

PETER SEILER

Humboldt-Universität Berlin

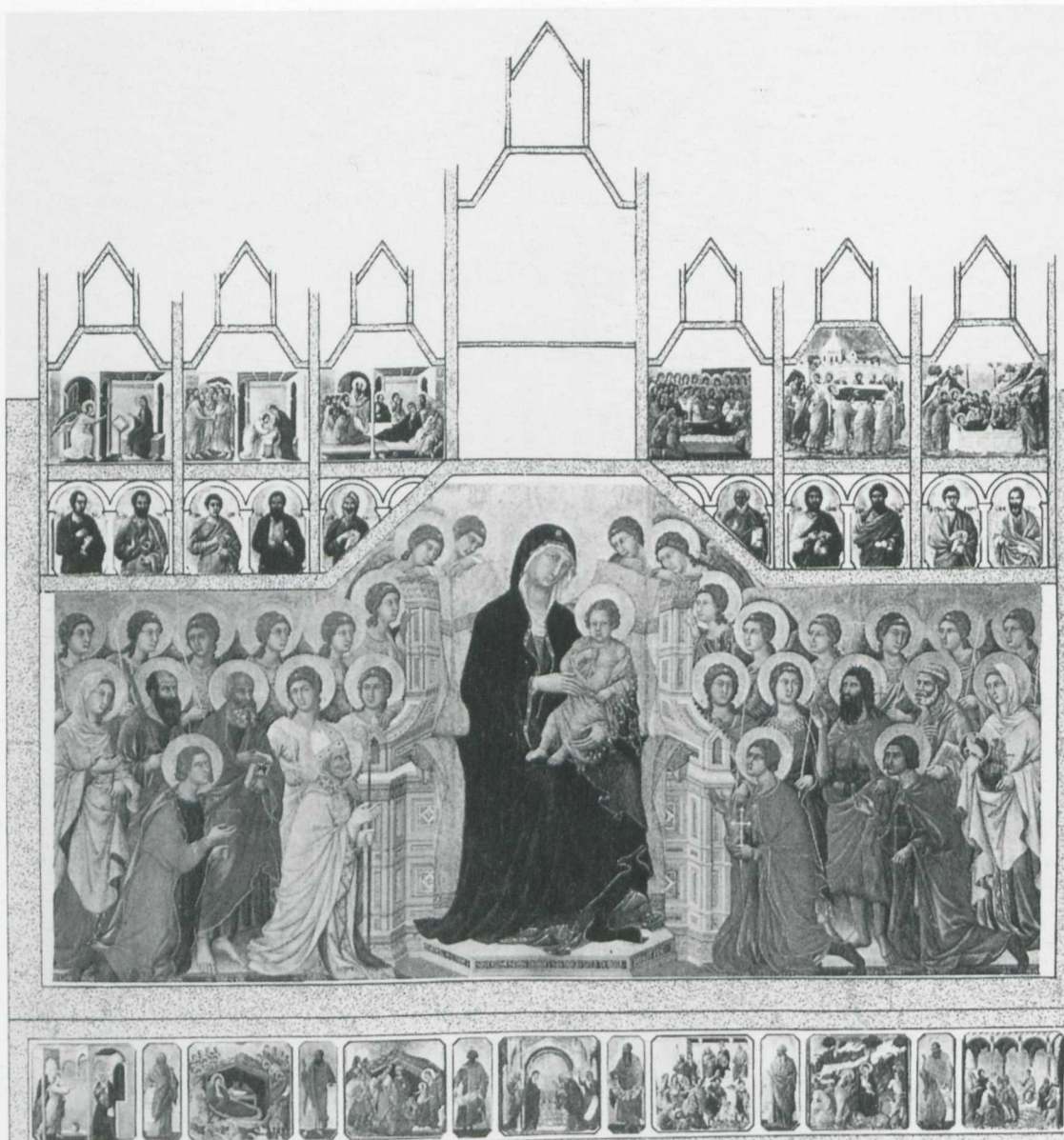
Duccio's Maestà: The Function of the Scenes from the Life of Christ on the Reverse of the Altarpiece: A New Hypothesis

The literature currently available on Duccio's *Maestà* for the main altar of Siena cathedral demonstrates that as far as the typological interpretations of this work are concerned, art historians are in agreement on a number of points.¹ They recognize and appreciate the altarpiece as a synthesis of the formal and thematic development of altarpiece painting as it unfolded during the thirteenth century. There are two types of panel paintings considered to be the most significant antecedents for the main painting on the front of the altarpiece (fig. 1): the *Virgin* in vertical format and the *dossal* in horizontal format. The Passion of Christ scenes on the reverse (fig. 2) are seen in relation to the tradition of the altar antependium. The altarpiece predella appears to be related to older precursors of two works that have not survived but are still documented: Cimabue's polyptych for Santa Chiara in Pisa (1301)² and Duccio's earlier *Maestà* in the town hall of Siena (1302).³ The pinnacles of the cathedral *Maestà* have been traced back to the retable in Perugia by Vigoroso da Siena (1291), the pinnacles of which were also decorated with angels.⁴ The *Maestà*'s Gothic framework, which has not survived, but whose essential lines have been reconstructed, is now considered to be the outcome of a trend toward the Gothicization of the altarpiece, again first documented with the retable in Perugia by Vigoroso da Siena (fig. 3).⁵

With respect to the interpretation of the innovative and unusual elements of the altarpiece, the various scholarly opinions fluctuate between two positions. While some researchers are swayed for the most part by stylistic and iconographic considerations and speculate about the artist's extensive travels, ascribing to him the knowledge of French Gothic cathedrals, Roman apse mosaics, and Byzantine art of the Near East,⁶ others base their arguments on the content of the work, stressing the "exceptional" character of the communal commission that led to its creation and Duccio's focused consideration of the site for the altarpiece.⁷ Inspired by the investigative "art in context" approach, scholars have given special attention to Duccio's relationship to the cathedral in Siena. Their intensive efforts to discover formal and content-related links from the *Maestà* to the architecture of the cathedral and its interior design⁸ have culminated in the statement by Hans Belting that the "residence of the Madonna in her cathedral repeats itself like a picture within a picture on the panel [of the *Maestà*]."⁹ The comparison of the altar painting with the design of the church is suggestive and not without a certain power of persuasion. However, one cannot avoid the question as to whether some of these arguments are not simply too clever, assuming too much careful and refined planning. One does not have to be a pedantic critic to see that these suggested analogies deal in part

Duccio di Buoninsegna,
Maestà, reverse,
reconstruction
After White 1979, 85, fig. 52

1. Duccio di Buoninsegna, *Maestà*, early fourteenth century; front, reconstruction
 After John White, *Duccio: Tuscan Art and the Medieval Workshop* (London, 1979), 84, fig. 51

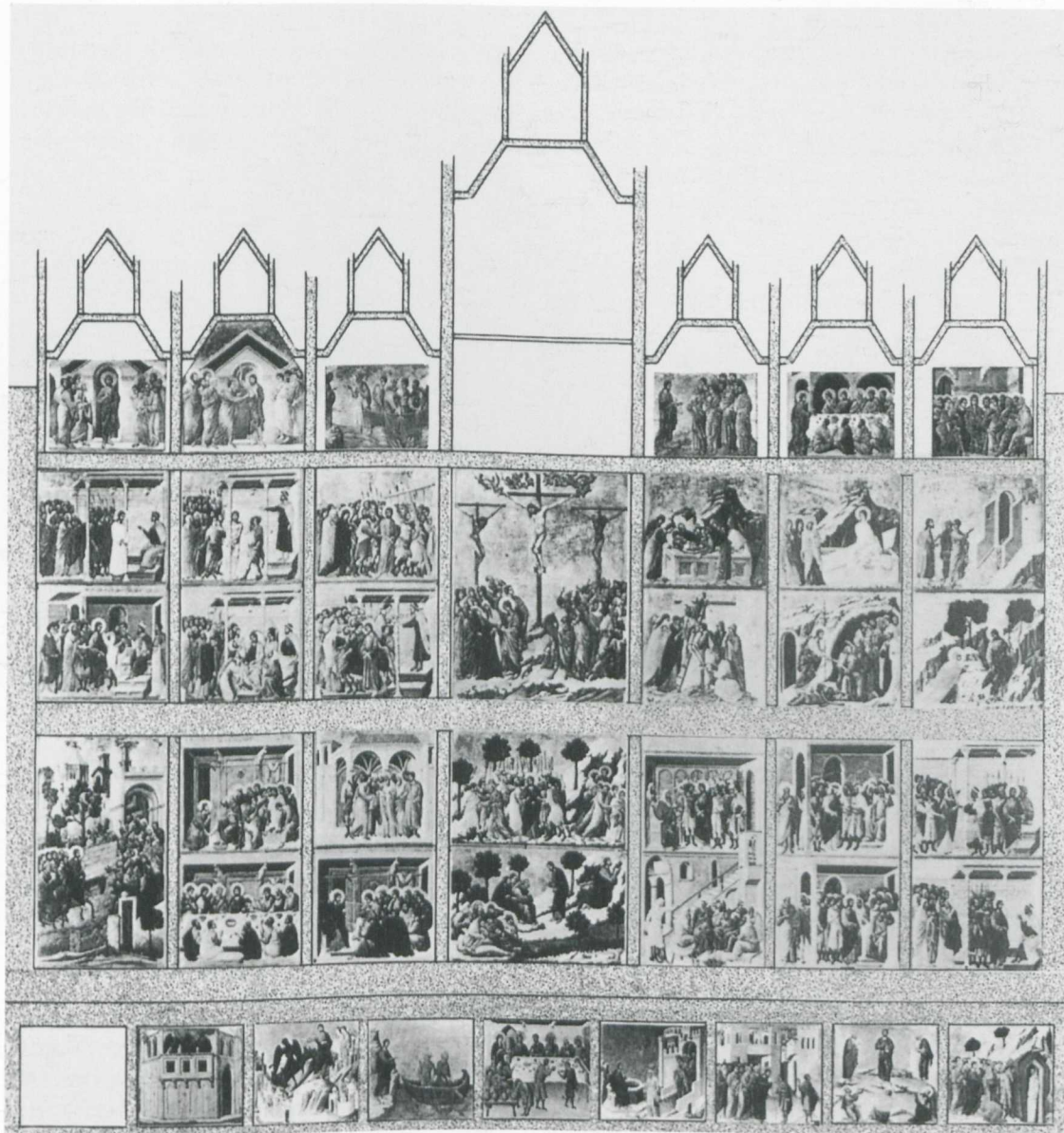


with different elements and that one could well consider other alternative explanations for the questions surrounding the *Maestà*'s origins.¹⁰

