

The Intersection of
Sculpture, Scripture and Salvation
at the Romanesque Cathedral in Sovana, Italy

By

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Dedicated to my loving family

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to shed light on the study of Romanesque art in Italy with a investigation of the cathedral in Sovana, an historically significant but understudied Romanesque church located in southern Tuscany. This dissertation presents the first effort to analyze the iconographic program of the portal and the interior historiated capitals as they relate to the political and religious context of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Sovana has close ties to one of the most interesting figures in the Middle Ages—Hildebrand, who became Pope Gregory the VII and was likely born there circa 1020. During his pontificate (r. 1073-1083), Gregory excommunicated Henry IV in a dispute commonly known as the Investiture Controversy, which stemmed from earlier reform initiatives. Also embroiled in this conflict was Matilda, Countess of Tuscany (ca. 1046-1115), who supported the papal party, even willing her extensive landholdings to the Roman Church. After Gregory's death, Matilda continued to rally papal advocates to her court providing asylum to several religious figures pursued by imperial allies. While under Matilda's protection, many of these theologians scripted letters and treatises which not only supported the primacy of the Roman Church in the reform movement, but also became some of the founding literary sources used to garner support for the Crusades.

In an examination of the relationship between the textual sources of these polemic writers and the visual imagery of the cathedral, Sovana proves an excellent example of the complex interplay of art, politics and religion that existed in the twelfth century.

Imagery at the cathedral resonated on a number of levels: supporting papal power; encouraging the Crusades; and ultimately conveying a message of salvation.

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Abbreviations

<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
Gregory VII, <i>Registrum</i> <i>Epistolae Vagantes</i>	E. Caspar (ed.), <i>Das Register Gregors VII, Monumenta Germaniae Historica Epistolae selectae 2</i> H.E.J. Cowdrey (ed.) <i>The Epistolae Vagantes of Pope Gregory VII</i> (Oxford, 1972)
<i>Italia Pontificia</i>	P. Kehr (ed.), <i>Italia Pontificia</i> 1-8 (Berlin, 1906-35)
<i>Liber pontificalis</i>	L. Duchesne and C. Vogel (eds.), <i>Liber pontificalis</i> , 1-3 (Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises d' Athènes et de Rome, 2e séries: Paris, 1886-1957)
<i>MGH,</i> <i>Libelli</i> <i>SS</i> <i>SS rer. Germ.</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica:</i> <i>Libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum saeculis XI et XII conscripti</i> <i>Scriptores</i> <i>Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi</i>
<i>MPL</i>	J. P. Migne (ed.), <i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina</i>

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION TO SOVANA

Our understanding of medieval Sovana and the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul begins with an understanding of the town—its location, geography and history (figure 1). Sovana is shaped by the many factors that contributed to its development with periods of prosperity and decline. The characteristics of location and geography impacted livelihood in terms of access to: water, food, raw materials, transportation routes to and from Sovana; the effects of disease and natural hazards; as well as the types of materials readily available for building. Moreover, Sovana’s political and cultural history indirectly, and in some cases directly, influenced the style and iconography of art produced there. How these factors wove together helps create a more complete understanding of Sovana in the Middle Ages.

Location and Geography

Sovana is located in Tuscany, one of twenty modern, regional divisions of Italy (map 1). This region has been recognized for generations as the birthplace of the Italian Renaissance style in the city of Florence, located in the northern part of Tuscany. Recently, scholarly attention has shifted to the importance of other Tuscan cities—such as the role of Pisa, Lucca and Pistoia on the economics, travel and culture of twelfth century Italy.¹ Nevertheless, these cities are also located in the northern part of Tuscany.

¹ Dorothy F. Glass, *Portals, Pilgrimage, and Crusade in Western Tuscany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

Sovana is in southern Tuscany, indeed, an area quite different from its northern counterpart in terms of its geography and development.

The southern part of Tuscany, which is geographically related to the northern part of the Lazio region, is known as the Maremma, from the Latin *maritima*, referring to the region's location on the sea.² The Tyrrhenian Sea defines the western border of the region with a rocky coastline and broad coastal plains that give way to rising inland hills. The low-lying areas of the Maremma were notorious for life threatening marshes filled with mosquitoes and malaria. One thirteenth century source described how the iron workers of Pisa gathered raw materials from the surrounding countryside during the winter months, but reserved great caution in avoiding the Maremma after the month of May.³ These marshes were not successfully drained until the mid-twentieth century, contributing to the stymied development of southern Tuscany compared to the larger cities located in the north.⁴

With the sea in the west, the eastern part of the Maremma reveals a land shaped by centuries of volcanic activity, creating distinct geographic formations. The northeastern corner of the Maremma is dominated by Monte Amiata, the second highest volcanic cone in Italy at 5,700 feet above sea level.⁵ A phase of volcanic activity started

² Aldo Mazzolai, *La Maremma e il suo territorio* (Grosseto, n.d.), 3.

³ David Herlihy, *Pisa in the Early Renaissance; A Study of Urban Growth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), 129; and Catherine Delano-Smith, *Western Mediterranean Europe: A Historical Geography of Italy, Spain and France Since the Neolithic* (London: Academic Press, 1979), 305.

⁴ In the 1930s, Mussolini passed laws to reclaim and to protect malarial infested lands. The process of reclaiming the Maremma continued into the 1940s. David Alexander, "The Reclamation of Val-di-Chiana (Tuscany)," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 74/4 (Dec., 1984), 547.

⁵ Mt. Etna in Sicily is the highest volcano in Europe, approximately 10,900 feet above sea level. Monte Amiata is 1,738 meters above sea level: Graeme Barker and Tom Rasmussen, *The Etruscans* (Oxford:

about a million years ago creating a chain of mountains including Vesuvius in the Bay of Naples and a series of crater lakes: Lake Bracciano in Monti Sabatini northwest of Rome; Lake Vico in Monti Cimini; and the northern Lake Bolsena in Monti Volsini.⁶ The latter, Lake Bolsena, is located approximately twenty miles southeast of Sovana and Monte Amiata is approximately twenty miles to the north, placing Sovana in the river valley between the two mountains. Periods of volcanic activity covered the region in volcanic deposits like the high outcroppings of tuff, or *tuffo* in Italian, that form plateaus throughout the landscape.⁷ The light weight, easy-to-carve rock called tuff is found throughout the southeast corner of the Maremma, giving its name to the *Area del Tuffo*.⁸ This material has been used for centuries in the construction of walls, tombs, buildings, cellars, and bridges. The Romans called the square tuff bricks *tuffi*. This is the same material that was used to construct the walls, buttresses and vaults of Sovana's cathedral. In addition to the volcanic material tuff, the mountains themselves were filled with metals such as iron, copper, lead and zinc that were later mined providing a source of wealth to the region.⁹

Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1998), 16.

⁶ Barker and Rasmussen, 11-19. J.B. Ward-Perkins, "Etruscan Towns, Roman Roads and Medieval Villages: The Historical Geography of Southern Etruria," *The Geographical Journal* 128/4 (Dec., 1962): 390.

⁷ Barker and Rasmussen, 12-13. Regarding the word *tuffo*, many archeologists and art historians have mistakenly translated *tuffo* into the English word tufa. Tufa is a type of calcite rock formed by the precipitation of a body of relatively warm, shallow water that is high in calcium. Therefore, tufa is not volcanic but sedimentary. Tuff, on the other hand, is created when volcanic ash fuses under intense heat. Confirmed in consultation with Andy Vessely, a geotechnical engineer and soil specialist, Cornforth Consultants, Portland, OR, October, 2008.

⁸ The other areas of Maremma include: *Alta Maremma*, *Colline Metalliferous*, *Maremma Grossetana (e Castiglione della Pescaia)*, and *Costa d'Argento*.

⁹ Delano-Smith, 299-300.

The other building material utilized for Sovana's cathedral portal and decorative elements was travertine, a sedimentary rock found throughout Italy and near Sovana in the areas around Saturnia and the Val d'Orcia.¹⁰ Travertine is more compact and denser than tuff and by nature more practical for carving detailed sculpture. Moreover, the white color of the stone proved ideal for symbolic carvings associated with purity and spiritual themes. Formed from consolidated deposits of calcium carbonate, sedimentary rock such as travertine generated from the water of mineral springs, one of the many effects of volcanic activity in the Maremma region.

The volcanic uplifting of the Earth's surface also resulted in river valleys that alternate with the tuff plateaus. Sovana is located on one of these tuff outcroppings nearly a mile in length that rises above the Y-shaped convergence of two watercourses: the Fosso della Calesine and the Fosso della Follonia. A third stream, the Fosso Picciolana, along with the Calesine form the two volcanic gorges north of the town. All three of these tributaries flow into the Fiora river less than two miles west of Sovana. The Fiora river valley begins in the hills of Mount Amiata and collects water from many tributaries, including those on the eastern slope of Mount Volsini and Mount Elmo,¹¹ as it flows southward to the sea. The rivers provided not only the water necessary for life but also served as communication and transportation routes. Streams too small for boat transportation were located in river valleys more easily traversed than the hilly and

¹⁰ Filippo Salviati, *Il Duomo di Sovana* (Rome: Stampa Tip. Mengarelli, 1992), 39-67 and 93-95.

¹¹ Mount Elmo (3248 feet) is northeast of Sovana and the source of the Calesina river.

mountainous terrain outside of the valleys.¹² In other cases, rivers carved deep gorges that provided natural barriers and protection in certain locations. Part of the river system and volcanic nature of the region are the sulfur springs that have long attracted people for their salubrious qualities. Saturnia, located a few miles west of Sovana, is one such location.

Even though the landscape of Tuscany is in a constant state of change, the geological history that created the basic land formations helps us understand why its location attracted people of different eras to settle there. Situated on a tuff plateau in the Fiora river valley, Sovana was well situated to sustain human life. With an appreciation of the landscape, we are better equipped to comprehend Sovana's periods of growth and decline in the historical periods leading up to the Middle Ages.

Early History

Historical artifacts from recent excavations confirm the existence of proto-Villanovan (twelfth to tenth century B.C.E.) inhabitants in Sovana.¹³ From the Neolithic through the Iron Ages sites throughout the Fiora valley were established, abandoned and re-established with little indication today as to why these settlements were so impermanent. The first firmly established inhabitants of Sovana were the Etruscans,

¹² Barker and Rasmussen, 16 and 24.

¹³ The 1990 collaborative excavations were conducted by the Archeological Soprintendenza of Tuscany, the Comune of Sorano, and the University of Milan and Venice and are well documented in the publication: Maurizio Michelucci, ed. *Sovana: Ricerche e scavi nell'area urbana* (Pitigliano: Tipolitografia, 1995). Michelucci (9) also summarizes the history of research and excavation projects on Sovanese sites.

dating back to the eighth century B.C.E.¹⁴ Then known as Suana or Suama¹⁵ (or Soana¹⁶), Sovana prospered in the heart of the Etruria. The acme of Etruscan activity in Sovana occurred during the third to second century B.C.E. as evidenced by the number and complexity of the extant tombs carved into the tuff cliffs along the Picciolana, Calesine, and Folonia waterways.¹⁷ These tombs were first published in the 1840's by S.J. Ainsley and George Dennis who both remarked on the surprising variety of tomb types, including the rare temple tombs like the Hildebrand Tomb, second century B.C.E.¹⁸ The location of this tomb, high on a southward facing cliff, is clearly visible across the valley from the

¹⁴ Etruscan remains include pottery fragments (such as *pithoi*), tombs, a temple base (from the 1905 excavations of Riccardo Mancinelli), and large *tufo* blocks used to construct walls and the partial foundations of the cathedral and the Rocca (fortress) Aldobrandeschi.

¹⁵ Pliny the Elder (*Naturalis Historia*, III: 8) and Ptolemy (*Geographia*, ed. Bart., 72) mention "Suana." Giovanni Feo presents a different opinion for the original name of Sovana based on an inscription in the François Tomb (350-330 B.C.E) in Vulci. One of the frescoes in this elaborate tomb complex identifies a dying soldiers as "Pesna Aremsnas Sveamach"—meaning "Pesna Aremanas of the town of Sveama." Since this is an Etruscan inscription identifying another Etruscan city, in contrast to a Roman author writing about an Etruscan city, Feo considers *Suama* the original name of the city of Sovana. This argument has merit considering the probable relationship of Sovana and Vulci. See Giovanni Feo and Antonello Carrucoli, *Il Duomo Romanico di Sovana: Arte, storia, archeoastronomia* (Viterbo: Nuovi Equilibri, 2007): 15.

¹⁶ Emmanuele Repetti, called Sovana "Soana" in *Dizionario geografico, fisico, storico della Toscana contenente la descrizione di tutti i luoghi del granducato, ducato di Lucca, Garfagnana e Lunigiana* (Florence: Presso l'autore e editore, 1833-46). Due to the early date of this publication, several subsequent sources use the same spelling.

¹⁷ John P. Oleson estimates 200-300 tombs at Sovana in "Regulatory Planning and Individual Site Development in Etruscan Necropolises," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 35/3 (Oct., 1976): 208.

¹⁸ S.J. Ainsley, "Monumenti sepolcrali di Sovana," *Bullettino dell' Instituto di corrispondenza archeologica* (Rome, 1843): 155-159; and S.J. Ainsley, "Monumenti sepolcrali di Sovana," *Annali dell' Instituto archeologico* (Rome, 1843): 223-232; George Dennis, *The Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria* (London: J. Murray, 1848). Ainsley (159) wrote that after "having visited nearly all the antiquities of this kind known to exist in Etruria, I can truly say that I have seen no place which contains so great a variety of sculptured tombs as Sovana." Dennis (14) wrote of Sovana, "Let no one who feels interest in the past, enter this district of Etruria without paying it a visit. It is better worth a pilgrimage than one half of known Etruscan sites." The types of tombs—including cube tombs, gable niche and facade tombs, burial ditches, *colombari*—are further explained by Gino Rosi, "Sepulchral Architecture as Illustrated by the Rock Facades of Central Etruria," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 15 (1925): 1-59; and 17 (1927): 59-96. In this publication, Rosi (50) named the Hildebrand Tomb, "[i]t is my desire that this nameless ruin should perpetuate the memory of the dead city's most illustrious son—the monk Hildebrand who became Pope Gregory the VII."

site of Sovana's cathedral a little over a mile away. The cathedral, which was built near the site of an earlier Etruscan temple,¹⁹ preserves the sacred nature of this area dating back to the Etruscans.

How the Etruscans established and supported themselves also relates to our understanding of Sovana. Most Etruscan cities, like Sovana, were located on a hill or a natural plateau that started as a small village which later coalesced into an independent city-state unit. The hill or plateau often rose above or near a natural source of water. The Etruscans cleared the forested land surrounding the plateau for agriculture and cattle-raising.²⁰ The process of deforestation was an issue of major concern in the hilly region of southern Tuscany. Tree removal led to soil erosion which silted up river mouths downstream and created marsh lands ripe for malarial infestation.²¹ The Etruscans' advanced engineering skills in the development of *cuniculi*, or drainage tunnels, and other techniques appear to have helped to maintain an equilibrium with their environment.²² This was not always the case in later periods and helps explain periods of decline in Sovana's history.

¹⁹ Feo and Carrucoli, 13.

²⁰ J.B. Ward-Perkins, "Landscape and History in Central Italy," in *J.L. Myres Memorial Lecture*, 2 (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, 1964): 12-14; Barker and Rasmussen, chapters 5 and 6.

²¹ The problems of soil erosion in this region still exist today. With pressure for greater productivity, modern farmers removed natural barriers creating large, uninterrupted fields for a single crop. This was a radical departure from traditional methods of polyculture as described by Roman historians. Instead of growing compatible crops with varying root depth which helped bind the soil and prevent erosion, the monoculture technique generated a competitive hydro-crop, drying out the soil and accelerating erosion rates previously abated by natural barriers. The tragic results did not lead to malaria in modern times, but drastically damaged previously rich farm land. See Barker and Rasmussen, 26.

²² *Cuniculi*, a system of horizontal tunnels and vertical drainages shafts cut into the tuff stone of southern Etruria, reached up to three and half miles in length. Barker and Rasmussen, 197-8. The cuniculated valleys around the ancient city of Veii continue to preserve the rolling fields of arable land opposed to the river cut gorges in other areas. Ward-Perkins, "Landscape and History in Central Italy," 14; and Ward-Perkins, "Etruscan Towns, Roman Roads," 394-395.

The portion of forest cleared to sustain the Etruscans appears minimal and much of the primeval forest still existed in the Roman period.²³ Livy (9:32-36) describes the enemy seeking refuge in the forest and that parts of Etruria were “*invia atque horrenda*”—trackless and indeed terrifying (9:36).²⁴ While the area may have appeared impassable to the Romans, the Etruscans established a system of communication via roads and river ways. Sovana was closely linked to the neighboring Etruscan sites of Pitigliano and Sorano. In fact, the Etruscan route between Sovana and Pitigliano (approximately two miles southwest) still exists today (figure 2). All three of these towns were established along tributaries of the Fiora river, thus linking them to the powerful city of Vulci, located seventeen miles downstream near the river’s mouth and accessible to the Tyrrhenian Sea.²⁵ Vulci’s position controlled both inland and maritime trading; for example, copper from the Mount Amiata region and pottery from Greece.²⁶ Sovana was a relatively modest Etruscan town compared to Vulci based on: one, the number of tombs found at these sites;²⁷ and two, Vulci’s position in the Etruscan league of twelve cities, the *Dodecapoli*. While the river routes were important to trade and communication, the

²³ The field studies of paleo-limnologists like Professor Hutchinson provide the physical evidence to prove the existence of forest lands in the Roman period. His research also helps date the construction of Roman roads, such as the Via Cassia, based on the increased amount of carbon materials present in the lake sediments of Monterosi. Hutchinson stated that the increased carbon materials found in the core samples of his study resulted from forest clearing projects necessary for road construction. G. Evelyn Hutchinson and Enrico Bonatti, *Ianula: an Account of the History and Development of the Lago Di Monterosi, Latium, Italy*, in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* (60/4 Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1970).

²⁴ Livy was describing the Cimini Forest, southeast of Sovana around Viterbo.

²⁵ Vulci is the Latin name. The Etruscan name is unclear: Velcha, Velcl, or Velcal.

²⁶ Dan Stanislawski, “Seeds for the Flowers of Tuscany,” *Geographical Review* 64/4 (Oct., 1977): 425.

²⁷ Oleson (208) estimates 200-300 tombs at Sovana compared to mid-size sites like Chiusi, Bieda, S. Giuliano, and Norchia (1,000-3,000 tombs), and large sites like Cerveteri, Tarquinia and Vulci (5,000-6,000 tombs). Tarquinia may have as many as 10,000 tombs in the final count.

Etruscans also established road routes, like the one still linking Sovana and Pitigliano.

Three major routes cut through the region of Tuscany in the Roman period. In the west, the Via Aurelia followed the coastline of the Tyrrhenian Sea a mile or more inland to avoid marshy terrain. The Via Cassia followed the eastern edge of Lake Bolsena and continued northward to Arezzo before turning west to Florence and Pistoia. Between these two major routes, the Via Clodia (or Claudia) passed through Tuscania, Saturnia, Rusellae and Volterra before reaching the Arno valley (map 1).²⁸ A connecting route between Saturnia and Sovana has yet to be identified even though the two cities are within miles of one another.²⁹ Surely such a route existed and some scholars have suggested its possible location.³⁰ Thus by linking Sovana to Saturnia, and by extension Rusellae, along the Via Clodia, Sovana had access to and from one of the secondary roadways of the Etruscan and Roman periods. It is clear, however, that Sovana's position a few miles off of the Via Clodia meant Sovana was a destination, not a stop along the route.

In regard to these Roman roads, the question of origin has occupied some scholars for generations. I agree with Ward-Perkins who believes the relatively circuitous nature of the Via Clodia indicates that this route, unlike the straighter Via Cassia, was most

²⁸ Barker and Rasmussen, 23. On the other hand, some scholars debate the direction of the Via Clodia after Tuscania. For example, one stated that Sovana was “in a district which was not traversed by any main line of communication in Etruscan or Roman days.” T.A., review of *Sovana*, by Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, *The Journal of Roman Studies* 19 (1929): 253-255.

²⁹ It is approximately seven and a half miles on a straight path between Saturnia and Sovana; however the hilly terrain would require a more indirect route.

³⁰ Based on the Etruscan pattern of lining major roads with a concentration of necropoli, Sovana's road to Saturnia would have followed the Fosso Calesina past the Poggi Grezzano and Felceto. See Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, *Sovana* (Florence: Rinascimento del libro, 1929): 30-31; and Oleson, 210.

likely built by the Etruscans and later adopted and paved by the Romans.³¹ In building the larger Via Cassia circa 171 B.C.E., the Romans bypassed existing towns (such as Veii) in order to more directly position the road to the north.³² Moreover, they preferred to build road supports and remove barriers rather than taking a circuitous path of fewer obstacles. The Romans constructed the Cassia to efficiently move supplies and troops to and from Rome. Conversely with the Via Clodia, it appears that the Romans maintained the existing Etruscan route into the hilly countryside of southern Etruria which weaves close to smaller towns, like Sovana. The Etruscan roads, like the ones radiating out from the abandoned city of Veii, generally followed the natural contour of the landscape, but when necessary they also cut up to forty feet into the tuff cliffs for their roads. There are several cut cliffs of this type around Sovana and several tuff roads like the one to Pitigliano. In general, the nature of the Via Cassia differs from the Via Clodia, meaning the latter was likely of Etruscan origin and continued to provide the inhabitants of Sovana access to Rome, Italy, and the rest of Europe throughout the Middle Ages.

³¹ J.B. Ward-Perkins, "Etruscan and Roman Roads in Southern Etruria," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 47/1/2 (1957): 139-143. In this article Ward-Perkins identifies the relatively little scholarly attention devoted to the Etruscans as road-builders. During the Roman period it is generally agreed that these two roads share the same route out of Rome and split just past La Storta. Ward-Perkins additionally suggests that the Via Clodia may have originally left Roma by the Via Triumphalis. D. Anziani, "Les voies romaines de l'étrurie méridionale," *Mélanges de l'École Française Rome* 33 (1913): 234, also asserted that the Via Clodia followed pre-existing Etruscan roads as opposed to the Cassia and Aurelia which were purposefully driven through enemy territory. Roman paving stones of the Via Clodia are still visible at the Porta Romana in Saturnia.

³² For dating the construction of the Via Cassia see: G. Evelyn Hutchinson and Enrico Bonatti, *Ianula: an Account of the History and Development of the Lago Di Monterosi, Latium, Italy* (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, new ser., v. 60, pt. 4. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1970): 10-12; Annapaola Mosca, *Via Cassia: Un Sistema Stradale Romano Tra Roma e Firenze* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 2002); Ward-Perkins, "Etruscan and Roman Roads in Southern Etruria," 140.

Another route that developed in the region during the tenth century was the Via Francigena.³³ During the Lombard period, the neglected Roman road system of major consular roads yielded to local route service mainly for two reasons. First, attacks from invaders like Saracens and Hungarians made living near the major routes dangerous.³⁴ Second, swampy marshes hindered access along the coastal Via Aurelia and along the Via Cassia, which passed through the Val-di-Chiana from Rome to Florence.³⁵ As a result of this limited access to Florence in the tenth century, the Via Francigena (or Via Romea) developed through this region establishing a popular route between Rome and Canterbury, shifting focus from the ancient Roman consular routes back to the inner territory of Tuscany. The Via Francigena split from the Via Cassia in Bolsena—approximately twenty-four miles east of Sovana—heading northwest through Aquapendente, Abbadia San Salvatore, San Quirico d’Orcia, Siena, San Gimignano, on to Lucca (map 1). Once again, Sovana was not along the main route but in close proximity with access to the rest of Europe.

³³ For more information on the Via Francigena see the work of Renato Stopani: *Guida ai percorsi della Via Francigena in Toscana* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1999); *La grande via di pellegrinaggio del Medioevo: le strade per Roma* (Florence, 1986); *La Via Francigena in Toscana. Storia di una strada medievale* (Florence, 1984); *La via Francigena: storia di una strada medievale* (Florence: Le lettere, 1998); *La Via Francigena. Una strada europea nell’Italia del Medioevo* (Florence, 1988); *Le via di pellegrinaggio del Medioevo. Gli itinerari per Roma, Gerusalemme, Compostella: con una antologia di fonti* (Florence, 1991).

³⁴ Hutchinson and Bonatti, 13.

³⁵ David Alexander, 527-550. This article outlines the process of natural tectonic and climatic changes exacerbated by human activity such as deforestation which led to soil erosion, lowland sedimentation, water-logging, increased malarial zones and land abandonment in the area of north-central Tuscany. The Etruscans built a system of drainage channels to control the problem, but the Romans began the process of deforestation on a massive scale to construct roads like the Via Cassia. Up to the tenth century travelers needed to pass through this area during particular seasons and take alternate routes. Deforestation between 1100 and 1300 reached a critical point when entire villages needed to move to higher ground, and troops were slaughtered while attempting to ford the marshes. Land reclamation projects began in the nineteenth century.

In addition to the road system first established by the Etruscans, they also left a rich tradition of artistic production. The bulging eyes, facial abstraction and modeling of forms found on Etruscan cinerary urns share some affinities with the relief sculpture of the cathedral of Sovana, particularly heads under the exterior apse window (figures 3 and 4). Particularly evocative are the thematic similarities of Etruscan tomb deities and subjects found on the cathedral portal. The Tomb of the Siren and the newly discovered Tomb of the Demoni Alati³⁶ both depict a scylla with bifurcating tail much like the mermaid with bifurcating tail on the cathedral portal (figures 5, 6, 7 and 8). From other Etruscan sites we know of their artistic rendering of bulls, birds, warriors, and abstract motifs from nature such as spirals and foliage—all of which are represented in the sculpture of the cathedral. Other than the occupation of the same physical site, there is no direct link between the Etruscan and medieval periods, although it can be argued the former established a rich artistic legacy inherited by the latter.³⁷

The transition from the Etruscan to the Roman period began in the fourth century B.C.E. when the Romans began a systematic campaign to conquer the *Tusci*—their name for the Etruscans and derivation of the regional name, *Toscana*.³⁸ In 396 B.C.E., after ten

³⁶ Carlo Rosati, ed., *The Etruscans and the Vie Cave* (Grosseto: Cesare Moroni Editore, 2008), 57. The Tomb of the Demoni Alati, third century B.C.E., was discovered in the spring of 2005. The tomb sculptures are relatively well preserved as the façade fell face down into the soil during an earthquake of the late seventeenth century.

³⁷ Silvio Bernardini makes a stronger case for the influence of Etruscan art and culture on medieval art in *The Serpent and the Siren: Sacred and Enigmatic Images in Tuscan Rural Churches*, trans. by Kate Singleton (San Quirico d'Orcia: Editrice DonChisciotte, 2000). Bernardini argues that the pagan cults associated with nature, agriculture, and fertility maintained a strong presence in the rural regions of Italy into the Middle Ages.

³⁸ For a historical summary of the Roman period in Sovana see: Feo and Carrucoli, 83-85; and Evandro Baldini, *Sovana: la sua storia e i suoi monumenti* (Florence: Tipografia Giuntina, 1956): 11-13.

years of war, the city of Veii fell to the Romans. Shortly thereafter, in 382 B.C.E., the cities of Sutri and Nepi, considered by Livy (6:9) as the “gateway” to Etruria, also fell. At the end of the fourth century B.C.E., the Romans finally crossed the “pathless and terrifying” Cimini Mountains into Etruria with the aid of an Etruscan guide. This account of an Etruscan guide serves as further evidence to the existence of Etruscan roads throughout the region. The centers of central Etruria—Vulci, Statonia³⁹ and Sovana—united to fight the advancing Romans but ultimately Vulci fell in 278 B.C.E, effectively ending the resistance. Throughout the third and second centuries B.C.E, Sovana maintained a neutral status with the Romans as a “*municipium*” (Pliny, III:8) of the “*prefettura*” established in Statonia (Vitruvius, *De architettura*, II:7). The Romans established colonies⁴⁰ in places like Saturnia, presumably for the thermal baths, and created large farming estates in their conquered territories. Etruria was now the seventh regional division of Augustus’ administrative system (Pliny, III:32) and the remaining Etruscans in this area were granted citizenship in the first century B.C.E.

What did this new political annexation of territories mean to Sovana? In the beginning after the fall of Vulci, Sovana appears to have prospered during the third and second centuries B.C.E which, as previously mentioned, was the period of greatest tomb construction, including: Hildebrand Tomb, Tomb of the Siren, Tomb of the Demoni Alati,

³⁹ The location of Statonia is debated. Some consider it Poggio Buco, south of Sovana, while other consider it Pitigliano, southeast of Sovana. Either way these locations are within a five mile radius of one another. More recent scholarship suggests Grotte di Castro northwest of Lake Bolsena as the location of the Etruscan city of Statonia, which is about fifteen miles from Sovana; see Vittorio Burattini, *La Santa Chiesa Sovanese: Le origini del vescovato e la traslazione da Statonia (Grotte di Castro) a Sovana* (Pitigliano: Tipolitografia A.T.L.A, 1997).

⁴⁰ Colonies in the Roman period were the strategic placement of veteran soldiers and citizens in agricultural communities to intermarry with the locals to form stronger alliances.

Pisa Tomb, Tifone Tomb, and Pola Tomb. A strong presence in central Etruria must not have concerned the Romans as there were relatively few colonies established there and Etruscan writing was still used until the first century B.C.E.⁴¹ In Sovana the physical evidence of Roman presence is minimal: a few inscriptions and *cippi*, or memorial stones, in the piazza and churches; the remains of some columns;⁴² and the partial remains of a Roman constructed wall.⁴³ Sovana's position deep in central Etruria, far from the main Roman military roads like the Via Cassia, allowed administrative autonomy but problems developed. The cities experienced an economic decline and the drainage system of the Etruscans fell into disuse which in turn increased the number of marshy lowlands and the presence of malaria.⁴⁴ Malaria reached a peak in the third to the fifth centuries C.E. making the coast inhospitable and causing the people to seek refuge in the hills.⁴⁵

In addition to the harsh conditions of the changing landscape, other factors caused people to leave low lying settlements. In the fifth century, many of the towns created along the Roman roads experienced increasing instability from the attacks of invading armies. These military roads created by the Romans to facilitate the movement of

⁴¹ On the number of colonies see Angelo Biondi, *Sovana: Città di Geremia* (Pitigliano: Tipolitografia A.T.L.A., 1989), 11-12. On writing see: Baldini, 43; *Etruscan and Medieval Sovana*, text by Cooperative La Fortezza (Pitigliano: A.T.L.A., 1996): 5.

⁴² Baldini, 42-44.

⁴³ Rosi, 17; and Dennis, 5.

⁴⁴ Stanislawski, 424; and J. Lawrence Angel, "Porotic Hyperostosis, Anemias, Malaras, and Marshes in the Prehistoric Mediterranean," *Science*, 153/3737 (Aug. 12, 1966): 760. Angel's study analyzes human remains for a disease called porotic hyperostosis, an overgrowth of skull thickness. The disease occurred frequently in inhabitants of marshy lands. This study provides physical evidence for the increase of malaria from the classical period to the nineteenth century.

⁴⁵ Salvatore Settis (ed.), *The Lands of the Etruscans from Prehistory to the Middle Ages* (Grosetto: Scala, 1985), 9. Sheldon Judson, "Erosion Rates Near Rome, Italy," *Science* 160/3835 (June 28, 1968): 1444-1446; Sheldon Judson, "Erosion and Deposition of Italian Stream Valleys During Historic Time," *Science* 149/3569 (May 24, 1963): 898-899.

supplies and troops also facilitated the movement of their enemies. The people who farmed the lower plains retreated to a pre-Roman, Etruscan pattern of hill town settlement.⁴⁶

Sovana's status during the period corresponding to the fall of the Roman Empire and the invasions of Goths and Lombards, roughly the fourth through the sixth centuries, is obscured by the relative lack of documentary evidence. This period does, however, correspond to the establishment of the Sovanese diocese (the subject of the next section). In the political sphere, Germanic Lombards entered Italy in 568/9 and continued to settle throughout the peninsula—only Rome and the areas around Ravenna and Genoa escaped occupation. Sovana, however, did not, and in 570 the Lombard Autari Flavio occupied the city and besieged Saturnia, thus suggesting the importance of Sovana during this period.⁴⁷ Byzantine forces took control of southern Italy but the Lombards continued to dominate the north, claiming Pavia as their capital. The Lombard political structure consisted of clans divided into duchies with allegiances to a king. Around the seventh century the monarchy asserted greater centralized authority over the Lombard clans and their dukes. The Lombard control of the northern and central areas of Italy—areas previously under the control of the Christian church—prompted the papacy in Rome to begin relations with the Franks in order to instigate a Lombard defeat.⁴⁸ Charlemagne seized the opportunity in 800 to be crowned emperor in Rome. In exchange the papacy

⁴⁶ Ward-Perkins, "Etruscan towns, Romans Roads," 399-400.

⁴⁷ Recorded in a letter with Ariulfo, Duke of Spoleto. P. Busatti, "Storia della contea di Sovana," *Bollettino della Società storica maremmana* XVII (1968): 24.

⁴⁸ Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1974): ix-xi.

received royal lands, including Sovana, creating a larger Papal State than the one established since Roman times.⁴⁹ Politics and religion in this period were intertwined, but in the interest of clarity, I will begin with a discussion of the religious development in Sovanese territory followed by a focused examination of the Aldobrandeschi family, who wielded great political power in Sovana during the construction of the cathedral.

Beginning of the Diocese

The religious atmosphere in southern Tuscany from the fall of the Roman Empire to the establishment of Aldobrandeschi family as feudal lords of the Maremma in the ninth century is a topic that has provoked many theories.⁵⁰ Clearly there were Christian centers, like Lucca to the north and Spoleto to the south, where dioceses were established in the first century. Other dioceses closer to Sovana include Chuisi, Siena, and Massa Marittima (originally Populonia), established in the third, fourth and fifth centuries, respectively. Nevertheless, throughout the fourth century various Roman emperors issued decrees against pagan temples and idol worship. The persistence of pagan worship into the early fifth century prompted another edict against the celebration of Bacchus and

⁴⁹ For other royal lands transferred to the pope at this time, including Rusellae (near modern Roselle Terme), Populonia, Toscanella (Tuscania after 1911), and Castro, see Settis, 16. For a discussion of Charlemagne's "need" for a imperial coronation which in turn led to political scheming with the papacy, see Henry Mayr-Harting, "Charlemagne, the Saxons, and the Imperial Coronation of 800," *The English Historical Review* 111/444 (Nov., 1996): 1113-1133.

⁵⁰ Most theories center on the origin of the diocese in Sovana, see: Burattini, *La Santa Chiesa Sovanese: Le origini del vescovato e la traslazione da Statonia (Grotte di Castro) a Sovana*; Ippolito Corridori, *La Diocese di Pitigliano-Sovana-Orbetello Nella Storia* (Pitigliano: Tipolitografia A.T.L.A., 2000); M. Polock, "Der Prozeß von 1194 zwischen Orvieto und Sovana um das Val di Lago, mit Edition der Akten und der Bischofsliste von Sovana bis zum Ende des 12. Jahrhunderts," *Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 70 (1990): 46-150. Burattini presents a clear analysis of the Christianization of the Maremma in his appendix (69-84); Baldini, 45-47.

harvest rituals.⁵¹ The opposing forces of Christianity and paganism may also have simultaneously coexisted for a period before the overall Christianization of the area.

Emerging from this period is the legend of a fifth century saint who proselytized throughout southern Tuscany and whose remains were eventually transferred to Sovana. The saint is Mamiliano, about whom many legends developed.⁵² The main aspects of his legend consists of the same basic elements. Mamiliano was a monk forced to flee from religious persecution, probably the violence against priests and clergy by the Vandal leader Huneric, who reigned from 477-484. Mamiliano traveled throughout the archipelago off the coast of Tuscany taking refuge on the island of Montecristo, where a hermitage developed in accordance with his teachings. Saint Mamiliano went on pilgrimage to Rome before he died and was buried on the island of Giglio. Exactly when a portion of his remains were transferred to Sovana is unclear.⁵³ In the main piazza of Sovana exists the ruins of a church dedicated to Saint Mamiliano, probably once housing the sarcophagus of his remains now found in the cathedral.⁵⁴ According to earlier sources this church once contained a crypt dating to the ninth century; therefore, it is possible that

⁵¹ Feo and Carrucoli, 86. The other edicts date to 353-357 and 390.

⁵² Burattini analyzed three legends regarding Saint Mamiliano which accounts for the discrepancies and conflation of details, 5-8. One of which identified Mamiliano as a Bishop of Palermo. Another says he fled from persecution in the fourth century.

⁵³ Corridori (115) states that Mamiliano's remains were transferred to Sovana in the Lombard or Carolingian period.

⁵⁴ The current sarcophagus dates to the fourteenth or fifteenth century. Some consider this church the oldest extant church in Sovana, although I believe the crypt of the cathedral may be older or at least contemporary. The foundations of the church of San Mamiliano show traces of Etruscan, *opus quadratum*, and Roman, *opus reticulatum*, construction. Baldini, 100; Giovanni Feo, *The Hilltop Towns of the Fiora Valley: Sovana, Sorano, Pitigliano, Saturnia, Monterano, Manciano*, trans. A.T.L.A. (Pitigliano: Tipolitografia A.T.L.A., n.d.), 21; *Etruscan and Medieval Sovana*, 26; Biondi, 65.

the saint's relics were transferred from Giglio to Sovana during that century.⁵⁵ Saint Mamiliano is important to our understanding of Sovana because his legend and physical remains bear witness to the introduction of Christianity to the city and the region between the fifth and the ninth centuries.⁵⁶

Other than saintly legend, the earliest extant documentation on the diocese of Sovana is a letter recording a bishop Maurizio of Sovana who participated in a synod in Rome on March 27, 680.⁵⁷ The question of when the diocese of Sovana began is expertly addressed in the research of Vittorio Burattini.⁵⁸ Through Burattini's careful analysis of archival documents, he identifies the first seat of the bishopric in Sant'Ippolito of Val di Lago in the ancient Etruscan city of Statonia (Grotte di Castro).⁵⁹ His reason for the transference of the diocese from Statonia to Sovana relates to the incursion of Lombards in the sixth century. This period corresponds to the abandonment of several ancient

⁵⁵ Burattini, 80; Biondi, 65; *Etruscan and Medieval Sovana*, 26; and Feo and Carrucoli, 86. The church of San Mamiliano is first documented in the thirteenth century although stylistically the remaining sections relate to the eleventh century.

⁵⁶ Saint Mamiliano is also the patron saint of the city of Sovana and since 1790 the patron saint of the diocese. Other physical evidence includes a ring with a cruciform sign and inscription "VRSAC(I) VIVAS" found near Sovana and Pitigliano dating to the fifth or sixth century based on paleography. Some historians believe this was a bishop's ring. G.F. Gamurrini, "Appunti sulle antichità sacre di Sovana," *Per il solenne ingresso dell'Eccmo Mons. Vescovo Michele cardella nella sede di Sovana e Pitigliano* 1 (Pitigliano, 1898); and Burattini, 9 and 69.

⁵⁷ An earlier bishop by the name of "Taddino" was listed in Ferdinando Ughelli and Coleti, *Italia sacra sive de Episcopis Italiae, et insularum adjacentium, rebusque ab iis praeclare gestis ... opus singulare, provinciis XX distinctum ... auctore D.F. Ughello*. S.l: s.n, 1717-1722. However, Burattini (5) found no documentation to support this claim. The synodal letter is recorded in: Catholic Church, Jean Hardouin, Philippe Labbe, and Gabriel Cossart, *Acta conciliorum et epistolae decretales, ac constitutiones summorum pontificum* (Paris: Ex Typographia Regia, 1714), c. 1136, V, chapter 2. As Burattini has noted (5), Bishop Maurizio of Sovana is frequently misidentified as a participant in the Third Council of Constantinople (the Sixth Ecumenical Council), which condemned Monothelitism. Instead, Maurizio was one of 126 bishops participating at the synod in Rome in March who signed a letter forwarded to the Council in Constantinople, which took place from November 680 to September 681.

⁵⁸ Burattini, *La Santa Chiesa Sovanese*.

⁵⁹ Burattini places Statonia near Grotte di Castro, northwest of Lake Bolsena.

Etruscan cities, such as Statonia and Vulci around 570. Burattini theorizes that the Lombard invasions of the sixth century altered the ecclesiastical territory of the region whereby Sovana became a diocese of churches and *pievi*, or parish churches.⁶⁰

With the establishment of the diocese in Sovana, this brings us back to the seventh-century Bishop Maurizio recorded at the synod in Rome in 680. Other written documentation from the seventh century through the period of Charlemagne to the end of the first millennium is scarce, and what little remains is found in the archives of external sources such as the diocese of Lucca and the abbeys of Sant'Antimo and San Salvatore.⁶¹ What does remain in fair abundance is the physical evidence of Christian activity in Sovana beginning in the late eighth century. A carved ciborium and the relief sculpture of the cathedral portal signal the importance of Sovana beginning in the late eighth century and culminating later in the sculpture and architecture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This very topic, indeed, is the focus of this study and subsequent chapters.

Before addressing this topic, a brief introduction to the political structure of the period is in order. The region around Sovana was part of the Papal State and ruled by landowners whose power structure evolved from the Lombard system after their invasion

⁶⁰ Burattini, 75-79. The Italian translation of *pieve* means parish church in a narrow sense, but it actually connotes a greater ecclesiastical unit centered around a mother church. As a result of this structured system, the *pieve* churches, generally located in remote wilderness locations, were in regular contact with other villages and regional centers; see Delano-Smith, 47-48. In 1981, the name of the diocese changed from Sovana-Pitigliano to the Diocese of Pitigliano-Sovana. In 1986, the name changed again to the Diocese of Pitigliano-Sovana-Orbetello.

⁶¹ Burattini, 79. Sant'Antimo is located approximately forty-one miles north of Sovana. Abbadia San Salvatore is located approximately twenty-four miles north of Sovana along the southeastern slope of Monte Amiata. These abbeys and their lands were known as *ager amiatnus*, meaning they maintained independent control outside of Sovana's Episcopal jurisdiction; Vincent Transano, *The Rural Noble Family of Southern Tuscany (800-1350)* (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 1974), 7.

and settlement in the area. One of the most powerful landowning families in the Maremma was the Aldobrandeschi.

Aldobrandeschi Family—A Castle for Every Day of the Year

The Aldobrandeschi family first appear in a document dated January 25, 800.⁶² This early date distinguishes them as the oldest of the eighty-two land-owning families in southern Tuscany between 800 and 1350.⁶³ Different historians have attempted to identify the origin of the Aldobrandeschi family by two means: first, by the law codes used in extant documents which in this case alternated between Salic (Carolingian Franks) and Germanic Lombard law; and second, by their name which is Teutonic in derivation.⁶⁴ While tracing their exact transalpine origins has proven impossible to date, the Aldobrandeschi are tied to the Lombards and first settled around Lucca. Several bills of sale and other documents reveal a number of land exchanges with the Bishop of Lucca for property he owned around Sovana and Roselle.⁶⁵ Throughout the period from the ninth to the thirteenth century, they continued to acquire new lands becoming the largest

⁶² Gaspero Ciacci, *Gli Aldobrandeschi nella storia e nella "Divina Commedia,"* 2 vols. (Rome: Biblioteca d'arte editrice, 1935), no. 21.

⁶³ Transano (8) identified the number of families. Only one other family is documented in the ninth century, the Lords of Siena (Transano, 35).

⁶⁴ Repetti; Ciacci; and Transano.

Transano notes (22 and 410-11) the name Aldobrandeschi derives from "Ildebrando," "Hildebrandt" in German, and it developed into the family name. Of the thirty-eight individuals associated with the earliest branch of the family, twelve were named Ildebrando, or some variant.

Germanic names were favored two to one in the four hundred and eighty noble names in Transano's study (39 and 424). By comparison three were Greek, twenty-six were Biblical, one hundred and thirty were Italian (Latin), and three hundred and twenty-one were German. This information is interesting when compared to the non-noble names which favored three to one for non-German names. Thus suggesting that the nobles of southern Tuscany primarily derived from Germanic regions outside of Italy.

⁶⁵ Ciacci, I, 25-38; Transano, 105; and Biondi, 17. These transactions appear particularly advantageous to the Aldobrandeschi family.

landowners in the region, with over a hundred and seventy-six castles, or *castelli*, in their domain.⁶⁶ Noble families built baronial strongholds on high rock, which was called a *rocca*. These *rocche* were functional structures with strong stone walls, large towers and smaller, wooden quarters for domestic life.⁶⁷ Visually the *rocca* gave an impression of the strength and power of the families who owned them. The one hundred and seventy-six castles owned by the Aldobrandeschi family prior to the fourteenth century conveyed a strong presence in the Maremma, even if it was not one for “every day of the year” as stated by Peter Damian in the eleventh century.⁶⁸

Beginning in the ninth century the Aldobrandeschi family began using the title of “count,” which like the “county” organization of territorial domains remained from the Carolingian administrative system.⁶⁹ The Carolingians, who dominated northern Italy from 773 to circa 840, established a system of royal offices chosen by the emperor.⁷⁰

While no extant documentation exists proving imperial or episcopal investment of the Aldobrandeschi family with title of nobility, they acquired such status either through lost

⁶⁶ The *castelli* also refers to the fortified town as well as the family dwelling (Transano, 3). In the eleventh and twelfth centuries an number of complaints are filed against the Aldobrandeschi family regarding their encroachment into new territories. For example, in July of 1081, the monks of the monastery of San Salvatore, who owned land to the west of Aldobrandeschi territory, plead with Emperor Henry IV to intervene on their behalf; Ciacci, no. 155; and Transano, 110.

⁶⁷ Delano-Smith, 117.

⁶⁸ Simone M. Collavini, *Honorabilis domus et spetiosissimus comitatus: gli Aldobrandeschi da "conti" a "principi territoriali": (secoli IX-XIII)* (Studi medioevali, 6. Pisa: ETS, 1998). Transano (105) identified the Aldobrandeschi acquisition of new *castelli* from the ninth through the thirteenth centuries—this topic will be further discussed in chapter 2 of this study in relation to the construction periods of the cathedral. The family owned or partially owned one hundred and seventy-six domains and was by far the largest land-owning family in the region. The next to them was the Ardengheschi family who owned forty-five castelli. The majority of Aldobrandeschi castles were in the south central portion of southern Tuscany (Transano, 109).

⁶⁹ In the ninth century the duchies created by the Lombards became counties under Carolingian control. By the tenth century the establishment of a marquisate promoted greater autonomy and the laid the foundations for a feudal structure; Settis, 16.

⁷⁰ Transano, 8 and 18. The titles were count-palatine, count, viscount and *vice dominus*.

documentation, tradition, or force.⁷¹ By the twelfth century the Aldobrandeschi family was only one of two families with the title of “count-palatine,” a title used by the Hohenstaufen emperors as a sign of great honor.⁷² The Aldobrandeschi family’s high rank and large land holdings made them a powerful force in the Maremma and their administrative capital was Sovana from the tenth century until their decline.⁷³

The Aldobrandeschi decline is marked by a convergence of changing factors in the political and economic structure of the region, and indeed, all of Italy. Prior to the twelfth century, urban and rural centers exhibited fewer differences; however, with the increase of trade, banking, and manufacturing in the thirteenth century, the disparity within the social structures changed. Agrarian regions, like the domain of the Aldobrandeschi family, were limited in their growth potential, while the urban centers formed communes of increasing strength. The Aldobrandeschi family, the great leaders of the ninth through twelfth centuries, appeared resistant to this transformation and over the course of the thirteenth century lost much of their land holdings.⁷⁴

Another factor related to the Aldobrandeschi decline was an issue of inheritance. When Ildebrandino il Rosso died in 1284 without a male heir, his possessions, which included the counties of Sovana and Pitigliano, passed to his daughter Margherita. Margherita’s sole heir was her daughter Anastasia and when she married in 1313 her

⁷¹ Transano (19) found no documentation (!) of investiture for any of the eighty-two noble families in his study. He suggest the families of this region took and held titles by strength.

⁷² The other family was the Alberti of Prata; Ciacci, no. 212.

⁷³ The center of the families activities began in Roselle. In 935 when Roselle was destroyed by the Saracens, the Aldobrandeschi family moved their administrative center to Sovana, where it remained until the thirteenth century; Feo and Carrucoli, 90.

⁷⁴ By 1274 the Aldobrandeschi only had twelve remaining castles.

dowry—the Aldobrandeschi patrimony—passed to the Orsini family from Rome. The Orsini moved their administrative center from Sovana to Pitigliano where they built a large fortress.⁷⁵

Additionally, the disputes between the expanding communes of Siena and Orvieto, and the power struggle between empire and papacy affected the stability of the Aldobrandeschi power. A turbulent period, when Sovana became a political pawn between rivaling factions, ended in the late fourteenth century when Sovana and the Aldobrandeschi became citizens of the commune of Siena.⁷⁶

Before the Aldobrandeschi decline, however, they were the lords of southern Tuscany and Sovana was the “Queen of the Maremma.”⁷⁷ The impact of the Aldobrandeschi family on the development of art and architecture in Sovana is hard to quantify. Whether they directly paid for the decorative or construction programs of the cathedral lacks documentation; however, circumstantial evidence suggests their involvement. As Vincent Transano stated in his study of the noble families of southern Tuscany up to the mid-fourteenth century, the nobility represented the “[u]pper level of medieval society which largely controlled the political, social, intellectual and economic destiny of the age.”⁷⁸ The destiny of Sovana in the Middle Ages was thus greatly influenced by two major parties—the Aldobrandeschi and, as the see, the Roman Church.

⁷⁵ Feo and Carrucoli, 284.

⁷⁶ Transano, 113-115.

⁷⁷ *Etruscan and Medieval Sovana*, 18.

⁷⁸ Transano, 13.

These two forces combined in one individual by the name of Hildebrand, later known as Pope Gregory VII.

Pope Gregory VII (c. 1015-1085)

Pope Gregory VII was undoubtedly one of the major figures of the eleventh century.⁷⁹ His relationship in regard to Sovana appears threefold: his probable origin; his influence during his lifetime; and his message propagated by his followers after his death. Of these three, the latter reflects the greatest impact on the sculptural program of the cathedral of Sovana; however, I will begin by briefly exploring the former two as Gregory's influence during his lifetime universally touched all of Italy and most of Europe.

Pope Gregory VII was born Hildebrand circa 1015 and has traditionally been referred to as *Ildebrando di Soana* (using an older spelling of Sovana).⁸⁰ His contemporaries—advocates and opponents alike—mention his humble Tuscan origins, while attempts to link Hildebrand to Roman lineage, or the Jewish Pierleoni family,

⁷⁹ For a thorough account of Pope Gregory VII's life and times see H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). Baldini (113-124) provides a summary of Italian sources. Also see: I. S. Robinson, *The Papal Reform of the Eleventh Century: Lives of Pope Leo IX and Pope Gregory VII*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); Ephraim Emerton, *The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII, Selected Letters from the Registrum* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932); and Gregory VII, *Das Register Gregors VII, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae selectae*, ed. E. Caspar (Berlin, II): 1920-23.

⁸⁰ Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085*, 27-28, in particular note 3. Hildebrand's date of birth is based on the relative age for advancement within the canonical system and medical examinations of his remains. Both suggest he was between 65 and 75 years of age at his death in 1085; placing his birth between 1010 and 1020.

likely stem from polarized interests aimed at bolstering or undermining his credentials.⁸¹ Of the three sources identifying Hildebrand's Tuscan origins, one specifically identifies his birthplace as a small village near Sovana called "Raouaco", or Rovacum, which no longer exists.⁸² This same source identifies his father as "Bonizo" but makes no mention of his mother.⁸³ His mother is significant because Benzo of Alba, a fervent supporter of King Henry IV of Germany (later crowned Holy Roman Emperor by the antipope Clement III), attempted to damage Hildebrand's reputation by mentioning the lowly status of his father as a peasant ("caprario" or goat herder) while at the same time recognizing his mother as "suburbana," meaning a woman of some means.⁸⁴ In the early

⁸¹ Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085*, 27-28. Early sources on Pope Gregory VII's youth include: Beno, Benzo of Alba, Bernold, Bonizo of Sutri, Bruno of Segni, *Liber pontificalis*, Paul of Bernried, Peter Damiani, Walo of Metz, Wenric of Trier and William of Malmesbury. On Gregory's Tuscan origins see: *Liber pontificalis*, 2, 360; Benzo of Alba, *To Henry IV*, VII.2; Paul of Bernried, *Vita Gregorii VII papae*, ed. J.M. Watterich, *Pontificum Romanorum Vitae* 1 (Leipzig, 1862), 1-6; for an English translations see Robinson, *The Papal Reform*, 370 and 262-265. On Gregory's Roman origins see Hugh of Flavigny, one of Gregory's supporters, wrote that Hildebrand was born in Rome. The *Annales Pegavienses* suggest a connection to the Roman Pierleoni family whose patriarch, Baruch, converted from Judaism to Christianity in 1039. In support of Hildebrand's Jewish heritage see: Demetrius Zema, "The Houses of Tuscany and of the Pierleone in the Crisis of Rome in the Eleventh Century," *Traditio* 2 (1944): 169-175; and R.L. Poole, (1934): 185-222 (cf. Robinson, *The Papal Reform*, 262). Gregory's activities of the eleventh century provoked intense opposition to him on a personal level calling him: hell brand (in reference to his name and Satan), an adulterer, a perjurer, leprous in body and soul, a sorcerer, a false monk, the Antichrist, as well as Benzo of Alba's scatological references—and yet, none of his adversaries directly called him a Jew, which proves problematic to the Pierleoni theory.

⁸² *Liber pontificalis*, 2, 360. Two modern theories surround the name Rovacum. One group of scholars identified a high tuff outcropping, about a mile from Sovana along the Fiora River and near the Via Clodia, as the ruins of a Aldobrandeschi castle with the place name Roiana or Roianaco (Roana, Rovana, Riana, Roanaco, Rovanaco, Rovaco); see G. C. Fabriziani, *I conti Aldobrandeschi e Orsini; sunti storici con note topografiche* (Pitigliano: O. Paggi, 1897); and Baldini, 116-118. A second school of thought equates Roanco with Soanae explaining the misunderstanding as a transcription error; see G.B. Vicarelli, "Ancora sulla patria sovanese di Gregorio VII" in *Sovana, la cattedrale restaurata* (Grosseto, 1974).

⁸³ *Liber pontificalis*, 2, 360. One modern source identifies "Oberto di Ildebrando" as Hildebrand's father although without evidence (see Ciacci).

⁸⁴ *Suburbana* generally means the city of Rome or an estate near Rome. While some have used this evidence to support Gregory's connection to the Peirleoni of Rome (Baldini, 120-121; see Zema), and others have disregarded the numerous references to the low status of his father when suggesting a connection to the Aldobrandeschi (see Ciacci), no one has suggested that Benzo's "suburbana" estate

eleventh century, at the time of Hildebrand's birth, the only family of certain means in or near Sovana was the Aldobrandeschi family, thus suggesting Hildebrand's kinship to the most powerful family of southern Tuscany was through his maternal ancestry, not his paternal lineage.⁸⁵ Additionally, a medical examination of Pope Gregory VII's skeletal remains conducted in 1984 revealed that Hildebrand experienced a healthy and well nourished youth, providing verification of a childhood with access to resources.⁸⁶

Another point of argument bears evidence to Hildebrand's relationship to the Aldobrandeschi family. His name, Hildebrand, a variant of the Germanic name "Hildebrandt" which in Italian became "Ildebrando", was the source of the Aldobrandeschi surname. One-third of the earliest branches of the Aldobrandeschi family bore a name that was some derivation of Ildebrando.⁸⁷ The name alone, however, is inconclusive data given that several members of the noble families of Lombard Germanic descent bear a similar name in one form or another. Yet, combined with the other evidence—the contemporary sources that made reference to Hildebrand's Tuscan origins which is an area dominated by the Aldobrandeschi family—a connection to this family is strongly suggested.⁸⁸ While Hildebrand's connection to Sovana lacks direct evidence but

outside Rome was Sovana of the Aldobrandeschi and the source of his mother's means.

⁸⁵ Cowdrey (*Gregory VII, 1073-1085*) says Gregory may be related to the Aldebrandini (Aldobrandeschi?) of southern Tuscany but quickly addresses the multiple references to his humble background (27). Cowdrey makes no connection between Gregory and the Aldobrandeschi through his mother.

⁸⁶ G. Fornaciari, F. Mallegni, and C. Vultaggio, "Il regime di vita e il quadro fisio-clinico di Gregorio VII" *Rassegna Storica Salernitana*, (NS 2, 1985): 31-90; and Fornaciari and Mallegni, "La ricognizione dei resti scheletrici di S. Gregorio VII: risultati antropologici, paleopatologici e paleonutrizionali," *Studi Gregoriani* (13, 1989): 399-425.

⁸⁷ Transano, 22 and 410-411.

⁸⁸ The Catholic Church today accepted Sovana as Pope Gregory VII's birthplace and no other location lays claim to this assertion. On the 900th anniversary of his death in 1073, the Catholic Church provided funds to restore the cathedral in Sovana and proclaimed 1973-74 *Anno Gregoriano*.

is generally undisputed, it appears that he left and never looked back. As pope, he referred to his youthful upbringing in Rome, where he became a monk in the service of Saint Peter, not mentioning Sovana nor his family in his writings.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, Hildebrand achieved rapid advancement within the ecclesiastic hierarchy, again prompting speculation of noble connections, as previously mentioned through his mother's family.⁹⁰

To summarize, these examples of Hildebrand's relationship to Sovana and the Aldobrandeschi family in and of themselves remain speculative. The cumulative effect, however, is far more compelling in terms of the statements made by contemporary sources, his maternal ancestry, his name and access to resources through those connections. Hildebrand, the man consecrated as Pope Gregory VII in 1073, was likely born in Sovana and related to the Aldobrandeschi family. Even if there is no evidence to suggest that he paid for any of the construction on the cathedral of Sovana,⁹¹ nor did he make reference to Sovana or the Aldobrandeschi family in his extant writings,⁹² based on a measure of circumstantial evidence Gregory's probable origins and kinship centered around Sovana. Because of this, we can also assume a certain degree of support from the Aldobrandeschi family and the diocese of this region for Gregory's reform ideology as he

⁸⁹ Gregory VII, *Registrum*, I.1, I.39, III.10a.

⁹⁰ Bruno of Segni, in *Libellus de simoniacis* composed between 1085-1102, said Hildebrand was an "adolescent of noble disposition." Baldini, 119.

⁹¹ A fire in the sixteenth century destroyed all of the archival records pertaining to the cathedral of Sovana.

⁹² Gregory's contemporaries do make reference to a niece (Paul of Bernried, *Vita Gregorii VII papae*, 32, and Robinson's *The Papal Reform*, 280) and a nephew (*Liber pontificalis*, 2, 290). The Cardinal-Bishop of Albano known as Blessed Petrus Igneus, who served as papal diplomat to Gregory, has been associated with the Aldobrandeschi of Sovana (Edward Hutton, *The Valley of Arno*, London: Constable, 1927); although other sources link Petrus Igneus to the Aldobrandini family (*Catholic Encyclopedia*).

maneuvered to transform the religious, political and social structure of Europe in the eleventh century.

While Pope Gregory VII did not instigate the controversial reform movement that traditionally bears his name,⁹³ his role in the transformation of the Roman Church established a new precedent for papal authority. The Gregorian Reform sought to end the corruptions of flesh and ecclesiastic power—namely clerical marriage (nicolaitism) and the purchase or sale of church offices (simony).⁹⁴ The latter directly led to the core of the Investiture Controversy, in particular, who had the right to appoint, or to “invest”, ecclesiastic positions and associated symbols of power.⁹⁵ The opposing forces in this conflict pitted King Henry IV of the Holy Roman Empire against Pope Gregory VII, as head of the Roman Church. Gregory’s involvement with reform principles began in his early years as Hildebrand, the advisor, legate, subdeacon and archdeacon to six preceding popes. Based on Gregory’s correspondence, he focused much of his reform fervor against indiscretions in Germany.⁹⁶

⁹³ Augustin Fliche popularized the term “Gregorian Reform” in his work *La réforme grégorienne* (Louvain: “Spicilegium sacrum lovaniense”, bureaux, 1924).

⁹⁴ The ideals of the “Gregorian Reform” began earlier in a broader movement for monastic reform, hence my use of the term “reform.” See Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy: Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).

⁹⁵ The vast scholarship addressing the Investiture Controversy includes seminal works by: Fliche (1924); Gerd Tellenbach and Ralph Francis Bennett, *Church, State, and Christian Society at the Time of the Investiture Contest* [Oxford (England): Basil Blackwell, 1940]; Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church & State 1050-1300* (Prentice-Hall, 1964); Karl Morrison, ed., *The Investiture Controversy: Issues, Ideals, and Results* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971); I. S. Robinson, *Authority and Resistance in the Investiture Contest: The Polemical Literature of the Late Eleventh Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978); Blumenthal (1988); Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* [Oxford (England): Clarendon Press, 1989]; Robinson, *The Papacy 1073-1198* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Kathleen G. Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy in the Eleventh Century: Spirituality and Social Change* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

⁹⁶ Cowdrey, *Gregory VII, 1073-1085*, 244 and 279. Cowdrey argues that Gregory’s intent aimed to bring

Gregory's conflict with Henry and the bishops of Germany came to a crux in 1075. After a synodal decree expressly denied the king and temporal authorities the right to invest ecclesiastic power, Henry, in direct opposition, appointed a new archbishop in Milan and made appointments in the bishoprics of Fermo and Spoleto without papal confirmation. The papal curia sanctioned several bishops and advisors to Henry with excommunication for the practice of simony, thus absolving their subjects from feudal ties. Also during this year, Gregory himself recorded in his *Registrum* a list of twenty-seven theses establishing the papacy's right, by authority from God, to supersede imperial power.⁹⁷ Since this document, known as the *Dictatus papae*, was not widely distributed and no contemporary sources make reference to the decrees, it should not be considered the final straw in the conflict between Gregory and Henry. The historian H. E. J. Cowdrey concludes, however, that the decrees of the *Dictatus papae* represented Gregory's views but that he *chose* not to disseminate them in that manner at that particular time.⁹⁸ Gregory's fundamental issue concerned the primacy of the papacy as mandated by God through Saint Peter, not the demise of the Empire. The precedent for papal primacy ensued from earlier patriarchs of the Roman Church, such as Leo the Great

"King Henry IV to a better mind" open to instruction (270), not a self serving desire to control Germany and Italy.

⁹⁷ The *Dictatus papae*, entered in Gregory's *Registrum* between the 3rd and the 5th of March, corresponds to the Lent synod of 1075; see Cowdrey, *Gregory VII, 1073-1085*, 502-507. Gregory's *Registrum* documents his correspondence in a compendium of nine volumes. The collection represents the only nearly complete record of papal communication since Pope Gregory I (r. 590-604), Gregory VII's sainted namesake. See Emerton, xvi-xvii.

⁹⁸ For an explanation of the mysteries surrounding this document see Cowdrey, *Gregory VII, 1073-1085*, 502-507.

(440-461) and Gregory the Great (590-604), but Gregory VII politicized this aim by claiming the right to excommunicate temporal rulers.

Gregory's demand for obedience and emphasis on penitence set apart his role in the reform movement compared to his less extreme predecessors and contemporaries.⁹⁹ The great Benedictine abbots, Desiderius (1058-1086) of Monte Cassino and Abbot Hugh (1049-1109) of Cluny, were both involved in papal reform initiatives, often mediating disputes;¹⁰⁰ however, their attention also focused on artistic interests of monastic building expansion, church decoration, creating liturgical objects of precious materials, producing manuscripts, and the development of ecclesiastic music. Conversely, Gregory's fervor focused on his perceived authority of papal power. Indeed, he supported military force to defend Church reforms, which differed from the aims of the other great ecclesiastic

⁹⁹ David J. Hay, *The Military Leadership of Matilda of Canossa 1046-1115* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2008), 24. For a study addressing Gregory's penitential emphasis see Cowdrey, *Gregory VII, 1073-1085*. On obedience see Robinson, *Authority*, 22-24.

¹⁰⁰ In fact, the degree of Desiderius' and Hugh's support for Gregorian Reform has long been the topic of scholarly debate. Desiderius maintained relations with Byzantium, employing their skilled artists for many of his decorative projects, and he also recognized the advantages of strong relations with the Norman princes of southern Italy which occasionally put him at odds with papal concerns. For research on Monte Cassino's artistic endeavors, particularly the bronze doors and manuscripts, see: Herbert Bloch, *Monte Cassino in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986); and Francis Newton, *The Scriptorium and Library at Monte Cassino, 1058-1105* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For research on Monte Cassino's political and diplomatic concerns see: H. W. Klewitz, "Montecassino in Rom," *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 28 (1937-8): 36-47; H. E. J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius: Montecassino, the Papacy, and the Normans in the Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries* (Oxford, Oxfordshire: Clarendon Press, 1983).

Like Desiderius, Abbot Hugh negotiated in the political sphere, but he also oversaw the spread of Cluniac reform throughout France into England, and to most of Spain and Italy, while supervising the largest expansion of the mother church, known as "Cluny III." For summary of the contentious debate regarding the involvement of the Cluniacs in the Gregorian Reform see the preface to H. E. J. Cowdrey, *The Cluniacs and the Gregorian Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970). For a summary of the research on artistic endeavors at Cluny see Ilene H. Forsyth, "Introduction (Current Studies on Cluny)," *Gesta* 27, no. 1/2 (1988): 5-8.

leaders of Europe at the end of the eleventh century, thereby intensifying the tension between the pope and the king.

In response to Gregory's synods of 1075, Henry convened the 1076 synod of Worms whereby he deposed the pontiff calling him 'Hildebrand, not pope..., but false monk'.¹⁰¹ Tensions continued through the winter of 1076-1077 to the pivotal events at Canossa, the ancestral fortress of Gregory's ardent supporter Matilda of Tuscany. At Canossa, an excommunicated and penitential Henry, in bare feet and simple woolen attire, sought Gregory's absolution. Henry's humble reverence was short lived and the events of the Investiture Controversy continued until Gregory's exile from Rome and subsequent death in Salerno in 1085.

Countess Matilda of Tuscany (1046-1115)

Since before the struggles of the Investiture Controversy and the broader reform movement began, the papacy received unwavering support from the most powerful women of the eleventh century, the Countess Beatrice and her daughter Matilda of Tuscany, who was later called the Great Countess of Canossa.¹⁰² The house of Canossa

¹⁰¹ Robinson, *The Papacy*, 403. For the full text of the letter by Henry see Morrison, 48-49.

¹⁰² The sources surrounding Matilda of Tuscany (also known as Matilda of Canossa) are relatively rich by medieval standards, and surprising for an eleventh century woman, which attests to her popularity then and now. Dante praised her virtue in his *Divina Commedia*. In her documents, she is referred to as countess, margravine and duchess. Of particular note is a poem of Matilda's life (*vita*) and deeds (*gesta*) by a monk who began his appointment at Canossa in 1086 and witnessed events prior to her death in 1115: Donizo, *Vita Mathildis, celeberrimae principis Italiae: carmine scripta a Donizone presbytero*, ed. Luigi Simeoni (Bologna: N. Zanichelli, 1940). A compilation of diplomas, charters and letters is found in Elke Goetz and Werner Goetz, eds., *Die Urkunden und Briefe der Markgräfin Mathilde von Tuszien* (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1998). Additional sources include: Alfred Overmann, *Gräfin Mathilde von Tuszien: ihre Besitzungen, Geschichte ihres Gutes von 1115-1230 und ihre Regesten* (Frankfurt, a.M.: Minerva, 1965);

began with Matilda's great-grandfather (Adalbert-Azzo, died 988) who initiated three generations of service to the Holy Roman Emperor. In exchange for their fealty, the family's position of nobility and lands increased to include Reggio, Modena, Mantua, Brescia, Verona, and Ferrara.¹⁰³ In 1027, Emperor Conrad II (1027-1039) bestowed the marquisate of Tuscany to Matilda's father, Boniface, making him the wealthiest landlord in Italy. Between 1036-1039, Boniface married Beatrice of Lorraine, whose lineage connected her to the imperial family.¹⁰⁴ After Boniface's death in 1052,¹⁰⁵ Beatrice married Duke Godfrey the Bearded of Lorraine, an open enemy of Emperor Henry III, without imperial consent thus signaling a new anti-imperial position in the house of Canossa. Godfrey remained in Lorraine initiating rebellions against the emperor until his death in 1069, at which time the governance of his lands passed to Beatrice. Matilda, present at the death of her stepfather, was identified at the time as the wife of Godfrey the Hunchback, the son of Godfrey the Bearded.¹⁰⁶ At the passing of Beatrice and Godfrey

Nora Duff, *Matilda of Tuscany: La Gran Donna D'Italia* (London, England: Methuen, 1909); Paolo Golinelli, *Matilde e i Canossa*, 2nd edition (Milan: Mursia, 2004); Valeria Eads, *Mighty in War: The Campaigns of Matilda of Tuscany as a Military Leader* (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2000); and Hay (2008). Most recently, three linked exhibitions focused on Matilda and her retinue: "Matilde di Canossa, il papato, l'impero," Mantua and Benedetto Po (August 31, 2008 – January 11, 2009) at <http://www.mostramatildedicanoessa.it>. For an annotated summary of sources see <http://libraryautomation.com/valerieeads/matilda.html>.

¹⁰³ Additionally, Matilda's father Boniface was called the Duke of Lucca, Parma, Pisa, Florence, Pistoia, Spoleto, and Camerino. Duff, 27.

¹⁰⁴ On Beatrice see Elke Goetz, *Beatrix von Canossa und Tuszien: eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte des 11. Jahrhunderts*, Vorträge und Forschungen, 41, (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1995).

¹⁰⁵ Boniface's death may have prompted the break between the house of Canossa and the empire. Some sources suggested Henry III plotted Boniface's assassination out of jealousy of his immense power. See Donizo, 1, 16; and Duff, 25-27.

¹⁰⁶ This account comes from a chronicle of the St. Hubert monastery in Ardennes to which the elder Godfrey bequeathed a donation (Hubertus Andaginensis *Sancti Huberti Andaginensis chronicon*, 1853), Duff, 105-108. By all accounts Matilda and Godfrey endured an unhappy marriage often divided by his aid to the emperor and her support for the papacy.

the Hunchback in the year 1076, Matilda inherited the patrimonies of Godfrey in Lorraine and Boniface in Tuscany; in other words, she owned regions on both sides of the Alps comprising a quarter of Italy including two of the major land routes to Rome.¹⁰⁷

Matilda availed her considerable resources to the papacy at the time of Gregory's greatest need in his struggle to enforce reform policies. Matilda's support included a variety of measures such as attending synods, discrediting antipopes, mediating disputes, and providing a generous and unending supply of financial contributions, materials and military aid.¹⁰⁸ Within her own lands she financed the construction of fortresses, hospitals and churches while maintaining bridges and roads along the major routes to Rome: the trans-Appennine Via Francigena, Via Flaminia Minor and La Futa pass, in addition to the trans-Alpine passes to Germany.¹⁰⁹ Control of these routes not only meant the transference of supplies and troops but also served as the channel of communication. Control of these routes was not always in Matilda's favor as she struggled against imperial bishops in Lombardy and Tuscany. Matilda's numerous defiant acts against Henry IV led him in 1081 to depose her, releasing her vassals from fealty. Her final defiance against the empire and the ultimate culmination of her support came in the form of a grand donation of her allodial lands to the papacy.¹¹⁰ After her failed marriage to

¹⁰⁷ Zema, 157-158; Valerie Eads, "The Geography of Power: Matilda of Tuscany and the Strategy of Active Defense," in *Crusaders, Condottieri, and Cannon: Medieval Warfare in Societies Around the Mediterranean*, ed. Donald J. Kagay and L. J. Andrew Villalon (Boston: Brill, 2003), 357-361.

¹⁰⁸ See Eads and Hay for Matilda's military campaigns.

¹⁰⁹ Eads, "Geography of Power," 366-371; and Hay, *Military Leadership*, 3.

¹¹⁰ When the first donation was made is unclear, circa 1079 or 1086. Donizo wrote of a renewed donation in 1102 (*Vita*, II, c. 1, cf. Zema, 160, note 19). At Matilda's death in 1115, Henry V claimed a secret pact of 1111 which reverted her lands to him and instigated yet another point of dispute between the Roman Church and the empire which lasted throughout the twelfth century; Overmann, 41; and Zema, 161.

Godfrey the Hunchback she wanted to renounce the world and enter a convent; however, so steadfast was her support that Gregory persuaded her to remain active in the pursuit of righteousness and in the defense of the Church.¹¹¹ Her second marriage to Welf V of Bavaria exemplifies another sacrifice for the reform cause as a purely political alliance to strengthen partisan support against Henry.¹¹²

The greatest contribution by Matilda in regard to this study relates to her ability to rally Gregorian supporters around reform ideals. As stated earlier, Gregory's influence on Sovana is most readily apparent through the polemic discourse following his demise in 1085. From 1085 until Matilda's death in 1115, she faced a number of challenges in defense of Gregory's papal successors—Victor III (1086-87); Urban II (1088-99); and Paschal II (1099-1118)—and against the antipopes of the empire. Matilda found spiritual guidance during these conflicts from Gregory's allies who produced theological and propagandistic rhetoric in a variety of letters and treatises. The dissemination of Gregory's reform ideals extended beyond the events of the eleventh century and continued to shape ecclesiastic agendas into the twelfth century. One of Matilda's closest spiritual advisors was Anselm of Lucca, for whom she provided protection during his exile from his bishopric starting in 1081.¹¹³

¹¹¹ *Registrum*, I, 40, 47 and 50; Hay, 14.

¹¹² Overmann, 41 and Zema, 167.

¹¹³ This Anselm, Anselm II of Lucca (the Younger), is not to be confused with Anselm I of Lucca (the Elder), a relative (uncle?) who became Pope Alexander II (r. 1061-1073). *Vita Anselmi episcopi Lucensis*, ed. R. Wilms, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores* 12 (1856), 16; Carl Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, trans. Marshall W. Baldwin and Walter Goffart (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), 241-242; and Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085*, 305. Matilda's other advisors included: Bernard of Vallombrosa, Bishop of Parma; John of Mantua; and Arimanno (Herman), Bishop of Brescia; cf. P. Guerrini, "Un cardinale gregoriano a Brescia: il vescovo arimanno," *Studi Gregoriani per la storia de*

Anselm of Lucca (1036-1086) and Other Polemic Writers

One of Pope Gregory VII's most devoted polemic authors was Anselm of Lucca, described by Gregory's biographer Paul of Bernried as "the foremost follower and heir of his [Gregory's] virtues,..."¹¹⁴ In fact, of Gregory's list of three potential pontiff successors only Anselm received the gift of his mitre, perhaps an indication of Gregory's ultimate preference.¹¹⁵ A monk from the Cluniac abbey of Polirone, Anselm was nominated Bishop of Lucca (1073-1086) where he met ongoing opposition for his reformist views. Gregory appointed Anselm a spiritual counselor to Matilda, under whose protection he wrote several biblical commentaries promoting Gregory's teachings.¹¹⁶

The polemic texts of Anselm and his contemporaries frequently presented historical and biblical precedents as justification for reform initiatives. One such exemplum of the golden age of imperial and papal relations invoked the deeds of Constantine, championed as the first Christian emperor who protected Christ's flock from persecutions and endowed the bishops of the church with preferential treatment at the

Gregorio VII e della Riforma gregoriana, vol. II (Rome, 1947-): 361-185. Matilda's close relationship specifically to Anselm is corroborated by her donation of lands to him between 1077 and 1079, such as the strategic route between Lucca, Pistoia and Florence; Eads, "Geography of Power," 375.

¹¹⁴ Paul of Bernried, *Vita Gregorii VII papae*, 111; and in Robinson, *Papal Reform*, 354. Other sources for Anselm of Lucca include: Anselm of Lucca, *Collectio canonum: Una cum collectione minore*, ed. Friedrich Thaner (Aalen: Scientia Verl, 1965); *Vita Anselmi ep. Lucensis*; Rangerius of Lucca, *Vita metrica Anselmi Lucensis episcopi*, ed. E. Sackur et al., *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores* 30/2 (1926-34), 1152-1307; Fliche; Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085*, 303-307; Paolo Golinelli, *Sant'Anselmo, Mantova e la lotta per le investiture: atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Mantova, 23-24-25 maggio 1986)* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1987); Kathleen G. Cushing, *Papacy and Law in the Gregorian Revolution: The Canonistic Work of Anselm of Lucca* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

¹¹⁵ Erdmann, 241; and Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085*, 306.

¹¹⁶ For a list of texts by Anselm of Lucca see Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085*, 305-306; and Cushing, *Papacy and Law*, 4-5.

synod of Nicea.¹¹⁷ Other exegetical writings utilized Old Testament figures to serve as instructional models for the current political conflict between the Church and the Empire, an approach characterized today as “political allegory.”¹¹⁸ Another popular theme explored in the polemic discourse of the day addressed concerns over the use of military force by the Church. Based on the letters between Matilda and Anselm, she struggled with the Church’s increased use of violence to defend its cause despite a full remission of her sins granted earlier by Gregory.¹¹⁹

Anselm firmly supported the militarization of the Roman Church as evidenced by a text written at Gregory’s request but not completed until 1086 after his death.¹²⁰ This text known as the *Collectio canonum* revised and codified the statutes of canon law by once again establishing precedents for reform concepts.¹²¹ In this literary work, Anselm presents the views of Gregory’s *Dicatus papae* by condemning simony, nicolaitism, lay investiture, and by validating the Church’s right to supremacy. In addition, Anselm promoted two other reformist themes. Book XI deals with Gregory’s penitential emphasis, and the thirteenth and final book of this treatise titled *De iusta vindicta* (“Of righteous vengeance”) presents the clearest example of the reformists’ justification for Christian

¹¹⁷ Constantine “prepared the presidential seat for all the bishops, while he himself sat on a footstool.” Bonizo of Sutri, *Liber ad amicum*, II, in Robinson, *Papal Reform*, 162-163. Gregory considered Constantine “the excellent emperor of pious memory”; *Registrum* IX, 37.

¹¹⁸ I. S. Robinson, “Political Allegory’ in the Biblical Exegesis of Bruno of Segni,” *Recherches de theologie ancienne et medievale* 50 (1983), 69-98. The term “political allegory” was coined in the work of Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (New York : Philosophical Library, 1952).

¹¹⁹ I. S. Robinson, “Gregory VII and the Soldiers of Christ,” *History* 58 (1973):184-185, note 77.

¹²⁰ Cushing, *Papacy and Law*, 5-8. Robert Rough, *The Reformist Illuminations in the Gospels of Matilda, Countess of Tuscany: A Study in the Art of the Age of Gregory VII* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 30-31, suggests that the *Collectio canonum* was completed in 1083.

¹²¹ The text is problematic for its lack of an extant complete edition. The number of manuscript versions, however, attests to its popularity. While most scholars accept Anselm’s authorship, Gérard Fransen, raised questions about Books VIII-XIII. Cushing, *Papacy and Law*, 5-8.

warfare. Anselm relied heavily on the writings St. Augustine (354-430) against the Donatists and his theology of ‘just war,’ as well as the writings of Gregory the Great (540-604) who supported military efforts against the Lombards. Gregorian supporters praised Anselm’s labors, even canonizing him within a year of his death. Similarly, pro-imperial supporters, while disagreeing with his positions, acknowledged Anselm as a virtuous opponent.¹²² The number of contemporary discussions—both for and against—Anselm’s *Collectio canonum* suggests a wide distribution of this text and its reformist ideologies.

In addition to Anselm of Lucca, other polemic authors supported reformist ideologies through their writings of the late eleventh and early twelfth century. Some authors such as John of Mantua and Bonizo of Sutri similarly wrote biblical commentaries while under the protection of Matilda; in fact her court became a refuge for reform partisans. Others labored for Gregory VII and his successor Urban II such as Bruno of Segni. They all followed a similar methodology of biblical exegesis presented as commentary on current political and religious events with the goal of justifying the primacy of the Roman Church as well as its right to engage in Christian warfare. Their writings had a tremendous impact even after the Concordat of Worms (1122), or the first phase in easing the tensions between church and state over the Investiture Controversy.

¹²² One of the overriding objectives of Anselm’s first biography by an unknown author was to present justification for his canonization: *Vita Anselmi ep. Lucensis*, ed. R. Wilmans. Imperial supporters who made reference to Anselm include: Sigebert of Gembloux and Ekkehard of Aura, cf. Cushing, *Papacy and Law*, 2-3.

Specifically, the polemic writings Anselm of Lucca and his contemporaries became fundamental texts in supporting the Crusades throughout the twelfth century.

Conclusion

The history of Italy reveals that the sustainability of certain towns and cities depended upon the adaptability of the people to its natural environment and changing forces. Several Etruscan cities remain only in memory and artifacts, while others, like Sovana, suffered periods of decline to rise again as viable communities sharing a rich history with modern visitors. Today Sovana is experiencing a rebirth of activity as the town garners greater attention in the tourist industry for its rich variety of Etruscan tombs and for the cathedral as an excellent example of Romanesque art and architecture in southern Tuscany. Based on the beauty and style of the cathedral of Sovana, the tenth through the thirteen centuries corresponded to a period of growth and development for the city, establishing it as one of the centers in the region.

In terms of this study, the reform movement and the individuals passionately embroiled in it represent more than a historical milieu of the eleventh century, as the conflict forced ecclesiastic and lay powers to determine sides. The polemic discourse that followed directly influenced the iconography of the twelfth-century sculptural program on the cathedral of Sovana. As we analyze the art and architecture of the cathedral from the eighth through the thirteenth centuries, this study will shed new light on the interrelated nature of the historic factors shaping the visual message of the sculptural program.

Chapter 2: ARCHITECTURE

While this study primarily focuses on an analysis of the sculptural programs of the cathedral of Sovana, it is important first to address the architectural aspects of this structure. All of the sculpture is in relief, yet to see it, one must walk around the physical space—through the carved portal and around the compound pier with historiated capitals. The sculpture and the architecture represent an integrated whole. It may be argued that the chronological difference between the beginning and the end of construction disrupt the unified meaning of the entire monument; however, I contend that with each period of construction from the ninth through the thirteenth century the architects and artists further enhanced the overall harmony and message of this monument. Furthermore, an understanding of the architectural chronology helps to clarify dating issues in regard to the sculpture.

Location

The cathedral is situated on the highest and westernmost point of the tuff outcropping upon which the city of Sovana is located. Excavations of this site in the 1990's unearthed large construction blocks, possibly the foundations of an Etruscan temple.¹²³ Many of the Etruscan tombs line the valley walls surrounding this sacred location with uninterrupted sightlines between major tombs and the acropolis. This elevated location is protected on the southern and western flanks by steep cliffs.

¹²³ Mauizio Michelucci, ed., *Sovana: Ricerche e scavi nell'area urbana*.

Moreover, the approach from the north rises up from through a forested valley along an incline that could be guarded from above. The eastern axis extends along the top of the tuff spur passing through the town to the Aldobrandeschi castle. The cathedral's position is protected on all sides and clearly visible from across the southeastern valley in the direction of Pitigliano, where Etruscan roads are still visible today.

The orientation of the cathedral on the acropolis is dictated by the topography and its cardinal alignment. Due to the terrain, the northern flank provides the easiest access to the interior of the structure.¹²⁴ Additionally, the bishop's palace on the western end requires that the main entrance to the cathedral is on the northern side. The apse faces slightly east-northeast as opposed to due east. While the angle of the tuff ridge may account for this adjustment to the alignment, a recent study of the archaeoastronomy of the cathedral in Sovana provides a more compelling explanation. The authors of this study, Giovanni Feo and Antonello Carrucoli, used modern Global Positioning System (GPS) technology and empirical observation to analyze the position of the crypt and the apse in relation to each other and to the sun. Their findings suggest that the alignment of the church relates to rising sun on the summer solstice.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ A main entrance on the western axis was likely moved to the north when the bishop's palace was added—some say in the twelfth century, other suggest the fourteenth century—this topic will be addressed further in this chapter.

¹²⁵ Feo and Carrucoli, 111-135.

General Description: Interior

The overall layout of the cathedral follows a longitudinal basilica plan with a large central nave flanked by single side aisles (figures 9 and 10). The width of the nave is twice the size of each side aisle creating a 1:2:1 ratio. Large cruciform piers delineate the four rectangular bays of the central space leading up to the transept and crossing. The transept arms, flush with the exterior walls of side aisles, are distinguished by the loftiness of two barrel vaults, one over each arm, equal to the height of the chancel arch of the nave and apse. The large square crossing bulges outward into a harmoniously proportioned apse (figure 11). The eastern end is further set apart from the nave and side aisles by a series of stairs. Three steps separate each transition from side aisle to the transept arm and four steps separate the nave from the elevated crossing. Between the transept and the crossing are two additional stairs leading to a single step up to the high altar. This crescendo of elevations physically and symbolically brings the viewer upward. To emphasize this spiritual uplifting the crossing is surmounted by a hemispherical dome supported on the interior by pendentives (figure 12). The transept arms, central crossing and concluding apse of the eastern end open into a fluid space of curvilinear forms transitioning between arches, barrel vaults, a semi-circular niche and the remarkable curvature of the dome.

The arches and vaults of the nave and side aisles are equally impressive. The nave arcade consists of rounded arches supported by cruciform piers. The inward facing engaged columns of the piers extend upward through the clerestory of two-part elevation into the slightly pointed transverse ribs of the nave. The transverse ribs correspond to the

rectangular bays crossed by ribbed groin vaults. The gray color of the ribs stands out against the infilling of tawny orange tuff blocks, achieving a clarity of parts and rhythmic order. The springing of the vaults is punctuated by capitals dating to various periods of construction, and tie rods help anchor the base of the transverse ribs (figure 13).

The side aisles are also vaulted with ribbed groin vaults although with one striking difference between each side: on the north, rounded arches separate the bays of cross vaults; while on the south, pointed arches separate each bay creating a stronger sense of verticality (figures 14 and 15). The vertical quality of the right side aisle is somewhat undermined, however, by the reduced light in this section of the cathedral; that is to say, the pointed arches are harder to see without artificial light than the rounder arches of the right aisle. Two of the four bays along the right side aisle lack windows compared to a window in each of the four bays of the left side aisle. We can account for this difference due to a large exterior buttress shoring up the southern flank and blocking the point of fenestration. Generally speaking, the thickness of the buttressing along the entire length of the south side is greater than the northern walls of the nave (figure 9), with the exception of the transept arms, where increased buttressing wraps around the eastern end providing additional support for the domed crossing (figure 16). The added buttressing to the transept arms has little effect on the interior light given that the architects notched the supports to permit relatively large windows at each end: one rectangular in shape in the north arm; and the other lancet shaped in the south arm. Generally speaking, due to the nature of the relatively small lancet windows piercing the thick exterior walls of the side aisles, their absence in the right aisle does little to disrupt

interior light, which is relatively bright by comparison to other Romanesque churches of this period.