In light of the multitude of conceivable points of contact, the complexity of the problems that confront scholars in their search for models and sources of inspiration for Duccio's *Maestà* cannot in the end, without a certain arbitrariness, be reduced to the local context of the work. The discussion on these points will doubtless proceed for some time to come. A series of relevant questions already beg to be asked. In the case of the *Maestà*, are we actually dealing only with a

combination of the various types of altar paintings already established in Siena at this time?¹¹ Faced with the complexity of a double-sided construction like the *Maestà*, do we not indeed have to consider on a much broader basis the possibility of the artist's adaptation of other types of panel painting, or his reception of iconographic types and cycles from other genres and media? Did Duccio take over the arcade of apostle busts on the front side from older polyptychs,¹² or did he, perhaps inspired by Byzantine or Byzantinizing iconostasis beams, introduce it to make up for the difference in height between the vertical format of the enthroned

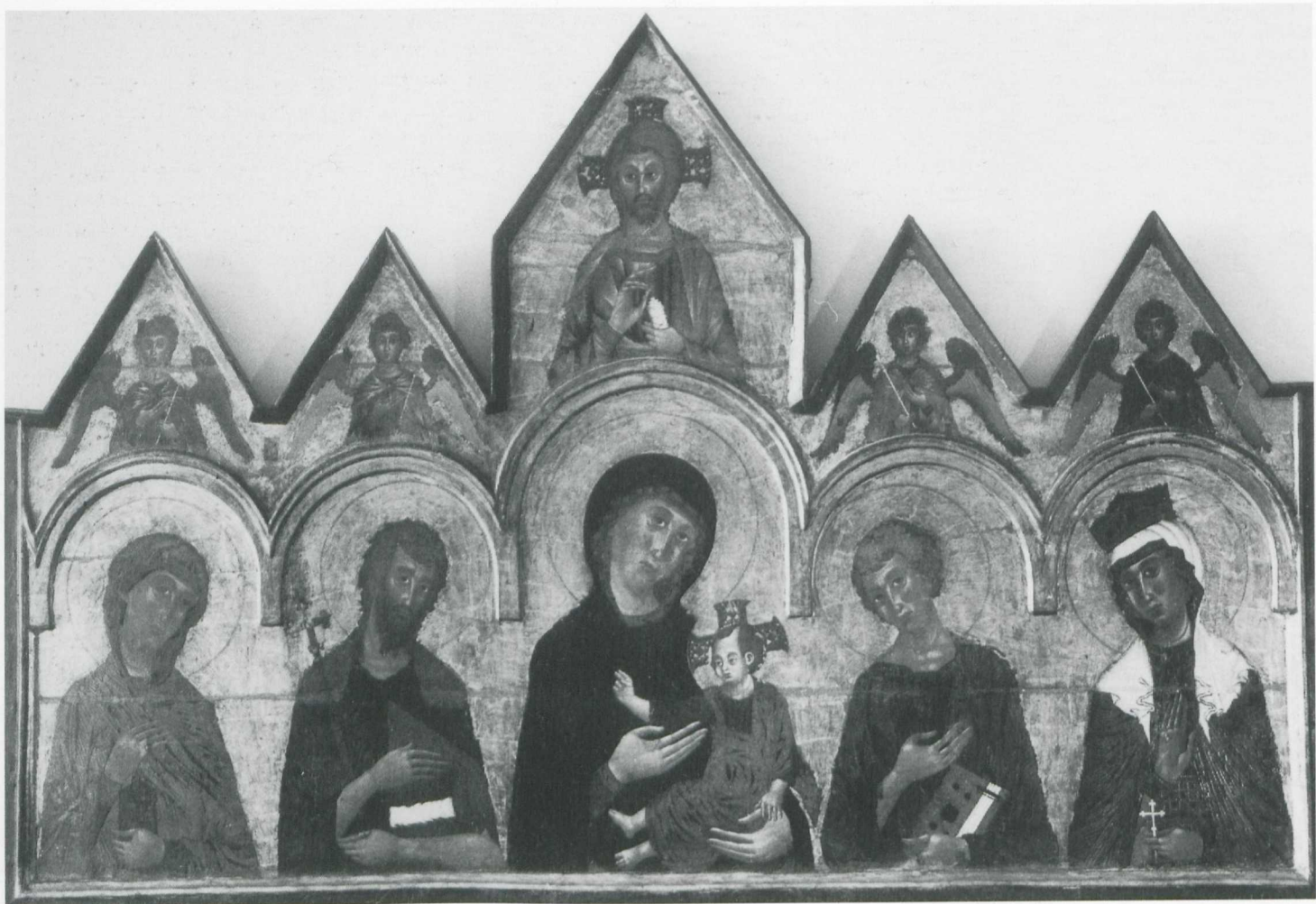
2. Duccio di Buoninsegna,
Maestà, reverse,
 reconstruction
 After White 1979, 85, fig. 52



Madonna and the horizontal format of the polyptych?¹³ On which models did Duccio base the Life of Mary scenes on the front of the *coronamento*?¹⁴ Is it mere coincidence that French Marian ivory triptychs represent in great detail Mary's death and assumption in a sequence similar to that of the scenes in the *Maestà*?¹⁵ When one considers the apparition scenes on the back of the altarpiece, for which there is nothing comparable in the realm of older panel painting, are not the most likely precedents to be found in manuscript illumination?¹⁶ Can one assume that the main part of the reverse with its Passion scenes arranged around a

large Crucifixion typologically belongs to the tradition of pictorial altar decoration, even though the comparative material offers only vague points of reference? The questions raised here cannot, for the most part, be definitively answered. In this essay I will concentrate only on the last question. My primary aim is to elucidate evidence for a number of hypotheses regarding the function of the entire reverse of the *Maestà*. To this end let me first summarize the current state of scholarship on the subject.

The double-sided design of the *Maestà* has been explained not only by the freestanding



position of the high altar in Siena cathedral, but also by assuming a liturgical function for the east side of the altar. Kees van der Ploug provided the rationale for this function in his reconstruction of the liturgical furnishing of the chancel.¹⁷ There are three basic tenets to his argument. (1) The *Ordo officiorum ecclesiae Senensis* of 1215 contains the following location reference, "in Sacristia, vel post Altare Beatae Virginis," which apparently describes the place where the canons' stalls stood: behind the high altar in the east part of the church.¹⁸ (2) The repeated appearance in this text of the location reference, "ante Altare in Choro," seems to establish the existence of a second altar in the chancel, probably a sacramental altar.¹⁹ (3) The lack of reference to a sacramental altar in later sources justifies the assumption that the newly erected high altar of 1260 also took over the function of this sacramental altar.²⁰

As a consequence we seem to be dealing with a double altar—an altar for the lay congregation and an altar for the clergy, a Virgin altar and a Christ altar, or rather a Passion altar, as Florens Deuchler emphasizes²¹—and the double-sidedness of the *Maestà* panel could be seen as the result of this set of circumstances. This view has now been adopted by many authors on the subject,²² and Beltling has formulated it very explicitly: "The double face of the bilateral panel was designed for its location on the freestanding high altar, and it also conveys the double hereditary succession that this work took on: the heritage of the two altars in the chancel, one of the Virgin and the other of Christ."²³

A great deal of what has been written over the last ten to twenty years on the typological, functional, and iconographic questions concerning the reverse of the *Maestà* has been influenced by this hypothesis of the double

3. Vigoroso da Siena, *Virgin and Child with Saints Mary Magdalene, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, and Julian*, 1291, tempera on panel

Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia; photograph: Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali, Artistici e Storici, Perugia

altar.²⁴ I here summarize briefly the most frequently discussed arguments and comment on their weak points. Scholars have stressed repeatedly that the sequence of images of the Passion of Christ on the panel appears to be arranged with the clergy in mind, their celebrations of mass and their canonical hours.²⁵ A liturgical program for the selection and ordering of the scenes has, however, not been demonstrated. Especially one feature was used in the argument: the central position of the Wedding of Cana in the predella.²⁶ There can be no doubt that in the exegetic tradition this scene was connected with eucharistic symbolism, but that circumstance alone does not prove that a liturgical function of the scene was intended. The central position of the scene could, for example, also be adequately explained merely through a consideration of the cycle's chronological sequence.