The emphasis of light is not in the side aisles; instead, a single lancet window in the apse and the clerestory windows of the nave create the fairly light-filled interior. Compared to the thin windows of the side aisles, the wider clerestory lancets allow direct light to penetrate the central nave. Each clerestory window rests on a horizontal cornice situated above the arches of the nave arcade and stretching between each of the transverse ribs. As one of the few horizontal elements on the interior of the cathedral, the spiral-decorated cornices add texture to the wall surface and visually provide a horizontal foundation for the lancet windows. The frames surrounding the lancets on the left side of the nave differ from those on the right side. On the left, a single embrasure, the depth of the wall, frames the lancet with a splayed sill to permit more light to enter the interior (figure 17). This is similar to the lancets of the left side aisle below, although there, both the embrasures and the sills are splayed through the thicker walls. The clerestory windows of the right side of the nave, however, are wider and have a varying number of stepped intrados creating a rhythmic play of light and shadow (figure 13).

Similarly, the contrasting colors of light and dark stones used to construct the cruciform piers of the nave arcade create an aesthetic rhythm in the lower part of the cathedral (figure 10). The milky-white lighter stones stand out against the gray stone used throughout the interior. Seven of the eight piers are striped in this fashion.¹²⁶ The

¹²⁶ One of the piers was reconstructed at a later date and not restored with the same striping pattern of the stones. Part of the striping remains to clearly indicate its original state.

monochromatic nature of the eighth pier distinguishes it from the others and draws attention to the message conveyed on its series of historiated capitals—the subject of chapter four in this study. This pier is also unusual in terms of its cross section with a more complex arrangement of engaged columns and colonnette compared to the less complex quatrefoil appearance of the other seven piers (figures 18 and 19). The location of this decidedly different architectural element is the closest pier to the main entrance in the northern side of the cathedral. After entering and turning left to face the altar, the viewer is immediately confronted with this compound pier and the message set forth by the historiated capitals.¹²⁷

General Description: Exterior

The exterior of the cathedral of Sovana clearly reveals the interior elements of architecture (figure 1). The height of the nave rises above the adjacent side aisles with the evident placement of windows. Likewise, the transept arms rise above the side aisles almost to the height of the nave. Equal to the height of the transept arms is the rounded apse of the eastern end. The crowning cupola over the crossing presents a slight variation from the interior with its octagonal exterior that steps upward through a level of harmoniously proportioned angles (figure 20). A bell tower on the west end reaches the greatest height and balances the visually heavier elements of the eastern end (figure 21). The lower section of the tower, from the ground until the roofline of the cathedral, is

¹²⁷ The main portal is currently only opened for special occasions and visitors today enter from the west end through the bishop's palace.

basically solid masonry, with the exception of a few construction post- and peep-holes. Each of the four main faces on the upper section of the tower have two vertically stacked arched openings containing the bells and providing observation points to the surrounding countryside.

In addition to the bell tower on the western end is a bishop's palace adjacent to the western wall of the cathedral. Some scholars suggest that a western façade with a main portal to the cathedral existed until the bishop's palace was constructed forcing the portal to be moved to the northern side. I contend that the main portal was intended for the northern side due to the important correlation between the entrance and the set of historiated capitals on the pier closest to this entrance—chapter three of this study focuses on the portal and its sculpture.

The dominating focal point of the north flank of the cathedral is the main portal located in the third bay from the transept arm (figure 22). These bays are clearly discernable from the exterior by the positioning of large angled buttresses to counteract the lateral thrust of the interior vaults. The portal, nestled between the third and fourth buttress, is elevated on a platform of five stairs and the milky white color of the stone contrasts sharply with the hue of the walls and buttresses (figure 23). An arch surmounted by a cross extends above the roofline mimicking the curvature of the portal. The lancet windows in each of the other three bays flanking the portal repeat the curvature of the entrance, and like the portal, the windows are offset by the white stone used for the sills, flanking columns and curved keystones decorated with an oak leaf or a rosette (figures 24, 25 and 26). The curvilinear quality of the apertures and the open, fluid spaces of the

interior contrast with the strikingly angular quality of the exterior buttresses, stairs and roofline.

Besides the portal and windows, white stone also divides and decorates the exterior of the apse (figure 20). The curve of the apse is vertically subdivided into five equal sections by two engaged pilasters flanking two engaged columns. In the middle section, two windows are vertically aligned: the lower one with splayed embrasure leads to the crypt; and the upper, tall, thin lancet provides light to the interior apse of the cathedral. Embellished by a rolled intrados, the upper window rests on a sill supported by blocks carved with human faces. The white stone of the sill is decorated with a palmette motif that merges into a snake on the left hand side. The faces carved in relief from white stone blocks bear a remarkable resemblance to Etruscan cinerary urns in the abstracted facial planes, large eyes, and linear nose-to-brow qualities (figures 3 and 4).

Other white elements of the apse include four blocks carved in relief with distinct linear borders framing animal subjects (figures 27 and 28). Three of these blocks depict a quadruped, perhaps a wolf or a fierce dog, turned back on itself biting its tail. The fourth relief block depicts two quadrupeds upright and facing each other with crossed legs. While these carved white blocks remain clustered around the entrance to the crypt at the base of the apse, their position today is likely altered from the original construction. The apse has clearly been rebuilt but without full attention to the original architectural details. Close inspection of the right side of the apse reveals that certain elements are missing from the other sections. The capitals of the engaged pilasters and columns align horizontally with a series of white corbels that extend from the right side but only across

three of the five sections (figure 29). Furthermore, also on the right near the roofline, the beginning of an arched corbel course stops after the first section (figure 30). The color of the stone used to construct the wall in the right section is also different from the remainder of the apse. Lastly, a rectangular window only in the furthest right section is now blocked off. Taken together, the missing elements and alterations suggest that four of the five sections of the apse were rebuilt and a single lancet window probably replaced large rectangular windows similar to the blocked one in the right section.

The exterior southern flank of the cathedral mirrors the north side in the general arrangement of parts with two exceptions (figure 31). As previously mentioned, a large uninterrupted buttress supports the two central bays of the interior only allowing two, as opposed to four, windows along the south side aisle. The second difference relates to a general lack of decoration on this side of the cathedral: there are no relief carvings or columns around the windows and the doorway to the bishop's palace is plain stone. This side of the cathedral abuts a cliff which limits access from the apse in the east to the bishop's palace in the west. The only entry to this area is through the bishops' palace. The terrain on the side must also account for the additional buttressing.

General Description: Crypt

If the vaults and open space of the interior of the cathedral symbolize a heavenly realm, and the angular quality of the exterior symbolizes the earthly realm, then the crypt symbolizes the underworld. The partially subterranean crypt is located under the apse and crossing and is accessible through two entrances: one from the exterior at the base of the

apse; and the other, from interior stairs in the right transept arm. The semi-elliptical plan consists of six white columns supporting shallow groin vaults (figure 9 and 32). The smooth shaft columns rest on large square plinths with geometric capitals of varying sizes (figure 33). It has been suggested that these columns may have been reused from an earlier structure.¹²⁸ The symmetrical arrangement of four columns along the width of the semi-oval and two columns where it tapers permits an axial alignment between the window and the crypt's altar, over which the sun directly rises on the summer solstice.¹²⁹ Above the crypt's altar is a hole in the ceiling, directly in front of the high altar above, which symbolically links the heavenly and underworld realms.

Materials

As previously mentioned with regard to color, the cathedral is constructed of two types of stone: one milky white in color; and the other, a tawny orange that turns gray. The white stone was used for: the portal, around windows, several capitals, other decorative elements, the columns in the crypt, and the lighter bands of the interior striped piers. This stone is travertine, a sedimentary rock much admired for its color and found throughout Italy and near Sovana in the Val d'Orcia and Saturnia.¹³⁰ Travertine is dense in nature allowing crisp details when carved and it also maintains its milky-white color in

¹²⁸ Salviati, 45-46.

¹²⁹ Feo and Carrucoli, 125-127.

¹³⁰ Salviati, 39-67 and 93-95.

interior spaces. The stone can gray slightly when exposed to the elements of the exterior, especially when facing north.¹³¹

The tawny orange sometimes gray stone used as the main construction material throughout the cathedral is tuff, or *tuffo* in Italian.¹³² Tuff is a volcanic rock found throughout the region from Siena to Sovana in a zone of the Maremma called the *Area del Tuffo*. While abundant and easy to carve due to its porous nature, tuff discolors to gray when exposed to the elements and plants tend to sprout in its crevasses separating mortar and stone. The local Italians today call the stone *tuffo peperino* for the flecks of black crystals resembling pepper. In addition to its abundance, tuff also tends to harden over time.¹³³

Dating: Documentation

In terms of the history of the cathedral of Sovana, one of the issues of some controversy relates to its dating, with the number of construction phases and the reuse of building materials complicating this issue. The construction of the crypt and exactly when the portal was moved to the north side present the greatest issues of dissention; however, in general, most scholars agree that the majority of the cathedral's construction occurred in the twelfth century.¹³⁴ The assessment of the dating is limited by the lack of

¹³¹ Mario Moretti, *L'architettura romanica religiosa nel territorio dell'antica repubblica senese* (Parma: Scuola Tipografica Benedettina, 1962), 15.

¹³² See chapter 1 for an explanation of the confusion regarding tuff and tufa.

¹³³ Mario Moretti, 16.

¹³⁴ Baldini, 91-98; Biondi, 70-71; Giuseppe Cantelli, et al., *L'architettura religiosa in Toscana: Medioevo* (Banca Toscana, 1995); Alfio Cavoli, *Sovana: storia e arte* (Pistoia: Tellini, 1982), 87-91; Feo and Carrucoli, 23 and 92; Mario Moretti, 101-108; Aldo Mazzolai, *Guida di Sovana* (Grosseto: Tip. La

episcopal records which were destroyed in a fire in the sixteenth century.¹³⁵ The few extant documents include: one papal bull, two stone inscriptions and the stylistic characteristics of the physical remains. With this information, a relative timeline is possible based on the remaining evidence and comparable analysis.

The written sources establish four dates associated with the construction of the cathedral during the medieval period, as opposed to later periods of restoration. These dates based on extant documentation establish chronological benchmarks for the periods of construction. The earliest reference to the cathedral is a papal bull issued April 27, 1061, during the pontificate of Nicholas II, as follows:

Canonicam itaque S. Petri in Suanensi Urbe quondam a Ranerio eiusdem
Suanesis Ecclesia sanctae memoriae episcopo pia religione aedificatam et postea
a Joanne successore eius firmata.¹³⁶

This bull identifies the Cathedral of Saint Peter in the city of Sovana built by Bishop Raniero and restored by his successor Giovanni. The dates of the bishops are known: Bishop Raniero was circa 967; and Bishop Giovanni reigned from 1015-1059. With this information, we can identify one phase of building in the tenth century and a restoration phase in the first half of the eleventh century. The amount of restoration remains unclear as does the possibility that earlier elements, such as the crypt, were incorporated into the

Commerciale, 1967), 15; Daniele Negri, *Chiese Romaniche in Toscana* (Pistoia: Libreria Editrice Tellini, 1978), 401; C.A. Nicolosi, *La montagna maremmana: Val d'Albegna--la Contea Ursina* (Bergamo: Istituto italiano d'arti grafiche, 1911): 162-164; Mario Salmi, *Chiese romaniche della Toscana* (Milan, 1961), 20, 33, 52 and 58-59; Salviati, 9-11, 17-21, and 29-37; Pietro Toesca, *Storia dell'arte italiana* (Torino: Unione Tipografico-editrice Torinese, 1971), 571, 820 and 901.

¹³⁵ Paul F. Kehr, *Italia Pontificia III* (Berlin: Apud Weidmannos, 1961), 253.

¹³⁶ Ughelli, 734 (cf. Salviati, 29).

tenth century building.¹³⁷ The latter part of Giovanni's episcopal reign also corresponds to Hildebrand's elevation to subdeacon and legate to France for Pope Leo IX (r. 1049-54).

The third datable phase of construction is based on an inscription in the portal which reads (figure 34):

**NATUS IN URBE SENA
SET PRESUL FACTUS IN ISTA
PETRUS UT HE[C] IANUE
SIC FIERENT STUDUIT**

Born in the city of Siena, what is more made bishop of this city (Sovana), Peter saw to it that this door was made in this way.¹³⁸

The cathedral of Sovana had two bishops named Pietro: the first from 1153 to 1175; and the second, Bishop Pietro Blandebelli, from 1380 to 1386.¹³⁹ While the latter Bishop Pietro is tempting since he came from the city of Siena, as mentioned in the inscription, the other evidence does not support a fourteenth century construction date. Three points strongly suggest that the earlier Bishop Pietro of the twelfth century is responsible for the arrangement of the portal. First, a paleographic study of the inscription reveals that the carving of the letters and Latin abbreviations are typically associated with the twelfth century.¹⁴⁰ Second, Sovana experienced a period of steady decline after the division of Aldobrandeschi power in the late thirteenth century, meaning the funds available for a construction period in the fourteenth century were unlikely. Third, the style of some of the sculpture found on the portal resembles other examples from the twelfth century.

¹³⁷ Salviati, 30-31.

¹³⁸ For a translation of the Latin word *PRESUL*, I consulted Salviati, 31; and *Etruscan and Medieval Sovana*, 33.

¹³⁹ Salviati, 9 and 31-33; *Etruscan and Medieval Sovana*, 33.

¹⁴⁰ Nicolette Gray, "The Paleography of Latin Inscriptions in the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Centuries in Italy," in *Papers of the British School at Rome XVI* (1948): 38-171; and Baldini, 92.

While the portal is a combination of individual blocks carved in different periods, the subject of the next chapter in this study, its overall arrangement corresponds to the twelfth century thus indicating a third building phase in the third quarter of the twelfth century.

The fourth benchmark of construction relates to another inscription located on the exterior of the left transept arm. This problematic inscription provides some clues to dating while at the same time generating other questions. A combination of floral and geometric patterns border the inscription along the top and sides while the once solid band along the bottom has nearly disappeared. The differing styles of the decorative borders—one floral with stylized leaves and the other an egg-and-dart pattern—suggest that fragments from an earlier period were used to embellish the inscription. The text itself is problematic for what appear to be additions to the inscription. A large rectangular portion in the lower right contains the date, but this section is in higher relief and the letters more deeply carved than the main body of the surrounding inscription. Moreover, instead of three continuous rows of the inscription, the last two words, “hoc opus,” are on separate lines and fit into the space to the left of the rectangle inscribed with the date. Alessandra Filippone, one of the authors in Salviati’s *Il Duomo di Sovana*, interprets the date section of the inscription as a later addition.¹⁴¹ This interpretation is inconsistent with the reductive qualities of the medium of stone whereby an addition would necessitate the surface removal of an earlier inscription, hence the lower relief of the

¹⁴¹ Salviati, 33, “Un tassello, poi, appare, aggiunto in basso, a destra, là dove si legge assai bene la data, come se per un errore del lapicida si fosse voluto fare una correzione.”

main body of text and higher relief of the date panel. Based on the principles of stone carving, the section in higher relief is the oldest part of the inscription and the main body of the inscription was carved after the date panel. Additionally, a smaller, less defined inscription was added above the date.

Based on the order of these texts, from oldest to most recent, the inscription reads (figure 35):

**AN[N]O D[O]M[INI] •M•CC•
XLVIII•F•G•F**

In the year of our Lord 1248 [F•G•F?] ¹⁴²

**P[RES]B[YTE]R BRUNUS CA
NONIC[US] SUAN[ENSIS] FECIT •F[IERI]•
HOC
OPUS**

Priest Bruno according to the canonical law of Sovana caused to be made this work

The third and final part of the shallowly carved inscription is fairly abraded in its current state. Two scholars, Salmi and Baldini, have attempted to translate the text with some inference:¹⁴³

CITADINUS VIVE[N]S V[OTUM] S[OLVIT] OP[ER]AE ¹⁴⁴

Citadinus, as Salmi noted, possibly refers to a sculptor by the name of Cittadino who worked for the head master, Bencivenne, at the cathedral of Siena in 1226. One detail that perhaps further supports a Sienese connection is the carving of the letter A in both

¹⁴² Baldini, 92, translates “FGF” as “F[ECIT] O[PUS] F[IERI]”, meaning “caused this work to be made.”

¹⁴³ Mario Salmi, *Romanesque Sculpture in Tuscany* (Florence, 1928), 34, note 23; Baldini, 92.

¹⁴⁴ Biondi (113, note 34 bis) suggests OPAI instead of OPAE.

inscription panels. In the early portal inscription, the crossbar of the A in “SENA” is a “v” as opposed to the horizontal dash of the other A letters in the rest of the portal inscription. In the later inscription of the transept arm, all of the A letters combine a horizontal cross bar with a “v” that in the earlier inscription was only associated with the word “Siena,” possibly suggesting greater Sienese influence in the construction of the cathedral of Sovana in the thirteenth century.

While the transept arm inscription presents some challenges to a straightforward interpretation, a date of 1248 is clear. The date is consistent with the style of ribbed groin vaulting used for the interior, side aisles and likely corresponds to the addition of the large slant buttresses on the exterior south side shoring up the lateral thrust of the interior vaults.¹⁴⁵ Thus, the fourth phase of construction for the cathedral of Sovana corresponds to the thirteenth century.

An analysis of these construction periods associated with the cathedral reveals a direct correlation to the rise of Aldobrandeschi power in Sovana and the region. As stated in chapter one, the Aldobrandeschi family was one of the oldest and highest ranking families in the region of southern Tuscany from the ninth through the thirteenth centuries, at which point their power began to decline eventually transferring to the Orsini family of Pitigliano. Vincent Transano’s study of the noble families in this region provides the physical evidence of Aldobrandeschi growth in power in terms of their acquisition of *castelli* from the ninth through the thirteenth centuries. In the ninth century, when the

¹⁴⁵ Large exterior slant buttresses were also used on the church of San Leonardo al Frigido (Massa Carrara). While the church itself was constructed in the late twelfth century, it is unclear exactly when the buttresses were added to the eastern end. Negri, 167-169.

Aldobrandeschi are first recorded, they owned six castles. Several of the sculptural fragments reused in later building campaigns as well as the crypt date from this period. In the tenth century, when the cathedral was built by Bishop Raniero, the Aldobrandeschi acquired an additional twenty castles and moved their administrative capital from Roselle to Sovana. In the eleventh century, the number of new castles decreased to seven at the same time the cathedral only received restorations under Bishop Giovanni. In the twelfth century, the Aldobrandeschi added an additional twenty-three domains in the period corresponding the construction of the portal and the nave. The thirteenth century proved the period of greatest growth for the Aldobrandeschi with the acquisition of one hundred and twenty-one *castelli*, and at the cathedral we see the construction of the advanced system of vaulting.¹⁴⁶

Chart of construction periods for the cathedral of Sovana in relation to number of Aldobrandeschi castles:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Construction</u>	<u>Aldobrandeschi acquisitions</u>
late 8 th to 9 th c.	some sculpture & crypt	6
10 th c. (ca. 967)	built	20
11 th c. (1015-59)	restored	7
12 th c. (1153-75)	portal & nave	23
13 th c. (ca. 1248)	vaults constructed	121

The charts shows that Aldobrandeschi wealth in terms of increased castles is linked to the periods of construction on the cathedral of Sovana. Aldobrandeschi power began to diminish by 1284, leading to the total economic decline of Sovana, which, fortuitously for our understanding today of Romanesque art in Tuscany, prevented new

¹⁴⁶ Transano, 105.

phases of construction from altering the structure with later additions. Periods of restoration are recorded in the fifteenth century,¹⁴⁷ the seventeenth century,¹⁴⁸ and in 1950, when plaster was removed from the walls and crypt, the sculpture and floor was cleaned, and the fifteenth century baptismal font was returned to the interior.¹⁴⁹ The cathedral as a whole remains an example of the style of architecture produced in southern Tuscany from the tenth century to the middle of the thirteenth century.

Dating: Stylistic Comparisons

In addition to the documentation used to benchmark the construction periods of the cathedral of Sovana, stylistic comparisons to churches built in the area of southern Tuscany and its environs provides strong supporting evidence for dating. Since the cathedral of Sovana was built in several phases, a comparative analysis necessitates an examination of parts of other structures—no one monument embodies all of the same elements of the cathedral of Sovana, which possesses its own history and final manifestation.

The oldest section of the cathedral of Sovana is the crypt. Some scholars consider this section contemporary with the apse above and the eastern end of the cathedral; however, recent scholarship provides convincing evidence that the crypt predates the apse. The work of Feo and Carrucoli shows a shift in alignment between the crypt and the apse,

¹⁴⁷ Under Bishop Apollonio Massaini, r. 1439-1467. For restorations in general see: Baldini, 94-97; and Salviati, 35-37; Mario Moretti, 107.

¹⁴⁸ Under Bishop Gerolamo de' Cori, r. 1669-1672.

¹⁴⁹ Salviati, 35.

in other words, on Summer Solstice the sunlight through the crypt's window rises directly above the lower altar but varies by one degree in relation to the main altar and the window in the apse above.¹⁵⁰ This variance in alignment could be the result of a later renovation of the apse which altered the window alignment in relation to the main altar. As previously stated, the quality of stonework on the exterior of the apse strongly suggests a renovation which lacked attention to details, as noted by not replacing the preexisting arched corbel course under the roofline of the apse exterior. Further support for Feo and Carrucoli's findings, however, is the overall shape of the crypt compared to the apse, which is semi-circular while the crypt is a semi-elliptical. Moreover, the general character of the crypt's shallow vaults and columnar supports suggest the style of the eighth or ninth century, certainly a time that predates the relatively expansive dome and open space of the of the apse above.

In comparison with the large crypt built at the powerful Abbey of San Salvatore, located north of Sovana on the southeastern slope of Monte Amiata, the difference in style is apparent.¹⁵¹ At San Salvatore, most of the thirty-six columns supporting the vaults consist of shafts decorated with fluting or chevron patterns resting on similar geometric bases (figure 36). In addition, the decoration of each capital reflects a variety in motifs including: interlacing, stylized foliage, geometric forms, and animal and human heads. The complexity of forms and slender proportions of the columns in the crypt of San Salvatore closely relate to other architectural details of the late tenth and early eleventh

¹⁵⁰ Feo and Carrucoli, 126-127, suggest that the crypt dates to the eighth century while the church is eleventh to thirteenth century.

¹⁵¹ San Salvatore is approximately twenty-four miles north of Sovana.

century, when the abbey was re-consecrated in 1035.¹⁵² By comparison Sovana's crypt has stockier columns, no bases and undecorated capitals—however, these are all elements that could have been reused from an early site.

Ultimately, the issue of comparing crypts to establish a chronological timeline must address the type of vault construction. At San Salvatore, the edges along the groin and barrel vaults are defined, each resting on a capital with four sides alternating with four points (figure 37). In cross-section the capital resembles a squared-off quatrefoil with four points in between each lobe. This style of vaulting developed out of earlier groins vaults resting on square capitals where the edges of the barrel vaults are not delineated and only the edges of the groin vaults are visible. One such example is the tenth century crypt of the Abbey of Farneta (figure 38).¹⁵³ The base-less columns with square capitals decorated with geometric forms support groin vaults similar to the vaults found in the crypt at Sovana—the difference being the height of the vaults at Farneta compared to the lower and broader vaults of Sovana. The taller vaults and decorated capitals of Farneta reinforce the evidence to suggest an earlier date at Sovana.¹⁵⁴ As we will see in chapter three, the crypt of the cathedral of Sovana is consistent with several of the reused blocks of sculpture from the late eighth and early ninth century.

¹⁵² For information on the Abbey of San Salvatore see: Italo Moretti, Fabio Gabrielli, et al. *Romanico nell' Amiata: architettura religiosa dall' XI al XIII secolo* (Florence: Salimbeni, 1990), 15-34 and 57-76; Mario Moretti, 85-88; Toesca, 567; and Salmi, *Chiese romaniche*, 33. San Salvatore is approximately twenty-four miles north of Sovana.

¹⁵³ Salmi, *Chiese romaniche*, 10. The Abbey of Farneta is located approximately fifty-five miles north of Sovana.

¹⁵⁴ While I acknowledge the inherent flaws in an argument based on the assumption that artistic forms develop from the simple to the complex, there is some basis to suggest that architectural forms—such as vaults—build on earlier engineering skills to create more complex forms.

Above the crypt of the cathedral of Sovana, the eastern end of the church stylistically represents the next phase of construction and the section corresponding to the tenth century work of Bishop Ranieri (circa 967) and the renovations of Bishop Giovanni (1015-59). An exterior comparison of the Abbey of Santa Maria in Conèo, just outside Colle Val d'Elsa,¹⁵⁵ bears striking resemblance to the eastern exterior of Sovana with slight variations (figure 39).¹⁵⁶ Both eastern ends project with semi-circular apses decorated with an arched corbel course under the roofline.¹⁵⁷ Clearly visible from the exterior, the height of the transept arms are nearly equal to the height of the apse. Likewise, the stepped transition from a square base to an octagonal support forming the dome is similar. They differ on the interior—the dome support at Conèo is squinches (figure 40) whereas Sovana's dome support looks like squinches from the exterior, but really uses pendentives, which are only visible on the interior. Documents state that the Abbey of Conèo was built between 1073-1123, and with construction beginning in the

¹⁵⁵ The abbey of Conèo, outside Colle Val d'Elsa, is located between Siena and San Gimignano on a secondary route off of the Via Francigena. This is about eighty miles north of Sovana.

¹⁵⁶ The main variation between the eastern end of Sovana and the Abbey of Conèo relates to a difference visible from the interior or in comparison of the plans. The side aisles at Sovana end in the eastern sanctuary with squared off walls; while at Conèo the side aisles end in rounded apses flanking the larger central apse (en echelon) and squared off on the exterior.

¹⁵⁷ The arched corbel course is a fairly common feature for exterior apse decoration in the area of central and southern Tuscany including such examples as: Pieve of Santa Giulia in Caprona (Vicopisano, Pisa), eleventh century (Negri 89-91); San Stefano in Magazzini, (Isola d'Elba, Livorno), eleventh to twelfth century (Negri, 98-103); Chiesa di S. Pietro (Grosseto), twelfth century (Negri, 390-91); and Abbey of San Bruzio in Magliano (Grosseto), twelfth century, (Negri, 392-397; Mario Moretti, 53-56); church of Saints Salvatore and Cirino at Badia a Isola (Monteriggioni), founded 1101, (Mario Moretti, 69-84; Salmi, *Chiese romaniche*, 20-21, 50 note 53 and 59 note 70; Toesca, 572; and Moretti and Stopani, 17-22); Pieve of Santa Maria of Lamula (Arcidosso), eleventh to twelfth century (Mario Moretti, 325; and Salmi, *Chiese romaniche*, 20).

The arched corbel course incorporated with engaged pilasters for apse decoration is a decorative element associated with Lombard architecture. See G.T. Rivoira, *Lombardic Architecture: Its Origins, Development and Derivatives*, trans. by G. Rushforth, 2 vols. (New York: William Helburn, 1910), 130-131.

east, this section was likely started in the last quarter of the eleventh century.¹⁵⁸ This date is consistent with Sovana's slightly earlier construction in the late tenth to early eleventh century.

Another example of octagonal dome construction is evident at the abbey ruins of San Bruzio (Magliano in Toscana, Grosseto) from the twelfth century. This dome maintains the octagonal shape on the interior where, like Conèo, squinches are still visible (figure 41). The dome itself along with the transepts and nave no longer exist but the semi-circular apse with arched corbel course and five-part vertical divisions, like Sovana, still remain.¹⁵⁹ The Abbey of San Bruzio is less than thirty miles southwest of Sovana and was likely influenced by Sovana's eleventh century dome construction.

The interior quality of Sovana's hemispherical dome is similar to the dome at the Hermitage of Montesiepi, near the Abbey of San Galgano, Chiusdino (figure 42 and 43).¹⁶⁰ The Montesiepi dome is more complex with twenty-four concentric rings of alternating stone and brick creating a bull's-eye effect as opposed to the monochromatic dome of Sovana constructed solely of tuff blocks. Sovana's dome of the eleventh century likely influenced the construction of the dome at the Hermitage of Montesiepi which dates to 1182-1185.¹⁶¹

The next phase of building on the cathedral of Sovana corresponds to the twelfth century portal inscription of Bishop Pietro (1153-75) and the main construction of the

¹⁵⁸ Italo Moretti and Renato Stopani, *Architettura romanica religiosa nel contado fiorentino* (Florence: Salimbeni libreria editrice, 1974), 33-35; Negri, 378-381; Toesca, 571; and Salmi, *Chiese romaniche*, 19, 50 and 59.

¹⁵⁹ Mario Moretti, 53-56; Negri, 393-397.

¹⁶⁰ Chiusdino is located seventy miles northwest of Sovana, outside of Siena.

¹⁶¹ Negri, 25; Salmi, *Chiese romaniche*, 29.

nave and layout of the church. This type of nave flanked by side aisles is associated with a number of churches in the Maremma—some aisles end in three semi-circular apses,¹⁶² and others, like Sovana, end squared off leading to one semi-circular apse.¹⁶³ At Sovana the side aisles and nave are separated by quatrefoil piers which were originally part of the construction at Badia a Isola, Ponte allo Spino and Pieve in Scola. Another architectural feature associated with many of the churches in this area during the twelfth century is the elevated sanctuary found at Sovana and Badia a Isola (figure 44), Cellole, Ponte allo Spino, and Corsignano (figure 45). In terms of the nave elevation at Sovana, the north and south flanks are different. In the north, the windows are smaller and set higher above the nave arcade compared to the south side. The nave elevation of the north side most closely resembles the elevation at Badia a Isola (Monteriggioni) founded 1101, but combined with the vaulting system of Santa Maria Castello, Tarquinia, 1121 (figure 46).¹⁶⁴ All three, including Sovana, are twelfth century examples of Romanesque churches built in the environs of southern Tuscany and northern Lazio. Sovana's

¹⁶² For example: church of Saints Salvatore and Cirino at Badia a Isola (Monteriggioni) founded in 1101 (Mario Moretti, 69-84; Salmi, *Chiese romaniche*, 20-21 and 50 notes 53, 59 and 70; Toesca, 572; and Moretti and Stopani, 17-22); Pieve of San Giovanni Battista in Ponte allo Spino (Sovicille), twelfth century (Mario Moretti, 115-130; Toesca, 571 and 820; Salmi, *Chiese romaniche*, 21); Pieve of San Giovanni Battista in Scola (Casole d'Elsa), twelfth century (Moretti and Stopani, 71-73; Salmi, *Chiese romaniche*, 21, 52, 59 and 62).

¹⁶³ For example: church of Santa Maria in Cellole (San Gimignano), twelfth century (Mario Moretti, 131-138; Toesca, 570; Salmi, *Chiese romaniche*, 21, 42 and 53; Moretti and Stopani, 201-207); and in its original state the Pieve of Saints Vito and Modesto in Corsignano (Pienza), eleventh to twelfth century (Mario Moretti, 255-261; Toesca, 580, Salmi, *Chiese romaniche*, 20, 33, 52, 59 and 60-61).

¹⁶⁴ Badia a Isola in Monteriggioni is located approximately seventy-three miles northeast of Sovana. For sources on Badia a Isola's church of Saints Salvatore and Cirino see previous citation. Tarquinia is located approximately forty-four miles south of Sovana (not located on map included with this study). For Santa Maria Castello in Tarquinia see: Joselita Raspi Serra, *La Tuscia romana: Un territorio come esperienza d'arte: evoluzione urbanistico-architettonica* (Rome: Banco di Santo Spirito, 1972), 22-29; Enrico Parlatto and S. Romano, *Roma e Lazio: il romanico*, patrimonio artistico italiano [(Italy): Palombi, 2001]: 205-215.

proportions are broader than Badia a Isola and the support system for the vaults does not alternate like Tarquinia; however, the individual parts that make up the structure of Sovana are visible in the other twelfth century churches, thus supporting the notion that majority of the construction of the cathedral of Sovana occurred in the twelfth century.

The final phase of construction on the cathedral of Sovana corresponds to the inscription of the exterior transept arm with the date, 1248, and possible associations with builders from Siena. The thirteenth century elements of the church are clearly visible in the vaults of the south side aisle with the pointed transverse arches and pointed ribbed groin vaults. Like the clerestory, the south side aisle differs from the north, where the transverse arches dividing each bay are rounded creating a more compartmentalized quality to each bay as opposed to the more fluid pointed vaults of the south side. The result is somewhat unusual in terms of construction practices of the Middle Ages in that the nave was not built one bay at a time from the sanctuary to the west end, but it appears that the north side of the church was built earlier than the south side where the windows are larger and the vaults reflect thirteenth-century engineering developments. In this one church, the advancements in vaulting from the late twelfth century through the mid-thirteenth century are visible in the vaulting transitions from the nave to the left side aisle to the final right side aisle.

The comparative examples in this study have all been selected from the regions of southern Tuscany and northern Lazio—within an eighty mile radius of Sovana. While

some of the architectural elements ultimately trace back to the Lombard building style,¹⁶⁵ a strong interchange of building ideas is evident in the extant churches of the Maremma, an area linked by geographical similarities. Other scholars place greater emphasis on the stylistic influence of French models, which I find more appropriate for locations along the Via Francigena (Aquapendente, Abbey of San Salvatore, San Quirico d'Orcia, Siena, San Gimignano).¹⁶⁶ Sovana's location along a secondary route off of the Via Clodia links it with the regional developments in architecture during this period.

Conclusion

While smaller in scale than the cathedrals of northern Tuscany, like Pisa and Lucca, the cathedral of Sovana is an excellent example of the developing transitions in architecture during the pre-Romanesque and Romanesque period, from the ninth through the mid thirteenth century. The angular qualities of the exterior architectural forms representing the earthly realm yield to the curvilinear forms of the interior spiritual realm. From its earliest phase of construction to the latest, the architects of the cathedral of Sovana melded together different architectural elements that, only through close analysis, can be associated with different construction periods, but as a whole, the cathedral represents a harmonious and grand example of the Romanesque style in southern Tuscany.

¹⁶⁵ Arthur Kingsley Porter, *Lombard Architecture* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1967); and Rivoira, *Lombardic Architecture*.

¹⁶⁶ Salviati, 39 and 49-53.

Chapter 3: THE PORTAL

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, much as it still does today, the portal marked a physical and spiritual transformation of the viewer as s/he crossed over into a new realm. Physically as one passed from the elements of the outside world—whether it be cold, rain, heat, the sounds and stench of city life and markets—into an interior space, where the senses were pleasantly engaged. Windows punctuated the relative darkness of the interior, directing the viewer to focus on the light-filled apse containing the altar. Similarly, the candlelit inner space flickered with life and the scent of wax and incense. The smoothness of the paving stones contrasted with the uneven terrain of the outside world. Moreover, the hushed stillness of the sacred space could inspire awe in some, or calm in others. In addition to the physical changes, a spiritual transformation occurred as well, crossing over the threshold into the house of God or the heavenly Jerusalem. The Church Fathers symbolically identified the portal with Christ as the conduit for the transition between earthly and heavenly realms.¹⁶⁷ The portal provided both literal and figurative protection for the individual as well as the eternal soul, and the sculpture of the portal conveyed a visual message of salvation.

This purpose of this chapter is to address the main portal of the cathedral of Sovana, which is located on the north side of the structure. This location, as well as the dating, are subjects of much debate among scholars who have previously addressed this

¹⁶⁷ Calvin B. Kendall, *The Allegory of the Church: Romanesque Portals and Their Verse Inscriptions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 3.

topic. Conversely, the iconography of the portal is often overlooked completely, primarily due to the complex issue of spolia, or the reuse of earlier building materials, and in this case, the majority of the relief blocks that comprise the portal are spolia. After a general description of the portal and its motifs, this chapter will address the issues of dating, original location and sculptural style of the portal, and conclude by addressing the overall iconography of the sculpture.

General Description

The portal is nestled between two diagonally-sloped, vertical buttresses (figure 47). A beautifully proportioned, rounded arch rests atop five steps and is composed of a number of milky-white travertine blocks that contrast with the surrounding grey stone, or tuff. The basic layout consists of a tympanum with two archivolt. Jambs with lower relief sculpture support the outer archivolt, and capitals decorated with high relief lions separate these two sections. Colonnets with Corinthian-style capitals support the inner archivolt. A thin impost separates the tympanum and the lintel, which is supported by the innermost jambs topped with stepped capitals. All of the jambs rest on bases of horizontally divided molding. The overall effect of the portal is one of harmony and balance, even though the parts were sculpted in different periods. With more on dating to follow, we begin with a description of the various motifs.

The following description progresses from top to bottom, as well as from the outer elements moving inward. The voussoirs of the outer archivolt are unadorned with one exception; to the right of the keystone is a figure in low relief with arms raised

(figure 48).¹⁶⁸ This slightly weathered figure appears genderless. One leg is shorter than the other, presumably to fit within the contour of the voussoir. A thickness around the wrists suggests a cuff or sleeve and the neck is proportionally bulbous. The parted lips taper upward into a smile and the eyes are open wide. These details, however, are indiscernible from the ground. The other voussoirs of the outer archivolt were presumably smooth before weathering, although not perfectly symmetrical in size. Below the outer archivolt, the inner archivolt is unadorned except for a cavetto molding running continuously through all of the voussoirs, and again the voussoirs are asymmetrical in size.

The tympanum consists of twelve fairly distinct blocks trimmed along the outer edges to fit within the semicircular shape of the arch (figure 49). The blocks are arranged in three rows of mostly horizontal blocks. Two blocks, one on the far left of the center row (figure 50, block B1) and the other second from the right on the bottom row (figure 50, block C3), were originally carved as one block and are currently cut, separated and vertically oriented. The decorative motifs of the tympanum blocks fall into four categories. The first is band interlacing—tripartite ridges run in parallel patterns creating the illusionistic effect of passing over and under one another. Within the compartments of interlacing we see the second motif—rosettes. The rosettes vary in size, petal formation, and centers—some are solid while others are openly drilled holes. Moreover, some blocks contain only rosettes with no interlacing, such as the center two blocks of the top

¹⁶⁸ In all descriptions to follow, left and right directional cues refer to viewer's left or right as s/he faces the work of art or architecture.

row (figure 50, blocks A2 and A3). The third motif adorning the tympanum is the whorl design of two blocks in the center row. Four “leaf” shapes spiral outward from a central point then taper together in a circular formation. This repeating motif seems organic in nature as the whorls connect to one another with an unfurling line that resembles a plant stem with small tendrils (figure 50, blocks B2 and B4). The fourth design is a pairing together of the circle and boss patterns as found along the edges of the uppermost blocks (figure 50, block A1). Both patterns resemble the barbarian metal working tradition in the beading effect and the circle-inscribed-in-a-circle design. Lastly, the central block of the tympanum contains a Latin inscription, to be discussed in the section on dating.

The outer archivolt rests on two high-relief lion heads composed of a darker stone. Both lions are rendered with wide eyes, open mouths and teeth bared. The whiskers run in straight grooves back toward the manes, which, in the unabraded sections, are stylized into clumps of reed-like carving. The paws of the left lion rest on two ram heads, also baring teeth (figure 51). The right lion slightly thrusts his tongue outward with his head resting on two stylized acanthus leaves (figure 52).

Below the lion capitals, outer jambs complete the support system for the outer archivolt. The left jamb consists of five blocks of unequal height. The top block resembles a double-layered rosette, inscribed in a single grooved circle, which is inscribed in another circle with a v-shaped pattern. The next block down is a bit odd: two fan-shaped arcs meet left of center with a line traversing the bottom two inches, below

which another pattern begins but is abruptly cut off.¹⁶⁹ The beautifully carved, third block down depicts two peafowl vertically positioned in profile and flanking a tree (figure 54). The top of the tree splits into spirals, from which hang fruit eaten by the birds. Details in the carving reveal a distinction between the peacock on the right, with his more elaborate plumage in the form of parallel ridges, and the peahen on the left, with her smaller head and more delicate eye. The fourth block down forming the outer jamb consists of two motifs. The first motif is a round face with spiky hair, ears out, and a wide smile (figure 55). The second motif is a Latin cross atop a semi-circular, hill-like, mound. Four large spirals sprout from the cross: two from the top and two from the lower cross-arm. The ends of the lateral cross-arms also appear to sprout in double v-shaped patterns. The fifth and final block of the left jamb depicts a mermaid with a scaly double-tail turned upward flanking her torso and breasts (figure 56). The details of her features are abraded and the cracked block is missing pieces; however, her oval head with sunken eyes and protruding ears is still evident.

The right jamb supporting the outer archivolt consists of four blocks, the top three of which share the same motif of overlapping, three-ringed circles (figures 47 and 57). The motif crosses from one block to the other; however, the topmost and bottommost blocks end abruptly. Moreover, on closer inspection the alignment of the motif suggests that the top block might have originally been carved as the middle of the three blocks. The bottom block of the right jamb depicts a man on horseback with military

¹⁶⁹ I believe that this section of the portal was originally filled by a block now on the interior of the cathedral based on its similar motif to a jamb relief at the hermitage of Vivo d'Orcia (figure 53).

accoutrements such as a raised sword in his right hand, a shield in his left hand, and a spur on his left foot (figure 57). The carved details of his head suggest a tonsure shave in addition to the same sunken eyes and protruding ears as found on the mermaid.

The colonnettes supporting the inner archivolt are less varied. The inner archivolt rests on two imposts with a v-shaped pattern, that in turn rest on two stylized Corinthian capitals. These capitals sit atop two slender and elegantly carved columns. The left colonnette is decorated with v-shaped chevrons; each chevron consists of a thin-thick-thin groove pattern. The right colonnette is decorated with diagonal striping of two thin bands in between each thick stripe (figures 47 and 58).

Below the tympanum, the v-shaped pattern of the imposts continues uninterrupted, except where damaged, to separate the tympanum from the lintel. The lintel, which is slightly smaller in height on the left side than the right, is decorated with a flowing, tightly-furled spiral pattern interspersed with leaves and small flowers. The spirals connect to one another like tendrils on a vine. The bottom edge of the lintel repeats the v-shaped pattern of the imposts (figure 58). The lintel is supported by two stepped capitals atop the inner jambs (figure 58). These stepped capitals vary in size to accommodate the size shift in the lintel. Both stepped capitals, carved from a darker stone, are decorated with an arrangement of rosettes. The larger stepped capital on the left has two small and one large rosette—the dominant rosette is an example of petals arranged in an overlapping double layer. The smaller stepped capital on the right has one small, geometric, six-petal rosette and one large rosette, the latter inscribed in a circle with

diamond patterning. The large rosettes of the stepped capitals vary in style from the arrangement of rosettes below on the inner jambs.

The inner jambs of the portal are perhaps the most unified of the decorative elements. Both sides share the same motifs which consistently cross from one of the five blocks to another in perfect alignment. The uppermost and bottommost blocks do not end abruptly and the decoration continues from the outer facing to the inner facing of the jambs. The outer facing of both jambs consists of eight complete circles, the designs of which convey a variety of rosette patterns interspersed with bird medallions. The diversity of rosette patterns differ in terms of petal shape, size and number. The three bird medallions equally show a range in bird types with an assortment of wings and head sizes. All of the birds, rendered in profile, pluck at fruit and claw the inscribing circle (figures 59 and 60). Two more birds are depicted in lunettes at the uppermost edge of the jambs, with the bird on the right side facing upward and the bird on the left side facing downward. The inner facing of the inner jambs is decorated with a spiral and wave pattern that flows uninterrupted along both sides of the door (figures 61). Nestled in the in flowing pattern of the inner facing is a bird in profile on the right. The harmony of the inner jamb elements reflects a unified design concept.

While the portal consists of multiple blocks, two different colors of stone, and a variety of motifs, the overall effect is balanced and creates a striking entrance to the cathedral of Sovana. In this section the individual elements of the portal have been described in detail, yet several questions still remain. When was the portal made and

where was it originally located? And what, if any, iconographic interpretation can we conclude regarding the arrangement of these motifs?

Dating, Location and Style

Any attempt to date the portal or locate its original placement is complicated by several issues. In part this complication stems from a lack of documentation which is the result of a fire in the sixteenth century that destroyed the episcopal archive of Sovana.¹⁷⁰ Consequently, we must base our dating on two extant inscriptions, both previously discussed in chapter two of this study: the first, located on the exterior north transept arm, suggesting a construction period in the thirteenth century; and the second, located in the tympanum, suggesting the third quarter of the twelfth century for the arrangement of the portal. Combining information from these inscriptions with regional stylistic comparisons sheds new light on the issue of dating related to the portal. One point regarding the portal about which most scholars agree is the use of spolia, or the reuse of building materials from a previous period combined “anew.” The term applies to both sculptural and architectural elements. Therefore, the issues before us remain as such: when were the spolia originally carved; is the remaining sculpture consistent with the twelfth-century date indicated by the inscription; when was the current manifestation of the portal constructed; and finally, was the portal moved from an earlier façade to its current location on the north face? While the definitive answer to these questions may always

¹⁷⁰ Kehr, 253; Salviati, 13.

elude us, this study proposes some reasonable suppositions by taking the context as a whole into account.

The location and date of the portal are integrally linked to the architecture and to the interior arrangement of historiated capitals. The capitals ring the second of three piers on the left of the nave—meaning they are located directly between the entrance on the north side and the altar in the east. If this portal had been on the west façade of *this* structure,¹⁷¹ as previously suggested,¹⁷² and moved at a later date, then the placement of the capitals would be incongruous in their current location. The set of capitals is unique in the assembly of interior sculpture in that it conveys a coherent program of iconography that reflected current events (the subject of the next chapter). It follows that the placement of the capitals in accord with the main portal was part of the original construction plan. Moreover, moving a portal is quite different from moving an element of major structural support, such as a pier on the interior of the nave. Therefore, if the pier is a fixed element, and the pier and portal are related, then the portal did not move and relates to the date of the historiated sculpture and the nave—the second half of the twelfth century.

Additionally, while the inscription suggests dates of the twelfth or fourteenth centuries, certain carved sections of the portal correspond stylistically only to the twelfth century, whereas there are no examples of fourteenth century sculpture on the portal.

Illustration this point are the two lion corbels supporting the outer archivolt. The practice

¹⁷¹ The structure prior to the current edifice, from which the portal spolia presumably derives, may have had a west façade main entrance.

¹⁷² Nicolosi, 162-4; Biondi, 70; and *Etruscan and Medieval Sovana*, 33.

of flanking an entrance with lions, or some beasts of burden, dates back centuries.¹⁷³ In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, this motif was revived on a major scale in the portal designs of Italy.¹⁷⁴ Tuscan examples provide the best comparisons with the lions at Sovana since this type varies in form from the porch-style portal seen at Modena and in the Emilia-Romagna region.¹⁷⁵ The porch mode consists of fully carved animals either on the ground or on pedestals bearing columns which support a canopy over the entrance, whereas the Sovana variety renders only the head, or front half of the lions, which are located as capitals or corbels just under the archivolt. The lions in both varieties bare their teeth in snarling growls while one or both lions maul another beast or foe in their paws.¹⁷⁶ The left lion at Sovana suppresses two rams.

Stylistically the Sovana lions resemble lions found at the cathedral of Salerno and the abbey of Sant'Antimo (albeit the Salerno and Sant'Antimo lions most closely resemble each other). The features of the Salerno lion are greatly weathered, but the thin, parallel grooves indicating the mane are well preserved (figure 62). At Sant'Antimo two

¹⁷³ The Hittite gate at Boghazköy, Turkey (c. 1,400 BCE) is an example.

¹⁷⁴ Notable examples include the cathedrals of Ferrara, Verona, Piacenza, and churches like Sagra di San Michele in Piedmont and San Zeno in Verona, all by the artist Nicholas and discussed in Christine Verzár Bornstein, *Portals and Politics in the Early Italian City-State: The Sculpture of Nicholas in Context*, (Parma: Istituto di Storia dell'Arte, 1988). Other examples found in Italy include the cities of Fidenza, Spoleto, Tuscania, Foligno, Narni, Pisa, Lucca, Livorno, Pistoia, Massa Marittima, Brindisi, Siena, the great abbey church of Sant'Antimo, and more. Two examples outside Italy are St. Trophime and the cathedral of Embrun both in the Provence region of France. The animal motif varies to also include atlas figures.

¹⁷⁵ Bornstein (*Portals and Politics*, 34) identifies Modena as the earliest example of the porch style. An earlier extant example, perhaps providing the origin for the fully developed later version discussed by Bornstein, appears at the pievi of S. Cassiano a Controne (Bagni di Lucca) of the ninth or tenth century. Other Tuscan lion entrances of the Sovana mode include: church of S. Paolo all'Orta (Pisa), pieve of S. Giocanni a Campiglia Marittima (Livorno), S. Giovanni (Lucca), S. Giusto (Lucca), S. Pietro Somaldi (Lucca), S. Jacopo Maggiore ad Altopascio (Lucca), and the cathedral of Massa Marittima (Grosseto).

¹⁷⁶ The mauled beasts or foe include: dragons, Moors, bears, birds of prey, other lions, bulls, or some other four-legged creature.

lions present good comparisons. First, a partially damaged exterior lion displays a remarkably similar mane to the Salerno lion (figure 63). The manes of both the Salerno and Sant'Antimo lions share a similar thinness of carving and parallel linear qualities with the Sovana lions. The best comparison is the second lion at Sant'Antimo, found today on the interior,¹⁷⁷ whose facial features remain relatively undamaged (figure 64 and 65). The Sovana lions and the Sant'Antimo lion have flattened noses with deeply drilled nostrils, the corners of the mouths curve in a wide arc, the teeth are conical and not pointy (this may also be due to weathering), the eyes bulge outward with a clearly incised double eyelid, and sections of the manes angle away from the faces in triangular patterns.¹⁷⁸ There are some differences which can be accounted for in several ways: the position of the sculptures—Sovana is meant to be seen from below and Sant'Antimo from above; stylistic differences among sculptors; and the powerful position Sant'Antimo held in the beginning of the twelfth century—power that led to wealth, which in turn led to higher quality workmanship. Sant'Antimo's power came from its longstanding relationship with emperors and popes and its wealth came in 1118 with a massive bequest of land from the Ardengheschi family.¹⁷⁹ This donation funded a new building campaign at Sant'Antimo which dates the lions to the second quarter of the twelfth century and close in date to the Sovana portal of the second half of the twelfth century. Stylistically,

¹⁷⁷ Two interior lions were originally part of the portal, which was destroyed along with the cloister in 1462. Camille Enlart, "L'église abbatiale de Sant'Antimo en Toscane," *Revue de l'Art Chrétien* (1913): 1-14.

¹⁷⁸ Eduardo Junyent, "L'Oeuvre du Maître de Cabestany," *Actes du quatre-vingt-sixième Congrès National des Sociétés savantes* (Montpellier, 1961): 169-178, attributes these lions, wrongly in my opinion, to the Cabestany Master. There are no deeply drilled holes in the corners of the eyes—a hallmark of Cabestany's style.

¹⁷⁹ *The Abbey of Sant'Antimo: A Stone that Sings*. Prepared by the Abbey of Sant'Antimo (Castelnuovo dell'Abate: Edizioni Sant'Antimo, 1995), 19.

however, not all of the sculpture on the portal is consistent with a mid-twelfth century date; indeed, most of the sculpture stylistically dates earlier to the pre-Romanesque period.¹⁸⁰ The spolia were presumably collected from the previous structure on this site and arranged to construct the twelfth-century portal.

Dating the pre-Romanesque style of the Longobards which spread throughout northern Italy, indeed to many parts of Europe, proves challenging as the style and motifs were ubiquitous. Furthermore, lingering late antique motif such as crosses, rosettes, palm leaves, and birds flanking sacred objects all continued with great popularity. These motifs combined with the flat, linear, *horror vacui* style of Barbarian metalwork and illuminated manuscripts, which also added interlacing, spirals and geometric compartmentalization. The production of relief sculpture of this type continued from the seventh through the tenth centuries, reaching an apogee in the eighth to early ninth centuries.¹⁸¹ Furthering the difficulty of dating is the lack of a comprehensive compendium of early medieval relief sculpture in Italy.¹⁸² At best, we can analyze stylistic comparisons to date these works of sculpture; however, this does account for differences in the various sculptors' abilities and centers of production. With this in mind, this study attempts to construct a relative chronology for the spolia at Sovana.

¹⁸⁰ This period is also referred to as proto-Romanesque or First-Romanesque.

¹⁸¹ Carl D. Sheppard, "Pre-Romanesque and Romanesque Sculpture in Stone," *Art Quarterly* 23 (1960): 346. Sheppard also points out that there are no examples of sculpture in the round from this period.

¹⁸² The most comprehensive study of this material to date is the Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, *Corpus della scultura altomedievale*, (Spoleto, 1959-), currently 17 volumes, last published in 2005. The volume on Tuscany has yet to be published. For earlier sources of this subject see: Rudolph Kautzsch, "Die römische Schmuckkunst in Stein vom 6. bis zum 10. Jahrhundert," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 3 (1939): 3-73; and Kautsch, "Die langobardische Schmuckkunst in Oberitalien," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 5 (1941): 3-48.

A ciborium in the church of Santa Maria in Sovana is a work of exceptional quality. This four-sided carved canopy over the altar, one of the few ciboria of the period in excellent condition, is decorated with relief carvings that are stylistically very similar to some of the spolia on the portal of the cathedral (figure 66).¹⁸³ The church of Santa Maria dates to the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, at which time the ciborium, of a much earlier date, was presumably moved from its location in the cathedral.¹⁸⁴ A relative chronology for the ciborium helps to establish a date for the inner jamb spolia of the portal.

The ciborium in the church of Santa Maria consists of a pyramidal roof crowning four panels carved to suggest round arches. They are supported by four columns with capitals of stylized foliage, spiral tendrils, and a cross or floral medallions. The shafts of the columns are smooth with no bases. The outer faces of the four panels are carved in low relief with similar designs divided into compartments of decorative motifs (figure 67). The lower section, echoing the shape of the arch, is decorated with a tapering and swelling band filled with grape clusters. The compartments created by the thinning of the band are filled with spiral tendrils and leaves. A bead-and-reel and twisted rope border frame the grape clusters. The spandrels depict peacocks in profile clinging to the border.

¹⁸³ In addition to quality, the ciborium in Santa Maria in Sovana is also exceptional for its location—it still functions in its original capacity as a canopy over an altar. Other ciboria in excellent condition, although dislocated from the altar, include examples in: the church of Santa Cristina in Bolsena, Sant’ Apollinare in Classe (Ravenna), and the church of San Prospero in Perugia. For an article discussing ciboria fragments, see Beat Brenk, “Four Langobardic Marble Reliefs Recently Acquired by the Cloisters,” in *The Cloisters: Studies in Honor of the Fiftieth Anniversary*, ed. Elizabeth C. Parker (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), 63-85.

¹⁸⁴ An alternate interpretation proposes that the ciborium was originally located in the church of San Mamiliano, the oldest church of Sovana.

The feathers of the birds are described by regularly spaced, parallel grooves. Below the birds' tails are bosses, whorl motifs, and v-shaped patterns. Another twisted rope border frames the upper section of horizontal interlace, or guilloche. Side bands on three of the four panel faces are decorated with an inverted chevron pattern (figure 68). The side bands of the panel facing the center of the church differs and is decorated with a grape cluster motif on the left and leaf motif on the right. In general, the principal of anti-classical asymmetry, as identified by Carl D. Sheppard in his analysis of pre-Romanesque sculpture,¹⁸⁵ applies to Sovana's ciborium where the overall effect looks symmetrical but, on closer inspection is not: smaller motifs switch from boss to cross, or cross to flower, or some birds have long tails while other have short ones. The depth of the relief, however, remains consistently low and even, and the type of stone is a milky white travertine, just like the spolia carvings of the portal.

In addition to the color of the stone, other general similarities exist between the ciborium and the portal such as the flanking bird motif, and the use of spirals, whorls, crosses and interlace; yet, the actual execution of these motifs varies. The tail feathers of the ciborium peacocks are indicated by closely cut, parallel grooves angled outward from a central raised line. The wings are represented as gently curving arcs nestled in smaller succession into one another. In contrast, the tail feathers and wings of the portal peacocks are carved with less detailed ridges rather than grooves. The eyes of the ciborium birds are created with shallow holes, while the birds of the portal have larger eyes fashioned from an incised line. Each spiral tendril of the ciborium curls back on itself one and a half

¹⁸⁵ Sheppard, "Pre-Romanesque and Romanesque Sculpture in Stone," 349-350.

times while the spiral motifs of the portal are more tightly furled. The whorls of the ciborium have a raised center and outer ridge that sinks into the spiraling middle section. Conversely, the whorls of the portal are cut evenly and spin outward from the center in leaf-like arrangements. Although the interlacing of both the ciborium and portal is composed of tripartite bands, the guilloche of the ciborium is more self-contained in a regular figure eight pattern. The interlacing of the portal leaves open compartments—some are empty, others are filled with flowers or stars. Another subtle difference between the ciborium and the portal is the variation in the depth of the relief carving. The relief of the ciborium is uniformly carved with no deeply drilled holes, a technique used to identify certain workshops of pre-Romanesque sculpture.¹⁸⁶ On the other hand, the relief of the portal spolia ranges between a low even depth, as seen on the inner jambs, and higher relief on the outer jambs with the mermaid and soldier for example.

Dates suggested for the ciborium and the spolia of the portal range from the eighth to the ninth century.¹⁸⁷ An analysis of a few stylistic comparisons helps narrow the dates; moreover, by dating the ciborium we establish a relative date for the portal. The first comparison looks at the sarcophagus of Abbess Theodota in the Museo Civico in Pavia (figure 69), specifically at the bird panel on one side. On the sarcophagus, the tail feathers angle out from a central raised line in a pattern resembling parallel reeds, and the

¹⁸⁶ Brenk, “Four Langobardic Marble Reliefs,” 72-73.

¹⁸⁷ Ciborium dating: Biondi (66) and Baldini (98) date the ciborium between the eighth and ninth century. Salmi, *Romanesque Sculpture*, 13, dates the ciborium to the early ninth century. Portal dating: Gray (197) dates the Sovana portal spolia from the eighth to the ninth centuries basing her assessment on a stylistic comparison to the altar at Ferentillo, eighth century. The authors of *Etruscan and Medieval Sovana* (32) date the portal spolia to the eighth century. Salmi, *Romanesque Sculpture*, 13, considers the ciborium and the portal spolia by the same hand in the early ninth century. Mario Moretti (101-107) dates the early sculpture of the portal to the eighth century.

wings are created with successive arcs. Other similarities with Sovana's ciborium include the bead-and-reel bordering around the central panel of the sarcophagus, the tripartite guilloche below both of the birds and the v-shaped pattern filling the spaces between the medallions of the border. Thus, the sarcophagus, which dates to 720, shares affinities with the Sovana ciborium and establishes an eighth century baseline.

The second comparison in establishing a date for the Sovana ciborium is a pair of capitals from the ciborium in the church of San Giorgio in Valpolicella (figures 70 and 71).¹⁸⁸ These capitals share many of the same motifs as the Sovana ciborium such as bifurcating spiral tendrils flanking a cross or a flower. The four faces of the upper section of each capital are chamfered. The lower sections of the capitals appear as stylized leaf motifs that raise vertically and then angle outward in a curve. At Sovana, the vertical elements are divided into two or three sections while at Valpolicella the whole motif is more geometric with quadripartite divisions. These capitals are remarkably similar and the Valpolicella capitals date to 712 according to an inscription.¹⁸⁹

The third comparison in dating the Sovana ciborium is to the eighth-century ciborium in the church of Santa Cristina in Bolsena (figure 72).¹⁹⁰ Similar bead-and-reel borders surround the Bolsena lintel and the lowest edge of the Sovana panel. On one panel, the decorative section above the arch depicts a vine enclosing clusters of grapes. This motif appears nearly identical on the ciboria of Sovana and Bolsena with the subtle

¹⁸⁸ Image in Rivoira, 139.

¹⁸⁹ Rivoira, 138.

¹⁹⁰ Image in Donatella Scortecci and Letizia Pani Ermini, *La Diocesi di Orvieto*, *Corpus della scultura altomedievale*, 16 (Spoleto: Fondazione centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 2003), table VI, plate 10d. Scortecci more specifically dates the Bolsena ciborium to the first half of the eighth century, 63.

variation of a tapering border compared to a crisscrossing border. In looking at grape clusters from the seventh century, such as at the church of San Bartolomeo in Badia di Cantignano (Lucca), the elements are the same but the execution lacks a clarity of organization (figure 73).¹⁹¹ The chevron borders of the Badia di Cantignano relief, however, bear remarkable similarity to the Sovana ciborium—further evidence of the longstanding nature of certain patterns between the seventh and eighth centuries.

The stylistic comparisons to the sarcophagus of Abbess Theodota, the ciborium capitals at Valpolicella, and the ciborium at Bolsena, establish strong evidence dating the ciborium at Sovana to the eighth century. All of these examples also exhibit a general design tendency associated with this period—the desire to fill all available space. This *horror vacui* aesthetic is also prevalent in the inner jambs of the portal to the cathedral in Sovana; furthermore, the Sovana ciborium and the inner jambs of the portal share an even flatness to the relief carving. Therefore, the ciborium and inner jambs are closely related in terms of their construction dates; however, the slight variation in bird types suggests that the ciborium slightly predates the inner jambs with a relative date of the late eighth or early ninth century. The outer jambs, on the other hand, do not share the same *horror vacui* design principal, with open space around a central image and generally higher relief, specifically of the three blocks occupying the lowest level on the portal: the soldier, mermaid and spiral cross surmounted by a face. Therefore, the spolia material on the portal was created during different periods.

¹⁹¹ Isa Belli Barsali and Mario Salmi, *Le diocesi di Lucca*, Corpus della scultura altomedievale, 1 (Spoleto, 1959): table III, plate a.

After careful analysis of the spolia carvings, it becomes clear that more than one set of pre-Romanesque and early Romanesque sculpture was used in the final arrangement of the portal.¹⁹² Based on comparative analysis, the inner jambs and whorl blocks of the tympanum date to the late eighth or early ninth century, just after the ciborium.¹⁹³ The interlacing blocks of the tympanum possibly date to the tenth century, circa 967 when Bishop Raniero is recorded to have built the cathedral.¹⁹⁴ The four lowest level blocks of the outer jambs—the mermaid, face and spiral cross, affronting peafowl and soldier—date to a later period, that I will demonstrate to be the eleventh century. Other sections of the portal were carved in the twelfth century, including: the lions, the topmost block of the outer left jamb, both stepped capitals of the inner jambs, and the top central block of the tympanum. All of these blocks present somewhat different stylistic variants, meaning that the portal is a pastiche of carved blocks from the eighth through the twelfth centuries.

The next question to consider is the influences on Pietro, who according to the portal inscription “saw to it that the door was made in this way.”¹⁹⁵ Not all scholars agree that the portal was constructed in the twelfth century with spolia from earlier periods. Pietro Toesca, one of the great historians of Italian art, stated that the portal was arranged in the thirteenth century entirely from spolia material.¹⁹⁶ The Pietro named in the

¹⁹² Baldini (92) says the portal consists of sculpture from diverse periods but makes no attempt to establish a timeframe.

¹⁹³ In dating, the ciborium and inner jambs are also closely related to the crypt, which predates the tenth century apse above.

¹⁹⁴ See chapter 2 of this study regarding architectural dating.

¹⁹⁵ See portal inscription discussion above.

¹⁹⁶ Toesca, 901, I find this interpretation incorrect and will explain why in the section on iconography.

inscription was clearly proud of the entire arrangement of the portal; therefore, I believe he was responsible for the placement of individual blocks of spolia dating from different periods. Sources available to him may have included the previous portal from which the spolia derived or other portals in the region.

An excellent regional comparison to the design at Sovana is the portal at Saints Vito and Modesto in Corsignano near Pienza (Siena), located sixty kilometers north of Sovana. The parish church at Corsignano experienced multiple periods of construction but the façade remains a unified whole and dates to the ninth or tenth century (figure 74).¹⁹⁷ The Corsignano portal arrangement conveys a great deal of information about the possible original character of the Sovana spolia, which bear striking resemblance to one another. Like Sovana, the Corsignano portal is a large rounded arch with jambs and colonnettes flanking the entrance (figures 47 and 75). The arrangement of flat outer jambs, tall slender columns decorated with chevrons and diagonal striping, and flat inner jambs with relief carving on the inner and outer facing, all directly parallel the Sovana arrangement.¹⁹⁸ The inner jambs at both Corsignano and Sovana are capped with stepped capitals which support the lintel and three archivolt. The outer archivolt at Corsignano is plain ashlar blocks like those used at Sovana—except at Sovana we see a figure near the keystone, which may be analogous to the caryatid figure in the mullion window over the portal at Corsignano (figure 76). A zigzag pattern decorates the middle archivolt at

¹⁹⁷ The tower and right side of the church are generally dated to the eleventh and twelfth centuries. See Bernardini, 92-92.

¹⁹⁸ Salmi, *Romanesque Sculpture*, 26-27, figures 30 and 31, noted the similarities in sculpture but did not comment about the overall arrangement of the portals.

Corsignano corresponding to a concave molding at Sovana. The inner archivolt at Corsignano, with connecting vines inscribing palm leaves, bears resemblance to the grape-cluster motif of the Sovana ciborium. Instead of an inner archivolt at Sovana, the tympanum is filled with relief blocks, while at Corsignano the tympanum is filled with ashlar blocks. This variation hardly diminishes the remarkable similarity in the overall arrangement of the two portals.

An additional point of comparison between Sovana and Corsignano is the mermaids—Sovana's mermaid is located on the lowest block of the outer jamb and the Corsignano mermaid is located in the center of the lintel (figures 47 and 77). Both mermaids share similar features: double tails turned upward and flanking the torsos, and protruding ears. The meaning of these archetypes of temptation will be discussed in the next section on iconography. Stylistically, the Corsignano mermaid is much thinner and flatter in form compared to the Sovana mermaid, where the relief is higher and the figure is modeled. Furthermore, the Sovana mermaid is more detailed in the scaly texture of her tails. The flatness of form and lack of textural detail is more closely associated with relief sculpture of the pre-Romanesque period suggesting the Corsignano mermaid pre-dates the one at Sovana. Additionally, due to the similarity of overall designs between the two portals but differences in sculptural elements, this comparison reinforces the contention that the Sovana portal is composed of spoila materials of differing periods.

A final comparison of sculpture with direct bearing on dating relates individual blocks from the jambs at Sovana to another jamb at the hermitage of Vivo d'Orcia.¹⁹⁹ The jamb at Vivo consists of five blocks of relief carving (figure 78 a and b). Above the lowest and most abraded block is a soldier wielding a sword and shield while on horseback—remarkably similar to the soldier at Sovana (figure 79 and 80). Both soldiers display identical compositions, face frontally and have protruding ears. The swords are of the same style with a hilt consisting of a straight cross-guard and circular pommel, or 'wheel' pommel. This type of sword was illustrated in numerous military scenes from the late tenth through the twelfth centuries and according to military arms experts probably originated in southern Europe, possibly Italy.²⁰⁰ Due to their popularity, especially during the first two Crusades (based in part on the symbolic cross-like profile), the swords depicted at Sovana and Vivo do not narrow the dating, but stylistically present a compelling comparison of similar types.

On the contrary, other aspects of the soldiers' military attire do provide valuable information regarding the date of these sculpted figures. Both soldiers carry a kite shield, which evolved in the late tenth or early eleventh century from the earlier circular shield.

¹⁹⁹ Vivo d'Orcia is located on the northern slope of Monte Amiata near the Abbey of San Salvatore (less than five miles apart) and thirty-two miles north of Sovana.

²⁰⁰ David Edge and John Miles Paddock, *Arms & Armor of the Medieval Knight* (New York: Crescent Books, 1988), 27-29. This book (14-55) illustrates multiple examples of swords depicted in art from the late tenth through the twelfth centuries, such as: the *Bayeux Tapestry* (c. 1070), a portico stone with soldier on the cathedral in Verona (12th c.), and a jamb figure on the abbey church in Comburg (c. 1140). A curved cross-guard was more closely associated with Viking and Anglo-Saxon sword hilts (27). For further discussions on military arms and armor see: Kelly DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, Ltd., 1992); Kelly DeVries and Robert D. Smith, *Medieval Weapons: An Illustrated History of Their Impact*, (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2007); David Nicolle, *Warriors and Their Weapons Around the Time of the Crusades: Relationships between Byzantium, the West, and the Islamic World* (Aldershot, Hampshire [England]: Ashgate/Variorum, 2002).

The kite shield, as the name would suggest, has a rounded top with tapered, kite-like bottom.²⁰¹ This type of shield reached its zenith of popularity in the eleventh and twelfth centuries but by the middle of the twelfth century the rounded top became flatter and the overall shape to the shield more convex along the sides.²⁰² Furthermore, later shields were designed with elaborately embossed umbos, or circular metal disks for protection against direct blows, which are clearly missing from the Sovana and Vivo shields.²⁰³ Even if the Sovana and Vivo soldiers were originally polychromed with painted umbos, the overall shape of the two shields is consistent with shields of the eleventh, possibly early twelfth, centuries. Moreover, the Sovana soldier is clearly depicted in a knee-length hauberk with an exposed lower leg revealing a prick spur. The straight style of prick spur was worn by mounted men of the eleventh century, after which time the spur became more elaborate with a curved neck and wheel-style rowel.²⁰⁴ Similarly, one element of military technology that improved at the beginning of the twelfth century and is missing from both the Sovana and Vivo soldiers is the new saddle with a high pommel and cantel.²⁰⁵ This innovation provided greater stability for men in arms and its absence suggests that the sculptures were carved prior to this invention.²⁰⁶ The subtle changes in military arms that occurred in the twelfth century provide further evidence that the soldier figure at Sovana pre-dates the twelfth-century portal inscription and is yet another

²⁰¹ DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology*, 62.

²⁰² DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology*, 70.

²⁰³ Edge and Paddock, 46-47.

²⁰⁴ The earliest recorded example of the prick spur dates to the ancient Greeks and Romans. Leonid Tarassuk and Claude Blair, eds., *The Complete Encyclopedia of Arms & Weapons* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 448-450; Edge and Paddock, 37.

²⁰⁵ DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology*, 46.

²⁰⁶ Tarassuk and Blair, 471.

example of spolia. Additionally, the earliest appearance of the kite shield dates to the late tenth century providing a *terminus post quem* for the soldier. The latest date for the straight prick spur is the end of the eleventh century providing a *terminus ante quem*. Although the possibility of intentional archaism may complicate firm dating, the specific attention to the number of eleventh century features, combined with the stylistic characteristics, argues strongly for an eleventh century date.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, the figure provides additional support, along with the inner jambs from the late eighth or early ninth century, that the Sovana portal consists of spolia from several periods.

While the foundation date of the hermitage in Vivo d'Orcia, between 1020 and 1080,²⁰⁸ confirms the above dating analysis based on military attire, it also assists in dating two of the other portal blocks at Sovana. The three relief blocks above the soldier at Vivo represent: a bifurcating tree with palm leaves on the lower section and an upper section with fruit hanging from spiral tendrils; a tripartite superimposed band of pseudo-interlacing; and a rosette flanked by plant motifs (figures 78 and 81). Thematically and stylistically these three blocks at Vivo resemble two blocks on the left jamb at Sovana—the spiral cross and affronting peafowl flanking a bifurcating tree bearing fruit from spiral tendrils (figures 54 and 55). The affronting peafowl have stylistic similarities to tenth century sculpture in their lack of feather detailing and raised border; however, the unmistakable resemblance to the Vivo jamb confirms an eleventh century date.

²⁰⁷ If intentional archaism was at work, it means the sculptor copied the stylistic *and thematic* similarities of the other carving on the jamb at Vivo d'Orcia, which seems highly unlikely.

²⁰⁸ On Vivo d'Orcia dating see: Umberto Tavanti, "L'Ermicciolo del Vivo sul Monte Amiata," *Bullettino senese di storia patria* 31 (1924): 54-55; Alfio Cortonesi and Gabriella Piccinni, eds., *L'eremo del Vivo fra dinamiche religiose e territoriali. Secolo XI - secolo XXI*, Atti del Convegno, Vivo d'Orcia, 5-6 ottobre 2002 (Arcidosso, 2004), 118, especially notes 6 and 7.

Furthermore, the depth of relief carving in both jambs presents evidence that the original intent was to carve the bottom level blocks in higher relief becoming progressively lower in relief in the higher blocks. This subtle variation of depth relates to the overall meaning of the portal and leads to our discussion on the iconography of the Sovana portal.

To summarize the issue of dating, the portal inscription of the cathedral of Sovana suggests an arrangement in either the twelfth or the fourteenth century under the supervision of one Bishop Pietro, either Pietro of 1153-1175 or 1380-1386. The political and economic decline of Sovana in the fourteenth century was unfavorable for building projects, while the twelfth century represented the city's era of greatest growth, thus favoring the twelfth-century Pietro. Moreover, the paleographic style of the lettering in the inscription, as well as the stylistic characteristics of certain blocks like the lions, also suggests the twelfth century. None of the sculpture resembles the fourteenth-century style of carving. Additionally, as previously established, the portal's proximity to the inner set of twelfth-century historiated capitals was by design, not an afterthought to accommodate the addition of the Bishop's palace. In terms of the spolia, this complicated issue is best addressed through the stylistic comparison presented in this section. The inner jambs, with the *horror vacui* aesthetic and lower relief, compare to late eighth- or early ninth-century examples, and the outer jambs—with a greater degree of modeled forms, higher relief, and the military attire—compare to other eleventh century sculpted examples.

Iconography

In the publications addressing the cathedral of Sovana only two discuss the overall meaning of the sculpture on the portal: one is a general guidebook with little explanation of the portal's relationship to the theme of salvation; the other provides an interesting analysis of the motifs as related to the celestial and mundane realms but stops short of tying the overall iconography together as a whole.²⁰⁹ Presumably, most scholars take the position that, since the portal is composed predominately of spolia, it does not exhibit iconographic unity, nor could it be considered a sculptural program. As recently defined by Bruno Boerner, a sculptural program implies that "series of figures are interrelated and based on a unifying concept, that they are not just an arbitrary collection of figures."²¹⁰ I contend that the portal of the cathedral of Sovana, as arranged by Bishop Pietro in the twelfth century, is anything but arbitrary and that all of the sculpture not only promotes the theological theme of salvation but does so in a unified and coherent manner. Not all of the sculpture was carved by the same sculptor or workshop, nor, as previously established, was it carved in the same time period; and yet in the inscription Bishop Pietro attests to 'seeing the portal made in a certain way,' in other words,

²⁰⁹ The only references to the overall iconography of the portal are: Italo Moretti and Renato Stopani, *Toscane Romane* (La Pierre-qui-Vire, Yonne: Zodiaque la nuit des temps, 1982), 198-199; and Feo and Carrucoli, 23-31, who mention the portal as a meaningful transition from the mundane to the spiritual realm and provide the fullest discussion of iconography prior to this study. Earlier sources on the portal: Baldini, 92-93; Salmi, *Romanesque Sculpture in Tuscany*, 26-27, refers to stylistic sources but says nothing about the portal's iconography; Biondi, 70, identifies the figure in the lunette as a soul but provides no further discussion of iconography; Salviati, 79-87, discusses individual motifs in terms of universal Christian iconography; Bernardini, 42-43, discussed the mermaid but due to the issue of spolia and the "urban" nature of Sovana, he considers Sovana outside the parameters of his study on rural churches of Tuscany.

²¹⁰ Bruno Boerner, "Sculptural Programs," in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 557.

directing the arrangement of the individual blocks of sculpture, even adding a few twelfth-century pieces that enhance the overall meaning. In effect, Bishop Pietro took what may have been arbitrary blocks of stone and assembled them into a sculptural program.

Most of the sculpture on the portal continues the traditions of Early Christian images of salvation. Sculpture of this type featured prominently in Early Christian mosaics and sarcophagi and spread throughout northern Italy during the Lombard and Carolingian periods to altars, chancel screens and ciboria. The symbols of salvation that are represented on the portal include: peafowl flanking the Sacred Tree; birds; the cross; spirals; sun and moon imagery; interlacing; rosettes; and the praying orant figure in the uppermost section of the outer archivolt. Each symbol can be interpreted individually, like the chapters in a book, or, in their current arrangement, they can be read as a whole, conveying a unified message. While a complete analysis of the origin of these symbols is outside the parameters of this study, I will begin with the “chapters” by briefly addressing each symbol’s meaning and then expanding the discussion to the “book” by concluding with an overall iconographic interpretation of the entire portal.

Celestial Realm

Many of the aforementioned symbols have pre-Christian origins and were adopted into the Christian lexicon of visual images.²¹¹ For example, the image of affronting birds

²¹¹ For more reading on Christian symbols see: Adolphe Napoléon Didron, *Christian Iconography; The History of Christian Art in the Middle Ages* (New York: F. Ungar Pub. Co, 1965); Gertrud Schiller,

flanking a sacred object such as a tree, fountain or vessel evolved from Eastern models and was first seen in Western sculpture in the fifth century.²¹² The subject represents the Early Christian theme of salvation as the birds symbolize the soul of the faithful drinking or eating from the sacred object, or source of life. In other words, the soul “hungers” for the divine and is fulfilled in the salvation of paradise. On the portal at Sovana, this subject is portrayed by two peafowl partaking of fruit from a sacred tree. In Early Christian and medieval art, the peacock represented the immortality of the soul and Christ’s Resurrection, notions that developed from a number of ancient texts, especially the accounts of Augustine and Isidore of Seville.²¹³ The association with immortality was

Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst ([Gütersloh]: Gütersloher Verlagshaus G. Mohn, 1966); André Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of Its Origins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968); James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); Heather Child and Dorothy Colles, *Christian Symbols Ancient and Modern: A Handbook for Students* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971); Emile Mâle and Harry Bober, *Religious Art in France: The Late Middle Ages: a Study of Medieval Iconography and Its Sources* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

²¹² Caroline Bruzelius, *The Brummer Collection of Medieval Art* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 142.

²¹³ Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 21:4; Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, 12:7.48. Moreover, the second-century, Greek text *Physiologus*—an account of ancient knowledge on animals—was the basis for a number of authors such as Pliny the Elder, Solinus, Horapollo. These texts in turn influenced the popular bestiaries of the Middle Ages providing information about the properties of animals, but presented as Christian analogies promoting virtue and condemning vice.

For more information on bestiaries see: Willene B. Clark and Meradith T. McMunn, *Beasts and Birds of the Middle Ages: The Bestiary and Its Legacy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989); Florence McCulloch, *Mediaeval Latin and French Bestiaries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960); Ron Baxter, *Bestiaries and Their Users in the Middle Ages* (London: Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1998); Debra Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, Image, Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Xenia Muratova, “The Bestiaries, an aspect of medieval patronage,” in *Art and Patronage in the English Romanesque*, S. Macready and F.H. Thompson, eds. (London, 1986): 118-144; Debra Hassig, ed., *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999). For a good online source with expanded bibliography see The Aberdeen Bestiary project at: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/>.

Hassig (*The Mark of the Beast*, xi) argues that direct access to these texts was not necessary for the people to be familiar with the stories which were available through other sources and through oral tradition; while Muratova does not believe bestiaries were universally popular.

For expanded discussions on birds see: Beryl Rowland, *Birds with Human Souls: A Guide to Bird Symbolism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1978); W. Brunsdon Yapp, *Birds in Medieval*

based on the ancient beliefs that the peacock's flesh never decayed, its incorruptibility analogous to Christ's renewal.²¹⁴ The bird as a symbol of the winged soul was represented in the earliest examples of Christian art and here, combined specifically with the peafowl, it symbolizes the immortal soul fed by the fruit produced from the spiral, bifurcating branches of a tree. More specifically, the tree symbolizes the one planted by God in the Garden of Eden that grants immortality, the Tree of Life (Genesis 3:22). The peafowl are nourished by the Tree, but as reputed destroyers of serpents, they also protect the Tree of Knowledge.²¹⁵ Therefore, the symbolism of the peafowl flanking the Tree of Life suggests the immortal soul nourished by the source of life, protecting it from evil, and finding eternal salvation in paradise.

Continuing with avian symbolism, the inner jambs of the portal of Sovana depict several birds interspersed among a varying array of rosettes. While the precise features of each bird are not specific, generally resembling doves, distinguishing the exact species is not necessary in understanding their symbolic meaning. The bird as a winged creature, like the peafowl, represents the faithful soul that rises to heaven after death. Their ability to take flight emphasizes the spiritual realm, as opposed to the material one. Surrounding the birds are individualized rosettes with unique petal designs. Throughout antiquity

Manuscripts (New York: Schocken Books, 1982); John Block Friedman, "Peacocks as Preachers: Analytic Technique in Marcus of Orvieto's *Liber de moralitatibus*, Vatican lat. MS 5935," in *Beasts and Birds of the Middle Ages: The Bestiary and Its Legacy*, Clark and McMunn, eds. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989); Hugh and Willene B. Clark, *The Medieval Book of Birds: Hugh of Fouilloy's Aviarium* (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1992).

²¹⁴ The peacock was also associated with pride when its tail feathers are opened in full display; when trailing on the ground or gathered, like Sovana, the bird was associated with immortality. See Yapp, 20; Friedman, "Peacocks and Preachers," 187; Child and Colles, 212.

²¹⁵ Rowland, *Birds with Human Souls*, 128.

rosettes were used as decoration, and here the floral imagery creates the paradisiacal setting for the saved soul. Another dimension of interpretation translates the rosettes as stars in the heavens in the context of the inner jambs. Often in sculpture of the pre-Romanesque period in the eighth and ninth centuries, specifically in stories referring to a star such as the Adoration of the Magi, the celestial symbol is represented in the form of a rosette. For example, in the eighth century altar of Duke Ratchis in Cividale, the three Magi follow the rosette-star of Bethlehem. Perhaps even more convincing is the scene of Christ in Majesty from the same altar with rosette-stars filling space around the angels supporting Christ's mandorla (figures 82 and 83). Either way—as rosettes or as stars—the inner jambs create an overall sense of paradise for the saved soul further enhanced by the wind- or wave-like pattern of the inner facing (figure 61).

While the inner jambs indicate the celestial realm of paradise, the single rosette on the uppermost section of the outer left jamb differs from the inner jamb rosettes in size, placement and style; therefore, this rosette suggests a different yet related meaning. In terms of its size and placement, this larger rosette is situated on the outer left jamb opposite the ringed circles of the outer right jamb. Stylistically it differs as well in the layering of designs and the v-shaped pattern of bursting rays in the outermost section. This rosette and the ringed circles relate to traditional images of the sun and the moon. As such, these symbols continue the celestial theme of the inner jambs, now on the outer jambs in the uppermost sections. The sun, as the source of light, fertility, and life, is also linked to the theme of resurrection when it sets and rises again each day. The sun and the moon were frequently depicted in early scenes of Christ's Crucifixion—including

narrative, personified and symbolic representations.²¹⁶ Several carved relief examples of the pre-Romanesque period—from the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries—represented these cosmic bodies in the form of a circle, a perfect shape with no beginning nor end, which was analogous to God. An eighth-century pluteo, or architectural balustrade, from the church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin in Rome depicts comparable iconography to the Sovana portal (figure 84). Flanking a central cross decorated with interlacing, two peacocks drink from sacred vessels above the cross arms while circular motifs representing the sun and the moon flank the cross below. The three ring bands encircling the whorl on the right repeat in the semi-circles of the upper register. Another pluteo, of the late eighth to early ninth century from the church of Santa Sabina in Rome, again represents an interlaced cross below a rounded arch with spiral vine tendrils and flanking plant motifs (figure 85). Flanking the cross, both beneath the arch and above in the spandrels, are a total of four medallions of rosette and whorl motifs suggesting the sun and the moon. At Sovana, the theme of a cross beneath the arch is symbolically represented by the physical cross plan of the church beneath the rounded arch of the portal, with a bursting sun on the left outer jamb and ringed circles representing the moon on the right outer jamb. Like the pluteo of Santa Sabina, these celestial bodies are repeated on the stepped capitals supporting Sovana's lintel.

²¹⁶ The *Rabbula Gospels*, sixth century, represents an early narrative translation of the Crucifixion scene. The *Lindau Gospels*, ninth century, and a tenth century ivory diptych in the Vatican collection (image: divinebalance.org, date accessed: 2/27/09) represent personified versions of the sun and the moon at the Crucifixion.

Another prominent Early Christian and pre-Romanesque symbol displayed on the Sovana portal is the spiral cross on the left jamb, below the affronting peafowl carving. The cross, perhaps the most universally recognized symbol of Christianity, in this setting is almost overpowered by four large spirals. Once the meaning of the spirals is understood, however, the symbolism of the cross is amplified by their presence. The Latin cross, which at this time was employed with equal frequency and meaning to the Greek cross, symbolizes Jesus Christ as the instrument of his death, and also salvation and redemption through him.²¹⁷ According to legend, the one True Cross of Christ's Crucifixion was discovered by Constantine's mother, Saint Helena. The Sovana cross, emerging from a small hill indicated by the semi-circular shape at the bottom, references the hill of Calvary and the site of Christ's Crucifixion. In this context the spirals also symbolize Christ. The spirals sprouting from the cross, as well as the flowing spirals along the lintel, are associated with the vine, or a coiled tendril before unfurling.²¹⁸ In the Bible, Christ references the vine in the following parable:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman...I am the vine and you are the branches;...whoever remains in me, and I in him, shall bear much fruit. If someone does not remain in me, let him be cast out like branches and dried, and they shall gather him up and throw him in the fire and he shall burn. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples (John 15:1-8).

²¹⁷ Child and Colles, 10; and Ferguson, 164.

²¹⁸ Another example of a sprouting object interpreted as a symbol of the Resurrection is the High Cross of Muiredach (c. 922) at Monasterboice in County Louth. One side depicts a Last Judgment scene where Christ carries a cross and a sprouting bough. Malcolm Bull, *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 74.