In its attempts to find a typological context for the scenes of the reverse of the altarpiece, current scholarship has for the most part also remained within the realm of altar decoration. References to antependia and dossals in this context often include examples whose thematic content clearly shows a different concept.²⁷ Deuchler, who identifies the reverse as a Passion altar, assumes that there were older antependia with corresponding scenes that served as models for Duccio.²⁸ His reference to their "tradizione antichissima," supported by the Pala d'oro created in 1020 and now in the museum of the cathedral of Aachen, does not, however, hide the fact that the concept of the christological side of the *Maestà* cannot be convincingly related to the few and disparate examples that have come down to us.²⁹ It is also worth noting in this context that in light of the assumed function of the reverse of the altarpiece, scholars have, on the one hand, spared no efforts to establish a compelling reading of the narrative sequence of the scenes, while, on the other hand, they have totally neglected the question of whether the public, which would, in part, have been sitting at a distance of approximately ten meters, would have been able to see at all, not to mention adequately identify, the relatively small series of images on the altarpiece, which was approximately six meters high.³⁰

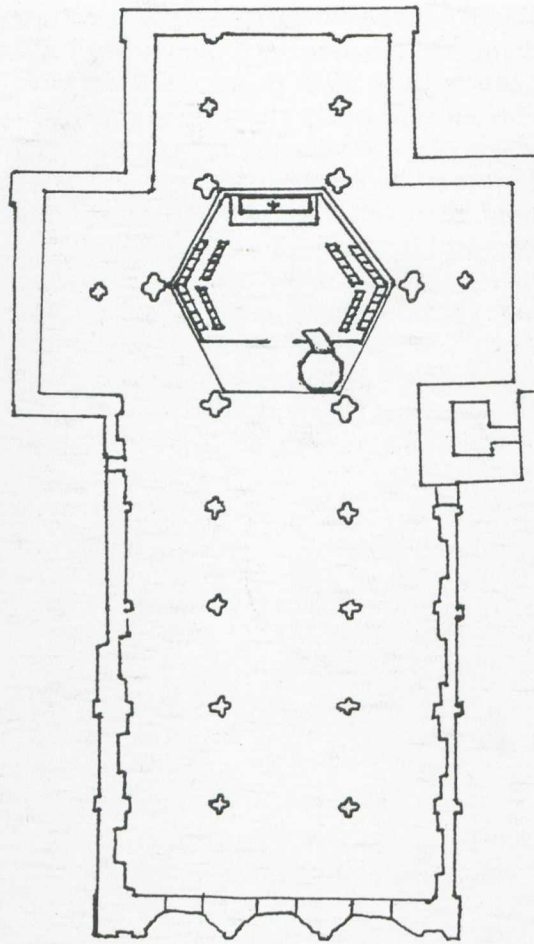
The fact that the double altar thesis for the *Maestà* has received such broad acceptance seems even more surprising when the documentary sources from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries are taken into consideration. There is, in fact, no written evidence at all to support a double-sided liturgical use of the altar,³¹ and the documents pertaining to the remodeling of the high altar and the canons' choir give for both a clear physical indication, "suptus metam" ("under the dome").³² For the other double-sided retables that have been preserved, there is also no evidence to support a two-sided liturgical function of the altars.³³ In some cases the possibility of such a function can be conclusively eliminated.³⁴

Since the publication in 1995 of Edith Struchholz' investigation into the choir and chancel of Siena cathedral—a study that has not yet been taken into consideration in the more recent literature on the *Maestà*—one must conclude that the history of the liturgical accessories in the cathedral is less complicated and unusual than has been assumed hitherto by Kees van der Ploeg. On the basis of a new analysis of the pertinent sources, Struchholz concludes that the descriptive passages in the *Ordo officiorum* mention only one, not two altars, and that the choir stalls stood in front of the high altar.³⁵ Furthermore, in her discussion of the structural changes carried out in the 1250s and 1260s, she virtually confirms the validity of the older reconstruction proposals, which place the main altar as well as the polygonal chancel under the dome (fig. 4).³⁶ As a result of these findings, there is no longer any basis for all the assumptions regarding a functional connection between the reverse of the *Maestà* and the clergy. Struchholz sees an explanation for the reverse of the altarpiece in "the entrance to the Duomo in the eastern part as a connecting axis to the city center and in the massive processions on the great Marian feasts, which could have been led around the hexagonal chancel (erected in the thirteenth century)."³⁷ In light of the small format of the individual scenes and the fact that they were apparently intended to be viewed from close range, Struchholz' explanation seems as unlikely as those already mentioned, since the participants in communal processions and rituals would have been able

to view the reverse of the *Maestà* only in passing. Had the city especially envisioned such an audience in motion, then the city's "megalomaniacal" pride, which is often considered the driving force behind the project, certainly would have been better satisfied by pictures of larger format.³⁸

If we assume that the clergy was indeed located in front of the high altar, then old questions become relevant again and new ones arise as well. Why were the extraordinary dimensions of the *Maestà* not used to accommodate painted scenes of larger format? Why was a large format not chosen for at least the Crucifixion scene? Why did they not limit themselves to scenes of the Passion, but rather also included scenes from Jesus' public life and a whole series of apparitions of the resurrected Christ? Does the extensive cycle of paintings have something to do with the function of the altar, or is it perhaps primarily a kind of artistic counterbalance to the circumstance that the cathedral, because of its design, could not be appropriately decorated with wall paintings?³⁹ Does not the eucharistic symbolism of the Wedding of Cana at the center of the predella provide sufficient evidence for the assumption that mass was also celebrated in back of the altar? If one accepts that the design of the reverse was conceived primarily with a moving, processional public in mind, then would one not also have to assume that the painted scenes in small format had more or less the same function that Paul Veyne ascribed to the series of reliefs on the column of Trajan, that it was essentially the representational effect of the altar-piece that dictated its design, rather than its legibility and symbolic accessibility for the public, however that public might be defined?⁴⁰ In short, why was a christological cycle produced with so many diminutive scenes—a pictorial cycle that encompassed more scenes than any other known cycle of wall paintings with the same theme?⁴¹

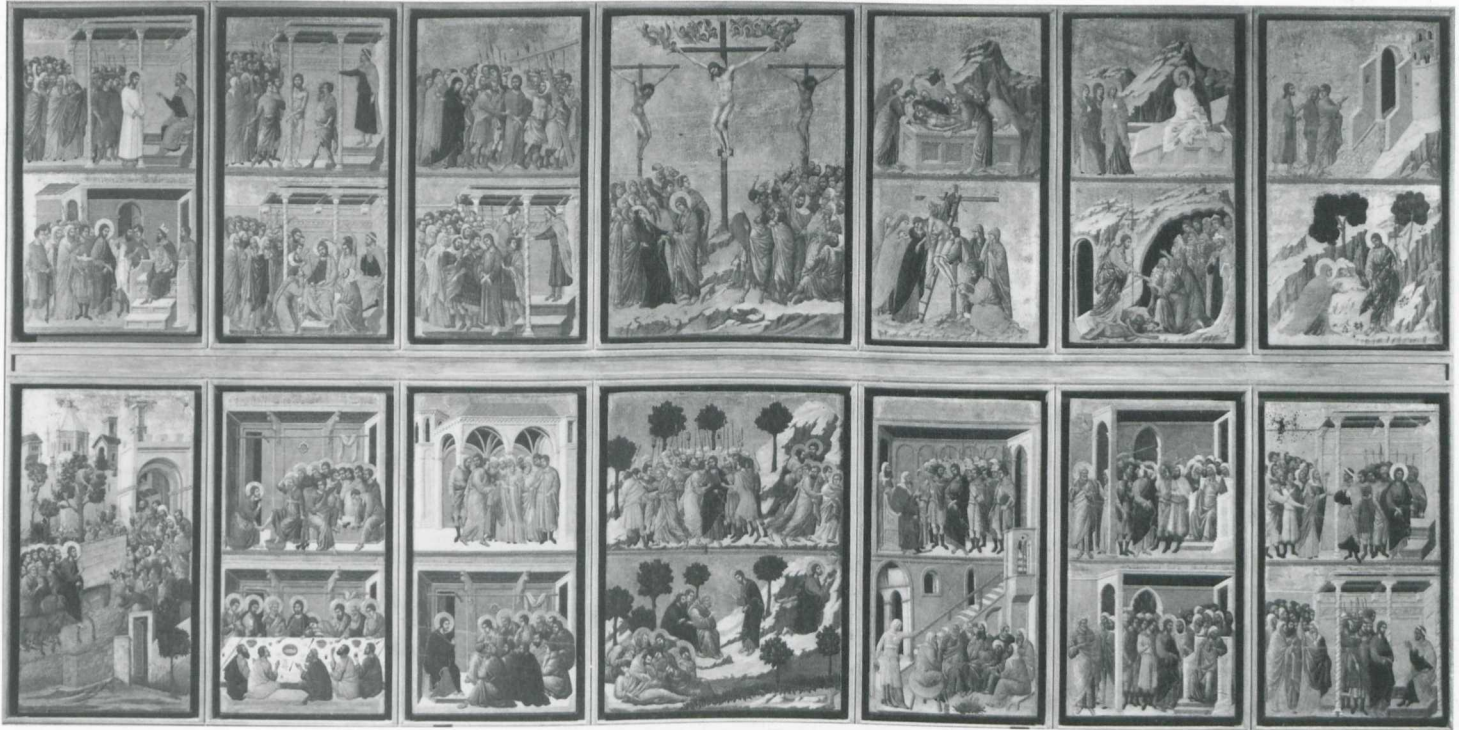
As indicated above, in light of the extraordinary size and singular complexity of Duccio's *Maestà*, I favor an explanation that takes into account different models and sources of inspiration for the individual parts. The reverse consists of a rectangular main section, the predella, and the superstructure



4. Reconstruction of the thirteenth-century choir of Siena cathedral and its furnishings
After Edith Struchholz, *Die Choranlagen und Chorgestühle des Sieneser Domes* (Münster and New York, 1995), 306, fig. 18

(*coronamento*). Each of these parts has a thematic focus: the predella shows the scenes illustrating Jesus' public life, the rectangular central portion shows primarily the Passion of Christ, and the *coronamento* presents seven of the nine apparitions of the resurrected Christ. Each of the three parts has its own history of origin.

The predella as such was, as already noted, not new. Duccio had evidently already used such a base (with scenes or with half-length figures) for the *Maestà* in the Palazzo Pubblico. The superstructure was likewise not a completely new element. The use of gables for images of angels and the Savior has been well documented since Vigoroso da Siena. The *coronamento* of the *Maestà* is, however, for the most part new in both its individual forms and its function as a support for paintings. For the first time ever in the history of panel painting, Duccio introduced a superstructure that spanned two registers. The



5. Duccio di Buoninsegna, *Maestà*, main rear panel, Passion scenes, 1308–1311, tempera on panel

Museo dell'Opera Metropolitana, Siena; photograph: Soprintendenza per i Beni Artistici e Storici per le province di Siena e Grosseto

superstructure's basic unit of form, which is repeated seven times, has the following characteristics: two gabled rectangular frames of differing sizes are placed one on top of the other, whereby the peak of the gable of the lower, larger frame has been capped and flattened to form a base for the upper frame. Until the creation of the *Maestà*, the top parts of altarpieces had a less complex form. The oldest retables exhibit simple triangular pinnacles, just like those of polyptych no. 28 in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena, a work that has been ascribed to Duccio. At the same time it appears that gabled rectangular frames were sometimes used for the larger central panels of polyptychs, like the dossal by Vigoroso da Siena in Perugia. The complex, double-layered superstructure introduced by Duccio was probably inspired by contemporary Gothic architecture. Arnolfo di Cambio used the form of a horizontally capped and flattened gable on the facade of the cathedral in Florence for the canopies, which are crowned by tabernacles and frame the two side entrances.⁴² The introduction of additional pictorial fields for paintings into the *coronamento* was apparently prompted by the desire to accommodate on the front of the *Maestà* the scenes from the

Life of Mary that are related to the title of the altar. Older altar paintings did not exhibit narrative scenes in this area. Until this time the pinnacles were reserved for angels and the center for the Savior.