Thus the combination of the True Cross with spiraling vine tendrils merges symbolically into the Tree of Life as a powerful symbol of Christ who nourished the faithful in finding salvation. Similar imagery is found in the apse mosaic of the church of San Clemente in Rome where spiraling vine tendrils surround the central image of the Crucifixion (rebuilt after 1084, figure 86). Numerous examples of a spiral-cross type exist in sculpture of the pre-Romanesque period, frequently represented with spiral ends from the cross arms, although generally not as prominent as the vine spirals at Sovana and San Clemente (figures 87 and 88).²¹⁹

An interesting iconographic comparison to Sovana's Tree-of-Life-Cross is the tree-cross of an eighth-century memorial stone from San Salvatore in Vasanello (Lazio) (figure 89). Like Sovana and San Clemente, the Vasanello relief combines the symbols of the Tree of Life with the True Cross creating an axial image between heaven and Earth, an *axis mundi*. The Vasanello relief depicts a Latin cross emerging from a small hill, like Sovana, and sprouting branches from the top that are inhabited by two birds. The visual meaning literally depicts the earthly hill of Calvary transitioning through the True Cross symbolizing Christ as the path to the spiritual realm inhabited by saved souls. The Vasanello relief represents an early example of the *axis mundi* theme, visually translating the passage between terrestrial and celestial realms as providing spiritual nourishment,

²¹⁹ Other images of the spiral-cross motif include examples from: Lazio—Bomarzo, Tuscania, Liprignano; Arezzo—Monastero di S. Vincenzo, pieve of Santa Maria; Roma—Santa Maria in Aracoeli; Lucca—Badia-di-Cantignano; Amelia-Narni—S. Firmina e Olimpiade.

salvation and redemption through Christ, and perhaps influencing later examples such as Sovana, San Clemente and the jamb relief at Vivo d'Orcia (figure 81).²²⁰

Above the spiral cross, and part of the same carved block of stone of the Sovana portal, is a face with spiky hair and large grin. Due to its juxtaposition above the positive imagery of the spiral cross, this seemingly enigmatic figure becomes clearer based on its context. Interpreting the spiral cross as a symbol of the transition from the lower terrestrial realm to the upper celestial realm positions the face in the spiritual domain, thus suggesting that it represents Christ with radiating hair, like Early Christian Helios figures. The human head of Christ is suspended over the symbolic representation of him as the vine on the cross. In a recent publication discussing the sculpture of Sovana, Giovanni Feo interprets the two images together but more generally as the head of a man with a geometric body in the form of the spiral cross below. Feo suggests that this image represents the union of earth and sky as the four points of the cross equate to the earthly realm and the single head to the divine (4+1).²²¹ Feo's argument is compelling; however, I suggest that the imagery is more specific in its representation of Christ with the spiral cross symbolizing his body and his face above.

²²⁰ Ischia di Castro (Lazio), ninth century, represents an additional iconographic comparison to the themes on the portal of Sovana attesting to the popularity of Early Christian symbols—such as: peacocks expressing the idea of immortality; birds representing salvation of the soul; rosettes and circles as sun, moon and celestial symbols of heaven and paradise; and spiral-crosses representing the vine as Christ and salvation through his sacrifice. The juxtaposition of these same images as the portal of Sovana emphasizes the interconnectedness of these symbols. The whorl on the Ischia di Castro relief resembles several of the whorl patterns in the tympanum at Sovana suggesting a cosmic interpretation of this motif and the other rosettes of the tympanum and inner jamb capitals.

²²¹ Feo and Carrucoli, 26-28.

Symbols of the celestial realm on the portal of Sovana continue with the array of blocks depicted in the tympanum. The uppermost section of the tympanum represents additional rosette and whorl motifs, akin to the stars in heaven. The lower section of the tympanum consists of four blocks carved with interlacing interspersed with rosettes. Interlacing is typically not listed in the scholarship on Christian symbols and yet it was ubiquitous—in fact it was so widespread in use, it is difficult to dismiss as the artist’s fancy or mere decoration. Based on the number of relief carvings from the pre-Romanesque period with interlacing patterns decorating the cross, like the pluteo of Santa Sabina (figure 85), it is likely an extension of the vine and a symbolic reference to Christ and sacrifice. Interlacing, however, also served another function with origins outside the realm of apparent Christian symbols—it served to ward off evil and to protect. The apotropaic nature of interlacing stems from the complex weaving of bands that would “confuse” or “trick” evil, thus averting its spread. In Late Latin, used between the third and eighth centuries, one of the words for amulet was *ligatura*, meaning “something tied, a knot”—also meaning “charm or spell” from *ligare* meaning “to tie, bind, wind around.”²²² An amulet was seen as something with continued protective powers and the Late Latin word itself was associated with knotting and interlacing. Thus we see sculpture used as a carved amulet protecting the portals, windows, cloisters, and elsewhere on the interior and exterior of churches throughout the Middle Ages, not to mention the written page of countless illuminated manuscripts.

²²² Ruth Mellinkoff, *Averting Demons* (Los Angeles: Ruth Mellinkoff Publications, 2004), 163 and 184 note 15.

Interlacing is not the only apotropaic motif possibly at work on the Sovana portal—the stylized acanthus leaf motif of the capitals may also have functioned as a protective device. Plants have long held properties of nourishment, healing, beauty, symbolism and protection. Pliny the Elder in his *Naturalis Historia* discussed the apotropaic properties of the acanthus plant and its use as a *amuletum*.²²³ Spiky plants especially, like acanthus, hold protective qualities in their use as a barrier to keep people or animals safe within or at bay.²²⁴ As such, the Corinthian capitals of spiky acanthus leaves would provide protection to the Sovana portal and, by extension, faithful Christians. Spiky plants in a Christian context also act as reminders of the crown of thorns and Christ’s sacrifice for mankind.

Terrestrial Realm

Saving the final celestial reference for the end as it relates to the overall meaning of the portal iconography, we turn our attention to the two representatives of the terrestrial world: the mermaid on the lower left jamb; and the soldier on the lower right jamb. The mermaid, displayed at eye level before one ascends the stairs to enter the cathedral, initially seems boldly pagan for such prominent placement on an entrance to a Christian church. In actuality, there are numerous examples of mermaids in Christian art and, in the environs of Tuscany, a surprising number of sculpted mermaids feature

²²³ Gaius Plinius Secundus, *Naturalis Historia*, trans. Rackham, 8 vols., (London: Heinemann, 1969), section xxv, 115.

²²⁴ L.J.A. Loewenthal, “Amulets in Medieval Sculpture: I. General Outline,” *Folklore*, 89/1 (1978): 7-8.

prominently on churches from the eighth through the twelfth centuries.²²⁵ In recent years, scholars have attempted to identify the meaning of these mythical maritime maidens with varying results.

In the Middle Ages, the half-fish mermaid was conflated with other hybrid female types such as the half-bird and half-snake and they were all known as “sirens.”²²⁶ In the Classical world, the mermaid and the siren were separate and, in fact, antithetical in nature. The sirens of Homer’s *Odyssey* lured sailors with their enchanting song and wiles, ultimately leading these men to their destruction. Likewise sirens, as the daughters of Chthonia goddess of the underworld, attracted men through seduction, again to the kingdom of death.²²⁷ Conversely, the earliest references to mermaids associated her with fertility, fish goddesses, Venus, and the zodiac sign Pisces.²²⁸ To the Etruscans, the mermaids featured on vases, mirrors, votive bronzes and tomb carvings connect to the mother goddess cult and provided protection.²²⁹ One of the most important examples of Hellenic funerary work is the Tomb of the Siren, third to second century BCE, located in the southwest necropolis of Sovana.²³⁰ Thus, the mermaid, as a positive symbol of protection, had long guarded Sovana and its citizens, in this world and the next.

²²⁵ For example: on the tympanum of Santa Maria in Tuscania; on the lintel of the parish church in Corsignano (Pienza); on the pulpit of San Pietro in Gropina; on the lintel of San Martino in Lucca; on a portal capital of the Collegiate Church in San Quirco d’Orcia; on a nave capital in San Cipriano in Codiponte; a capital in the church of Santa Maria Chianni in Gambassi Terme (FI), the jamb of San Pietro in Vallore.

²²⁶ Wilfred P. Mustard, “Siren-Mermaid,” *Modern Language Notes* 23/1 (Jan., 1908): 21-24; E. Faral “La queue de poisson des Sirens,” *Romania* 74 (1953): 433-506; D. Jalabert “Recherches sur la faune et la flore romanes, II, Les sirens,” *Bulletin monumental* 95 (1936): 433-71.

²²⁷ Bernardini, 44.

²²⁸ Rowland, *Birds with Human Souls*, 139-141; Mellinkoff, *Averting Demons*, 63.

²²⁹ Bernardini, 46.

²³⁰ The tomb was named in a period when the terms “mermaid,” “siren” and “scylla” were conflated. The

By the Middle Ages, however, the mermaid and siren of the ancient world had merged forming a powerful symbol of sin. The figure of the fish-tailed female had combined with the evil temptress who used fleshy lust to bring destruction to man. This interpretation is particularly relevant to the double-tailed mermaid with split and upturned tails grasped in each hand, a type that did not exist in classical mythology but derived from the East.²³¹ The split tails of the mermaid parallel the split legs of genital displaying figures of the medieval period, known as “Sheela-na-gigs,” or exhibitionist type figures. Sexually explicit sculpture of this nature reached the zenith of production in the twelfth century; however, most of the extant examples are found along the pilgrimage routes in France, Spain and the British Isles. The most famous example is the Sheela-na-gig, or Sheela figure, from Kilpeck in Herefordshire, England.²³² Current scholarship focuses on three main interpretive meanings for these types of exhibitionist sculptures found on

female figure on the Etruscan tomb of Sovana is actually a scylla, not a siren. Further reading see: Joseph Coleman Carter, “The Tomb of the Siren,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 78/2 (April 1974): 131-139.

²³¹ Veronica Berry, “Neapolitan Charms Against the Evil Eye,” *Folklore*, 79/4 (Winter 1968): 255-256, identifies Assyrian, Near and Middle Eastern examples.

²³² Sheelas-na-gig scholarship began in the nineteenth century with Irish antiquarians—for a survey of this topic see Marian Bleeker, *Situating Sheela-na-gigs: The Female Body and Social Significance in Romanesque Sculpture* (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2001), 11-42.

For more expanded discussions of the Sheela-na-gigs and sexual carvings found on Romanesque churches as a genre see: Jørgen Andersen, *The Witch on the Wall: Medieval Erotic Sculpture in the British Isles* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1977); Anthony Weir and James Jerman, *Images of Lust: Sexual Carvings on Medieval Churches* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1986); James O'Connor, *Sheela Na Gig* (Tipperary: Fethard Historical Society, 1991); Eamonn P. Kelly, *Sheela-Na-Gigs: Origins and Functions* (Dublin: Country House in association with the National Museum of Ireland, 1996); Juliette Dor, “The Sheela-na-Gig: An Incongruous Sign of Sexual Purity?” in *Medieval Virginites*, eds. Anke Bernau, Ruth Evans, and Sarah Salih (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2003); Barbara Freitag, *Sheela-na-gigs: Unravelling an Enigma* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Marian Bleeker, “Sheelas, Sex, and Significance in Romanesque Sculpture: The Kilpeck Corbel Series,” *Studies in Iconography* 26 (2005): 1-26. In recent years, a number of websites with good images have developed on this topic: Anthony Weir created the Satan in the Groin site: www.beyond-the-pale.org.uk; John Harding’s site primarily deals with the United Kingdom: www.sheelanagig.org; Gay Cannon’s site provides examples in Ireland: www.irelands-sheelanagigs.org.

medieval churches: first, in relation to the female figures, the Sheela-na-gigs are associated with fertility;²³³ second, the hideous and vulgar qualities of male and female figures are seen as apotropaic;²³⁴ and third, others see them as images commenting on medieval morality, in particular as personifications of the sins lust (*Luxuria*) and greed (*Advaritas*).²³⁵

Medieval theologians and writers clearly established a view of the mermaid as sinful, evil, a force of the devil, a symbol of vice, lust and worldly temptation. To the Church Fathers and historians, the meaning of the mermaid-siren was quite clear—they were temptresses using sexual wiles to bring about death and destruction. In St. Jerome’s (d. 420) translation of the Bible, Isaiah 13:21-22, the sirens dance with satyrs and other wild animals to the destruction of Babylon, even saying “*sirenes in delubris voluptatis*” or “the sirens took pleasure in the temple.”²³⁶ Isidore of Seville, seventh century, in his *Etymologies* (Book 11, 3:30-31 or Book 12, 4:29), recorded that some believed sirens to play music and sing men to their death, but this according to Isidore was untrue. Instead he stated that sirens were ‘prostitutes’ who led travelers to poverty. While Honorius of Auton (d. 1130) maintains their musical enticement, he also links the mermaid to vice in the following quote: “the singing mermaid was avarice, the pipe-player was pride, and the siren who plucked the lyre was lechery....the three delights which soften the human

²³³ Freitag (*Sheela-na-gigs: Unravelling an Enigma*) is one of the main proponents of this interpretation.

²³⁴ See the work of Jørgen Andersen; Mellinkoff; and Ronald Sheridan and Anne Ross, *Gargoyles and Grotesques: Paganism in the Medieval Church* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975).

²³⁵ See Weir and Jerman.

²³⁶ John L. Ward “Hidden Symbolism in Jan van Eyck’s *Annunciation*,” *Art Bulletin* 57/4 (1975): 202; Rowland, *Birds with Human Souls*, 140.

heart to vice and lead it to the sleep of death.”²³⁷ The bestiaries also identify the mermaid with vice and the moral message that those who enjoy earthly pleasures will become the Devil’s prey. An additional moral caution from the bestiaries related to mermaids luring sailors to their doom which was equated to Christians being warned not to be lured by false doctrines.

Based on the medieval writings warning against mermaids and the sexually explicit nature of her split-tail pose, the mermaid depicted on the cathedral of Sovana in the lower and outermost section of the portal is a symbol of sin in the terrestrial realm. In direct binary opposition across from the mermaid on the portal is the figure of a medieval soldier with sword raised in the attack of such sin. As previously discussed, the type of sword, shield, spur, the lack of a saddle, and comparative stylistic analysis to a similar soldier at Vivo d’Orcia, help date the carving of this figure to the eleventh century. Curiously missing from the Sovana soldier’s military accoutrements, however, are stirrups and a helmet. The stirrup, introduced in western Europe probably in the eighth century, represented a major technological advancement in warfare where both the stability and agility of the rider to wield his weapon was greatly improved. Charles Martel (circa 688-741), the Frankish leader who fought against the Muslim invasion of his lands, insisted that his soldiers adopt the stirrup as part of their military equipment due to its effectiveness in battle.²³⁸ The helmet, known from archeological sites as well as

²³⁷ Honorius CLXXII, cols. 855-57, *MPL*, Migne, 22 vols., (Paris, 1844-1864); Rowland, *Birds with Human Souls*, 141.

²³⁸ DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology*, 46-47 and 100-101. In fact, the invention of the stirrup became the basis for White’s thesis on the development of feudalism, see Lynn T. White, “Stirrup, Mounted Shock

numerous depictions in art, from earliest times was a necessary form of protection for anyone heading into combat. In the eleventh century, the conical style of helmet, minus the Norman nasal guard as represented in the *Bayeux Tapestry*, was the most common type;²³⁹ but a helmet is clearly absent from the soldier at Sovana. The fact that two such vitally important components of military gear are missing suggest that this soldier is not about actual warfare but symbolic of a soldier as a type and his struggle against sin as represented by the mermaid directly across the portal. The emphasis of this figure is on his sword held high above his head and on his shield in the direct center of the composition. The shield for protection and the sword, considered the most revered weapon of the eleventh century, served as an emblem of authority, status, and the instrument by which God's will could be attained on Earth.²⁴⁰

The earliest prototypes for armed soldiers on cathedrals was thoroughly discussed in Linda Seidel's study on the Romanesque façades of the Aquitaine region of France, where numerous examples of this subject exist from the eleventh and twelfth centuries.²⁴¹ Seidel identified sources for the transmission of architectural and sculptural forms from classical Rome to the Middle Ages while also specifying two prominent themes: victory over death; and the struggle between Virtue and Vice. Medieval examples of the 'soldiers of Christ' theme were represented in the images of Saint Michael and Saint Martin of Tour depicted in classical guise. Classical examples of mounted soldiers depicted in

Combat, Feudalism, and Chivalry," in *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

²³⁹ Edge and Paddock, 17-18.

²⁴⁰ DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology*, 20-22; Edge and Paddock, 24-25.

²⁴¹ Linda Seidel, *Songs of Glory: The Romanesque Façades of Aquitaine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

manuscripts, ivories, metalwork, and stone provided the precedence for the continuation of this subject in art. The transmission of the soldier-model through intermediary periods such as the Carolingian Empire strove to revive classical ideals of honor, strength and virtue. Both Constantine and Charlemagne were seen in the Middle Ages as exemplars of the Christian soldier fighting for righteousness. Moreover, by the end of the eleventh century many writers in the circle of Pope Gregory VII had written polemic material in support of papal reform initiatives which specifically cited the glorious triumph of Constantine as a “Golden Age.”²⁴² Although the soldier on the portal of Sovana was carved prior to the dissemination of these texts, by the time the portal was arranged by Bishop Pietro in the twelfth century, the meaning of the soldier had been transformed. While continuing the theme of a Christian soldier as an emblem of virtue fighting against vice and sin, by the twelfth century, the soldier may have also been interpreted as a member of the lay clergy taking up arms to fight against the enemies of the Roman Church.

The missing elements of military gear on the soldier of Sovana may specifically reference these themes. In the traditional view of Virtue fighting Vice, like the military leaders of the classical Roman past, the lack of stirrups may be a reference to Constantine who fought prior to the invention of the device. The most famous sculpted example of Constantine is the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, misidentified in the Middle Ages and placed in front of the church of Saint John the Lateran in Rome as a monument to the

²⁴² Bonizo of Sutri, *Liber ad amicum*, II-III (*MGH Libelli*, i). For an English translation see Robinson, *Papal*, 162-175.

first Christian Emperor—the lack of stirrups is evident in the statue (figure 90). In a Carolingian equestrian statue referencing the classical past, stirrups were also not included. Notably this sculpture was created after the stirrup's eighth-century invention and later used by the Franks' own patriarch, Charles Martel (figure 91). The lack of stirrups on the Sovana soldier may have been a conscious effort to link this defender of morality to the virtuous ideals of the classical past.

Similarly, the lack of a helmet may intentionally draw attention to the figure's hair, cut with a distinctive edge, like a Roman tonsure (figure 92).²⁴³ The tonsure, most frequently associated with the clergy, was also used to indicate soldiers who remained in the world to fight for the church and who also took monastic vows. This type of soldier of Christ epitomized the ideal in the discourse of Pope Gregory VII and his supporters; however, they changed the paradigm of a soldier of Christ that existed in the writings of St. Paul,²⁴⁴ the *Rule* of St. Benedict, and the *Life* of St. Martin of Tours. In earlier models, the soldiers of Christ forfeited their arms, like St. Martin, or as Christ said to Peter, "Put

²⁴³ The Roman tonsure consisted of a sharply shaved line high above the ears and a shaved circle around the crown of the head. The shaved crown was meant to symbolize Christ's crown of thorns, while the overall design modeled Saint Peter's pattern of balding. In two-dimensional images of the Romanesque period, such as the *Bayeux Tapestry* and numerous manuscript examples, the shaved circular crown is clearly indicated to distinguish clerical tonsures from the high ear cut common to hairstyles of the day. In sculpted examples of the period, however, the circular shave is not clearly distinguished and in some cases not even visible. One such example from the monastery of San Pietro in Valle, Ferentillo (approximately 80 miles east of Sovana), a sculpted representation of Saint Peter distinguishes the high cut over the ears but does not indicate the shaved crown. Three other examples of relief sculpture in close proximity to Sovana also show the high shave over the ears but not the crown. One is another figure of Saint Peter, in this case in profile, from Romena (see figure 112). The second is a sacred figure reading from a text on the ambo of Gropina. The third example is two orant figures from Ponte allo Spino. These examples, like the soldier at Sovana, cast some doubt on a definitive identification of a Roman tonsure. It is the height of the shave over the ears and the close attention to this particular detail that leads to my conclusion that it is a Roman tonsure cut for the soldier at Sovana.

²⁴⁴ 2 Timothy 2:3-4.

your sword away!”²⁴⁵ This concept of the sheathed sword changed in the writings of Gregory VII to armed conflict with material weapons all in the interests of Saint Peter and in defense of the Church. In the writings of Gregory VII he used terms like *militia Christi* (the warfare of Christ), *servitium sancti Petri* (the service of Saint Peter), and *fideles beati Petri* (the vassals of Saint Peter), to enlist laymen to take up arms to defend the Church in the name of Saint Peter.²⁴⁶ There were models for these ideal soldiers championed in the writings of Gregory’s supporters, such as Saint Gerald of Aurillac, who tonsured his head, gave up women to live a celibate life, but also remained in the world taking up arms to fight for the ideals of the Church.²⁴⁷ Other examples of the transformed soldier of Christ were described by Bonizo of Sutri (d. 1090) in his history of the Church where he details the lives of the knight Herlembald of Milan and the Roman prefect Cencio.²⁴⁸ Both men were killed in the 1070s by the enemies of Gregory, and, as Bonzio described them, were martyrs for the ideals of Gregorian reform. Gregory had persuaded Cencio against becoming a monk, for Gregory wanted all men of secular power to remain in the world to fight for Saint Peter, as opposed to retreating to the monastic realm. In a letter from Gregory to Abbot Hugh of Cluny, the pontiff admonished the abbot for accepting Duke Hugh I of Burgundy into the monastic cloister

²⁴⁵ John 18:11.

²⁴⁶ Erdmann, 201-228; Robinson, “Gregory VII and the Soldiers of Christ,” 178-179.

²⁴⁷ Saint Gerald of Aurillac, c. 855 – 909, was the subject of a biography by Odo of Cluny (d. 942), *De vita Sancti Geraldii Auriliacensis comitis Libri Quattuor*. Since Gregory VII spent time at Cluny before becoming pope, he most certainly had access to Odo’s text in the abbey’s library. Odo of Cluny, “The Life of Saint Gerald of Aurillac,” trans. Gerard Sitwell, in *Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints’ Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Thomas Noble and Thomas Head (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995): 293-295.

²⁴⁸ Bonizo of Sutri, *Liber ad amicum*, VI-VIII; Robinson, *Papal Reform*, 196-245.

of Cluny.²⁴⁹ It is clear that Gregory wanted as many secular “vassals of Saint Peter” as possible to fight against attacks on the Roman Church. Gregory quoted Jeremiah (48:10) ten times in his register: “cursed is the man who keeps back his sword from bloodshed!” Gregory’s support of armed combat by soldiers of Christ to defend the Roman Church became the foundation of Crusading ideals.

As art carries multiple meanings, so too does the soldier on the portal of Sovana. In the early Middle Ages, the clergy fought against vice with metaphorical weapons as suggested by this tenth century charter: “The abbot is armed with spiritual weapons and supported by a troop of monks....They fight together in the strength of Christ with the sword of the spirit against the cunning of the invisible devils of the air.”²⁵⁰ From the tenth century when this statement was recorded, to the eleventh century when the Sovana soldier represented a virtuous soldier fighting against sin as personified by the mermaid directly across the portal, to the twelfth century when the portal sculpture was arranged, the sentiments regarding spiritual men taking up arms to fight against sin had intensified.²⁵¹ By the twelfth century a tonsured soldier with raised arms represented the ideal soldier of Christ who literally took up weapons to fight against enemies of the Roman Church.

²⁴⁹ Gregory VII, *Registrum*, 6.17; for an English translation see Emerton, 138-139.

²⁵⁰ Quote from the 966 foundation charter of the New Minster at Winchester, in Robinson, “Gregory VII and the Soldiers of Christ,” 178.

²⁵¹ For a similar interpretation of soldiers in art in the Aquitaine region of France see Anat Tcherikover, “Concerning Angoulême, Riders and the Art of the Gregorian Reform,” *Art History* 13/4 (Dec., 1990): 425-457.

Spolia

Thus far the discussion regarding the iconography of the carved sculpture on the portal of Sovana has addressed works of art called spolia. The term spolia, now removed for its original anachronistic meanings of the “spoils” or booty “stripped” by force, has entered a new era of scholarly research that addresses the political and religious implications of reused building materials.²⁵² The publications of Dale Kinney analyze the implications of using spolia for intentional meaning.²⁵³ The reuse of old building materials goes beyond notions related to lack of skill, resources or time. The inscription on the portal of Sovana attests to Bishop Pietro’s pride in seeing that the portal was constructed in a particular way thus suggesting that there is significance to his arrangement. The reuse of older building materials, especially in church construction, implies a psychological or metaphysical transferring of authority from an older consecrated site to the new—in a sense empowering the new structure with the legitimacy of the old. In many ways, this concept relates directly to the mission of the Pope Gregory VII in his directives to his followers, whom he commissioned to write canonical treatises expressing his hereditary authority to reign over all matters of church and state as empowered by Saint Peter through Christ. Gregory’s wishes are more fully

²⁵² Dale Kinney, “The Concept of Spolia,” In *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006): 233. This article provides an excellent historiography of spolia.

²⁵³ Dale Kinney, “The Evidence for the Dating of S. Lorenzo in Milan,” *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 31/2 (May, 1972): 92-107; Kinney “Spolia from the Baths of Caracalla in Sta. Maria in Trastevere” *The Art Bulletin* 68/3 (Sep., 1986): 379-397; Kinney “Roman architectural Spolia” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 145/2 (June, 2001): 138-161; Charles B. McClendon and Dale Kinney, “The Origins of Medieval Architecture: Building in Europe, A.D. 600-900,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 67/3 (2008): 443.

expressed in the series of historiated capitals directly inside the portal, and the discussion of the next chapter. The portal, in its reuse of building materials from earlier times, is like the soldier in that both revive sentiments associated with earlier days—the “Golden Age” of Constantine and the authority of the early church.

Twelfth-Century Lions

One of the new sections of the portal added in the twelfth century is the pair of lions situated under the outer archivolt and above the outer jambs. The expression of fierce beasts is somewhat belied by the stylized manes and whiskers; however, the bared teeth and conquered rams on the left communicate the power associated with the lion as the king of all beasts. The lion is a ubiquitous symbol in medieval art with polyvalent meaning derived from the Bible, bestiaries, pagan tradition, and heraldry, among others.²⁵⁴ Early depictions reflect the apotropaic qualities of these powerful beasts while biblical accounts equate the lion with Christ.²⁵⁵ Based on characteristics ascribed to the lion in the *Physiologus* and the bestiaries, the lion was a symbol of Christ’s Incarnation, death and Resurrection. In Apocalypse 5:5, Christ the “Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed.” This emphasis on bloodline, leadership, power, and

²⁵⁴ On the ubiquitous representations of lions in the Middle Ages see the following two studies: Charles J.P. Cave, *Roof Bosses in Medieval Churches* (Cambridge [EN]: Cambridge University Press, 1948), found lions to be the most common animal in the roof boss context; Carola Hicks, *Animals in Early Medieval Art* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), found the lion second only to birds in the animals of the *Bayeux Tapestry*.

²⁵⁵ Ezekiel 19:1-9 resents a parable of the lion and power; and Genesis 49:9 tells of the lion of the tribe of Judah prophesying Jacob’s direct bloodline will produce the next messiah.

victory made the lion a popular heraldic symbol throughout Europe, and, in relation to Sovana, of the Aldobrandeschi family.

The representation of lions on the portals of Italian churches in the eleventh and twelfth centuries became particularly prominent as a symbol of authority. Specifically associated with the development of the porch style of portal in northern Italy, lions also became incorporated into portals throughout Italy and into Provence. Whitney Stoddard's research makes significant connections to judiciary activities that took place *inter leones* as symbols of authority and justice.²⁵⁶ In Christine Verzár Bornstein's research on the porch style portal, she presents the interconnectedness of legal matters, patronage from Matilda of Tuscany and the physical expression of papal allegiance during the Investiture Controversy.²⁵⁷ By the twelfth century lions positioned in a portal like Sovana seem particularly associated with judgment in an authoritative context. Lions had long been linked with imperial symbols and judgment, like the lions decorating the throne of Solomon.²⁵⁸ As the reformers in the papal party co-opted imperial symbols into their lexicon of authoritative imagery, the lion and its associations with royalty and justice developed stronger meaning to the Roman Church.²⁵⁹ Polemic supporters of the papacy referred to the popes in terms previously reserved for kings. Bruno of Segni compared Pope Leo IX to a lion who had conquered and "become the most courageous of the

²⁵⁶ Whitney S. Stoddard, *The Façade of Saint-Gilles-Du-Gard: Its Influence on French Sculpture* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 54.

²⁵⁷ Bornstein, *Portals and Politics*, 36; Christine Verzár Bornstein, "Matilda of Canossa, Papal Rome and the Earliest Italian Porch Portals," in *Romanico padano, Romanico europeo* (Modena, 1977), 143-158.

²⁵⁸ Bornstein, "Matilda of Canossa," 155, note 4.

²⁵⁹ An area for further study regarding the Romanesque portals of Italy is the possible correlation between the increase of lion image and the Gregorian reform agenda. The area of Rome containing the basilica of Saint Peter's and headquarters of the Roman church was called the Leonine City, or *Civitas Leonina*.

beasts,” a description perhaps also playing on the name of ‘Leo’ as lion.²⁶⁰ Paul of Bernried called Pope Gregory VII “righteous” and “bold as a lion.”²⁶¹ In the political and religious sphere of the twelfth century, church decorations expressed allegiance to the papacy by symbolically acknowledging the Church’s bloodline, authority and wisdom.

As the polemic supporters of the papacy derived precedence from ancient models in their writings, so too did the sculptors and their theological advisors in the art of the twelfth century. The lion, based on ancient models, served as an atlas figure supporting the Earth or heavens. One of the earliest models of this theme in the Middle Ages is the frontispiece to St. Augustine’s *Questiones in Hepteuchon*, where two lions support an arch framing a cross (circa 750, figure 93).²⁶² Firstly, the manuscript is a copy of a work by Augustine, one of the Church Fathers whose texts were frequently referenced by the polemic writers who were supporting the papacy. Secondly, the basic format of lions supporting an arch which frames a cross, symbolic of Christ, reiterates the basic structure of the portal at Sovana. On the portal, the lions, as *altante* figures, support the archivolt—symbolic of heaven—and below or through the portal arch is the cruciform plan of the church itself, symbolic of Christ. Other works of art with comparable structures in two dimensional form include: the *Sacramentary of Gelasius* (circa 750, figure 94); the pluteo relief from Santa Sabina in Rome (ninth century, figure 85); an altar relief from Santa Maria in Aracoeli (ninth century, figure 95); and a pluteo from San Pietro in Tuscania

²⁶⁰ Bruno of Segni, *Libellus de symoniaci*, *MGH Libelli* 2, 543-562. For an English translations see Robinson, *Papal and Reform*, 380.

²⁶¹ Paul of Bernried, *Vita Gregorii VII papae*, ed. J.M. Watterich, *Pontificum Romanorum Vitae* 1 (Leipzig, 1862), 474-545. For an English translations see Robinson, *Papal and Reform*, 264.

²⁶² Bornstein, “Matilda of Canossa,” 155, note 4.

(ninth century, figure 96). In all of these examples, the arch frames a cross below, which is analogous to the arch of a church portal framing the entrance to the cruciform plan of the church.

Overall Meaning

In the heavenly section of the outer archivolt, supported by the lion altante figures, is the final sculpted piece of the portal—an orant figure just to the right of the keystone. This figure relates to the overall meaning of the iconographic program of the portal at Sovana, as the whole portal is a visual expression of how one attains access to the kingdom of heaven. The orant figure, with hands raised in a traditional gesture of praise and prayer, represents the saved soul in the heavenly realm of the arch but is also significantly next to the keystone. In this sense, the keystone is Christ, the central block physically locking the arch into place and metaphorically the key to salvation. Another visual example of this theme is the tympanum in the narthex of Sainte Madeleine in Vézelay where Christ's head replaces the keystone of the inner archivolt (figure 97). Romanesque art in France tended to be more literal with visual imagery, while in Italy the themes are more symbolic. According to the scriptures of John (10:9) "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture." The portal, as Christ, is symbolic of the gateway to salvation by entering the church, the heavenly Jerusalem, where the faithful will find peace. As Calvin Kendall noted in his study on verse inscriptions of Romanesque portals, the voice of most Latin texts is not in first person from the patron, sculptor, or theological advisor guiding the masons; instead,

the inscriptions come from the voice of God.²⁶³ The portal, therefore, is a message from God to the viewer. In affirmation of this point, the visual language also speaks directly to the viewer, as one faces the church; for example, the symbolism of the terrestrial figures on the portal at Sovana—the representation of sin is on the left, or “sinister” side, and the symbol of virtue, the soldier, is on the right.²⁶⁴ While many portals of the Romanesque period maintain traditional left-right symbolism from the perspective of Christ depicted in a sculpted scene over the entrance, at Sovana, the perspective of left-right symbolism is dictated by the viewer as one enters the cathedral; thus the imagery speaks directly to the viewer.

The overall message of the iconographic program on the portal of Sovana is conveyed on multiple levels as one reads the images from left to right, bottom to top, and from the outside moving in. The terrestrial realm of the sinful mermaid on the left and virtuous soldier on the right is also expressed by a greater height of relief carving. These figures are literally more corporeal than the other carvings which become lower in relief as they progress upward and inward. The inner jambs are uniformly carved in a shallow, even relief decorated with birds and rosette-stars of the heavenly realm. Moreover, the inner and outer archivolts, with the exception of the saved orant soul, are smooth ashlar blocks, in a sense with no physical depth at all in the highest celestial realm. On the left outer jamb above the mermaid is the symbol of the *axis mundi*, or the Latin cross that transforms into the spiraling vine of Christ’s body and face above. The sinful must repent

²⁶³ Kendall, 96.

²⁶⁴ John Williams, “Generaciones Abrahæ: Reconquest Iconography in León,” *Gesta* 16/2 (1977): 10, noted a similar reversal of left-right symbols on the portal in León.

to Christ before moving upward to be nourished in the sacred realm, symbolized by the affronting peafowl eating from the Sacred Tree. Above the peafowl are blocks symbolizing the winds and the sun, occupying the highest position on the jambs. From the terrestrial realm of the soldier on the right outer jamb, the virtuous move upward directly into the celestial realm of the moon symbols. The atlante lions supporting the archivolt of heaven reign over different symbols. On the left, the lion's paws press down on the heads of two rams; on the right, the lion's head emerges from stylized acanthus leaves. The different symbols relate to the left-right symbolism of the entire portal. Isidore of Seville wrote that the lion "spares those who prostrate themselves."²⁶⁵ On the right side of the portal, the path to salvation is clear, literally and figuratively, to the virtuous all the way up to the orant next to the keystone of Christ. While on the left side of the portal, the path to salvation means sinners, like the suppressed rams, must repent to enter the heavenly kingdom.²⁶⁶ The iconographic program of the portal at Sovana builds from layers of visual symbols and their placement to create an overall message regarding the path to salvation through Christ.

In the twelfth century when this portal was arranged, the means to salvation through the portal and Christ took on new meaning. Through the expressed views of Pope Gregory VII and the dissemination of his reform ideology by way of his polemic supporters, the soldier of Christ had transformed into a new ideal of virtue, one that directly confronted the enemies of the Roman Church. The lions above symbolized the

²⁶⁵ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, 12.2.6.

²⁶⁶ Kendall (126-128) identified a similar reading of the verse inscription and symbols on the Jaca tympanum.

papacy and its judicial authority based on antique models. The portal at Sovana in its arrangement communicates both themes of support for the Roman Church and salvation.

As one enters the cathedral of Sovana, the portal speaks directly to the viewer with a message of virtue triumphing over vice and the course one must take to attain eternal peace in the celestial realm of the heavenly Jerusalem inside the church. The portal marks a physical and metaphorical transition of realms and the sculptural program of the cathedral of Sovana provides visual symbols guiding the faithful to the path of salvation.

Chapter 4: INTERIOR SCULPTURE

The goal of this chapter is to identify the historiated capitals of the cathedral of Sovana as a sculptural program in association with the polemic discourse of the Investiture Controversy as well as a visual program supporting the crusading agenda of the Church. The sculpture on the interior of the cathedral of Sovana is located at two consistent points: beneath each clerestory window is a horizontal cornice of spiraling vine scroll; and each of the piers and engaged columns has a decorated capital. The capitals can be divided generally into three categories. One group includes a variety of geometric motifs and motifs based on nature: such as spirals, interlacing, rosettes, triangles, and zigzags; and trees and leaves. A second group consists of animals and humans including bulls' heads, upright eagles, human heads, serpents, and a pair of birds drinking from a vessel.²⁶⁷ The third category is a set of historiated capitals primarily depicting scenes from the Old Testament. These historiated capitals have been interpreted as individual and ancillary scenes with little or no connection to one another. None of the earlier scholarship addresses the relevance of the subject matter to contemporary events of the twelfth century, when the sculpture was carved.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ For a discussion of groups one and two see: Salviati, 69-91; Feo and Carrucoli, 56-60.

²⁶⁸ Baldini, 95; Biondi, 75; Feo and Carrucoli, 51-55; Mazzolai, 20; Salmi, *Romanesque Sculpture in Tuscany*, 26-27; Salviati, 87-89.

Historiated Capitals: Description

Upon entering the church through the main portal, slightly above the viewers' line of sight to the altar is the pier encircled by a set of historiated capitals. In their proximity and juxtaposition, these scenes convey more than individual biblical events with traditional Early Christian meaning but instead a narrative program enriched by the selection of the subjects with particular reference to the literary exchange of ideas in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Specifically, these scenes defend the ideals of the papal reform movement and relate to the mission of the Crusades. To study the sculpture, the viewer must circumambulate a cluster of engaged columns that form a compound pier which supports and articulates the space between the nave and side aisles; however, this pier is notably atypical. The compound pier with historiated capitals is made up of monochromatic stones whereas the other compound piers of the nave alternate bands of light travertine and dark tuff. The aesthetic and symbolic effect of zebra-stripping, common in northern Tuscany, serves as a horizontal element to draw the viewer's eye down the length of the nave to the altar; moreover, it has been suggested that the bands visually symbolize stairs leading to heaven.²⁶⁹ The monochromatic nature of a single compound pier serves to highlight and draw attention to the historiated capitals (figure 10).

The compound pier consists of four engaged columns flanked by colonnettes with a composite cross-section (figure 19). The capitals of three of the four engaged columns align at the springing of the side aisle vaults and the rounded arch of the nave

²⁶⁹ Feo and Carrucoli, 43.

arcade. The fourth engaged column, which faces the nave, rises uninterrupted to the springing of the nave vaults, where a bull's head capital marks the transition of architectural elements. The colonnette capitals align with the three main engaged columns. In short, the narrative extends across three main capitals and four colonnette capitals.

The surface of the capitals is somewhat damaged; nevertheless, the general features of the sculptures remain in a reasonable state so that each scene can be seen. Originally these carvings were never as refined or as detailed as the sculpture of major twelfth century trading centers such as Lucca. It is perhaps for this reason, and the fact that Sovana faded from political favor, that these sculptures survive in their original location as an excellent example of Romanesque art outside of the major centers of Tuscany in the twelfth century. In regard to style, the figures are fairly stocky, with large heads, and exaggerated gestures. In each scene, the characters and objects necessary to complete the narrative fill the entire space of the capital. The sparseness of background elements draws attention to every object carved as inherently meaningful and important to the narrative. Drapery folds are suggested by incised lines carved at diagonal angles. The reduction of details and simplification of forms, however, does not diminish the complexity of the iconography.

The arrangement of the historiated capitals does not follow a chronological reading from left to right. Instead the main scene of each story is represented on the center face of the capitals with ancillary scenes to the left and right. Between the capitals, I contend that the colonnette capitals serve to enrich the narrative and enhance the

meaning of the overall sculptural program. The three main capital faces illustrate Old Testament scenes of the Fall, Daniel, and Abraham. The following description follows a left-to-right reading of the main scenes beginning with the Fall; however, in the subsequent section on iconography, I will address the order of these biblical scenes in relation to their positioning and the viewers' approach.

The central scene of the Fall depicts Eve beside the tempting snake wound around the Tree of Knowledge (Genesis 3:1-19). The serpent and Eve equally share the center of the composition while on the left Adam straddles the corner edge of the capital (figure 98). Eve passes the fruit to Adam, who covers his genitals and simultaneously grasps his throat, a reference to the legend that the apple temporarily lodged there (figure 99).²⁷⁰ The throat-grasping detail may link the imagery at Sovana to Cluny (1088-1121), the earliest example in Romanesque art of a capital depicting Adam reaching up to his throat (figure 100). On the left face of the Fall capital, a figure in three-quarter view, with shoulder-length hair and a long robe, reaches across his body to touch Adam's shoulder with his right hand. The left hand of the figure on the left bends upward toward his chest in a gesture of astonishment. Although not depicted with a halo, this is likely the Lord God, who was walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and came upon Adam and Eve ashamed of their nakedness (Genesis 3:8-11). This simultaneous narrative allows the sculptor to convey multiple aspects of the story in a compact space. While the

²⁷⁰ James Snyder, "Jan van Eyck and Adam's Apple," *Art Bulletin* 58/4 (Dec., 1976): 514 and footnote 17. Snyder notes Romanesque examples of this tradition in Spain but does not include other examples in the sculpture of France and Italy, such as: St. Pierre in Airvault, Anzy-le-Duc, Neuilly-en-Donjon, the castle of Trani, a cloister capital in Torri, bronze doors to the cathedral of Pisa. All of these examples post-date Cluny.

carving is rough, compositionally, the scene skillfully renders Eve who covers herself with her left hand while her right hand not only passes the fruit to Adam but also crosses her body concealing her breasts.

The right face of the Fall capital represents Moses smiting the rock to bring forth a spring (Exodus 17:1-7). On the far right, Moses, in a long robe with bearded face, raises the rod up to the corner edge of the capital, below which flows water (figure 101). An unusual aspect of the composition is the birds' eye rendering of the Israelites drinking from both sides the spring, indicated by undulating vertical lines. While some of these figures are abraded, the carving at the lower right clearly represents a foreshortened view of a figure as seen from above—the head tilted back and the mouth submerged under water (figure 102). The three figures to the left of the water angle slightly revealing part of their foreshortened bodies.

The second main capital represents Daniel in the Lions' Den (Vulgate book of Daniel, now considered Apocrypha, chapter 14, more commonly known as *Bel and the Snake*). Daniel, a bearded and monumental figure seated slightly left of center, reaches across the front of his body with an elongated right arm to take food, representing spiritual nourishment, brought to him by the prophet Habakkuk, whose body is hidden behind the bundles he carries (figure 103). Habakkuk was alerted to Daniel's plight by the angel, depicted along the right side carrying the reluctant prophet by his hair to Daniel. While the angel's left arm bends awkwardly upward to reach Habakkuk's hair, all of the necessary details of the three central figures are conveyed in a relatively compact space. The gentle arc of the angel's body and splayed wings imply movement which is echoed

by the diagonal, almost twisting, motion of Daniel receiving the food. Daniel's clothes are divided into regularly incised compartments indicating drapery folds. These three figures—Daniel, Habakkuk, and the angel—are flanked by four lions. Unlike the other two main capitals, the Daniel capital does not have ancillary scenes on the side faces, instead, the profile view of two vertically stacked lions direct attention to the central scene of Daniel on the front face (figures 104 and 105). While the back half of the lions' bodies disappear into the corner of the capital, a sense of strength is conveyed through muscularly rendered front legs and large bushy manes, created by overlapping, tripartite, v-shaped sections. While the face on the upper right lion is missing, the other three lions have prominent noses, and the lower two lions lick Daniel's feet with long tongues.

Two colonnette capitals flank the Daniel capital. The left represents two long armed and long legged figures in crouched positions with the majority of their bodies covered by a swirling mass of intertwining hair (figure 104). Traditionally these figures have been identified as two penitential figures, who will be discussed further in the next section on iconography.²⁷¹ To the right of the Daniel capital, the colonnette capital depicts an upright eagle with wings stretched out and down from the body, filling the entire space (figure 105). Where the wings bend and turn downward on either side of the eagle are two partially overlapped rosettes. Beneath the eagle, in the center and on the right, are two figures: one resembling a four-legged animal gripped in the talons of the eagle; the other figure on the right is too abraded to discern. The eagle's head is

²⁷¹ Baldini, 95; Biondi, 75; Feo and Carrucoli, 55; Mazzolai, 20.

completely missing but it originally held a snake whose partial body still remains along both sides of the eagle.