From these observations one can draw the following conclusions concerning the interpretation of the reverse of the altar. (1) The scenes of the apparitions of Christ on the reverse of the altar—scenes that belong neither to the tradition of panel painting nor to that of mural painting—were evidently a thematic complement, induced by the enlargement of the *coronamento*. (2) The evidence supporting an enlargement of the *coronamento* through an ad hoc decision also confirms the hypothesis reached by scholarship to date that the horizontal rectangular main portion of the reverse of the *Maestà* (fig. 5) must be investigated and understood as a categorically discrete unit.

These findings prompt in turn the following questions. Where do we find horizontal rectangular altarpieces with an enlarged central image and smaller ones to either side? Where are panels with a central Crucifixion and scenes of the Passion on either side to be found? The first question is easily answered. Among the earliest types

of altar paintings we find the horizontally formatted rectangular dossal. It is already documented in Siene painting by the antependiumlike *Majestas Domini* panel in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena.⁴³ This type of painting was also adapted for the cult of the saints, as we see in the panel dating from the last third of the thirteenth century showing the enthroned Saint John in the same museum.⁴⁴ John White has pointed out that the architectural elements in the internal subdivision of this panel return later in the *Maestà*.⁴⁵ The second question requires a more involved answer: the understanding of the eucharist as representation (*repraesentatio*), remembrance, and visualization of Christ's sacrificial death⁴⁶ lead already in the early Middle Ages to the decoration of the altar with a cross, and since the eleventh century with increasing frequency to the erection of a cross on or near the altar table.⁴⁷ In Italy, painted crosses, flanked on either side by Passion scenes, were used since the twelfth century.⁴⁸ The tradition of these *croci dipinte* is a possible explanation for the fact that painted antependia with the Crucifixion flanked by a series of images from the Life of Christ were not common during this period. The same is true for the horizontal dossals on the altar. Painted Passion scenes first found their way to the altar primarily as accompaniment to the Madonna.⁴⁹ The evolution of the form of the *croce dipinta*—the replacement of the *Christus triumphans* by the *Christus patiens*, as well as the decline in the use of lateral scenes—may in some regions have favored this development. The relatively large crucifix hanging above the altar and the Madonna on the altar flanked by Passion scenes were probably often arranged and installed as an ensemble.⁵⁰ The location of the crucifixion scene in the central gable of some later retables, frequently above a Madonna figure, seems to follow the traditional placement of the *croce dipinta* above the dossal. An example of this type of altarpiece from the Siena region is the polyptych ascribed to Ugolino da Siena in the Cleveland Museum of Art, whereby the Madonna is, however, not flanked by Passion scenes but by saints.⁵¹ The combination of a Crucifixion, highlighted through a larger format and central or elevated position, and Passion scenes was not common

in Siene painting at this time. Among the Siene retables that have been preserved from the period before Duccio's *Maestà* there is not a single example of such an altarpiece. For this reason it is necessary to consider other areas as well. There are several small-scale panels for private devotion worth discussing in this context.

From northern Italy—Venice, Rimini, and Bologna—a series of small panel paintings portraying cycles of the Life of Christ have survived. These are primarily vertically formatted diptychs and triptychs,⁵² whose typological precedents are to be found in Byzantine art.⁵³ A few panels, however, also exhibit a horizontal format. The first example (fig. 6) was published in 1932 by Evelyn Sandberg-Valalà and has been discussed repeatedly in art-historical literature since then.⁵⁴ This panel measures 67.3 × 84.8 cm and depicts twenty individual scenes grouped around a larger central Crucifixion scene. The six upper fields show scenes from the Life of Christ, while the fourteen others portray events from the lives of various saints. In terms of typological precedents, this panel goes back to Byzantine calendar icons, modifying them in particular through the central placement and enlarged format of the Crucifixion scene. On some examples of this type of Byzantine icon we encounter not only figures of saints and scenes from their lives, arranged according to their feast days, but also scenes from the Life of Christ in separate and distinct sequence and chronology.⁵⁵

A further example, which was no longer in its original form and has since disappeared, was published in 1956–1957 by Giuseppe Fiocco and Gertrude Coor-Achenbach.⁵⁶ This work included twenty individual scenes divided into two groups and placed in modern frames, which were on display in Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs in Paris. They depicted exclusively events from the Life of Christ. Coor-Achenbach assumed, probably correctly, that the individual painted scenes were originally arranged around a larger Crucifixion scene. The overall dimensions must have been approximately 70 × 90 cm. In this case the format must again have been horizontal with the Crucifixion in the center, framed, in similar fashion to the *vita* panels of saints, by narrative scenes.⁵⁷



6. Venetian School,
*Crucifixion Surrounded by
 Twenty Scenes from the
 Infancy and Passion of Christ
 and the Lives of the Saints*,
 early fourteenth century,
 tempera on panel
 Present whereabouts unknown

The third example (fig. 7) is located in the Museum für Spätantike und byzantinische Kunst in Berlin.⁵⁸ In this case, the number of individual narrative scenes has been reduced from twenty to sixteen and in the center of the panel a Crucifixion image is positioned above an icon of the Madonna and Child. Until now the occurrence of such horizontal rectangular panels has not been considered in the search for historical precedents for the reverse of the *Maestà*, because the composite arrangement of images in these panels was viewed as evidence for the influence of the Sienese altarpiece in northern Italy.⁵⁹ However, for stylistic reasons alone, this is not a very convincing

argument. These panels show a mixture of Byzantine and western elements that was characteristic for Venetian painting of the trecento. There are in fact no points of reference in these panels that would relate them to Sienese painting of this period. They are rather to be understood as witnesses for the reception of Byzantine icons in the West, with origins distinct from those of contemporary Tuscan panel painting. Such panels are interesting examples of how certain types of Byzantine icons, uncoupled from their original liturgical symbolism and functional context, were rearranged and adapted for a western audience. The fact that Venice was a center for

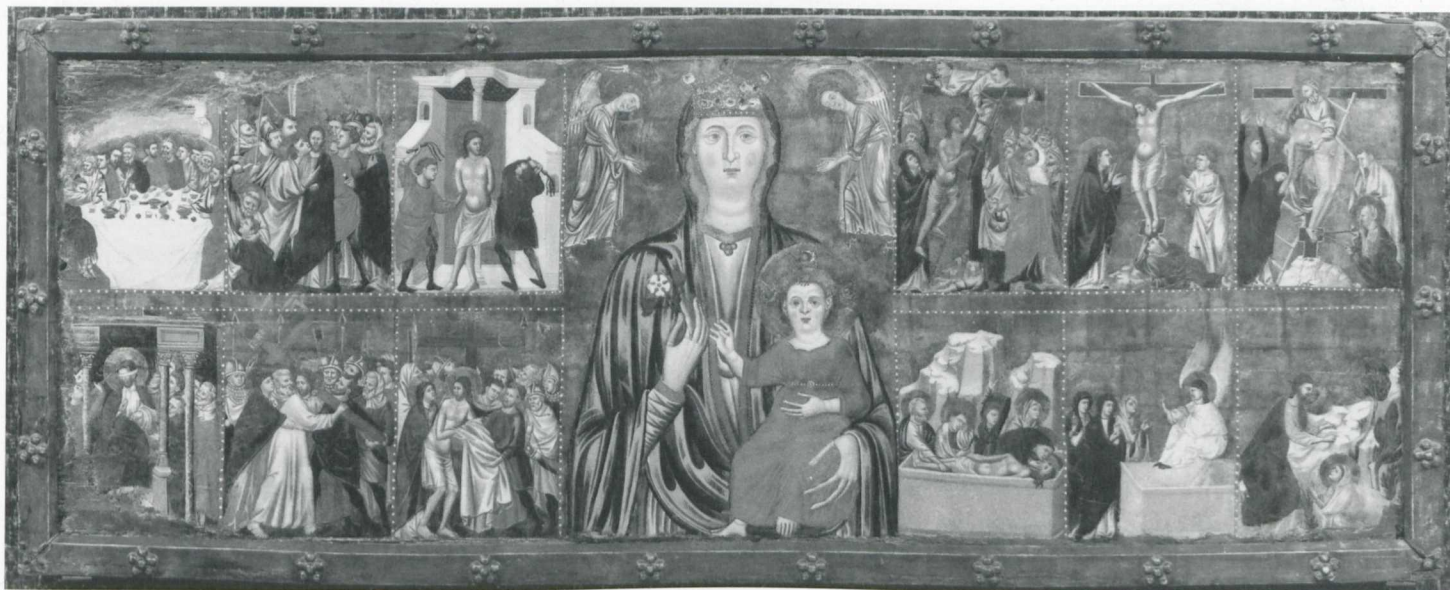


diverse experimentation with eastern icons is well known.⁶⁰

Panels of this kind were doubtless produced rather often, and one can probably assume that they were distributed and known not only in northern Italy but also within the central region of Italy.⁶¹ I would like to underscore this assumption with two further examples: one is a fragmentary dossal from the last quarter of the thirteenth century, now in the Timken Museum of Art in San Diego (fig. 8),⁶² and the other, in the University Art Gallery in Tucson, Arizona, is a small folding panel from the early trecento (44.4 × 63.5 cm), which has been attributed to Pacino di Buonaguida (fig. 9).⁶³ With respect to the dossal in San Diego, which is attributed to two anonymous Florentine

painters, the Magdalene Master and the Master of San Gaggio, I would like, above all, to highlight the sequence of the images: twelve Passion scenes are grouped evenly on either side of a half-length Madonna figure, in an arrangement similar to that of the lower part of the Berlin panel with the cycle of the Life of Christ. The second panel is distinguished from the others by its folding wings. According to a supposition put forward by Richard Offner and shared by other scholars, this folding panel served originally as a *custodia* to keep the eucharist.⁶⁴ At the center of the panel is a large-format Crucifixion scene with a mourning Mary Magdalene, donors, and a Clarissan nun at the feet of Christ. Sixteen scenes from the Life of Christ are spread evenly over the wings.