The front face of the third main capital represents Abraham flanked by his two wives holding his two sons (Genesis 21:8-14, figure 106). The bearded Abraham is seated frontally in the center of the composition with his arms crossed in front of his body holding a cane placed between his legs. Both Sarah and Hagar cradle Isaac and Ishmael, respectively, in their arms. Their similar headdresses consist of a swathe of material extending from their heads under their chins with a horizontal band across their foreheads, similar to a wimple and fillet. Unfortunately, the faces of both children have been damaged. The entire composition is balanced and nearly symmetrical, except for one detail; the child held by the woman on the right raises his right hand, perhaps indicating the chosen Isaac, while the child on the left grasps his mother's left arm. Indeed, this scene alludes to Abraham's decision to send Hagar and Ishmael away.

The left face of this capital illustrates Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac in a compact yet detailed arrangement (figure 107). The angel flies in horizontally along the uppermost edge of the capital and reaches down to stop Abraham, who wields a large knife in his left hand. On the left, the bound Isaac recoils from the knife but is held steady by Abraham's right hand. The violence and immediacy of the scene is conveyed by the angel's need to use both hands to stop Abraham, one on each shoulder, and the angled contour of Isaac's side as he leans away from the knife pointed at his hip. Moreover, the diagonal lines of Abraham's arms express a sense of action while his tilted head and

furrowed brow suggest anguish. In the foreground, the ram, sacrificed in place of Isaac, completes the narrative (Genesis 22:1-19).

The right face of the Abraham capital depicts the head of a figure in the upper section of an arched gateway flanked by two crenellated towers (figure 108). This scene has previously been identified as Samson at the city gate of Gaza when he took “...the two posts, and tore them loose” (Judges 16:1-3);²⁷² and alternatively as the gates of Jerusalem.²⁷³ The former identification fails to recognize the figure’s headdress, which is the same as Sarah and Hagar on the front face of this capital; and the latter identification gives no justification. The figure must be Sarah who was inside the tent when the three angels appeared to Abraham to announce the pending arrival of their son Isaac (Genesis 18:6-10). It was not uncommon in the Middle Ages for artists to substitute a contemporary structure, such as a castle or a tower, for Sarah’s tent. A key detail to this identification is the oak leaf in the upper left corner of the capital. The leaf represents the Oak of Mamre where the three angels appeared to Abraham to prophesize the birth of his son with Sarah (Genesis 18:1-2).²⁷⁴ Interesting to note is the sculptor’s reduction of the narrative elements, meaning the exclusion of Abraham and the three angels, to represent only the figure of Sarah listening in the tower.

The two colonnette capitals that begin and end the series of historiated capitals are unfortunately fairly damaged. They both face the interior of the nave with an engaged

²⁷² Biondi, 75.

²⁷³ Feo and Carrucoli, 55.

²⁷⁴ Also known as the terebinth trees of Mamre, but by the Middle Ages, the site was more commonly referred to as the Oak of Mamre, or Abraham’s Oak.

column separating the scenes (figure 109). Neither of these scenes represents a clearly recognizable or popular story from the Old Testament, nor, to my knowledge, have any scholars attempted to provide a convincing argument as to their identification. As colonnette capitals along the nave as opposed to the main capitals, they share another common feature—each contains a figure with an unusual headdress, almost turban-like in appearance with diagonal bands along the sides that overlap three horizontal bands across the front.

While the colonnette capitals share a similar placement and type of figure, they depict different scenes. To the left of the Fall (figure 110), the scene depicts three figures interacting with one another. The turban-headed figure on the far left, wearing a long robe with diagonal striations, reaches across his body touching the arm of the middle figure, who wears a thigh-length tunic associated with workers or the lower classes (figure 111). The figure on the right wears a slightly longer tunic with a pouch slung over the right shoulder that circles around under the figure's left arm. The figure on the right and the middle figure reach toward the corner of the capital together to hold a bundle between them. Dangling below the bundle is a set of keys, which appears to be the significant action of the scene. As Filippo Salviati has suggested in his 1992 publication on the cathedral of Sovana, the conference of keys immediately brings to mind Christ's bestowal of the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven to Saint Peter,²⁷⁵ which would make this

²⁷⁵ Salviati, 89. Others merely identify the scene as the consignment of keys: Baldini, 95; Biondi, 75; Mazzolai, 20.

the only scene in this series from the New Testament.²⁷⁶ This identification, however, ignores the turban-like headdress and the fact that Christ is never depicted wearing a turban in art.²⁷⁷ Moreover, in the parish church of Romena (1152), a contemporary example of the conference of keys, as identified by an inscription, shows very different iconography.²⁷⁸ At Romena, Saint Peter, represented on the left in profile, receives the keys with bent knees in reverence of Christ on the right (figure 112). There are only two figures in the scene at Romena, not three like Sovana.

The final colonnette capital, sadly suffering from the most damage, depicts two discernible figures confronting one another before a rocky, or uneven background (figure 113). The chain-mailed figure on the left holds a downward-pointed sword in his right hand and angles inward toward the center, indicated by the slight outward flare of his chain mail on his lower left side and the diagonal angle of his body (figure 114). The upright figure on the right, wearing the turban-like headdress and a long belted robe with vertically arranged, wavy drapery folds, stands in profile with both arms raised in front of him toward the moving soldier. What the turbaned figure may have held in his hands as well as what, if anything, was held in the left hand of the soldier are lost to us. At the corner of the capital below the figures is an object that looks like a table (altar?) of some sort. This colonnette capital completes the scenes in the series of historiated capitals at

²⁷⁶ Feo and Carrucoli (51) do not identify the scene but suggest that the three figures represent a woman, a young person and a man. I disagree that the figure on the far left is female—the headdress does not wrap around the chin like the wimples on Sarah and Hagar in the Abraham scene.

²⁷⁷ Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek Jonathan Penslar, “Jesus did not wear a turban: Orientalism, the Jews, and Christian art” in *Orientalism and the Jews* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2005).

²⁷⁸ The parish church of Romena (AR) is located east of Florence near Stia and approximately 115 miles north of Sovana.

Sovana. While the first and the last scenes remain difficult to identify as individual narratives, perhaps their arrangement as part of the entire sculptural program can provide clues to their iconographic meaning.

Historiated Capitals: Iconography

A significant question regarding the historiated capitals in the cathedral of Sovana investigates whether these scenes are a series of interrelated figures based on a unified concept, in other words a sculptural program, or if the sculptures represent individual subjects arbitrarily juxtaposed in close proximity.²⁷⁹ This question can only be answered after a thorough investigation of the literary texts produced in the late eleventh and early twelfth century, just prior to the creation of the sculpture. No one contemporary text materialized as the single source of inspiration for the selection of scenes represented at Sovana; instead what emerged was a clear association with several texts produced by the ardent supporters of the Investiture Controversy and continuing efforts to rally support for the Crusades, which was furthermore often linked with End of Days, or Apocalyptic, writings. The literary discourse of the period establishes a religious and political context by which the iconography of the historiated capitals at Sovana may be better understood.

Our understanding begins with the general scriptural source for the three main capitals, the Old Testament. Early Christian art from the onset employed Old Testament imagery as a means to convey symbols, types and allegories related to New Testament

²⁷⁹ This definition of a sculptural program is described in Boerner, 557. Also see Emile Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France: étude sur l'iconographie de moyen âge et sur ses sources d'inspiration* (Paris, 1898).

themes, providing the latter with an established history and tradition. Between the second and fourth century in the West, Old Testament subjects in art outnumbered New Testament scenes four to one.²⁸⁰ Leading up to the Romanesque period, New Testament imagery gained prominence as the central theme in art, while Old Testament figures, when present, appeared in supporting or parallel roles.²⁸¹ We see a shift in some Romanesque art representing narrative cycles²⁸² or scenes based on Old Testament subjects, such as the historiated capitals at Sovana. This shift or, more pointedly, *return* to Old Testament based subject matter in art was a conscious effort by the artists and their theological advisors to evoke the “Golden Age” of Early Christian art and politics to justify the reforming ideals of Pope Gregory VII and the increasing militarization of the Church. The Golden Age from the reformers’ perspective began with Constantine I, who at the synod of Nicaea (325 CE) reserved preferential seating for all of the bishops while he, the Emperor, sat on a footstool.²⁸³ Constantine’s deference to the papal pontiff served as the very model Gregory wished to establish in his relations with Henry IV.²⁸⁴ In his own words Gregory stated his goal was “to renew and restore whatever has been long neglected in the Church,”²⁸⁵ and that he would “lead [the] holy church back to the

²⁸⁰ Robin M. Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 68-69.

²⁸¹ This statement refers to the extant examples of sculpture and metalwork in Christian art from the Migration, Carolingian and Ottonian periods, and does not include manuscript illuminations which parallel the given text.

²⁸² Such as the four relief panels of the story on Genesis on the cathedral of Modena in northern Italy.

²⁸³ Bonizo of Sutri, *Liber ad amicum*, II (*MGH Libelli*, i, 573-574). Bonizo’s Book II lists a number of Constantine’s qualities as a model Emperor. For an English translation see Robinson, *Papal Reform*, 162-163.

²⁸⁴ Gregory VII, *Registrum*, IX.37.

²⁸⁵ Gregory VII, *Registrum* V.5.

condition of ancient religion.”²⁸⁶ Gregory looked to the past imploring his devoted followers like Anselm II of Lucca, Bonizo of Sutri, Paul of Bernried, Bruno of Segni, and John of Mantua to write texts using canon law, patristic texts and the Bible to legitimize Gregory’s program and the means necessary for the Roman Church to triumph.

Many statements of reforming ideologies are found throughout their polemic writings. For example, the scriptures are seen as powerful tools at their service, “All the commandments of both Testaments are the weapons which enable us to conquer our enemies.”²⁸⁷ In particular the prophets of the Old Testament served as models of tyrannical persecutions against the Church imposed by imperial foes. Gregory promoted himself as analogous to Samuel and Henry to King Saul, who lost his throne due to his disobedience (I Samuel 15:1-35),²⁸⁸ while Gregory’s biographer, Paul of Bernried, related the Pope to the prophet Elijah who fought “against the transgressions of wicked kings and the seductions of false prophets.”²⁸⁹ Using the Old Testament prophets as models, the Pope found precedence to admonish the King and to claim political authority in the Investiture Controversy. During Gregory’s pontificate and after his death in 1083, a number of polemic writers continued to justify the Gregorian Reform by presenting

²⁸⁶ Gregory VII, *Epistolae Vagantes* 2, 6. For an extended discussion of the reformers’ “Golden Age” see Robinson, *Papal Reform*, 1-2.

²⁸⁷ Bruno of Segni, *Expositio in Psalmos*, MPL, clxiv, 960D.

²⁸⁸ Gregory VII, *Registrum* III.10. For an English translation see Emerton, 86-90. Gregory invoked Jeremiah (48:10) to support his agenda for clerical celibacy.

²⁸⁹ Paul of Bernried, *Vita Gregorii VII papae*, 2-4, 6, 110-11. For an English translation see Robinson, *Papal Reform*, 263 and 354. Paul of Bernried also compared Hildebrand the monk to the innocence of Abel and the wisdom of Solomon (*Vita Gregorii VII papae*, 6) with a gentleness of spirit like Joshua (*Vita Gregorii VII papae*, 14). Bruno of Segni, in his *Commentarium in Isaiam* (composed between 1082 and 1083), presented Isaiah as Gregory’s model to cleanse the temple against simony and as an exemplum of how a papal candidate should protest his nomination. See Ambrogio Amelli, *Spicilegium Casinense complectens Analecta sacra et profana* iii.1 (Monte Cassino, 1897), 1-204.

scripture as an allegory of the current political context—a tradition retained into the twelfth century in validation of the Crusades. The allegorization of scripture for political benefit in the Investiture Controversy has long been studied by historians,²⁹⁰ and the impact of this tradition on the visual arts continues to evolve as this study hopes to prove.²⁹¹

The subjects represented in the historiated capitals of the cathedral in Sovana convey meaning on multiple levels. In a traditional sense the Old Testament subjects serve as prefigurations for New Testament themes, in particular a typological emphasis

²⁹⁰ Max Hackelsperger, *Bibel und mittelalterlicher reichsgedanke studien und beiträge zum gebrauch der Bibel im streit zwischen kaisertum und papsttum zur zeit der Salier* (Bottrop i.W.: Buch- und kunstdruckerei W. Postberg, 1934); Josef Funkenstein, *Das Alte Testament im Kampf von regnum und sacerdotium zur Zeit des Investiturstreits* (Dortmund: M. Horn, 1938); Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*; Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale: les quatre sens de l'Écriture* (Paris: Aubier, 1954); G. Miccoli, "Ecclesiae primitivae forma," *Chiesa gregoriana. Ricerche sulla riforma de secolo XI* (Florence, 1966): 225-99; G. Ropa, "Studio e utilizzazione ideologica della bibbia nell'ambiente matildico (sec. XI-XII)," *Studi matildici: atti e memorie del III Convegno di studi matildici, Reggio E., 7-8-9 ottobre 1977* (Modena: Aedes Muratoriana, 1978): 395-425; J. Leclercq, "Usage et abus de la Bible au temps de la réforme grégorienne," eds. W. Lourdaux and D. Verhelst, *The Bible and Medieval Culture* (Mediaevalia Lovaniensia, ser. 1, studia 7 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979): 89-108; Robinson, "'Political Allegory' in the Biblical Exegesis of Bruno of Segni," 69-98; Giuseppe Ruggieri, "Alcuni usi dell' Antico Testamento nella controversia gregoriana," *Cristianesimo nella storia: ricerche storiche esegetiche teologiche* 8 (Bologna: EDB., 1987): 51-91; Ambrogio Piazzoni, "Exegesis as a Theological Methodology Between the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *Studi medievali* 3/35 (1994): 835-51.

²⁹¹ Ernst Kitzinger, "The Gregorian Reform and the Visual Arts: A Problem of Method," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5/22 (1972): 87-102; Rough, *The Reformist Illuminations in the Gospels of Matilda, Countess of Tuscany: A Study in the Art of the Age of Gregory VII*; F. Gandolfo, "Note per una interpretazione iconologica delle Storie del Genesi di Wiligelmo," in *Romanico padano, romanico europeo, Convegno internazionale di studi, Modena-Parma, 26 ottobre – 1 novembre 1977* (Parma, 1982): 323-37; Arturo C. Quintavalle, "Le origini di Niccolò e la riforma gregoriana," *Storia dell'Arte* 52 (1984): 63-76; Quintavalle, "L'officina della Riforma: Wiligelmo e Lanfranco," in *Lanfranco e Wiligelmo: Il Duomo di Modena* ([Modena]: Panini, 1984); Mary Stroll, *Symbols As Power: The Papacy Following the Investiture Contest* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991); Jeanne Fox-Friedman, *Cosmic History and Messianic Vision: The Sculpture of Modena Cathedral at the Time of the Crusades* (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1992); Anat Tcherikover, "Reflections of the Investiture Controversy at Nonantola and Modena," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 60/2 (1997): 150-165; Glass, *Portals, Pilgrimage, and Crusade in Western Tuscany*; Charles S. Buchanan, "Late Eleventh-Century Illuminated Initials From Lucca: Partisan Political Imagery During the Investiture Struggle," *Arte Medievale* 12-13 (1998-1999): 65-73; Dorothy Glass, "Prophecy and Priesthood at Modena," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 63/3 (2000): 326-338.

on salvation through Christ and Christian beliefs with good triumphing over evil. In this case, the visual manifestations of evil appears as recurrent topoi reminding the viewer of the struggle necessary to secure salvation. Like the images depicted in the Roman catacombs, the theme suggests salvation through faith; however, in the context of the eleventh and twelfth century, in addition to faith in Christ as God's son, the sculptural program also suggests faith in the actions of the Roman Church—specifically the pope's right to engage in the military campaigns against the Muslims.

In addition to the traditional typological meaning of the scenes represented, I will also show how the sculptural program reflects the concerns of the Investiture Controversy and crusading ideals as influenced by reform and messianic writings. The following explanation of the iconographic program will begin with the meaning of the Old Testament scenes on the main capitals, including the ancillary scenes which reinforce the central narrative, and then examine the first and last scenes on the colonnette capitals using the themes of the three main capitals to shed light on the mysteries of the colonnette capitals and their subjects.

The Adam and Eve Capital

Beginning with scenes from Genesis, specifically Adam and Eve, the Fall is the most commonly reproduced subject from Genesis in manuscript illuminations, paintings and sculpture. Even from the earliest stages of Christian art, Adam was understood as the prefiguration of Christ and Eve as the prefiguration of Mary (Romans 5:13-14, 1 Corinthians 15:45, Saint Augustine). In the context of Sovana, this subject represents the

reason *why* viewers must be concerned with the salvation of their souls—it is the beginning in terms of humanity’s search and need for salvation. While on one level this story traditionally represents disobedience and disgrace, Adam and Eve also represent, to the faithful Christian, the potential salvation for all of humanity through Christ and Mary.²⁹²

If the main face of the Genesis capital represents the beginning of the faithful’s need for salvation, then the right scene, with the image of Moses bringing forth the water from rocks in the wilderness, represents the beginning of the quest for the faithful. Images of Moses, the lawgiver and leader who brought the Jewish people out of slavery to salvation, figure prominently in Early Christian art.²⁹³ Also considered as a prefiguration of Christ for delivering his people to salvation, Moses smiting the water from the rocks has other meanings as well. When coupled with scenes of Adam and Eve, Moses and the rock traditionally prefigures baptism and resurrection.²⁹⁴ Scenes from the Bible involving the miraculous powers of water to heal, cleanse, save or transport a believer on a spiritual journey have long been associated with baptism and rebirth.²⁹⁵ In 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, Paul refers to the Israelites who “were all baptized into Moses” and they “all ate from the spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.” With the rite of

²⁹² Jensen, *Understanding*, 178-179.

²⁹³ Moses was depicted over 200 times in catacomb paintings, and numerous sculpted examples still remain on sarcophagi.

²⁹⁴ Jean Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956); and Jensen, *Understanding*, 48 and 179.

²⁹⁵ These scenes include: Jonah, healing of the paralytic, woman at the well, and Moses striking the rock.

baptism, Christians begin their spiritual journey back to Paradise, in effect to counter the effects of Original Sin.²⁹⁶

Other authors interpret Moses striking the rock to further aspects of biblical typology thereby expanding the meaning of this scene. Cyprian makes a comparison between the rock struck by Moses and Christ as the rock struck by the lance at the Crucifixion whereby the life-giving fluids of both rock and Christ resurrect the faithful.²⁹⁷ Therefore, Moses striking the rock refers not only to baptism, but also to the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. Moreover, this theme from the life of Moses prefigures Saint Peter.²⁹⁸ According to legend, when Peter was imprisoned in Rome, he struck the walls of his cell bringing forth water, like Moses, which Peter used to baptize his jailers.

An evocation of Saint Peter is appropriate in the context of the Investiture Controversy. Pope Gregory VII made frequent reference to himself as the righteous follower of Saint Peter who inherited divine privilege and power over all temporal rulers.²⁹⁹ As the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven were passed directly to Peter so too in turn did Peter pass the keys to the bishops of Rome and the pope as their leader. Gregory

²⁹⁶ “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come” (Romans 5:14). Jensen, *Understanding*, 87.

²⁹⁷ Cyprian, *Epistles*, 62:8

²⁹⁸ See C.O. Nordström, “The Water Miracles of Moses in Jewish Legend and Byzantine Art,” *Orientalia Suecana* 7 (1959), 78-109, reprinted in *No Graven Images: Studies in Art and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Joseph Gutmann (New York: Ktav, 1971), 277-308; and Robin M. Jensen, “Moses Imagery on Jewish and Christian Art: Problems of Continuity and Particularity,” in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers 1992*, ed. Eugene H. Lovering (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992): 395-8; and Jensen, *Understanding*, 90.

²⁹⁹ Gregory VII, “From that time, this dominion and power passed from St. Peter to all those who assume his throne...by divine privilege and hereditary right,” *Registrum*, IX.35. Gregory was likely influenced in his political exegesis of Petrine dominance for Rome over the Western Church by the earlier writings of Peter Damian during the 1050s and 1060s, such as *Actus Mediolani, de privilegium Romanae ecclesiae*, written in 1059. For an expanded discussion of this topic see Robinson, *Authority*, 27.

used terminology such as “the service of Saint Peter” (*servitium sancti Petri*) and “the vassals of Saint Peter” (*fideles beati Petri*)³⁰⁰ in addition to statements like “God gave to Peter as leader the power of binding and loosing in heaven and on earth...”³⁰¹ Gregory claimed that by the authority of Saint Peter that he alone as pope “inherited” obedience from “emperors, kings, princes, dukes, marquises, counts and...all men.”³⁰² At Sovana, Moses traditionally serves as a prefiguration of Christ, who leads the faithful to salvation, and in the context of the eleventh and twelfth century, Moses prefigures Saint Peter, who passed the means of salvation to the pope as head of the Roman Church.

An additional interpretation of Moses in light of the Investiture Controversy also merits attention. To the polemic supporters of reform initiatives, Moses was viewed as an Old Testament prefiguration of the lawgiver and Christian priesthood. Gregory commissioned his supporters with the mission of recording canon law according to the authority of the holy Fathers and the Bible.³⁰³ In Anselm of Lucca’s *Collectio canonum*, the *incipit* of the twelfth-century Barberini codex describes the work as an “authentic and compendious collection of the rules and sentences of the holy Fathers and the authoritative councils,...[Anselm] completed this work at [Gregory VII’s] command and

³⁰⁰ Erdmann, 185-211; and Robinson, “Gregory VII and the Soldiers of Christ,” 177.

³⁰¹ Gregory VII, *Registrum*, I.15, II.70, II.72, IV.2, VI.2, VIII.21; Emerton, 11, 76, 103 and 167. These statements vary slightly but all share the same premise of Petrine authority.

³⁰² Gregory VII, *Registrum*, VII.14a.

³⁰³ The impetus to seek authority for Church reform in ancient texts developed prior to Pope Gregory VII. Like Anselm, Cardinal Deusdedit in writing for Pope Victor III, expressed the basic goal of polemic writers, “desiring to reveal to the ignorant the privilege of authority by which [the Roman Church] is pre-eminent in the Christian world...I have brought together in one place whatever is most important among the various authorities of the holy Fathers and the Christian princes....” Deusdedit and Victor Wolf von Glanvell. *Die Kanonensammlung des Kardinals Deusdedit: 1. (einzigster) Band: Die Kanonensammlung selbst* (Aalen: Scientia, 1967): *prologus* 2-3. Also see Robinson, *Authority*, 42-3.

according to his direction.”³⁰⁴ In other words, the laws of the Church were defined by the authority of ancient figures, and Moses, as the lawgiver, provided an exemplum to the reformers of an obedient follower of God’s laws bringing salvation to the faithful.

Gregory’s opponents were anything but obedient in his eyes.

In addition to exemplifying the obedient lawgiver, Moses prefigured the Christian priesthood. In Bruno of Segni’s commentary on Exodus 17, Moses stands with the staff of God raised in his hand coinciding with the triumph of Israel over Amalek and his people. In Bruno’s words Moses represents the bishops who “bear the rod of correction and direction in their hands,”³⁰⁵ and with raised hands “Israel conquers; the priests and bishops raise pure hands with prayers to God and victory is given to the faithful.”³⁰⁶ The rod of the bishops indicates the bishops’ crosier employed with “pure hands” free from the sins of simony and concubinage, two major points of contention to the reformers.

Exodus 17 on Moses and Joshua leading Israel to victory over Amalek and his people suggests another theme current in the discourse of twelfth century literature.

³⁰⁴ Anselm of Lucca, *Collectio canonum*, MS Vaticanus 535, Biblioteca Barberini MS XI.178, in F. Thaner, ed., *Anselmi episcopi Lucensis Collectio canonum una cum collectione minore*, 2 (Innsbruck, 1906, 1915). For a discussion of the extant versions of the *Collectio canonum* text see Cushing, *Papacy and Law*, 5-8. For a discussion of Anselm’s writings in relation to Gregory VII and canon law see Robinson, *Authority*, 39-49. Another example of a polemic writer expressly stating his intension is Bonizo of Sutri, *Libre ad amicum*, I. Bonizo states that it is his goal to answer the question “prompting you to seek from me the authority of ancient examples from the holy Fathers: whether it was and is lawful for a Christian to engage in an armed struggle for the sake of the Faith?” For an English translation see Robinson, *Papal Reform*, 158.

³⁰⁵ Bruno of Segni, *Expositio in Exodum*, 17, MPL 164, col. 271c. For a discussion of the Bruno’s exegesis see: Robinson, ““Political Allegory,”” 86-88; and Leidulf Melve, “Intentional ethics and hermeneutics in the *Libellus de symoniacis*: Bruno of Segni as papal Polemicist,” *Journal of Medieval History* 35/1 (2009): 77-96. On Bruno himself see: H. Hoffmann, “Bruno di Segni, santo,” *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 14 (Rome, 1972): 644-47; R. Grégoire, *Bruno de Segni, exégète médiéval et théologien monastique*. (Spoleto, 1965).

³⁰⁶ Bruno of Segni, *Expositio in Exodum*, 29, MPL 164, col. 348CD. For an example of this application by an art historian see Glass, “Prophecy and Priesthood at Modena.”

Several writers built their defense for the Crusades on the reformers' established tradition of allegorical interpretation of ancient texts as political commentary.³⁰⁷ In this light, the Amalekites in Jewish tradition developed into the archetypal enemy, and since "[t]he Lord will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation" (Exodus 17:15), David engaged in warfare for the extermination of the Amalekites (1 Chronicles 4:42-43). Old Testament models such as David, Joshua, and Judas Maccabeus served to express the idea of war in religious terms.³⁰⁸

As Old Testament models of religious warfare influenced the current Christian political sphere, several themes became linked in the literary sources of the day. The connection between Christian warfare and the prophecies of the End of Days, for example, were connected to the crusading goal of recapturing Jerusalem in the Holy Land.³⁰⁹ Eleventh century views of leading an army of 50,000 to the Holy Sepulcher to defend the Christians in Jerusalem are apparent in Gregory's letters to Henry IV in 1074.³¹⁰ Gregory's twofold goal of freeing the Christians from the Muslims and uniting the Western and Eastern Churches under the dominion of Saint Peter moreover reflects a

³⁰⁷ See the seminal work of Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*.

³⁰⁸ Erdmann, 273.

³⁰⁹ For discussions regarding the differing views by modern scholars as to whether millenaristic prophecies directly influenced crusading ideas or whether the prophecies were popularized after the initial promotion of the first Crusade see: P. Alphandéry, "Les Citations Bibliques chez les historiens de la première croisade," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 99 (1929): 139-157; Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 61-75; Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979); Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London: Athlone, 1986); Fox-Friedman, 92-98.

³¹⁰ Gregory VII, *Registrum*, II.30-31; Emerton, 55-58; H.E.J. Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII's 'Crusading' Plans of 1074," in *Outremer: Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem Presented to Joshua Prawer*, eds. Joshua Prawer, B. Z. Kedar, H. E. Mayer, and R. C. Smail (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1982): 34-35.

plan influenced by Sibylline prophecies.³¹¹ Therefore, the associations of Old Testament figures, the Crusades, and messianic and Sibylline visions of the end, while albeit complex, influenced the sculptural program at Sovana—as we continue our analysis of the entire iconographic program, the influence of these factors becomes evident.

First, the connection between messianic, End of Days and Sibylline prophecies in relation to the Crusades needs further explanation.³¹² The popular text the *Revelations of the Pseudo-Methodius*, written in what is present-day Iraq circa 692 and translated into Greek and Latin in the early eighth century,³¹³ represents the earliest extant version of the “Last World Emperor” prophecy. This text essentially recounts of the rise of Islam and the call for war to free Christians from Muslim oppression, an act only achievable by the most powerful Christian monarch in Byzantium. In later versions, Byzantium is replaced by Rome. This vision begins with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise then proceeds through world history to the rise of the “sons of Ishmael,” who represent the forces of evil and Christ’s enemies, the Ishmaelites.³¹⁴ According to prophecy, after their

³¹¹ Cowdery, “Pope Gregory VII’s ‘Crusading’ Plans,” 38.

³¹² For a general overview of Sibylline apocalypticism and their popularity see McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 18-21.

³¹³ *Revelations of the Pseudo-Methodius* was also translated into vernacular versions in both the East and the West and continued in use until 1683. Bernard McGinn, “The End of the World,” in *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World*, ed. Malcolm Bull (Wolfson College lectures. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 76-77. According to McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 70, “After the Book of Daniel and the Revelation of John it [*Revelations of the Pseudo-Methodius*] was among the most widespread of medieval apocalyptic texts.” See McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 70-73, for further discussion of the texts popularity. For a discussion on the dissemination of the Latin version and recensions see D. Verhelst, “La préhistoire des conceptions d’Adso concernant l’Antichrist,” *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 40 (1973): 52-103, especially on page 95. Verhelst inventoried 190 manuscripts in the Latin version, of which 21 predate the twelfth century.

³¹⁴ As explained by Bull (77), this is typical of apocalyptic tradition *vaticinia ex eventu*, or prophecies after the event, that then continue on to true prophecy. Also see McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 7.

defeat, God's chosen emperor gives up his crown in Jerusalem and the Holy Land before signaling the reign of the Antichrist.³¹⁵

Most scholars agree that the *Revelations of the Pseudo-Methodius* were influenced by an earlier, now lost, version of the Tiburtine Sibyl's prophecies of an apocalyptic Christian emperor.³¹⁶ Ernst Sackur's critical analysis of the Latin version of the Tiburtine text suggests it was re-edited for King Conrad II (1024-1039) in Northern Italy with, according to Paul Alexander, the insertion of Lombard and German rulers.³¹⁷ The Latin versions of the Tiburtine Sibyl's prophecies made a stronger connection to contemporary eleventh century figures and events; moreover, a greater emphasis was placed on the kingdom of Jerusalem established prior to the Second Coming. Jerusalem had long been reserved as a special place in Christian tradition as the focal point on Earth where God sent his incarnation to save mankind, and thus was the place of sacred sites and holy relics for the veneration of pilgrims. As pilgrimage grew in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, so too did Christians' attitudes toward Jerusalem, which coincided with the endpoint of Tiburtine Sibylline and other prophetic writings.³¹⁸ As prophetic literature of the Apocalypse became linked to the rise of Islam and the need to free Jerusalem, the

³¹⁵ McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 70-72.

³¹⁶ Ernst Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen: Pseudomethodius, Adso und die Tiburtinische Sibylle* (Halle a. S.: Niemeyer, 1898; reprinted, Turin: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1963 and 1976), 126-128 and 177. Also see Paul Julius Alexander, *The Oracle of Baalbek; The Tiburtine Sibyl in Greek Dress*, *Dumbarton Oaks studies*, 10 (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies; distributed by J.J. Augustin, Locust Valley, N.Y., 1967), 41-47 and 66. P. Alexander believes the original Greek text dates to 380 CE based in part on Coptic apocalyptic themes.

³¹⁷ Sackur, 162; P. Alexander, 3 and 137. Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII's 'Crusading' Plans," 38-39, discusses the use of Sibylline prophecies by both sides of the Investiture Controversy. The pro-imperial Bishop Benzo of Alba equated the Last Emperor to Henry IV, see: Benzo of Alba, *Ad Henricum IV. imperatorem libri VII*, 2.12, ed. Karl Perta, *MGH SS 11*: 617; Robinson, *Papal Reform*, 365-376. Cowdrey suggests Gregory may have seen himself in the Sibylline role as Last Emperor.

³¹⁸ Riley-Smith, 20-21.

conflict between papacy and empire shifted focus to the Crusades. From 1099 Jerusalem was a Crusader state; however, with the fall of the County of Edessa in 1144, tension increased to keep Jerusalem free.

In bringing this discussion back to the sculptural program at Sovana, four influential factors coalesce to create an iconographic program that can be read at many levels: first, the continuation of traditional messages established in Early Christian art with Old Testament prefigurations of New Testament themes, in this case salvation through faith and obedience in Christ; second, the influence of the Investiture Controversy and reform literature promoting the primacy of the Roman Church as a hereditary right bequeathed by Saint Peter; third, the prophetic writings of the End of Days which specifically developed in the eleventh century the ideal of a Christian leader conquering Islam and establishing a kingdom in Jerusalem prior to the Second Coming; fourth, the means to this end, as promoted in contemporary literature, namely the crusading military campaigns led by the papacy providing salvation for all soldiers of Christ. The sculptural program at Sovana begins with the Fall of Adam and Eve just as did the messianic text of the *Revelations of the Pseudo-Methodius*.³¹⁹ Next Moses, a prefiguration of Christ and Saint Peter also represents the faithful and obedient lawgiver who symbolized the reformers' emphasis on pure bishops and serves as an Old Testament model of religious warfare in his aid to Joshua to defeat the Amalekites.

³¹⁹ On the apocalyptic tradition of connecting the beginning with the end see Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction: with a New Epilogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4.

The Daniel Capital

At Sovana, after the Adam and Eve capital with the depiction of Moses on a right side, the front and side faces of the Daniel capital depict him in the lions' den, his punishment for the destruction of false idols. Traditional Early Christian images of Daniel flanked by lions is comparable to early catacomb paintings and Good Shepherd images of Christ flanked by sheep.³²⁰ In this role, Daniel was an Old Testament prefiguration of Christ,³²¹ as well as the brave and righteous Christian willing to suffer for his faith.³²² The Daniel/Christ typology continued with later images of the Old Testament prophet attended to by Habakkuk; here the faithful servant receives spiritual nourishment from a messenger sent by God.³²³ This messenger is inspirational to the faithful to be patient and steadfast in their prayers as God's answers may not arrive immediately but his assistance will be timely.³²⁴ From a traditional perspective, Daniel is a model for patient and steadfast faith, as well as likened to Christ in that both emerged from great trials to be resurrected again.

The side faces of this capital depict a profile view of the four lions flanking Daniel. The two lower lions lick Daniel's feet conveying their tamed devotion to the prophet. The action of licking lions derived from medieval bestiaries which stated that

³²⁰ Jensen, *Understanding*, 174.

³²¹ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, 31-32; Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, III.21.7; Origen, *De Principiis*, 4.5; Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 6.45; Origen, *Exhortatio Ad Martyrium*, 3.3.

³²² Tertullian, *Scorpiace*, 8.7; Tertullian, *De Idololatria*, 15.10; Cyprian, *De lapsis*, 19, 31; Cyprian, *Epistulae*, 58.2, 61.2; 67.8; Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum*, 2, 11; Gregory Nazianzen, *Orations*, 48.74 and Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, 5.4.

³²³ For an expanded discussion of the spiritual nourishment theme in the Daniel story see Glass, "Prophecy and Priesthood at Modena," 335.

³²⁴ A similar message is expressed in the Vision of a Man (Daniel 10).

one of the three qualities associated with lions was the revival of their stillborn cubs by licking them to life after three days.³²⁵ Therefore, the licking lions in the Daniel scene reinforces the resurrection theme.³²⁶

The number of lions represented in the Daniel scene has varied from the Early Christian period to the twelfth century. Most early examples include two lions while medieval examples ranged between two or four, and on rare occasions six or eight, even seven representing the Seven Deadly Sins.³²⁷ The increase in the number of beastly oppressors tamed by Daniel may reflect the external political or religious pressures experienced by the individual churches in which these images appear. At Sovana, the use of four lions may relate to the crisis of the Investiture Controversy and the Crusades which may have been reason enough to express these external pressures in symbolic terms, hence Daniel is surrounded by four lions instead of two. The four lions represented

³²⁵ Originally, lions “breathed” life into their cubs but the iconography changed to licking, see Margaret Haist, “The Lion, Bloodline, and Kingship,” in *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature*, ed. Debra Hassig (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1999), 7. For an expanded discussion of medieval bestiaries also see chapter 3 of this study. Bestiaries were incredibly popular in the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries, reaching the zenith of production in the thirteenth century. Originally based on *Physiologus*, a Greek text from Alexandria written possibly as early as the second century CE. This text discusses the perceived characteristics of forty animals, beast, birds, fish and mystical rocks. While some earlier scholars considered bestiaries natural history, today most agree the text conveys moralized commentary on Christian dogma. For more information on bestiaries scholarship see: Ron Baxter, Xenia Muratova, Florence McCulloch, Willene B. Clark, Meradith T. McMunn, Michael Camille, Wilma George, Brunsdon Yapp.

³²⁶ An alternate interpretation explores the notion that evil may enter one’s body through the ears; examples at Gropina and Corsignano. If so, lions licking Daniel’s feet reinforces the theme of taming external beasts. Conversely, Bernardini (21-24) interprets serpent licking in positive terms as related to the Melampus myth of Greek mythology.

³²⁷ Beryl Rowland, *Animals with Human Faces: A Guide to Animal Symbolism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1973), 120.

at Sovana, however, also relate to the other tradition associated with the figure of Daniel, in particular his messianic prophecies regarding the end of the world.³²⁸

The book of Daniel, as traditionally analyzed by scholars, is divided into two sections based on a distinction between form and content.³²⁹ The narrative chapters 1-6, known as “court tales,” recount in the third person Daniel’s life at court as the wise advisor and interpreter of dreams to King Nebuchadnezzar and his followers. Chapters 7-12 recount in first person four of Daniel’s visions of the future as interpreted by an angel.³³⁰ The *four* visions may account for the popular use of *four* lions in depictions of the den particularly when emphasizing Daniel’s apocalyptic visions. Throughout the book of Daniel we see a repetition of numbers, especially the numbers three, four and seven. In chapter 1, Daniel is accompanied by three friends making a total of four in the group. In chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar dreams of an idol made of four metals interpreted as the four kingdoms leading to the final empire that will endure forever. In chapter 3, the three youths in the fiery furnace are accompanied by a fourth figure interpreted as an angel, literally “like a son of God” (Daniel 3:24-25). In chapter 4, Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar’s dream to mean the arrogant king will be driven from society for a period of seven years, which comes to pass until Nebuchadnezzar is penitent before God.

³²⁸ Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 5.25-26; Hippolytus, *Commentarium in Danielem*, 4; Eusebius, *Oration in Praise of Constantine*, 17; Jerome, *Commentarium in Danielem*. For a general overview of patristic apocalypticism see McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 14-36. Gerhard von Rad *Old Testament Theology* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), sees the Old Testament, in particular Daniel, as the antecedent of apocalyptic, rather than the prophetic movement, 330.

³²⁹ Lorenzo DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature*, *Studia in Veteris Testamenti pseudepigrapha*, v. 20 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 2. DiTommaso (*The Book of Daniel*, 1-38) thoroughly reviews the scholarly literature on Daniel.

³³⁰ DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel*, 2.

In chapter 5, at the feast of Belshazzar words appear on the wall that Daniel interprets—*mēnē, mēnē, tēkēl, ûparsîn*—three different words used a total of four times. Finally, chapter 6 recounts the story of Daniel, one of three chief administrators to the new King Darius, and how Daniel, for his belief and faith in God, is thrown into lions' den. The apocryphal account of *Bel and the Snake*, as described above at Sovana, relates to this section of the Daniel story.³³¹ Chapters 7-12 with Daniel's four visions also make reference to numbers: in chapter 7, Daniel's vision of four great beasts representing four future kings and four future kingdoms, with the fourth devouring the earth; in chapter 8, a ram (its two horns symbolizing Media and Persia) and a goat (Greece) battle until the goat triumphs and his single horn is replaced by four smaller horns (kingdoms); chapter 9, concerns seventy weeks, or seventy "sevens," indicating the history of the Israelites and of Jerusalem. Not to belabor the numerology of the book and Daniel and its correlation to Sovana but it is worth noting that the historiated capitals in Sovana are arranged with three main capitals plus four colonnette capitals for a total of seven capitals.³³²

Daniel's fourth apocalyptic vision, chapters 10-12, is a long revelation regarding a great conflict and a king who: desecrates the temple, removes daily sacrifices, and persecutes those who remain true to the path. This theme of an evil force who will challenge God leading to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple is consistent

³³¹ DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel*, 39-57, explains the first six chapters of the book of Daniel.

³³² For an expanded discussion of numerology in the Middle Ages see Vincent F. Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism: Its Sources, Meaning, and Influence on Thought and Expression*, Columbia University studies in English and comparative literature, no. 132 (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1969). The number three was seen as celestial in nature and referring to the past, present and future (4-7). The number four was terrestrial in nature (8). The number seven related to various conceptions: steps to perfection; Old Testament associations with creation; Adam's descendants; and trial and expiation of sin (23-25).

throughout Daniel's visions (Daniel 7-12) and it closely parallels the crusading agenda as combined with Sibylline prophecy of a great emperor who will free Jerusalem from the forces of Islam.

The two colonnette capitals flanking the Daniel scene relate to and enhance the meaning of the central image. From a traditional perspective, the devoted Daniel triumphed in his expression of faith for one true God over four beastly oppressors. Daniel's beasts, however, were more than the four-legged variety but also the beasts within—that could drive one to madness in the wilderness—as well as external beasts who needed to be subjugated.³³³ To the left, the colonnette capital represents two crouching figures with their hands stretched down between their legs and a swirling mass of hair covering their bodies except their faces, arms and legs (figure 115).³³⁴ In the twelfth century, hairiness was associated with either individuals living outside of society due to an unstable mental condition or penitents who, of their own free will, sought redemption through hardship and isolation. To the right, the colonnette capital represents an upright eagle originally with a snake in its beak and two creatures in its talons (figure 116). Daniel 4:33 refers to Nebuchadnezzar, who was cast out into the wilderness for idolatry, blasphemy and pride, “[h]e was driven away from human society, ate grass like an ox,...until his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers and his nails became like birds' claws.” The book of Daniel refers to long hair and eagles in association with madness,

³³³ On the concept of the beast within see Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 135-166.

³³⁴ As to the question of whether the figures are surrounded by vines like green men figures instead of hair, the apparent lack of leafy foliage and the context of the sculptures at Sovana clarify any visual ambiguities.

which to the medieval mind meant illness or disease.³³⁵ Disease functioned in three ways in medieval society: to test the faithful's moral fiber; as a type of purgatory serving as a means to salvation through an atonement for sin; or as punishment for religious disobedience.³³⁶ The meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's trials convey a model of an individual who experienced a crisis—madness in the wilderness, who then repented, and in the end found salvation.³³⁷ This theme of crisis-penitence-salvation serves the overall message of the sculptural program at Sovana in two ways: first, the two hairy figures represent models of those who have succumbed to the beast within and sinned but find salvation through penitence; and second, the eagle who conquers external sin through force as represented by the snake and creatures in the its claws.

Representing the beast within, the two penitential figures at Sovana, like Nebuchadnezzar, are depicted in a state of madness with long hair as associated with the theme the wild men and wild women figures.³³⁸ Wild people generally appeared with thick coats of hair covering all but their hands, feet, and faces. These irrational creatures were given to uncontrollable sexual desires, which to medieval society meant they embodied their greatest fears: disorder, madness and ungodliness. To Christians, the wild

³³⁵ For expanded studies on the madness in the Middle Ages see: Penelope B. R. Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar's Children; Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974); Judith S. Neaman, *Suggestion of the Devil: Insanity in the Middle Ages and the Twentieth Century* (New York: Octagon Books, 1978).

³³⁶ Doob, 5-7; Neaman, 48-51. 8.

³³⁷ Doob (55) sees Nebuchadnezzar as "the father of most literary madmen."