7. Venetian School,
*Crucifixion, Virgin, and
Scenes from the Life of
Christ*, early fourteenth
century, tempera on panel
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin—
Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum
für Spätantike und byzantinische
Kunst, Berlin



8. Magdalene Master and Master of San Gaggio, *Virgin and Child with Passion Scenes*, late thirteenth century, tempera on panel
Timken Museum of Art, San Diego

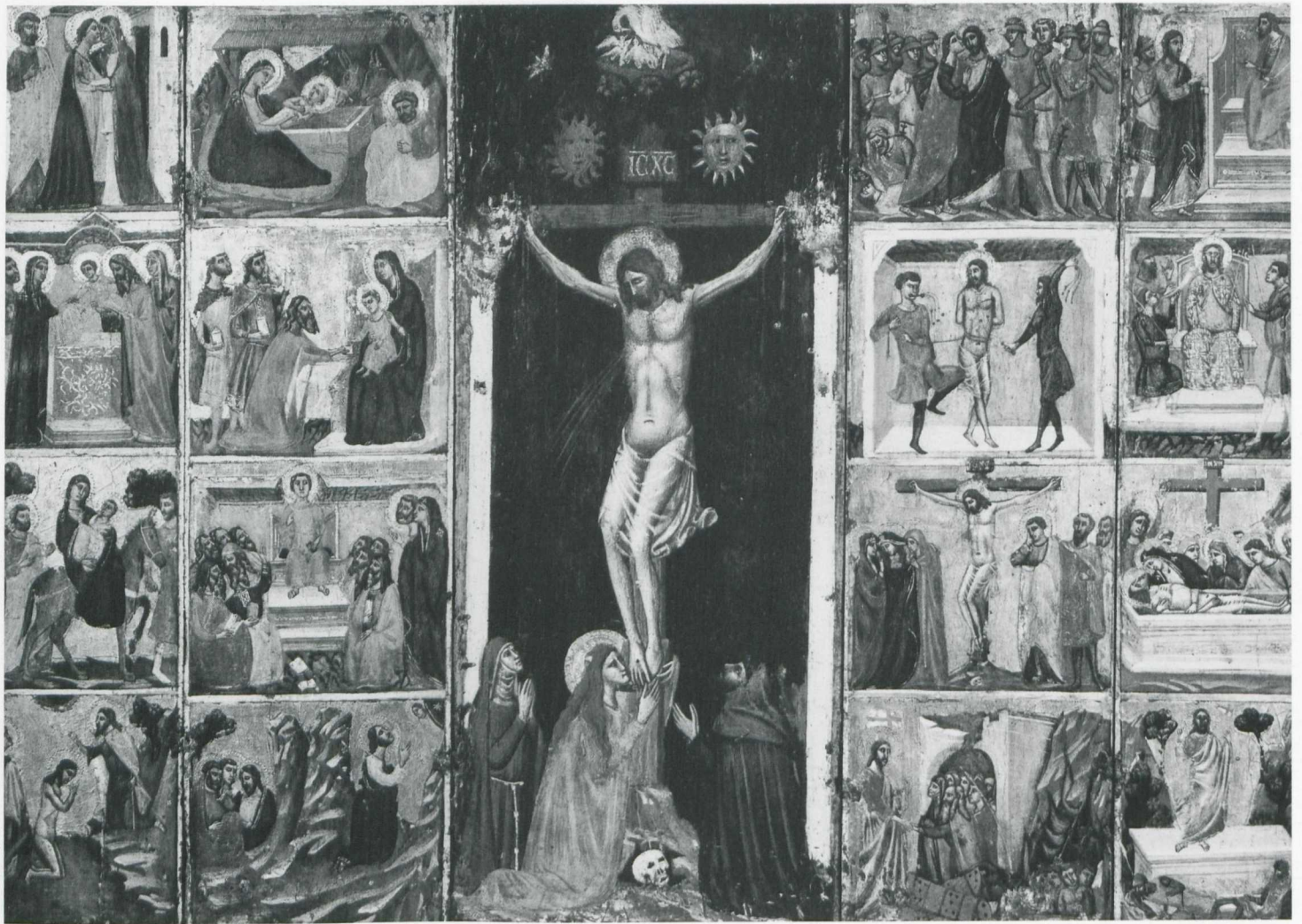
At this point I would like briefly to draw attention to the fact that north of the Alps, in the painting from the region around Cologne, comparable panels have come down to us which accurately have been traced back to Italian models.⁶⁵ A panel in the Wallraff-Richartz Museum from the third quarter of the fourteenth century with twenty-seven scenes from the Life of Christ is of interest in the current context, because here again the Crucifixion scene is highlighted through an enlarged format (fig. 10).⁶⁶

Concerning the original provenance of the northern Italian panels portraying the Life of Christ, there is, as far as I can see, no written documentation. Some of them exhibit iconographic characteristics that indicate they originated within the milieu of Franciscan convents. It is rather unlikely that they had a uniform, consistent function. In any case, it is, however, almost certain that these panel paintings, because of their relatively diminutive size overall, and especially because of their numerous individual scenes in small format, were not intended for larger audiences. Instead, notwithstanding where they were displayed—whether in private spaces or within churches—we can assume that they served primarily for the private devotion of individuals or small groups of worshipers. Edward B. Garrison's assumption, that they were used as dossals, does not seem very probable.⁶⁷ If one, however, holds to this possibility, then the most likely locations

for these panels would have been small side altars rather than main altars. The Tuscan panel in the Timken Museum of Art provides, nevertheless, grounds for the hypothesis that such horizontally formatted panels could in some cases also have served as models for paintings that were to be mounted on the altar. It testifies to an evolution to a larger format which would have corresponded to this function. Anne Derbes recently argued for a possible Franciscan provenance for these panels.⁶⁸

If one compares the reverse of the *Maestà* in this context with the panel paintings mentioned above, it appears that Duccio (or the communal authorities who commissioned the work), in designing the painting for the main altar of Siena cathedral, intentionally used as a point of orientation a kind of panel painting that normally served for private devotion. Following this line of investigation, the reverse of the *Maestà* emerges as the result of transferring a type of painting designed for extraliturgical use into the realm of altar furnishing.⁶⁹ If one takes this conclusion seriously, it leads almost inevitably to the assumption that the narrative scenes of the *Maestà* were conceived intentionally for viewing from close range by individuals or small groups.

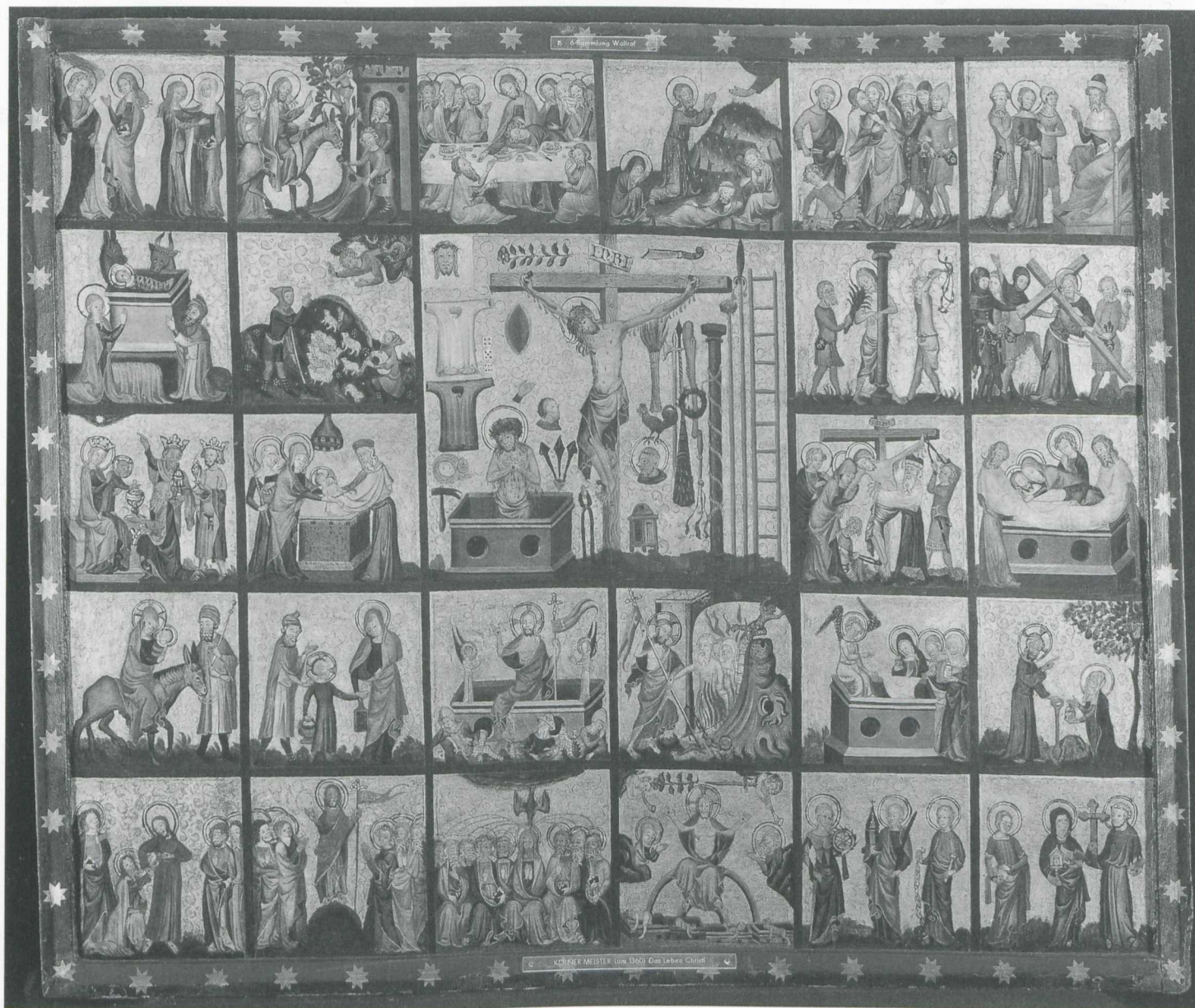
Why were the private *Meditationes vitae Christi* considered appropriate for the reverse of the high altarpiece in Siena cathedral?



"One distinct iconographic convention among double-sided altarpieces was to have narrative scenes on the secondary face, and a more iconic composition of standing figures on the principal face."⁷⁰ Can this statement by Julian Gardner be applied to the time period prior to the *Maestà*? Was Duccio following a convention when he designed the high altarpiece of Siena cathedral? The available evidence is sparse and questionable. Since it pertains to Perugia and its environs, and Duccio, like other painters from Siena,⁷¹ had documented contacts with the Umbrian region, it seems, nevertheless, advisable to at least mention this evidence: since the 1960s scholars have postulated the existence of a double-sided dossal by the Maestro di San Francesco. According to estimations of its original construction, one side portrayed a series of standing figures

(Saint Francis and the twelve Apostles) with an enthroned Christ in the middle, while the other side showed Passion scenes, alternating with standing figures of prophets and saints.⁷² Dillian Gordon's investigation into the altarpiece uncovered convincing technical evidence to support this reconstruction proposal, the logic of which, in light of the different systems of decoration for the two sides, is at first not at all obvious.⁷³ The reconstruction seems even more plausible through consideration of a later work, a double-sided altarpiece from the second quarter of the trecento, which found its way in the nineteenth century from Paciano into the Pinacoteca of Perugia. It still exhibits the low horizontal format that was common for dossals from the second half of the duecento but that was, however, mostly out of fashion already by the beginning of the tre-

9. Pacino di Buonaguida, *Scenes from the Life of Christ*, early fourteenth century, tempera on panel
University Art Gallery, University of Arizona, Tucson



10. School of Cologne, *Crucifixion with Twenty-Seven Scenes from the Life of Christ*, third quarter of the fourteenth century, tempera on panel

Wallraff-Richartz Museum, Cologne; photograph: Rheinisches Bildarchiv, Cologne

cento. On the one side we see an enthroned Madonna flanked on either side by noticeably smaller saints, and on the other side five Passion scenes, a Crucifixion (almost completely destroyed) under the central gable, on the left Christ being taken prisoner and Christ carrying the Cross, and on the right probably the Descent from the Cross (likewise nearly altogether destroyed), followed by the Entombment.

It seems, therefore, possible that Duccio's *Maestà* was not the first altarpiece to feature an "iconic composition" of individual figures on one side and narrative scenes on

the other. The Siennese painter may have seen the dossal by the Maestro di San Francesco in Umbria, as well as other earlier examples.⁷⁴ As reasonable as this observation may seem, it does not really further the discussion. Why were the two sides of the Umbrian altarpiece designed differently? Were there functional reasons for this? What do we know about the original appearance and mode of display of this altarpiece?

Regarding the dossal of the Maestro di San Francesco, which was apparently created between 1262 and 1272, Dillian Gordon was able to identify the high altar of San

Francesco al Prato in Perugia as the original location of the painting.⁷⁵ Considering the strong presence of Franciscan saints on the Madonna side (Clare, Francis, Louis of Toulouse, Anthony of Padua), the provenance of the altarpiece from Paciano can also be traced back to a Franciscan convent.⁷⁶ Gardner discusses the double-sidedness of this altarpiece in connection with the two different groups of observers, laypeople and monks.⁷⁷ Gordon assumes that the side of the dorsal of the Maestro di San Francesco that featured the Passion scenes was facing the nave of the church, while the side with the Apostles would have been visible to the friars.⁷⁸ Gardner, on the other hand, evidently following his interpretation cited above, arrives at just the reverse orientation of the altarpiece.⁷⁹ In the case of the dorsal from Paciano, the side with the figures of the saints is generally considered to be the front because of the relatively large size of the Madonna. No matter which orientation of the dorsal of the Maestro di San Francesco is in fact the correct one, a number of other questions present themselves. Why is there not a considerably larger number of documented double-sided altars from churches of the Franciscan and other orders? Why were they evidently more widely distributed in Perugia and Umbria than elsewhere? Why did Ugolino di Nuccio da Montevibiano, the abbot of the Benedictine abbey of San Pietro in Perugia, decide not to use narrative scenes, but rather to commission from Meo da Siena a double-sided dorsal that portrayed figures of saints on both sides?⁸⁰ Why do we find Passion scenes painted on the reverse of the dorsal from Paciano, while in the case of other Franciscan altarpieces, like the dorsal from the convent of the Frati Minori del Farneto, now in the Pinacoteca in Perugia, we see such scenes on the front of the altarpiece, flanking a half-length Madonna and Child.⁸¹

Scholars are only beginning to answer these questions. But even if one is optimistic and believes that conclusive evidence will be uncovered in one or the other of the currently unresolved cases, at the same time one must admit that the speculations on firmly established conventions in this field have become rather doubtful. A brief consideration of the *Stefaneschi Altarpiece* pro-

vides further confirmation for this argument. Julian Gardner, who assumes the high altar of Old Saint Peter's to be the original location of the altarpiece, makes the case that the only scenes depicted, the two representations of the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul, could have been viewed only by the clerics sitting in the apse.⁸² Bram Kempers and Sible de Blaauw, who locate the monumental triptych on the *altare canonicorum*, argue to the contrary "that the retable was placed with the Christ side to the choir stalls, i.e. to that side of the altar where mass was celebrated."⁸³ No matter which of these hypotheses one favors, it seems worth mentioning that in this case it is not possible to delineate clearly an iconic and a narrative side of the work. The side devoted to Peter illustrates, to be sure, exclusively individual figures; however, on the reverse side the two martyrdom scenes are not flanking a narrative theme but rather the figure of Christ enthroned, and on the predella we see the complete series of Apostles to either side of the Madonna and Child.⁸⁴ Although it may not be possible at present to determine exactly which factors dictated the iconographic program of the altarpiece, we can still be reasonably assured that they resulted primarily from the specific conditions of the original location in Old Saint Peter's. My research leads me to the conclusion that the study of double-sided altarpieces, including those both before and after Duccio's time, does not yield sufficient evidence to support the credible reconstruction of these works according to a more or less binding set of conventions. It appears that in most cases we are dealing with a unique constellation of facts, motives, and decision making.

If we turn our attention to a possible explanation for the choice of themes on the reverse of the *Maestà*, we again encounter primarily specific, place-related factors that cannot be understood using the current set of commonly applied typological investigative criteria. At this point I would like to introduce three considerations into the discussion, the last of which appears to me to be the most important. The first of these considerations concerns the possibility of a theological advisor. Since panel paintings featuring

extensive cycles of the Life of Christ were apparently widely distributed within the milieu of the Frati Minori, the question arises as to whether a Franciscan theologian may have influenced the conception and design of the *Maestà*. The narrative cycle, however, does not yield any supportive evidence for this possibility.⁸⁵ On the contrary, the series of Passion scenes is distinctly different in terms of its iconography from cycles that have been proven to have Franciscan origins. The particular selection of the portrayed scenes points in a different direction. In light of the painting's extensive series of images of the trial of Christ, the absence of several themes favored by the Franciscans is striking: neither the Disrobing of Christ, the Mounting of the Cross, or the Nailing to the Cross are represented.⁸⁶ There is in addition further evidence indicating that these scenes were left out intentionally. The planning and execution of the *Maestà* occurred under the pontificate of a Dominican, Ruggiero da Casole, who occupied the office of bishop in Siena from 1307 to 1317.⁸⁷