³³⁸ For expanded discussions of the wild man theme in art and medieval society see: Richard Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages: A Study in Art, Sentiment, and Demonology* (New York: Octagon Books, 1970); Timothy Husbands and Gloria Gilmore-House, *The Wild Man: Medieval Myth and Symbolism* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980); Roger Bartra, *Wild Men in the Looking Glass: The Mythic Origins of European Otherness*, trans. Carl T. Berrisford, (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1994).

man myth was closely linked to the dogma of Original Sin as any flaws of the mind or body were introduced with the Fall and mankind's path to salvation was only redeemable through true faith.³³⁹ To make lucid the wanton sexual nature of these types, the figures at Sovana are also an "exhibiting type," or, in modern terms, exhibitionist (figures 117 and 118). They both reach their arms down between their legs and with hands gesturing to their genital area, which for both are partially abraded or were purposefully altered.³⁴⁰ Even in their original state these figures were never as explicit as the famed Kilpeck Sheela but clearly their gesture is associated with exhibitionist types.³⁴¹

In Italy, known examples of male or female figures exposing their genitals or gesturing to this area were once considered rare as scholarly attention has tended to focus on the United Kingdom, France and Spain;³⁴² however, a survey of this genre in Italy reveals a far greater number than currently compiled in the scholarship.³⁴³ Unlike many

³³⁹ Husbands and Gilmore-House, 1-8 and 15; Doob, 7-12.

³⁴⁰ Over the years, particularly during the nineteenth century, the perceived vulgarity of these images prompted destruction or removal from their original settings. Andersen, 11-12; Weir and Jerman, 9-15.

³⁴¹ For a discussion of gestures associated with exhibitionist-type figures see Anderson, 120-130.

³⁴² Admittedly the Sovana figures are not Sheela-na-gigs by definition but represent the exhibitionist types of both male and female figures as discussed in the research of Weir and Jerman, *Images of Lust*. Chapter 3 of this study discussed current Sheela-na-gig scholarship in relation to the mermaid on the portal; see: Andersen, Weir and Jerman, O'Connor, Kelly, Dor, Freitag, and Bleeke.

³⁴³ A few documented examples in Sheela scholarly literature: "Porta," formerly above the gate *Porta Tosa* in Milan, now in the collection of the Castello Sforzesco, Milan, see: Anderson, fig. 94; Richard N. Bailey, "Apotropaic Figures in Milan and North-West England," *Folklore* 94/1 (1983): 113-117; capital in the nave of a seated figure with knees bent upward and splayed in exhibiting posture and flanked by attacking beasts, Piacenza Cathedral, see Anderson, fig. 26; examples in Italy of ithyphallic male figures at Filattiera (Massa), Cennano, Gropina, Cipriano at Codiponte, San Giorgio at Brancoli (Lucca) see Bernardini, figs. 24, 25, 26, 29, 35, 66; Italian examples of exhibiting couples Corsignano see Bernardini, figs. 27, 28; capital with eight exhibiting acrobats in the cloister of Cefalù (Sicily) image at www.beyond-the-pale.org.uk; leg-splayed nude figures but genitals covered by foliage at Monreale image at www.beyond-the-pale.org.uk; figures with exposed genitals at Cortazze (Piedmont) image at www.beyond-the-pale.org.uk. Additional examples: vousoir and capitals of exhibiting figures at the cathedral of Modena; capital of splayed-leg hair-pullers at San di San Michele (Piedmont); male atlante with exposed phallus Santa Maria Pozzana in Civita Castellana (Lazio).

of the de-contextualized examples,³⁴⁴ most of the Italian examples are located in their original positions and therefore shed new light on our understanding of carvings of this genre. In the context of the sculptural program at Sovana, the exhibiting figures of a wild man and wild woman represent sin; furthermore, in their juxtaposition to the Daniel capital, they additionally stress the theme of penitence and obedience. Thus, as projections of sin and the evil beast within that can drive humans to madness and sexual desire, they symbolize an internal conflict that must be conquered through penitence and obedience to God in order to attain salvation.

The colonnette capital flanking the Daniel scene on the opposite side of the wild figures represents an upright eagle defeating a snake and two creatures. Once again, in relation to the Daniel text (4:33), Nebuchadnezzar's hair grew like eagle feathers and in several Romanesque manuscript illustrations of Nebuchadnezzar's madness in the wilderness, his bestial company is characterized by an ox and a lion.³⁴⁵ Could the two creatures in the eagle's talons at Sovana be an ox and a lion? Unfortunately, the sculpture is too damaged to say with certainty. In general terms, these creatures and the snake represent evil forces subjugated by the eagle. To understand the eagle, certain texts may provide greater clarification and also brings this discussion back to the influence of Daniel apocalyptic literature.

The following texts relate to Daniel's vision (Daniel 7) of four kingdoms, the fourth of which, according to God's plan, is preordained to end foreign oppression prior

³⁴⁴ See footnote 340.

³⁴⁵ See for example: Bible of San Pedro de Roda, Spain (Catalonia), ca. 1000. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. Lat. 6111, fol. 65v.

to the End of Days. Originally this fourth kingdom was interpreted as Greece, but later writers re-interpreted the kingdom to be Rome.³⁴⁶ In the so-called “Eagle Vision” of 4 Ezra 11-12, for example, an angelic messenger explicitly interprets the eagle to be Daniel’s fourth kingdom—Rome.³⁴⁷ Moreover, Sibylline prophecies, with renewed popularity in the eleventh and twelfth centuries as previously discussed, connected the Last World Emperor of Byzantine Christianity with Rome and Daniel’s fourth kingdom.³⁴⁸ At Sovana, the visual representation of the eagle, meaning Rome, conquering its enemies, represented in the form of beasts, coincided with the papacy’s crusading plans to conquer Islam. Since the Investiture Controversy of the eleventh century, the papacy had attempted to assert its authority as Rome’s leader over all temporal rulers. Some scholars propose that Pope Gregory’s earlier 1074 plans to free Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulcher mark his agenda to bring ecclesiastic unity to all Christians also under the supremacy of the Roman Church.³⁴⁹ Therefore, the literary and visual equation of the eagle to Rome becomes a powerful symbol of the papacy’s subjugation of its evil enemy, who are identified in contemporary apocalyptic texts as Moslems. This may also shed light on why Old Testament subjects were employed to convey the message of this sculptural program as opposed to New Testament subjects. The eagle in the New Testament frequently symbolizes Saint John and certainly his

³⁴⁶ Jerome’s commentary on the Book of Daniel and the Eagle Vision. For an expanded discussion of this topic a see Lorenzo DiTommaso, “Dating the Eagle Vision of 4 Ezra: A New Look at an Old Theory,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 10/1 (1999): 3-38.

³⁴⁷ DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel*, 74-75. As a side note, the military standard of ancient Rome was topped with an eagle (Aquila) since the second century.

³⁴⁸ In particular the *Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius*. McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 70-71.

³⁴⁹ Cowdrey, “Pope Gregory VII’s ‘Crusading’ Plans of 1074,” 38-40; and Erdmann, xvi, 167-168.

Revelations based on Daniel relate to the theme at hand; however, John's anti-Roman stance may have communicated an anti-papal agenda of which the theological advisor(s) of this program did not wish to convey.³⁵⁰ While the position of the theological advisor(s) can not be substantiated, ultimately, the Old Testament represented the authority, or *auctoritas*, of older texts sought by the polemic writers of the Gregorian era which carried over to the literary and visual traditions in support of the Crusades.

The Abraham Capital

The third and final of the three main capitals of Sova's sculptural program depicts three subjects from the story of Abraham.³⁵¹ On the left face is the Sacrifice of Isaac, on the main face is Abraham between his two wives, and the right face represents Sarah in a castle gateway indicative of the tent where she overhears the three angels telling Abraham about the imminent birth of his son, Isaac. These three scenes from the story of Abraham present a clear link to reform literature and crusading motivation.

The first scene of the Sacrifice of Isaac was particularly popular in Early Christian art as the subject in paintings, sarcophagi, ivories, glass, lamps and bowls.³⁵² Scholars generally identify the iconography in two ways depending on the juxtaposition of biblical scenes and the emphasis on the details of the story. One interpretation see this sacrificial

³⁵⁰ On the anti-Roman views of St. John's Revelations see; McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 34; and R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963). It is important to note that other eagle sculptures of the Romanesque period symbolize Saint John and his Revelations without anti-Roman implications.

³⁵¹ For general studies on Abraham see: John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975); Claus Westerman and David Green, *Genesis: A Practical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1987).

³⁵² Jensen, *Understanding*, 10, 69 and 143.

scene with Abraham and Isaac as an allegorical prefiguration of the Crucifixion equating Isaac's sacrifice and Christ's suffering on the cross.³⁵³ In this model, Abraham represents a God the Father type who offers his only son for sacrifice.³⁵⁴ The other interpretation sees Isaac representing a figure at risk of imminent danger but delivered to safety through the intervention of God.³⁵⁵ In Early Christian art, Isaac "at risk" was often paired with other at risk figures like Daniel in the lions' den, as is the case at Sovana. In Romanesque examples of this scene, the angel plays a far more prominent role in staying Abraham's hand compared to Early Christian examples, where the hand of God appears from the clouds. At Sovana, the angel depicted along the top section of the scene reaches down the center of the composition with both arms to grab Abraham's shoulders—the crisis is narrowly averted (figure 107). Certainly the first meaning of Isaac as a prefiguration of Christ and salvation applies to the Sovana scene as well, however, the meaning of a figure at risk, or at the moment of crisis, dominates in relation to the overall context of

³⁵³ Epistle of Barnabas, 7.3; Melito of Sardis, *Fragments*, 9-11; Tertullian, *Adversus Judaeos*, 10.6 and 13.20-22; Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 4.10.1; Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*, 1.23; Origen, *Homilies on Genesis*, 8; Ambrose, *De Abraham*, 1.8; Ephrem, *In Genesis 1, liber ad Judicum*, 10.77; Chrysostom Paulinus, *Homilies in Genesis*, 47.3; Theodoret, *Quaestiones in Genesis*, 74; Augustine, *De civitate dei*, 16.32; Augustine, *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, 22.73; Alison Moore Smith, "The Iconography of the Sacrifice of Isaac in Early Christian Art," *American Journal of Archaeology* 26/2 (1922): 159-173; Isabel S. Van Woerden, "The Iconography of the Sacrifice of Abraham," *Vigiliae Christianae*, 15/4 (1961): 242; Engelbert Kirschbaum and Günter Bandmann, et al., *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie. In Zusammenarbeit mit Günter Bandmann* (Rom: Herder, 1968): cols. 23-30; Erich Dinkler, "The Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus," in *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century*, Kurt Weitzmann, ed. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979), 429; Jensen, *Understanding*, 71 and 145-147.

³⁵⁴ *Glossa Ordinaria*, Migne, *PL*, CXIII, col. 139; J. Williams, 5.

³⁵⁵ Graydon F. Snyder, *Ante Pacem: Archaeological Evidence of Church Life Before Constantine*, ([Macon, GA.]: Mercer, 1985), 29 and 51-52; James Stevenson, *The Catacombs: Rediscovered Monuments of Early Christianity* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 68; Jensen, *Understanding*, 27 and 67.

the historiated capitals and relates to the condition of the Roman Church during the Investiture Controversy and the Crusades.

The second and main scene from the story of Abraham representing the patriarch between his two wives, unlike the Sacrifice of Isaac, is never seen in Early Christian art (figure 106). By its unusual representation and prominent placement as the main scene, it calls attention to its meaning in the context of the sculptural program at Sovana. One other notable example in Romanesque art that addresses a similar theme is located on the south tympanum to the Collegiate of San Isidoro in León (c. 1126-1157, likely after 1142) and discussed by John Williams.³⁵⁶ The León tympanum centers around the Sacrifice of Isaac with additional scenes of Sarah, Hagar and Ishmael. At León, Williams suggests that the tympanum conveys visual support for the Reconquest of Spain and the Crusades as the righteous path as defined in the writings of a number of sources, such as Saint Paul, Jerome, Augustine, Isidore of Seville and Flavius Josephus. While the theme of the sanctioning crusades against the Muslims as based on exegetical texts echoes the meaning of the Sovana Abraham scene, a greater emphasis on Abraham and his wives as the central scene places a different emphasis in the iconographic program. It also provides the basis for understanding a relief panel of the same scene, the Chigi panel, dating to the second half of the twelfth century, probably from the region between Siena and Grosseto (figure 119).³⁵⁷ While scenes of Hagar and Ishmael are rare in early

³⁵⁶ J. Williams, 3-14.

³⁵⁷ Previously located in the Chigi Palace in San Quirico d'Orcia, the relief panel of Abraham between his two wives and the sacrifice of Isaac is now located in the private collection near Florence. Very little is written on this panel, see Daniela Lamberini, ed., *Pulpiti Medievali Toscani: Storia e Restauri di Micro-*

medieval art, their representation in two Italian examples reflects an influence of eleventh and twelfth century current events on visual modes of communication in the region of Tuscany. Missing from William's analysis of the Abraham scene at León is a connection to the polemic discourse of the Investiture Controversy which, along with apocalyptic writings as previously mentioned in this chapter, was the foundation for much of the texts in support of the Crusades.

A similar message about Abraham is transmitted through biblical and patristic texts of Saint Paul (Galatians, 4:22-31), Jerome, Augustine, Isidore of Seville and Flavius Josephus. Essentially the two sons of Abraham are allegorically interpreted as two peoples/two covenants/two Jerusalems—one of heaven and one of earth. The one of earth, corresponding to Ishmael born of the flesh to the slave girl Hagar, represents the people born into slavery, later interpreted to mean the Muslims or followers of Muhammad called Ishmaelites and Agarenes. The one of heaven, meaning Isaac born of the spirit to the free woman Sarah, represents the promised people, the blessed descendants of Abraham.³⁵⁸ For according to Genesis 22:16-18,

says the Lord, since you have done this and have not withheld your only son, I will indeed bless you, and will surely multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, as the sands on the seashore. In your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed me.

Architettura (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1999): cat. 60; Salmi, *Romanesque Sculpture*, 26;

Walther Biehl, *Toskanische Plastik* des frühen und hohen Mittelalters (Lipzig, 1926); fig 21a.

³⁵⁸ Galatians, 4:22-31; Jerome, *Commentarium in Epistolam ad Galatas*, Migne, PL, XXVI, col. 417;

Jerome, *Epistola 123*, Migne, PL, XXII, col. 1055; Augustine, *De civitate dei*, 15.2; *Glossa Ordinaria*,

Migne, PL, CXIII, col. 122; Isidore of Seville, *In Libros Veteris ac Novi Testamenti Proemia*, Migne, PL,

LXXXIII, col., 155f; Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive Originum*, ed. W.M. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911):

IX.ii.6; Flavius Josephus, *Jewish antiquities*, tr. Henry St. John Thackeray, Ralph Marcus, Louis H. Feldman, and Allen Paul Wikgren (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998): I.12:4; J. Williams, 7.

Therefore, Abraham the obedient servant of God is depicted at Sovana at a critical moment between his two wives when he chooses to send away his eldest son. The message is one of judgment for God's chosen people.

The authors active in the reform circle, who answered Pope Gregory VII's call for canonical texts based on biblical and patristic precedence legitimizing his authority, cite the story of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar (Genesis 16.6) as an allegorization of the Church's right to persecute heretics and its enemies.³⁵⁹ Anselm of Lucca in two of his texts, *Collectio canonum* and *Liber contra Wibertum* based on the Epistle of Augustine, reference Abraham and Sarah's expulsion of Hagar as a blessed and righteous persecution as opposed to unrighteous persecutions practiced by heathens.³⁶⁰ As Anselm's argument continues, while acknowledging that the Church should not bear arms in the name of righteousness, he underscores the paradox of Church doctrine and practical necessities, in which case the necessity of the military campaigns to persecute the enemies of the Church would be justified in times of true crisis.³⁶¹

Similarly, another polemic author like Anselm active in the protective circle of Matilda of Tuscany, Bonizo of Sutri wrote *Liber ad amicum* and *Liber de vita christiana* with specific reference to the story of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar as transmitted through Galatians and Augustine. Bonizo analogizes Isaac and Ishmael to refer to two peoples—

³⁵⁹ For an expanded discussion of this theme see Robinson, "Gregory VII and the Soldiers of Christ," 186-187.

³⁶⁰ Anselm of Lucca, *Collectio canonum*, XIII.14 and *Liber contra Wibertum*, 4, *MGH, Libelli de lite*, i.523; Augustine, *Epistola* 185, *CSEL*, 1vii (Vienna, 1991), 9ff.

³⁶¹ Anselm of Lucca, *Liber contra Wibertum*, 6, *MGH, Libelli de lite*, i.525. In addition to Augustine, Anselm also cited Gregory the Great and his letters supporting military campaign against the Lombards. Robinson, "Gregory VII and the Soldiers of Christ," 186-187.

one of catholics and one of heretics—and, as the heretical son of the flesh persecuted the promised son of the spirit, the Church is justified in its righteous persecution of heretics.³⁶² Bonizo continues with an analogy of the wells of water dug by his father and quarreled over by foreigners (Genesis 26:18, 21). Bonizo states,

This demonstrates more clearly than day that persecution that is inflicted on us by those who are outside must be overcome by patient endurance [suffering], while persecution inflicted by those who are inside, must first be cut down with the scythe of the Gospel and afterwards must be fought with all our strength and weapons.³⁶³

To Bonizo, those “outside” the church are pagans, while those “inside” to be cut down with full strength and weapons are schismatics and heretics.³⁶⁴ Bonizo argues more forcefully than his predecessors and his contemporaries, like Anselm, for the use of armed force to fight heresy, indeed calling it every Christian’s duty to strike down the enemies of the Church.³⁶⁵ Bonizo’s impassioned defense for the idea of crusading against heresy is visually reinforced in the representations of Abraham between his two wives seen at Sovana and in the Chigi relief panel; however, in the context of the Sovana sculptural program the message is enhanced.

The third scene on the right face of the Abraham capital depicts Sarah in a castle gateway (figure 108). The scene implies the time when she was listening to the three visitors announcing that she and Abraham will have a son (Genesis 18:9-10). The

³⁶² Bonizo of Sutri, *Libre ad amicum*, I. For an English translation see Robinson, *Papal Reform*, 158-162. Bonizo of Sutri, *Liber de vita christiana*, VII.17, 243, under the title “That the Church can practice persecution.” For an expanded discussion see Robinson, “Political Allegory,” 81.

³⁶³ Bonizo of Sutri, *Libre ad amicum*, I. For an English translation see Robinson, *Papal Reform*, 162.

³⁶⁴ Erdmann, 252; Robinson, “Political Allegory,” 81, interprets those “inside” to refer specifically to schismatics.

³⁶⁵ Bonizo of Sutri, *MGH Libelli*, 1.571, 573.

emphasis on Sarah in direct juxtaposition to the Abraham scene of the front face of this capital suggests a theme of Christianity triumphing over Islam, since Sarah and Hagar represent the two peoples of the two religions. The emphasis on Sarah alone and at this particular point in the narrative, however, is fairly unusual in art and therefore calls for a deeper analysis of her meaning.³⁶⁶ Looking to the texts that have influenced our understanding of the proceeding scenes of historiated capitals helps elucidate Sarah's relationship to the overall context, in particular the writings of Pope Gregory VII, Sibylline prophecy, biblical exegesis and contemporary texts on the Crusades.

As previously mentioned, Pope Gregory wrote three letters to King Henry IV in December of 1074.³⁶⁷ Historians of the Crusades identify these letters as Gregory's early plans to organize military aid to the Byzantine Empire to defend the Christian faith and bring about a union of the Eastern and Western Church under Roman primacy.³⁶⁸ The specifics of Gregory's plan also reflects an influence of Sibylline prophecy in his call for 50,000 armed knights to proceed against God's enemies to liberate the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.³⁶⁹ Jerusalem may not have been Gregory's final aim but it certainly became so

³⁶⁶ Visual precedence for this subject in art is seen in a choir mosaics at San Vitale in Ravenna (before 548) with Sarah in the doorway of a thatched roof structure on the left and Abraham and the three angels on the right. A contemporary Romanesque example is located in the south tympanum of the collegiate church of San Isidoro, León, where Sarah is positioned before the doorway of a structure but, like Sovania, the other details of the narrative are not represented, instead the Sacrifice of Isaac is emphasized.

³⁶⁷ Gregory VII, *Registrum*, II.30-31; Emerton, 55-58. Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII's 'Crusading' Plans of 1074," 34, note 38, sees five letters as related to Gregory's overall plans.

³⁶⁸ Erdmann, 167-168; Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII's 'Crusading' Plans of 1074," 27-40.

³⁶⁹ McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 94-97; Riley-Smith, 8; Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII's 'Crusading' Plans of 1074," 38-40. Cowdrey suggests Gregory was familiar with Sibylline prophecy on his own or through the pro-Imperialist writings of Benzo of Alba. The Salian court had a strong tradition with Sibylline prophecy as it was King Conrad II (1024-1039), Henry's grandfather, who commissioned the *Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius* which are based on the prophecies of the Tiburtine Sibyl. In Benzo's analogy Henry represents the Last World Emperor. Adopted into Gregorian terms, Gregory identifies himself as "*dux et*

in the First Crusade as Pope Urban identified the freedom of Jerusalem as the goal of the Holy War.³⁷⁰ In at least one monastic letter of the period, the heavenly Jerusalem is equated with the earthly Jerusalem in a call to the pope to “open for us the gates of both Jerusalems” indicating that one’s journey was both a internal and external pilgrimage to Jerusalem.³⁷¹

In the texts, Jerusalem is personified as a woman. The *Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius*, based on an earlier Tiburtine prophesy of the End of the World, describes the rise of the “sons of Ishmael” who persecute Christians, “[t]hen suddenly there will be awakened perdition and calamity as those of *a woman in travail*,” prompting the king (of the Romans) to “come down with the sword” against the Ishmaelites ushering the “last peace of the perfection of the world” and the “Last Emperor will reign in Jerusalem until the appearance of the Antichrist.”³⁷² The woman in distress of the Pseudo-Methodius text is similar to the disloyal woman described by Ezekiel in his allegorization of Jerusalem as an unfaithful wife (Ezekiel 16). Jerusalem in distress and unfaithful is personified by the figure of Sarah in that she doubted God in her ability to conceive, indeed she laughed at the word of the Lord as transmitted through the three visitors (Genesis 18:12).³⁷³

pontifex” (general and leader) of the army, thus assuming the role of the Last Emperor.

³⁷⁰ See the studies of Erdmann, 306-372; Riley-Smith, 13-30; Ernest O. Blake, “The formation of the ‘crusade idea,’” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 21 (1970), 11-31; Jaroslav Folda, *Crusader Art: The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1099-1291* (Burlington, VT: Lund Humphries, 2008); 22.

³⁷¹ Anselm of Canterbury, *Opera Omnia*, ed. F.S. Schmitt, 6 vols. (1938-61): 3, 254; Riley-Smith, 119.

³⁷² Italics mine. These passages are from the Latin and Syrian texts. For the Latin translation see McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 75-76, based on Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte*, 89-94. For a translation of the Syriac apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius see Paul J. Alexander and Dorothy deF. Abrahamse, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985): 48-49. Bull, 77-78.

³⁷³ A similar example of a woman in distress equated to the city of Jerusalem is identified in the research of Jeanne Fox-Friedman (103) in regard to the Porta della Pescheria, with its Arthurian imagery, on the north side of the cathedral in Modena.

In addition to the emphasis on the single figure of Sarah in the Sovana capital scene, she is also represented in a prominent gateway. The lower section of the gateway consists of an open arch topped with five crenellations and the upper section resembles two crenellated towers with Sarah's head positioned in the upper center. While representations of architecture are frequently not site specific in Romanesque art, it is tempting to make a few brief comparisons. A common image of Jerusalem in the twelfth century was the Tower of David as depicted on the back of the denier coin of King Baldwin III (r. 1143-62), marking the residence of the kings in Jerusalem (figure 120). Even after the reign of Baldwin III, new deniers consistently represented an architectural structure on the verso (figures 121 and 122).³⁷⁴ The type of architecture associated with the Crusade states, as rendered on the back of these coins, was a crenellated tower: one with bulbous points perhaps indicating a double tower; the other with an arched portal; and the third with the Tower of David as an arched portal topped by two crenellated towers—like the double towers and open portal of Sarah's gateway at Sovana. Part of the significance of the Tower of David in Jerusalem relates to its position on the citadel near the western gateway to the Old City. This gateway was known as David's Gate, later the Jaffa Gate as it represented the main entrance to Jerusalem for pilgrims and crusaders alike on the road from the port city of Jaffa.³⁷⁵ In later manuscript illustrations from the thirteenth century, Jerusalem continued to be represented by an arched portal with crenellated towers (figure 123). With this in mind, the image of Sarah, an unfaithful

³⁷⁴ Folda, 47 and 50.

³⁷⁵ The tower and gate were destroyed many times during the turbulent periods of Jerusalem's past. For a map of Jerusalem in the twelfth century with the Tower of David and David's Gate see Folda, 64.

woman who laughed at God's word like the unfaithful Jerusalem of Ezekiel's allegory, figured at the top of a gateway, evocative of crusader images, suggests a powerful symbol of the city of Jerusalem—the holy site, the aim of the Crusades, and nexus of the End of the World.³⁷⁶

The First and Last Colonnade Capitals

The two remaining colonnade capitals, both facing the interior of the nave, preceding and ending the three main capitals discussed above, are abraded and difficult to identify with certainty. In light of the current discussion, however, involving literary influences from biblical exegesis, reform ideologies, and Sibylline messianic texts mixed with support for the Crusades, perhaps a clearer understanding of their meaning comes to light. The first colonnade capital, preceding the capital of Adam and Eve, depicts three people—the one on the left wearing a long robe, usually attire associated with sacred figures, and a turban-like headdress gives keys to two other figures, one in a short worker's tunic and the other in a mid-length tunic carrying a pouch. As the main action of the scene, the reference is clearly to the "conference of keys" (figure 124). From the reformers' perspective, Christ giving the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven to Saint Peter served as a critical message legitimizing the pope's authoritative right. As Peter

³⁷⁶ As a side note, Matilda of Tuscany was frequently compared to Deborah and Jael, heroines of the Old Testament who free Israelites from their oppressors, see: *Vita Anselmi*, 11, *MGH SS*, 12.16; Rangerius, 3589, *MGH SS*, 30.1232; Paul of Bernried, *Pontificum Romanorum vitae*, I, 59: 506; Bonizo of Sutri, *MGH Libelli* 1.620; Donizo, *Vita Mathildis*, 80; Erdmann, 225.

Additionally, this scene of Tower of Jerusalem may provide a clue to more securely dating the historiated capitals. Stylistically they resemble twelfth century models. More specifically, the close relationship of Sarah's gateway tower at Sovana to the Tower of Jerusalem on the back of the Crusader denier of Baldwin IV, 1172-83, suggests a date closer the last quarter of the twelfth century.

possessed the exclusive right to the power of the keys, which he passed along to the bishops of Rome, the pope's right to reign over temporal and ecclesiastic power was his alone.³⁷⁷ Gregory VII saw the papacy in these terms, "this dominion and power passed from Saint Peter to all those who assume his throne...by divine privilege and hereditary right."³⁷⁸ In the context of Old Testament scenes at Sovana, a departure to a New Testament subject seems inconsistent. Moreover, the turban-like headdress suggests looking to Old Testament prophets for the iconographic meaning.³⁷⁹

From the Old Testament, the meaning of this colonnette capital lies in the writings of the prophet Isaiah (22:15 and 22:19-22):

This is what the Lord, the LORD Almighty, says: "Go, say to this steward, to Shebna, who is in charge of the palace.... I will depose you from your office, and you will be ousted from your position. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah: And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

This passage accounts for the three figures in the Sovana scene: the turbaned figure is the Lord, or Isaiah as the prophet of this text; and the two other figures represent Shebna, the relieved steward whose duties as key master pass to Eliakim—"father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem," the house of Judah, and the house of David. The key passed to Eliakim becomes the key of David, and according to Acts 2:30 and Sibylline prophecy, David's

³⁷⁷ For an expanded discussion of the meaning of Saint Peter and the keys see Robinson, *Authority and Resistance*, 21-27.

³⁷⁸ Gregory VII, *Registrum*, IX.35. For an expanded discussion of this topic see Robinson, "Political Allegory," 76.

³⁷⁹ As previously stated Christ was never depicted in a turban in art of this period. Some figures from the East, or Moors, were represented in turbans but generally in negative light. Prophets of the Old Testament were the only positive figures portrayed in turbans in the art of this period.

throne is promised to Jesus as the descendant of David.³⁸⁰ The scriptures of John discuss the key of David in relation to a key-door metaphor as the way to salvation:

he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.... (Revelations 3: 7-8)

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem... (Revelations 3: 12)

Therefore Jesus said again, I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. (John 10:7)

I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. (John 10:9)

Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)

Christ not only opens the door, he *is* the door and the way to salvation. In addition to biblical metaphor and Sibylline prophecy, reform discourse was also influenced by the symbolism of the key of David. In a text written by Honorius Augustodunensis between 1098-1108, he states that “holy scripture is written only for the sons of God, for whom mother church opens all that is closed by means of David’s key. Those who are not sons see the outside only and do not understand.”³⁸¹ In this sense, the colonnette capital at Sovana conveys an allegory on the conference of keys from God to Eliakim, to David, to Christ, to Peter, and to the pope, and also communicates that the only means to salvation is through Christ.

³⁸⁰ Tiburtine Sybil on the prophecy of the throne. For a translation see: P. Alexander, *The Oracle of Baalbek*, 24, passage 43, commentary 30-31; for the Latin translation see McGinn, *Vision of the End*, 46.

³⁸¹ Honorius Augustodunensis, *Elucidarium*, ed. Y. Lefèvre, *L’Elucidarium et les Lucidaires* (Paris, 1954), 438.

The last colonnette capital represents two figures—one a chain mailed knight with his sword down and slightly leaning in reverence to the turbaned figure, or prophet, on the left. Unfortunately, what originally existed between the two figures is damaged making identification difficult.³⁸² The scene falls directly after Abraham between his two wives and the image of Sarah in the gateway taken to represent the rise of Islam and Jerusalem in a state of crisis, essentially a call for the Crusades. From the nave, this scene is juxtaposed with the conference of keys, or the key of David, colonnette capital. With the context of the other capitals in mind, it stands to reason that this colonnette capital refers to prophets of the Old Testament and the Crusades.

Two polemic texts analyzed by Ian Robinson as examples of political allegory may provide the key to understanding this colonnette capital.³⁸³ The first is a commentary on Isaiah (37:33) written by Bruno of Segni between December 1082-April 1083, which presents a justification for the primacy of the Roman Church by describing how God spared Jerusalem from the Assyrian King Sennacherib,

[i]t here appears how much God loved David; since so long after the time of that love He says that He will save Jerusalem. Let us therefore believe that through the merits of the blessed apostles this Roman city must be saved.³⁸⁴

The second polemic text is by John of Mantua composed in the early 1080s expressly at the request of the Countess Matilda of Tuscany.³⁸⁵

³⁸² To my knowledge, the only comparable scene of this subject is a damaged relief panel from the church of La Madeleine in Vézelay depicting a figure under an arch, a door with a lock, two knights, and possibly two religious figures.

³⁸³ Robinson, "Gregory VII and the Soldiers of Christ," 184-186; Robinson, "'Political Allegory,'" 72-79.

³⁸⁴ Bruno of Segni, *Commentarium in Isaiam*, 66; translation in Robinson, "'Political Allegory,'" 75.

³⁸⁵ John of Mantua, *Iohannis Mantuani in Cantica canticorum et de Sancta Maria tractatus ad comitissam Matildam*, eds. Bernhard Bischoff and Burkhard Taeger, *Spicilegium Friburgense*, 19 (Freiburg/Schweiz:

The rafters' are the secular powers which are set up under the roof of the house [of God], so that what is lacking in the roof—that is, in the words of the preachers, attacking vices—the secular powers supply with the vigour of their justice; and so the knight with his sword complements what the priest's words lacks. Do not be ashamed, O Bride of Heaven [Matilda]...to complete with your sword against the heretics of what is lacking in the word of holy catholics. For the God still lives who sanctified such actions through the arms of David....David enacted slaughter upon the wicked and on this account his soul dwelt with God, because he smote His enemies with the sword.³⁸⁶

Matilda's need for texts justifying the use of military aid to support the initiative of the reforming Church may reflect a general ill-ease with the growing militarization of the Church and may explain the need for sculptural programs such as the one at Sovana. The text of John of Mantua relates to the colonnette capital at Sovana in several ways. First, the preachers attacking vices connects to the other set of colonnette capitals with the wild man and woman as personifications of sin generated from the beast within, and to the eagle attacking beasts as symbolic of external forces of evil. Second, the emphasis on a knight with his sword fighting against heretics, connects to the same heretics described earlier in relation to the Abraham capital who dwell outside the church and along with Muslims needed to be conquered. Third, the idea of the arms of David may explain the final colonnette capital of a knight with sword down in respect of an Old Testament prophet. In 2 Chronicles 23:9, "the priest gave to the captains of hundreds the spears and the large and small shields which had been King David's, which were in the house of

Universitätsverlag, 1973); Bernhard Bischoff, "Der Canticumkommentar des Johannes von Mantua für die Markgräfin Mathilde," in *Lebenskräfte in der abendländischen Geistesgeschichte. Dank-und Erinnerungsgabe an Walter Goetz zum 80. Geburtstag am 11. November 1947*, ed. Wolfgang Stämmler, (Marburg/Lahn: Simons-Verlag, 1948).

³⁸⁶ John of Mantua, *Tractatus*, 51.3-20; translation in Robinson, "Gregory and the Soldiers of Christ," 185; further discussion see Robinson, "'Political Allegory,'" 77-79.

God.” As was custom, the arms of a soldier were put to rest in the temple after battle to give thanks for their protection. Perhaps the knight in the Sovana capital is giving up his arms after success in battle and ushering in the era of peace to reign before the Second Coming of Christ.

Conclusion

Thus concludes this analysis of the iconographic program of the historiated capitals on the interior of the cathedral of Sovana. Reoccurring themes are conveyed throughout re-enforcing and enhancing the overall meaning. The capitals depicting traditional Old Testament subjects—the Fall, Moses, Daniel in the Lions’ Den, and the Sacrifice of Isaac—continue the familiar device of prefiguring New Testament themes and accordingly convey a sense of authority. The polemic writers of the Gregorian reform intentionally sought to legitimize the authority of the Roman Church through the models set forth in ancient and patristic texts. In the new Old Testament subjects depicted at Sovana—Abraham between his two wives and Sarah in a gateway devoid of other narrative details—the reformers’ tradition of exegesis becomes the foundation for commentary on current religious and political events, specifically a call to support the Crusades and to keep Jerusalem free from Muslim oppression. With the addition of messianic prophecy, transformed in the eleventh century to expressly identify a Christian leader who would keep Jerusalem free from the Islamic “sons of Ishmael” prior to the Second Coming, the general theme of salvation for those who have faith in God’s plan was emphasized. God’s plan of salvation for the obedient stems from the disobedience of

Adam and Eve, through the faithful followers of Moses, Daniel, Isaac, Abraham and those who fight against evil—from within or without. If the key and arms of David hold for the identification of the colonnette capitals these same themes are re-enforced.

Through the key of David the papacy's authority to fight a religious war with the arms of David is without a doubt justified from the perspective of the Church.

Therefore, the historiated capitals on the interior of the cathedral of Sovana express interwoven layers of iconographic reading. The primacy of the Roman Church as the rightful descendants of God's will is communicated as well as their justification for the Crusades. Individual scenes set up a model of crisis in the Sacrifice of Isaac and the Fall of Adam and Eve which can be equated to the crisis between church and state or the state of Jerusalem. This crisis is followed by a moment of judgment such as Abraham between his two wives or when every individual must decide whether or not to follow the teachings of the Roman Church. For those who chose wisely, a model of salvation is provided in the example of Daniel whose prophecies of the End of Days save the true followers of God's will. This example of crisis and judgment leading to salvation is the ultimate theme of the sculptural program at Sovana. Of the three main capitals, Daniel in the center is emphasized. It is the only capital without ancillary scenes on the side faces; instead it is accompanied by a full set of colonnette capitals which serve to strengthen the meaning of salvation through struggle against vice in its many forms. Moreover the theme of salvation is accentuated by the capitals' placement in relation to the portal. The portal is Christ who also has the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. The two colonnette capitals with the key and arms of David are positioned along the nave and in leaving the

cathedral one would have been reminded that the one who unlocks the door to salvation is Christ (figure 125).

As set out in the beginning, this study has attempted to prove that the historiated capitals of the cathedral of Sovana are indeed a sculptural program. The intention is to shed light on one of the smaller arrangements of sculpture found in an understudied region of southern Tuscany. While the architecture of the cathedral of Sovana has been addressed in several earlier studies, the sculpture and its rich layers of iconography have previously gone overlooked. Moreover, while little is known about Bishop Pietro³⁸⁷ or the other theologians active at Sovana in the mid to late twelfth century, based on the physical evidence of the portal and the complexity of themes presented in the sculpture program of the historiated capitals we can now propose that the theological advisor(s) of this program was part of an educated religious *literati*, well versed in the polemic literature of the Investiture Controversy and the apocalyptic texts supporting the Crusades. This individual, or small group of advisors, interpreted the political and religious events leading up to the middle of the twelfth century and utilized traditional and contemporary exegesis of the Old Testament to create a visual manifesto to bolster papal and crusading ideals. As the complexity of themes represented in the sculpture proves, Sovana was neither a site of political nor religious backwater, instead it was fluent in contemporary events of the late eleventh and twelfth century.

³⁸⁷ Feo and Carrucoli (63, note 1) suggest that Bishop Pietro was accused of the schismatic heresy of Catharism and served a penitential period in a hermitage near the Fiora river, or alternately at the hermitage of Ripatonna Cicognina (Ishia di Castro) as suggested by G. Gavelli, *I romitori* (Ishia di Castro, 1968). Also mentioned by Alessandra Filippone in Salviati, *Il Duomo di Sovana*, 33. Unfortunately, there is little documentation regarding this event; however, it could possibly provide the reason for Bishop Pietro's public expression of penitence in the arrangement of the portal.

Chapter 5: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to contextualize the Romanesque cathedral of Sovana with particular emphasis on the iconography of the portal sculpture and historiated capitals in relation to its historical milieu. Heretofore, no publication has addressed the influence of political or religious events of the eleventh or twelfth century on the iconographic program. The sculpture exists at the intersection of visual imagery and written texts, reflecting the ideals of the papal reform movement and a clear promise of spiritual salvation.

The first chapter provided an overview of the geographical and historical factors that shaped the development of Sovana in relation to its physical surroundings in southern Tuscany. Moreover, chapter one introduced important figures of the period who shaped the religious and cultural environment. The lords of the Maremma—the Aldobrandeschi family headquartered in Sovana—had the means and political clout to finance a large scale building project, one worthy of the seat of the bishop. The following chapter identified the strong links between the increases in the family's land holdings and the construction phases of the cathedral between the late eighth and thirteenth centuries. The Aldobrandeschi also appear related to Hildebrand, who became Pope Gregory VII and was one of the central figures of the Investiture Controversy that pitted political powers against the papacy. One of the major secular powers championing papal initiatives was the Countess Matilda of Tuscany, who provided support and protection to the authors of polemic discourse that espoused papal reforms. The written texts of

Anselm of Lucca, John of Mantua, Bonizo of Sutri, Paul of Bernried and others generated a literary foundation for papal primacy and crusading activities as the means to salvation.

Chapter two further laid out the phases of construction and the stylistic influences on the architecture of the cathedral of Sovana. Due to a lack of documentary sources in the episcopal archive, the analysis of construction phases was based on one papal bull, two inscriptions, and several stylistic comparisons. The results revealed that there were four major periods of construction. Remnants of the earliest phase of construction, from the late eighth or early ninth century, include the crypt and a number of sculptural fragments used in later phases of construction. The apse, dome and eastern end reflect tenth-century architectural practices but include an eleventh century restoration. The majority of the structure, particularly the nave, was built in the twelfth century, which also corresponds to the construction of the north side portal using spolia from different periods. In the thirteenth century, the relatively high, side aisle vaults were added. The various sections of the cathedral made in these periods relate to other contemporary structures throughout southern Tuscany. Due to the marked periodicity of the sections, however, the cathedral of Sovana is noteworthy in that it recapitulates the phases of architectural and sculptural development of the region throughout the Romanesque style.

The third chapter presented an iconographic and stylistic analysis of the sculpture located on the portal. While previously dismissed as a pastiche of spolia, I contended that the overall arrangement of the portal, as designed by Bishop Pietro in the twelfth century, communicates a message of salvation. The spolia blocks from the late eighth through the twelfth century were arranged hierarchically, with reference to the terrestrial and celestial

realms leading to salvation. The means to salvation is through Christ, symbolized by the keystone and the portal itself—a metaphorical reference to Christ, “I am the door; if anyone enters through me, he will be saved” (John 10:9). Whether the faithful follow the path of the repentant sinner, symbolized by the mermaid and the sculptures above her, or the path of the virtuous, symbolized by the soldier of God and the sculptures above him, only the truly faithful will reach salvation through Christ. The message of the sculptural program is conveyed as the images move upward and inward to the more spiritual realms of heaven and the inner sanctum of the church. The visual reference to the *axis mundi* parallels the physical one in the form of the actual portal itself. In addition to the message of salvation, the portal also expresses support for the papacy in Rome with the addition of the twelfth-century lions who protect the celestial realm of the archivolt. In their association with justice and as symbols of the Leonine City of the papacy, lions guarding the portals of many churches in Italy, like Sovana, communicate a message of papal allegiance.

Chapter four of this study interpreted the iconographic program of the historiated capitals in relation to the polemic discourse of the Investiture Controversy. Essentially the Investiture Controversy attempted a reorganization of the Church and a new social structure for all of Europe. To express this new order, visual images, like the iconographic program at Sovana, reflect a new approach to the textual past. Borrowing from the traditional Early Christian practice of Old Testament models as prefigurations of New Testament ideals, the polemic discourse of the reform movement established a new language of hereditary authority for the primacy of the Roman Church. This literary

exchange of reform ideologies combined with a resurgence of prophetic writings regarding the End of Days providing support for the Christian Crusades against the Muslims. It is difficult to prove direct contact with all of the polemic texts mentioned due to the paucity of information on the twelfth-century Pietro responsible for the arrangement of the portal and possibly for the iconographic program of the historiated capitals. The goal of chapter four was to provide an interpretation of the sculpture as a unified program, an idea which has hitherto not received any scholarly attention. This study provided evidence to suggest that: 1) a sculptural program at the cathedral of Sovana does indeed exist; and 2) it was guided by the literary discourse of the late eleventh and first half of the twelfth century—which in this case championed the reform of Pope Gregory VII and the Church's justification for crusading activities. Ultimately, the interior historiated capitals support the message of salvation expressed by the portal, underscoring the primacy of the Roman Church as inherited through David, Jesus, Peter and the bishops of Rome. As Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida wrote in a letter in the name of Pope Leo IX:

As the door is ruled by the hinge, so the good of the whole Church is governed by Peter and his successors, and as the hinge remains unchanging while opening and closing the door, so Peter and his successors have free judgment over the whole Church, but no one may change their position because the highest see can be judged by no one.³⁸⁸

The messages convey that the Church and its agenda, and by extension the mission of the Crusades, should not be challenged if one wanted to reach the heavenly realm of

³⁸⁸ Leo IX, *Regesta pontificum Romanorum*, ed. P. Jaffé, W. Wattenbach, S. Loewenfeld, F. Kaltenbrunner, P. Ewald, 2 vols. (second edition, Leipzig, 1885) 4302, *MPL* 143, col. 751B; in Robinson, *Papal Reform*, 7.

salvation. Through the Old Testament and ancillary scenes depicted on the historiated capitals of the cathedral of Sovana, the ideals of the reform Church and the mission to continue the Crusades as the final conflict before the End of Days are supported in a visual treatise on salvation.

The cathedral of Sovana has long been recognized as a fine example of southern Tuscan Romanesque architecture and sculpture, but due to the complexities of its phases of construction and use of spolia, it has been relatively under-appreciated in the field of Romanesque art history. This study has endeavored to bring greater scholarly attention to this important Romanesque site by shedding new light on Sovana as an example of the complex interplay of sculpture, scripture and salvation.

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Illustrations



Map 1: Map of the region of Tuscany.



Figure 1: Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, Sovana, Italy. View from the south.



Figure 2: Etruscan road between Sovana and Pitigliano.



Figure 3: Exterior apse, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 4: Etruscan cinerary urn, Orvieto.



Figure 5: Scylla with bifurcating tail, Tomb of the Sirena, 3rd-2nd c. BCE.
Source: Flickr: vip.mud.



Figure 6: Tomb of the Sirena, woodcut. Source: George Dennis, *The Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*.



Figure 7: Scylla with bifurcating tail, Tomb of the Demoni Alati, 3rd – 2nd c. BCE. Source: Carlo Rosati, ed. *History Symbology and Legend: The Etruscans and the Vie Cave*.



Figure 8: Mermaid with bifurcating tail, portal, cathedral of Sovana.

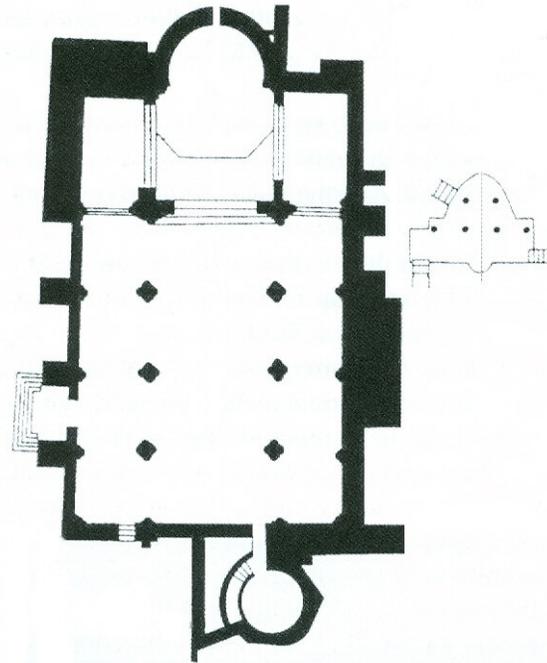


Figure 9: Plan, cathedral with crypt, Sovana. Source: based on plan in Feo and Carrucoli, *Il Duomo Romanico di Sovana*, 126.



Figure 10: Interior, cathedral of Sovana. Source: Flickr: Bizzo_65.

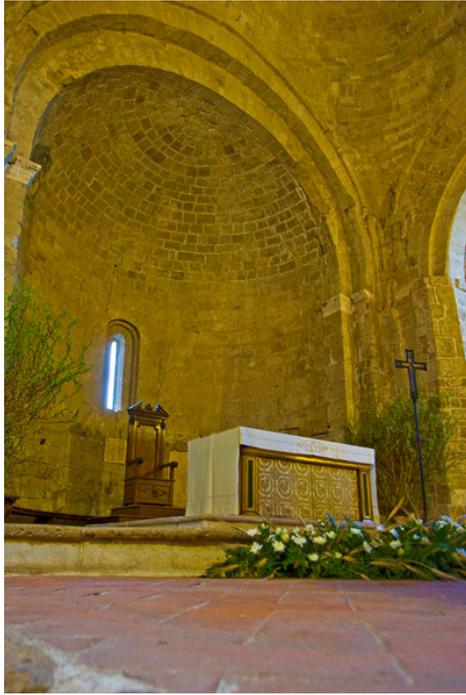


Figure 11: Apse, cathedral of Sovana. Source: Flickr: ekefe.



Figure 12: Dome on pendentives with apse, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 13: Vaults, cathedral of Sovana. Photo by Pat Vessely.



Figure 14: North side aisle, cathedral of Sovana. Photo by Pat Vessely.



Figure 15: South side aisle, cathedral of Sovana.
Source: Flickr: Jayjay P.



Figure 16: Buttressing on exterior north transept, cathedral of Sovana. Photo by Pat Vessely.



Figure 17: North clerestory windows, cathedral of Sovana. Photo by Pat Vessely.

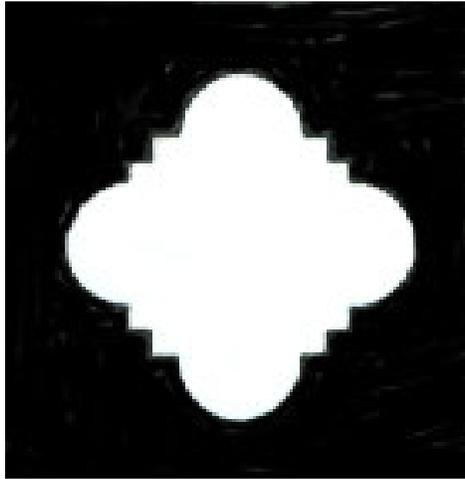


Figure 18: Cross section of piers, cathedral of Sovana.

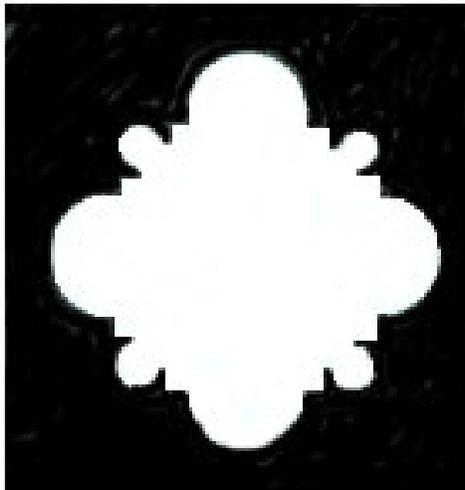


Figure 19: Cross section of pier with historiated capitals, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 20: East end of cathedral in Sovana.



Figure 21: Bell tower, southwest, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 22: North flank, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 23: Portal, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 24: North exterior window, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 25: North exterior window, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 26: North exterior window, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 27: Detail of apse, cathedral of Sovana.

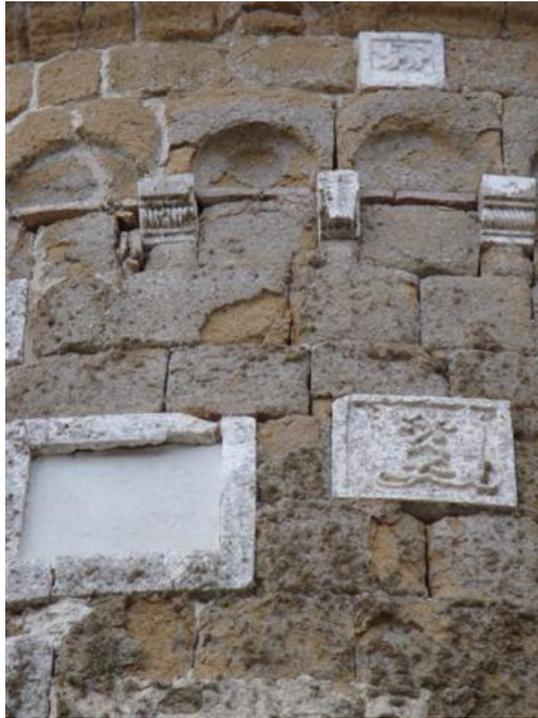


Figure 28: Detail of apse, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 29: Apse, arched corbel table missing from left side, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 30: Apse, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 31: South flank, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 32: Crypt, cathedral of Sovana. Photo by Pat Vessely.

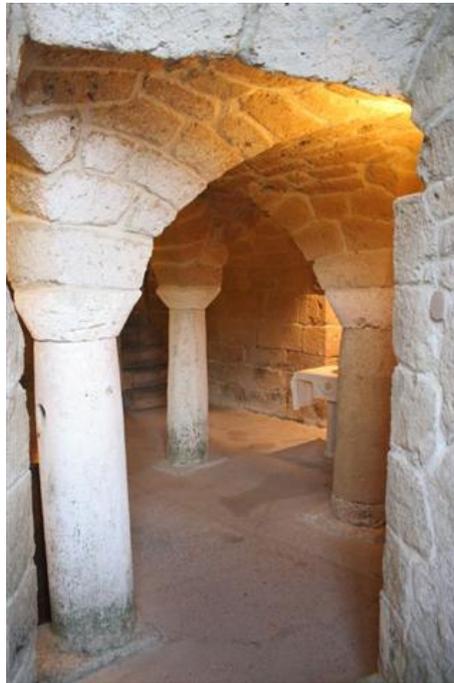


Figure 33: Crypt, cathedral of Sovana. Source: Flickr: Jayjay P.



Figure 34: Portal inscription, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 35: North transept arm inscription, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 36: Crypt, San Salvatore. Source: Flickr: naknak79.



Figure 37: Detail of crypt vault and capital, San Salvatore.
Source: Flickr: verhelstaal.



Figure 38: Crypt, Foiano della Chiana, Arezzo.
Source: Salmi, *Chiese romaniche*, plate 1.



Figure 39: Apse, abbey of Santa Maria in Conèo.
Source: Flickr: micio.piccardo.



Figure 40: Interior with squinches, abbey of Santa Maria in Conèo.
Source: Flickr: giovanna.

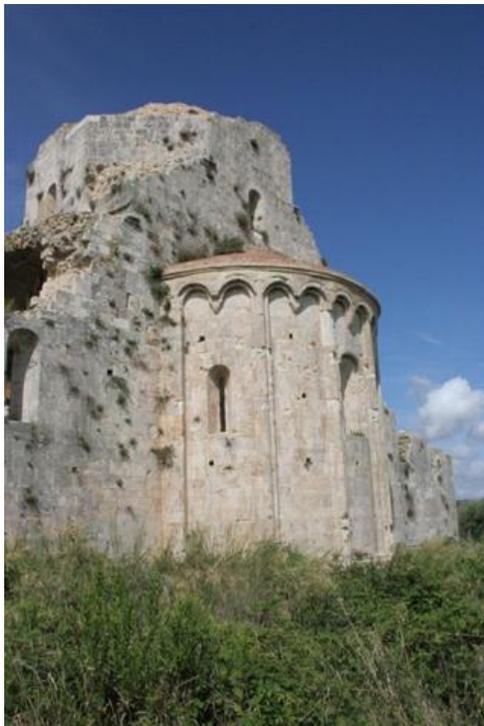


Figure 41: Exterior, San Bruzio, Magliano in Toscana.
Source: Flickr: Jayjay P.

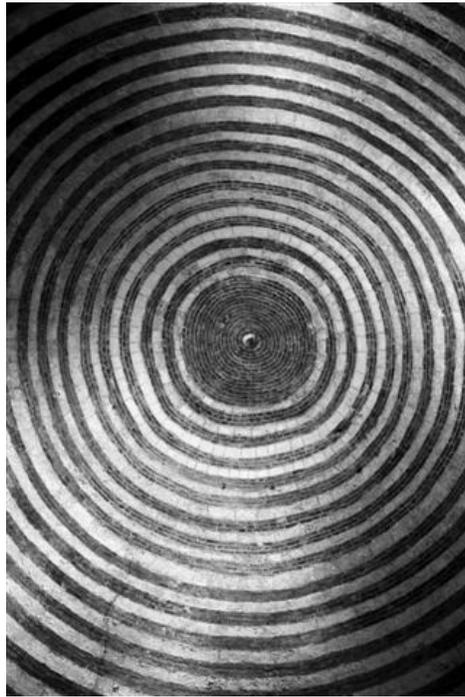


Figure 42: Dome, Hermitage of Montesiepi.
Source: Flickr: simply Iory.



Figure 43: Dome, cathedral of Sovana.

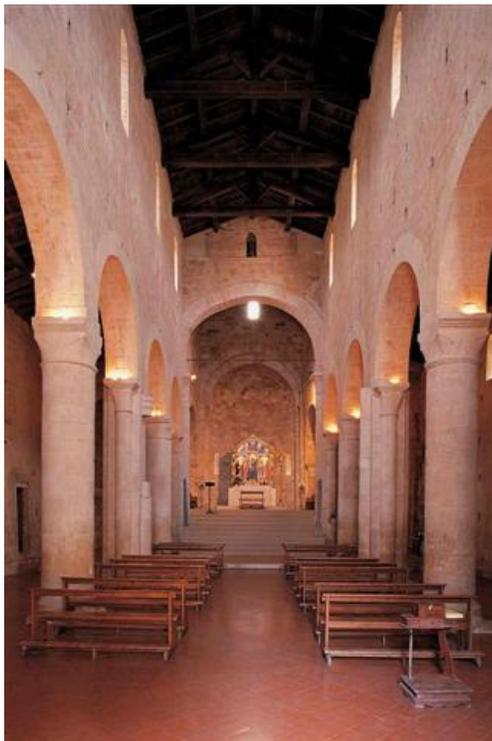


Figure 44: Interior with elevated sanctuary, Badia a Isola.
Source: www.comune.monteriggioni.si.it.



Figure 45: Interior with elevated sanctuary, Corsignano.



Figure 46: Interior, Santa Maria Castello, Tarquinia. Source: Raspi Serra, *La Tuscia romana: Un territorio come esperienza d'arte: evoluzione urbanistico-architettonica*.



Figure 47: Portal, north side, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 48: Orant figure in outer archivolt, portal, cathedral of Sovana.
Source: Flickr: Rossella 64.



Figure 49: Tympanum, portal, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 50: Tympanum, portal, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 51: Left lion with front paws on rams, portal, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 52: Right lion with acanthus leaves, portal, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 53: Carved block on interior of the cathedral of Sovana, possibly part of original portal (footnote 169). Photo by Pat Vessely.



Figure 54: Upper left jamb, portal, cathedral of Sovana.

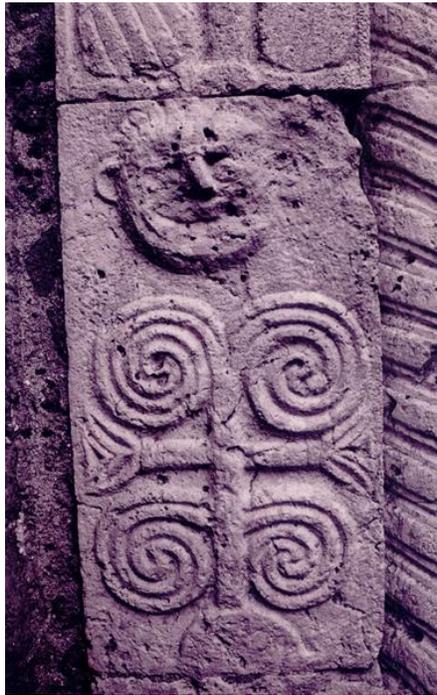


Figure 55: Head and spiral cross, left jamb, portal, cathedral of Sovana.

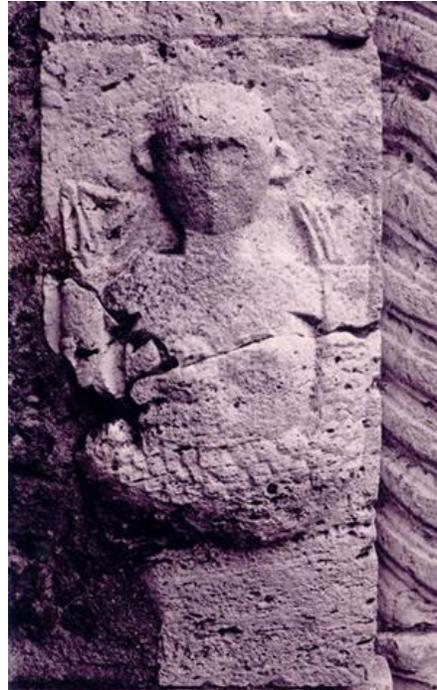


Figure 56: Mermaid, left jamb, portal, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 57: Right jamb with rings and soldier, portal, cathedral of Sovana.

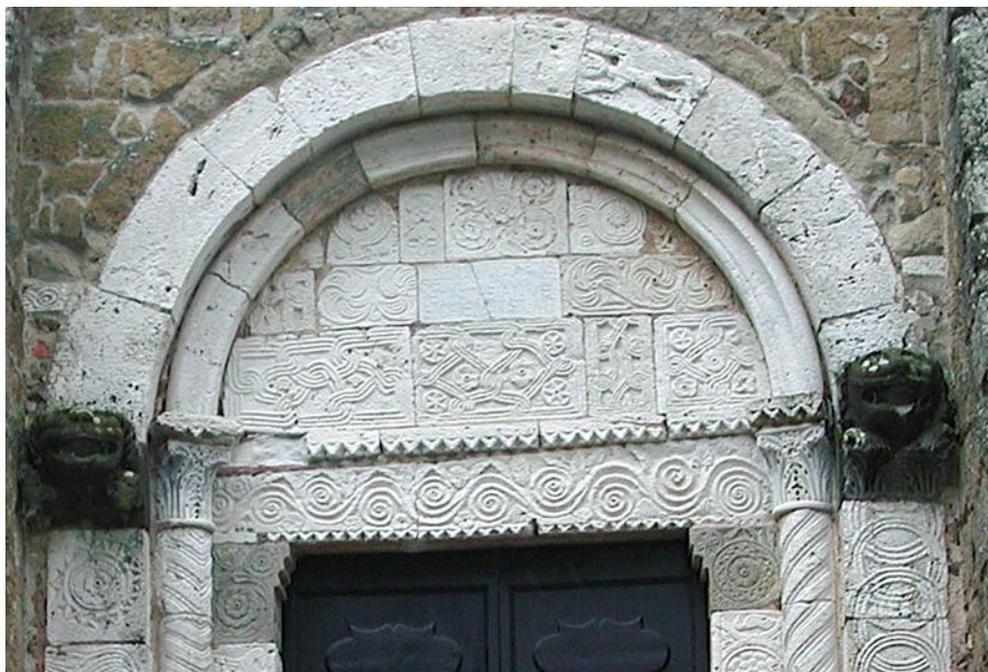


Figure 58: Tympanum, archivolt, lintel, stepped capitals of inner jambs, portal, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 59: Inner left jamb, portal, cathedral of Sovana.

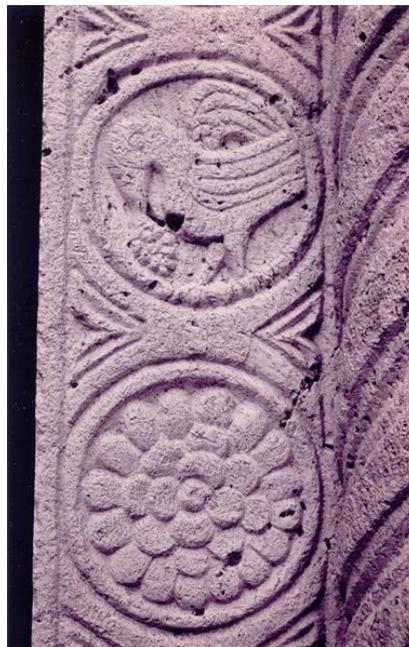


Figure 60: Inner right jamb, portal, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 61: Inner facing of inner jambs, portal, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 62: Lion, cathedral of Salerno.
Source: Flickr: Papini at the Pianacci.



Figure 63: Lion, abbey of Sant' Antimo.



Figure 64: Lion, now on interior, abbey of Sant' Antimo.



Figure 65: Lion, now on interior, abbey of Sant' Antimo.



Figure 66: Ciborium, church of Santa Maria, Sovana.



Figure 67: Ciborium, arcuated lintel, church of Santa Maria, Sovana.



Figure 68: Ciborium, detail, church of Santa Maria, Sovana.



Figure 69: Sarcophagus of Abbess Theodota, c. 735, Museo Civico, Pavia.
Source: www.hp.uab.edu.



Figure 70: Capital, ciborium, church of Santa Maria, Sovana.
Source: Flickr: riky prof.



Figure 71: Capitals of ciborium, San Giorgio, Valpolicella, 712-740.
Source: G.T. Rivoira, *Lombardic Architecture: Its Origin, Development and Derivatives*, figure 190.



Figure 72: Arcuated lintel, ciborium, first half of 8th century, Santa Cristina, Bolsena.
Source: Scortecci, *La Diocesi di Orvieto* (Corpus della scultura altomedievale), figure 10d.



Figure 73: Pluteo relief, 7th century, church of San Bartolomeo, Badia di Cantignano.
Source: Barsali, *La Diocesi di Lucca* (Corpus della scultura altomedievale), figure a.



Figure 74: Façade, Santi Vito e Modesto, Corsignano, near Pienza (Siena).
Photo by Pat Vessely.

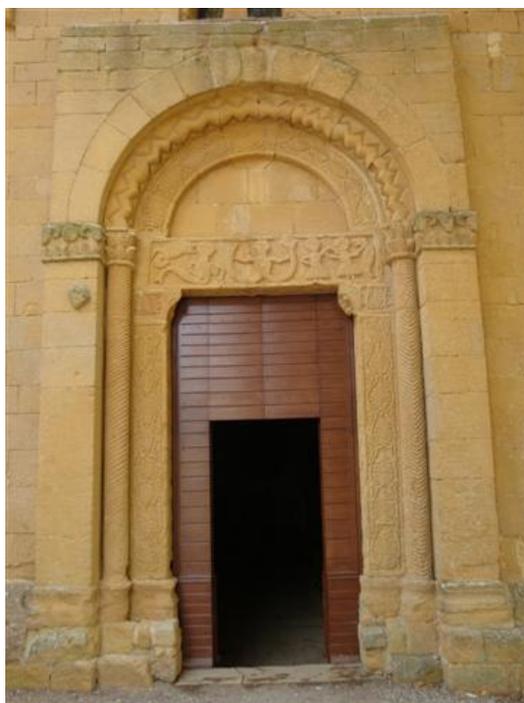


Figure 75: Portal, Corsignano. Photo by Pat Vessely.

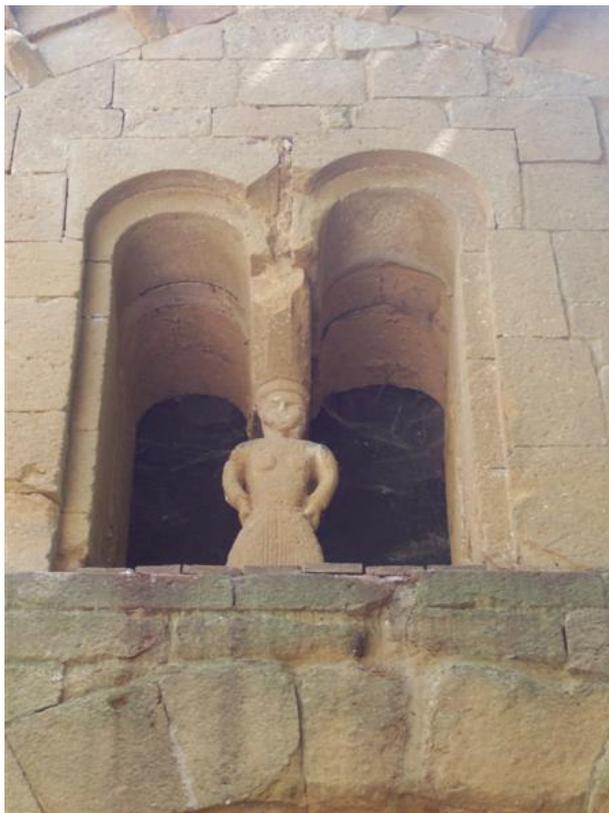


Figure 76: Figure in mullion window over portal, portal, Corsignano.



Figure 77: Mermaid in lintel, portal, Corsignano. Photo by Pat Vessely.



Figures 78 a and b: Jamb, portal, Vivo d'Orcia. Photo by Pat Vessely.

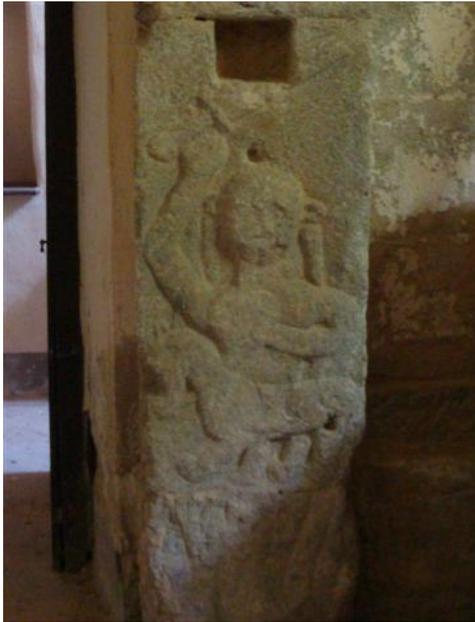


Figure 79: Soldier, jamb, portal, Vivo d'Orcia. Photo by Pat Vessely.



Figure 80: Soldier, right jamb, portal, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 81: Bifurcating Latin cross with fruit and plant motifs, jamb, Vivo d'Orcia. Photo by Pat Vessely.



Figure 82: Adoration of the Magi, Altar of Ratchis, Santa Maria Assunta, Cividale del Friuli, 796. Source: Tagliaferri, *Le Diocesi Aquileia e Grado* (Corpus della scultura altomedievale), figure 312.



Figure 83: Christ in Majesty, Altar of Ratchis, Santa Maria Assunta, Cividale del Friuli, 796. Source: Tagliaferri, *Le Diocesi Aquileia e Grado* (Corpus della scultura altomedievale), figure 311.



Figure 84: Pluteo, 774-795, Santa Maria in Cosmedin, Rome. Source: G.T. Rivoira, *Lombardic Architecture: Its Origin, Development and Derivatives*, figure 172.



Figure 85: Pluteo, late 8th – early 9th century, Rome.

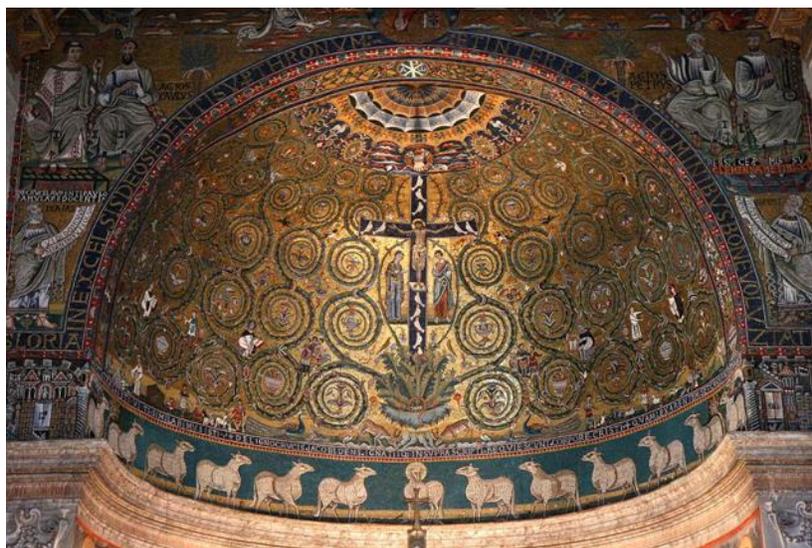


Figure 86: The Cross as the Tree of Life, apse mosaic, detail, 12th century, San Clemente, Rome Source: Flickr: Sacred Destinations.



Figure 87: Relief slab, early 9th century, Santa Maria Assunta, Otricoli.
Source: Bertelli, *Le Diocesi di Amelia, Narni e Otricoli* (Corpus della scultura altomedievale), figure 132a.



Figure 88: Relief slab, Bomarzo. Source: Raspi Serra, *La Diocesi dell'Alto Lazio* (Corpus della scultura altomedievale).



Figure 89: Memorial stone, 8th century, San Salvatore, Vasanello. Source: Raspi Serra, *La Diocesi dell'Alto Lazio* (Corpus della scultura altomedievale), figure 313.



Figure 90: Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius, c. 176 CE, Museo Capitolino, Rome.
Source: Stokstad, *Art History*, figure 6-60.



Figure 91: Equestrian Statue of a Carolingian Emperor (Charlemagne?), 9th century, The Louvre, Paris. Source: *Gardner's Art through the Ages*.



Figure 92: Soldier, detail of tonsure, right jamb, cathedral of Sovana.
Photo by Pat Vessely.



Figure 93: Frontispiece, *Questiones in Heptateuchon* by St. Augustine, circa 750, Paris BN Ms Lat. 12168. Source: pagesperso-orange.fr/lemerovingien/enluminure/img/enlureprecroixhumaine.



Figure 94: Frontispiece, *Sacramentary of Gelasius*, circa 750, Vatican Library. Source: tripatlas.com:8080/media/images/Sacr_Gelasianum_131v_132.



Figure 95: Relief from an altar, 9th century, Santa Maria in Capitolio, Aracoeli. Source: Ermini, *La Diocesi di Roma* (Corpus della scultura altomedievale), table XVI.



Figure 96: Pluteo, 847-855, San Pietro, Tuscania. Source: Raspi Serra, *La Diocesi dell'Alto Lazio* (Corpus della scultura altomedievale), figure 436.



Figure 97: Tympanum, narthex, La Madeleine, Vézelay.

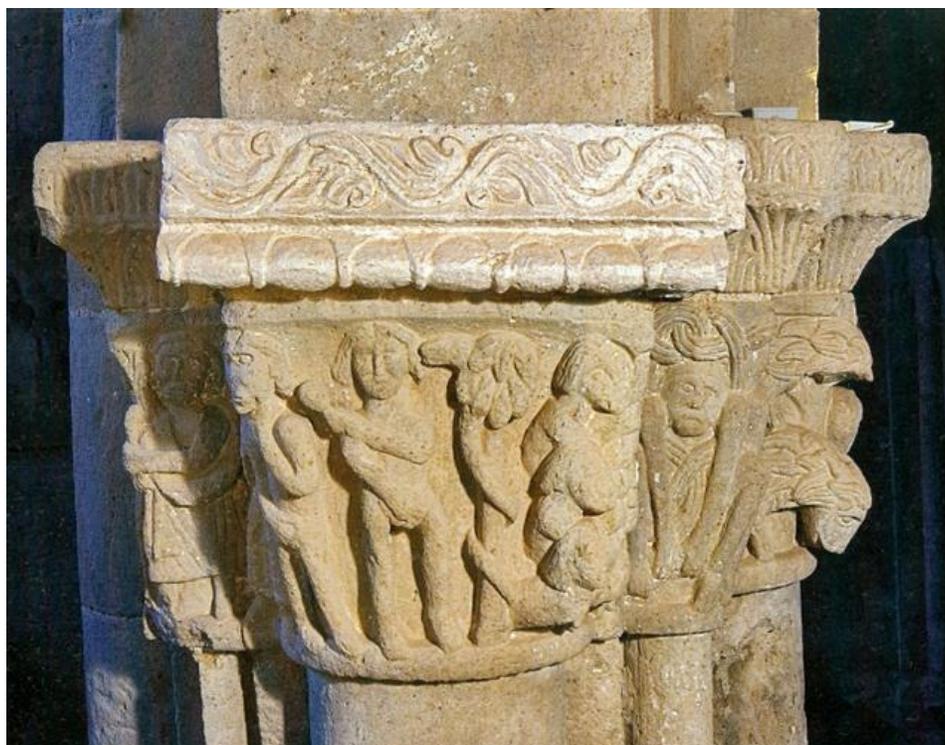


Figure 98: The Fall capital, cathedral of Sovana.
Source: Feo and Carrucoli, *Il Duomo Romanico di Sovana*, 74.



Figure 99: Left face, the Fall capital, cathedral of Sovana.

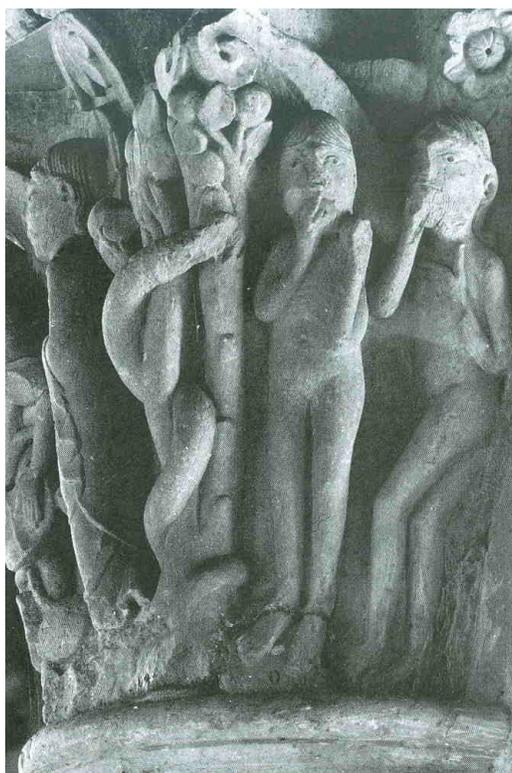


Figure 100: Adam and Eve and the Fall, ambulatory capital, Cluny III, c. 1088-95, Musée Ochier, Cluny. Source: Snyder, *Medieval Art*, figure 345.



Figure 101: Moses smiting the rock, right face, the Fall capital, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 102: Moses smiting the rock scene, detail of Israelite drinking from the water, right face, the Fall capital, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 103: Daniel in the Lions' Den capital, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 104: Colonnade capitals with wild figures; left face of Daniel capital, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 105: Right face of Daniel capital; colonnette capital with upright eagle; Sacrifice of Isaac on left face of Abraham capital, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 106: Abraham between his two wives, capital, cathedral of Sovana.
Source: Foto Francardi, A.T.L.A.



Figure 107: Sacrifice of Isaac, left face, Abraham capital, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 108: Sarah in tower gateway, right face of Abraham capital, cathedral of Sovana.
Photo by Madeleine Vessely.



Figure 109: Two colonnette capitals, view from nave, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 110: First colonnette capital, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 111: First colonnette capital with turban figure, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 112: Christ giving the keys to St. Peter, capital, Romena. Source: www.casentinoonline.it.



Figure 113: Last colonnette capital, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 114: Knight, last colonnette capital, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 115: Wild man and woman, colonnette capital, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 116: Eagle colonnette capital, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 117: Wild woman, colonnette capital, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 118: Wild man, colonnette capital, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 119: Abraham between his two wives and the Sacrifice of Isaac, relief panel, second half of 12th c., formerly in Palazzo Chigi, San Quirico d'Orcia.
Source: Lamberini (ed.), *Pulpiti Medievali Toscani*, figure 8.



Figure 120: Denier, Baldwin III, 1143-46, verso: Tower of David; recto: Crusader Cross.
Source: www.vcoins.com.



Figure 121: Denier, Raymond III of Tripoli, 1173-78, Sources: Wikipedia.



Figure 122: Denier, 1172-1183, recto: Baldwin IV; verso: Holy Sepulcher, Tower of David (center), Dome of the Rock. Sources: www.numismatics.org.

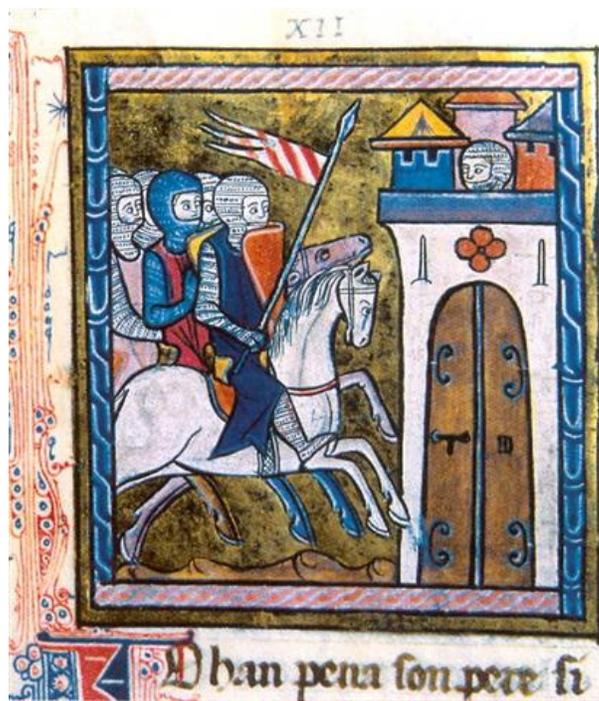


Figure 123: II Maccabees with a scene of John Hyrcanus riding to defend Jerusalem. Paris BNF MS n. acq. Fr. 1404, 226v. Source: Folda, *Crusader Art: The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1099-1291*, figure 96.



Figure 124: Colonnnette capital, figure with key, cathedral of Sovana.



Figure 125: Position of historiated capitals in relation to the portal, cathedral of Sovana.
Photo by Pat Vessely.

Appendix: Timeline of Related Dating

5 th c.	Sovana become a Bishopric
5 th c.	church of San Mamiliano in Sovana
692	<i>Revelations of the Pseudo-Methodius</i> written in what is present-day Iraq
early 8 th c.	<i>Revelations of the Pseudo-Methodius</i> translated into Latin and Greek
late 8 th - 9 th c.	
10 th c.	Sovana designated seat of county ruled by “Lords of Soana,” the Aldobrandeschi family
c. 967	Bishop Raniero associated with the 10 th century building phase of the cathedral
c. 1015	Hildebrand born, in or near Sovana (d. 1085)
1015-1059	reign of Bishop Giovanni associated with the 11th century restoration of the cathedral
c. 1025-80	outer jambs on portals sculpted
1046	Hildebrand to Germany or Cluny with the banished ex-Pope Gregory VI (Johannes Gratiaus Pierleoni, r. 1045-46), Hildebrand’s teacher
1046-47	Pope Clement II
1047-48	Pope Benedict IX
1048	Pope Damasus II
early 1048	Gregory VI died, Hildebrand at Cluny
1048	Hildebrand returns to Rome with Bishop Bruno of Toul, who becomes Pope Leo IX (r. 1049-54), Hildebrand became subdeacon and steward in the Roman Church, legate to France
1049	Synods of Reims and Mainz under Leo IX, proclamations against simony and Nicolaitism
1054	after Leo IX’s death, Hildebrand sent to Germany to negotiate with Emperor Henry III for the next pope, Bishop Gebhard of Eichsättdt becomes Pope Victor II (r. 1055-57)
1055	Hildebrand again appointed legate to France
1056	Henry IV became king of the Holy Roman Empire at age 5, regency period of his mother Queen Agnes
1057	Pope Stephen IX (Frederick of Lorraine), appointed without consultation of German court, Hildebrand and Bishop Anselm of Lucca sent to

- Germany for consent which came from Empress Agnes, but Stephen IX died 1058
- 1058 Pope Nicholas II (r. 1058-61)
- 1059 At Lateran synod, Nicholas II initiated the Papal Election Decree granting the College of Cardinals primacy in the election of popes.
- 1061 Papal bull regarding cathedral of Sovana identifying two earlier building phases (c. 967 and 1015-1059)
- 1061 Bishop Anselm I of Lucca became Pope Alexander II (r. 1061-73), contested by Henry IV who appointed Bishop Cadalus of Parma as 'anti-pope' Honorius II
- 1070s Matilda of Tuscany proves herself an ardent papal supporter until her death in 1115
- 1073 Hildebrand became Pope Gregory VII (d. 1085)
- 1073 Anselm II appointed Bishop of Lucca (1073 – 1086)
- 1074 Gregory VII planned to send military support to the Byzantine Empire to fight the Muslims, plan aborted
- 1074 First Lenten synod in Rome—sacraments issued by clerics who practiced simony or nicolatism declared annulled
- 1075 Second Lenten synod in Rome—conflict over the appointment of the Archbishop of Milan and other dioceses, lay investiture declared invalid
- 1075 *Dictatus papae* written out in Gregory's *Registrum*
- 1076 Synod of Worms—Henry IV deposed Gregory VII
- 1076 Third Lenten synod in Rome—Gregory excommunicated Henry VI, Saxon lords gave Henry until February 22, 1077 to receive a pardon from Gregory or they would elect another king
- 1077 Henry's penitence to Gregory at Canossa, received absolution and communion from the pope (January 18)
- 1079? Matilda's first patrimonial donation to the papacy (or 1086?)
- 1080 Gregory excommunicated Henry for the second time for his disobedience, replaced Henry with Rudolf of Saxony as 'anti-king.' At Henry's synod of Brixen, he deposed Gregory and elected Archbishop Guibert of Ravenna as the 'anti-pope' Clement III
- early 1080s John of Mantua composed his treatise for Matilda of Tuscany
- 1081-84 Henry's military campaigns in Italy
- 1081 Anselm of Lucca exiled from his bishopric, found refuge with Matilda in Mantua
- 1082-1083 Bruno of Segni composed his *Commentarium in Isaiam* (December-April)
- 1083-84 Henry besieged Rome, Gregory took refuge in Castello Sant' Angelo until rescued by papal allies, the Normans in southern Italy
- 1085 Pope Gregory VII died, Salerno (May 25)
- 1085 Bonizo of Sutri, while in exile in Tuscany, writes his *Liber ad amicum* shortly after Gregory's death
- 1086 Anselm of Lucca completes *Collectio canonum*, died March 18th

- 1086 Pope Victor III (r. 1086-87)
- c. 1087 Cardinal Deusdedi wrote his *Collectio canonum*
- 1088 Pope Urban II (r. 1088-99), encouraged Matilda's marriage to Welf V of Bavaria to strengthen papal political allies
- c. 1090 Bonizo of Sutri wrote his *Liber de vita christiana*
- 1090s Bruno of Segni composed his commentary on Exodus
- 1095 Pope Urban II proclaimed the First Crusade (November, Council of Clermont); Welf of Bavaria renounced his marriage to Matilda of Tuscany on the grounds of nonconsummation, thus weakening the papacy's position in imperial lands
- 1097-98 conquest of Antioch
- 1099 Pope Paschal II (r. 1099-1118)
- 1099 Jerusalem became a Crusader state
- 12th c. Rocca Aldobrandeschi (built on site of Etruscan, then Roman, fortification, renovated in 1572)
- 1102 "Renewed" donation of Matilda's lands to the papacy (first donation c. 1079 or 1086?)
- 1106 Henry IV died
- 1111 Paschal II conflict with Henry V
- 1115 Matilda died; Henry V claimed her vast lands despite her early donations (1079/1086 and 1106) to the papacy
- 1116-1117 Henry V invaded Italy to take Matilda's lands
- 1117 earthquake in northern Italy, parts of Tuscany
- 1118-19 Pope Gelasius II
- 1119-24 Pope Calixtus II; excommunicated Henry V and anti-pope Gregory VIII
- 1122 Concordat of Worms; Henry V and Pope Calixtus II eased tensions between papacy and empire
- 1128 Paul of Bernried wrote his *Vita Gregorii VII papae*
- 1144 County of Edessa, one of the four Crusader states, falls to the Muslims
- 1145-48 "Second Crusade" to Damascus
- 1153 reign of Bishop Pietro at Sovana identified in the cathedral's portal inscription (r. 1153-1175)
- mid 12th c. interior historiated capitals sculpted
- 1174 Muslims regain control of Damascus
- 1190-92 "Third Crusade" with Frederick I Barbarossa, Richard I of England, and Philip II of France
- 1202-04 "Fourth Crusade" to Constantinople
- 1248 date associated with inscription located on cathedral's exterior transept arm and corresponding to interior side aisle vaults
- 1284 decline of Aldobrandeschi power in Sovana
- 1293 Sovana under control of Count Romano di Orsini

- 1410 Sovana under control of Siena
- 1608 Sovana incorporated into the Grand Duchy of Tuscany