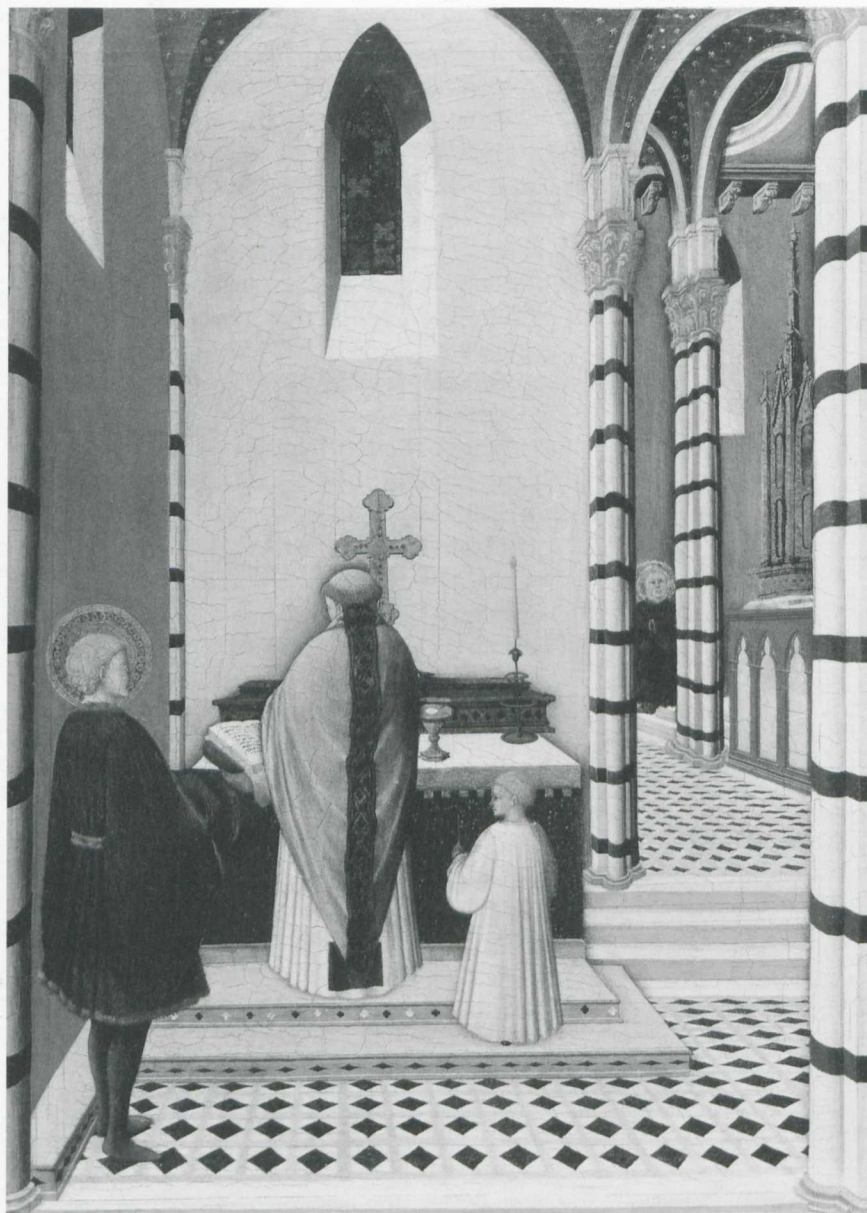
The second consideration has to do with the consecration of the altar.⁸⁸ In this connection one is prompted to ask whether the extensive cycle of the Life of Christ scenes has something to do with the notion of Mary's piety. The depiction of the Virgin reading and meditating emerged around 1300 as a new, auspicious theme. It first appeared at the end of the thirteenth century in connection with scenes of the Annunciation of the Birth of Christ.⁸⁹ The image of the Mother of God reading the Psalms or Isaiah was prevalent at that time.⁹⁰ Duccio employed this motif twice. In the Annunciation of the Birth of Christ, Mary holds an open book in her left hand, in which one can read the passage from Isaiah 7:14 ("Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium et vocabitur nomen eius Emmanuel"),⁹¹ and in the Annunciation of the Death of Mary, an open book again lies on her desk. In this case we see only a pseudo-text in the opened book. The context of the theme of the painting would indicate that it is probably the book of Psalms. The piety of Mary was, however, associated not only with the reading of biblical texts and with devotional prayer. The *Legenda Aurea* calls to mind, at the feast of

the Assumption, the figure of Mary meditating without any text. Jacobus de Voragine reports that Mary remained behind after the departure of the Apostles from Jerusalem and stayed in the house on Mount Sion until her death, a period of twelve years according to this source. During this time of intense devotional prayer, Mary visited in spirit all the sites of the life of Christ: "As long as she lived, she diligently and devoutly visited all the places sacred to the memory of her Son—where he had been baptized, had fasted, had prayed, and suffered, died, and been buried, had risen and ascended into heaven."⁹² Mary appears here as an example of the pious life, dedicated to the contemplation of the earthly existence of Jesus, and in this context it is only of secondary importance whether, in reading the above-cited sentence, one imagines Mary to be a real or—as I prefer to interpret it—a purely meditative pilgrim. The *Meditationes vitae Christi* function here to a certain degree as a contextual attribute for the piety of Mary. If one takes into consideration this tradition, which was probably called to mind during celebrations of the feast of the Assumption, then the *Maestà* panel appears to fulfill a very concrete function. It illustrates in biblical sequence the events that continually occupied the spiritual eye of Mary during her pious meditations before her assumption into heaven. To the medieval urban viewer, who in general would not have been able to undertake a pilgrimage to the *loca sancta*, this sequence of images appeared as a vehicle for an alternative, imaginary pilgrimage to these sites. In this way viewers could replicate the actual meditative practice of Mary in Jerusalem through their devotion within the church, the symbolic Jerusalem. According to relevant hagiographic and visual sources, this sort of meditative "exchange of roles" became associated with the contemplation of religious paintings since the late duecento.⁹³ Whether it played a role as a concept in the planning of the reverse of the *Maestà* remains, however, in the realm of speculation.

The third, most significant consideration concerns a later painting that probably provides a clue toward resolving the question of the *Maestà's* function. The panel is *Saint Anthony at Mass*, of c. 1440, attributed to

the Master of the Osservanza, and now in Berlin (fig. 11).⁹⁴ The painting shows a part of the interior of the cathedral in Siena. We see a view through the Cappella di Sant' Ansano toward the sanctuary on the right.⁹⁵ The young Saint Anthony appears twice: once in the foreground, participating in mass in front of the altar to Saint Ansano and then a second time in the background, kneeling in personal devotion before the reverse side of the high altar. The documentary value of this panel here is limited due to its date of origin and chronological distance from the *Maestà's* time of creation. Furthermore, one must consider that the *Maestà* was at the time of this later work no longer at its original site, but rather at the location to which it had been moved in 1375. One can, however, imagine the situation behind the high altar in this painting as largely analogous to that of the early trecento.⁹⁶ It is therefore worthwhile to take a closer look at the contents of this painting. What concepts can be associated with the figure of Anthony in meditation? The painting belongs to a series of eight surviving panels with scenes from the life of the saint. There are six horizontally formatted images and two with vertical formats, which were originally arranged around a central panel, presumably portraying a standing figure of the saint. The panel in Berlin is the first one in the series.

The passage in the *Legenda Aurea* pertaining to this scene reads as follows: "When Anthony was twenty years old, he heard the following words read in church: 'If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor.' He sold all he had, gave the proceeds to the poor, and from then on lived the life of a hermit."⁹⁷ The distribution of money to the poor and the departure of the saint into the desert are depicted in the next two scenes, now in the National Gallery in Washington. If one draws upon the passage cited above to interpret the panel in Berlin, then it seems at first that the saint portrayed in the foreground may be listening to the appropriate passage from Matthew 19:21.⁹⁸ If, however, one examines carefully the elements represented in the foreground of the painting, then this interpretation is not exactly accurate. The priest performing the mass has, to be sure, his gaze trained on the



missal lying open to his left, yet we cannot assume that he is necessarily reading the Gospel lesson. As on the altar we see not only the communion chalice covered by the paten, but also the consecrated wafer on top, the scene is related to the offertory portion of the mass.⁹⁹ The artist's choice of this segment of the mass has a simple explanation. The offertory was associated with the act of oblation, that is, an offering of money or objects of value to the church and to the poor, as a means by which the devout participant could express his own surrender to God. The intention of Saint Anthony to divest himself of his possessions is thus made appar-

11. Master of the Osservanza, *Saint Anthony at Mass*, c. 1440, tempera on panel
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin—
Preussischer Kulturbesitz,
Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

ent through the choice of this moment, highlighting his offering as a reciprocal act to the eucharistic offering.

The second portrayal of Saint Anthony in this painting, which shows him kneeling before the reverse of the main altar, could consequently be understood as a thematically separate indication of his decision to lead the life of a hermit. Erich Schleier's comments on the painting follow this assumption when he states that one should imagine the saint "very probably in the act of taking a vow."¹⁰⁰ Keith Christiansen sees in this second kneeling figure, on the other hand, an emphatic demonstration of the saint's piety. As a possible textual source for this interpretation, he cites Cavalca's *Vite dei santi padri* (chapter 1), a popular fourteenth-century collection of the lives of the saints, in which the following passage appears: "And whether at home or at church with his father and mother, [Anthony] practised prayer and thanked God with a full heart and love."¹⁰¹ Why then was the kneeling saint depicted behind the high altar? Why not in front of the altar where he could have said his prayers and perhaps also made his vow directly to the Madonna and the Christ Child? Was the choice of the location of his devotion motivated by the sequence of Passion scenes on the altarpiece, that is, was his presence intended to indicate indirectly that the piety of the saint was focused on the Passion of Christ? Can one perhaps recognize here a possible, intentional connection between the meditation on a painting by an urban dweller and the saint's consequent monastic life? Or was there an additional reason for the particular meaning of the reverse side? A plausible answer to these questions lies, I believe, in the assumption that the depository for the eucharist in Siena cathedral was located on the reverse side of the high altar.¹⁰² If one accepts this hypothesis, then Saint Anthony upon completion of the mass would have followed the *Corpus Domini* to its place of keeping, in order to express in private devotion his own surrender to God.¹⁰³

Evidence for the deposition of the eucharist on the reverse side of the altar is provided by a description of the altar from an inventory of 1435.

*A high altar with marble with a panel on it which is painted on both sides, with the figure of Nostra Donna and several saints and with all of the Passion of Jesus Christ, with the canopies (suspended) from above on four iron poles, with three tabernacles inside of which are three little carved and gilded angels that descend for the administration of the sacred mass, with the host and with cups and with coverings for the hands, and four more little angels with candlesticks in hand who serve the altar behind and in front, and for the singing at the said altar are two iron grilles, with a vermilion cloth to cover the said altar, with fringe of silk and painted in the center, two angels who hold a tabernacle painted with the body of Christ, and two little boxes painted with the coat of arms of the Opera that sit on the said altar, in which are placed alms, and two ostrich eggs in front of the said altar, hung from on high, with five iron candlesticks. Four little, carved angels are suspended with iron candlesticks in their hands, of which two are in front of the altar and two behind, that hold the candles which light up the altar.*¹⁰⁴

The "ancillary furnishings" of the *Mae-stà*¹⁰⁵—baldachin, curtains, tabernacle—are mentioned frequently in the pertinent secondary literature. No one fails to mention the two ostrich eggs. Attention is also paid to the descending angels that administer the sacred mass, as well as to the angels with candlesticks at the four corners of the altar. However, the "due angioi che tengono uno tabernacolo dipinto el Corpo di Christo"—this description apparently refers to a painted *Imago Pietatis*¹⁰⁶—have so far gone unnoticed. Where was this pair of figures located? What significance was attached to them at their specific location? To be sure, the inventory description specifies only that together with the two little boxes for alms they were placed on the altar. However, since the following reference to the two ostrich eggs shifts to a new description of the location, "dinanzi al detto altare," one can assume that the previously mentioned object belonged to the reverse side of the altar. Since there is no documentation for mass having been celebrated on this side of the mensa, the function of these two angels—supporting the tabernacle upon which the *Corpus Christi* was painted—must evidently have been simply to indicate the resting place of the eucharist when it was not employed in the

liturgy. Whether they had a figurative form serving merely to identify the eucharist or whether they took the form of a container that could have held the pyx is unknown. Both versions are possible. There are relatively few documented examples of the reverse side of altars being used as a place of deposition for the eucharist.¹⁰⁷ There is, however, a prominent example comparable to the *Maestà*. Donatello's high altar in the Santo church in Padua possessed a niche on the reverse of the predella in which the eucharist was kept.¹⁰⁸ The date when the two angels and their *tabernacolo* were placed on the high altar of the cathedral in Siena cannot be determined precisely. It is possible that they just barely predate the inventory of 1435 cited above. The earlier inventory of 1423 helps to shed light on this matter.

*The high altar: a panel painted on both sides with the figure of the Virgin Mary and of several saints, with the canopies (suspended) from above on four iron poles, with three small tabernacles inside of which (are) three little carved and gilded angels that descend, that is, they are lowered, to administer the sacred mass with the eucharist, the cups, and the cloth for the hands. And four more little angels with candlesticks in their hands that serve the altar behind and in front, with two iron grilles for the singing behind the altar, with a vermilion curtain to cover the said altar, and a curtain to cover the predella with silk fringe and painted several colors, with two small, painted boxes that sit on the said altar with the coats of arms of the Opera for the collection of alms, and two ostrich eggs to adorn this altar.*¹⁰⁹

In a number of instances, this text yields information that was missing in the inventory taken twelve years later: the iron grilles that are mentioned in the inventory of 1435 in connection with the curtain of the *Maestà* are located here on the reverse side of the altar ("ne canti dietro l'altare"), and furthermore a clear distinction is made between the *tenda* of the altarpiece and that of the predella. In this earlier inventory there is, however, no mention of a *tabernacolo* on the mensa held by two angels. It could be that it was simply forgotten, but it is probably more likely that it was not yet part of the altar decoration. There is another piece of decorative furnishing in the cathedral that should be mentioned in this context: a

marble wall tabernacle from the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, which is now located in the cathedral's sacristy, but originally was probably installed in or near the *Cappella Maggiore* and may have served as a tabernacle for the sacrament.¹¹⁰ If this was in fact the case, then it does not necessarily exclude the possibility that the reverse side of the altar played a role at that time as a place for venerating the eucharist. It is quite possible that a pyx may at times have been placed on the altar.¹¹¹ For the current discussion, however, more important than these various conjectures regarding the period of Duccio's *Maestà* is the basic question of where the consecrated eucharistic host was kept in the cathedral during the early trecento. As far as I can see, there are no real grounds to contradict the assumption that at the time of the *Maestà*'s origin the reverse side of the main altar was already serving as the depository for the eucharist. On the contrary, there are several pieces of evidence that support this hypothesis, and they are, in my opinion, primarily the following five:

1. In the thirteenth century the consecrated eucharistic host was kept in a pyx on the high altar of Siena cathedral.¹¹² It is thus reasonable to assume a continuation of this tradition.
2. The basic design of the painted images on the reverse side of the altar, a Crucifixion scene in large format flanked on either side by Passion scenes, corresponds to the design of the *custodia* in Tucson.
3. Because of its significance to the eucharistic symbolism, the Wedding of Cana scene located at the center of the predella is very appropriate for the place where a container for the eucharistic host was kept.
4. A document dating from 1339 indicates that not only the front of the altar was lighted by candles. At that time a new candelabra angel was created for the back of the altar.¹¹³ This at least demonstrates that it was also intended for this side of the altar to be presented to believers in appropriately reverential fashion.¹¹⁴
5. The spectacular procession during which Duccio's *Maestà* was transported from the artist's studio to the high altar of the cathedral took place not on a Marian

feast but the day before Corpus Christi, 9 June 1311.¹¹⁵ The choice of this day appears to be significant in two respects: on the one hand it strengthens the assumption that the altarpiece from its very inception was related not just to the city's cult of Mary, but also to the adoration of the eucharist; and on the other it prompts us to consider the possible influence of the then reigning Dominican bishop, Ruggiero da Casole, whose participation in the Corpus Christi procession in 1311 has been documented.¹¹⁶ The observance of Corpus Christi was already celebrated by the Dominicans before the Council of Vienne (1311–1312), and they considered its promulgation as one of their primary tasks.¹¹⁷ One of the saints of this order, Thomas Aquinas, was thought to be the author of the office of Corpus Christi.¹¹⁸

Surrendering the theory that the double-sided high altar of the cathedral of Siena functioned as a site for celebrating mass on both sides, and returning to the concept that the choir stalls were located under the main dome of the cathedral, does not necessarily

reduce the function of the reverse of the *Maestà* to that of a representative screen of images for passing processions. In attempting to answer the question posed above—why was a cycle of images of the Passion of Christ created with so many small individual scenes?—the following observations appear to be important: the large number and small format of the individual scenes, as well as other similarly designed panels with scenes from the Passion of Christ, demonstrate that in the planning of this altarpiece the artist and his patrons were not only aiming at an effect upon a larger audience, but were also intent upon accommodating the reverse side for extraliturgical private devotion. The deposition of the consecrated eucharistic host on this side of the altar probably played an important role. In the context of the then growing movement toward adoration of the eucharist, the realization of this solution could have been an attempt within Siena cathedral to grant access also to lay worshipers to the site where the *Corpus Domini* was kept. An incentive for designing the altarpiece toward achieving these ends may possibly have emanated from the Sienese bishop, Ruggiero da Casole.

NOTES

Translated from the German by Richard W. Pettit

1. John White, *Duccio. Tuscan Art and the Medieval Workshop* (London, 1979), 80–134; James H. Stubblebine, *Duccio di Buoninsegna and His School*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1979), 1:31–62; Florens Deuchler, *Duccio* (Milan, 1984), 46–81; Henk van Os, *Sieneese Altarpieces 1215–1460. Form, Content, Function*, 2 vols. (Gronigen, 1984–1990), 1:39–61; John White, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1250–1400*, Pelican History of Art, 3d ed. (New Haven and London, 1993), 289–303; Hans Belting, “Das Werk im Kontext,” in *Kunstgeschichte. Eine Einführung*, ed. Heinrich Dilly, Wolfgang Kemp, Willibald Sauerländer, and Martin Warnke (Berlin, 1988), 222–239; Hans Belting, *Bild und Kult. Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst* (Munich, 1990), 452–456; Luciano Bellosi, *Duccio. La Maestà* (Milan, 1998), 12–13. Concerning the reconstruction of the “outer supporting structure of the altarpiece,” see also Christa Gardner von Teuffel, “The Buttressed Altarpiece: A Forgotten Aspect of Tuscan Fourteenth-Century Altarpiece Design,” in: *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 21 (1979), 21–65, especially 36–40.
2. For references to Cimabue’s polyptych in Pisa, see the literature mentioned in note 12.
3. James Stubblebine, “Duccio’s Maestà of 1302 for the Chapel of the Nave,” *Art Quarterly* 35 (1972), 239–268; and Stubblebine 1979, 1:4, 8–10 (he presumes that scenes from the Passion were present in this piece); Deuchler 1984, 26–30 (he would not like to exclude the possibility of the reconstruction of half-length figures). Concerning the origins of the predella, see Hellmut Hager, *Die Anfänge des italienischen Altarbildes. Untersuchungen zur Entstehungsgeschichte des toskanischen Hochaltarretabels* (Munich, 1962), 116; Arno Preiser, *Das Entstehen und die Entwicklung der Predella in der italienischen Malerei* (Hildesheim and New York, 1973), especially 30–81; Julian Gardner, “The Stefaneschi Altarpiece: A Reconsideration,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 37 (1974), 57–103, especially 76–78; Gardner von Teuffel 1979, 41–43. In the older literature on the subject, the theme of alternating scenes and figures of the prophets had already been ascribed to the influence of the pulpits by Nicola and Giovanni Pisano (Siena and Pistoia): Ernest T. DeWald, “Observations on Duccio’s Maestà,” in *Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend Jr.*, ed. Kurt Weitzmann (Princeton, 1955), 362–386, 379, note 40; Frederick A. Cooper, “A Reconstruction of Duccio’s Maestà,” *Art Bulletin* 47 (1965), 155–171, 169. On the interpretation of the predella’s iconographic themes, see Ruth Wilkins Sullivan, “Some Old Testament Themes on the Front Predella of Duccio’s Maestà,” *Art Bulletin* 68 (1986), 597–609; Isa Ragusa, “On Duccio’s Cycle of the Infancy of Christ: The Flight and the Return,” *Art Bulletin* 69 (1987), 646–647, and Sullivan’s reply, *Art Bulletin* 69 (1987), 647–649; due to unresolved questions of dating, it remains uncertain whether Duccio had already introduced prophets in earlier polyptychs and triptychs. On polyptych no. 47 in the Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena there are twenty figures of prophets with scrolls representing the same theme; for the iconography of this piece, see Van Os 1984–1990, 1:64–65. Most scholars date this retable shortly after the *Maestà* (most recently also Joseph Polzer, “Il Gotico e la pittura senese tra Duecento e Trecento,” in *Il Gotico europeo in Italia*, ed. Valentino Pace and Martina Bagnoli [Naples, 1994], 153–180, especially 160); an earlier date of origin is, however, suggested by White 1979, 71–74, also White 1993, 306; this date is supported further on the basis of stylistic observations related to the Madonna and Child by Victor M. Schmidt, “Il trittico di Duccio alla National Gallery di Londra: La datazione, l’iconografia e il committente,” *Prospettiva* 81 (1996), 19–30, especially 22. Like White (1979, 46–60), Schmidt dates the triptych in London, which also displays figures of prophets, prior to the *Maestà*. Concerning the predella on the reverse of the altarpiece, see note 26.
4. James Stubblebine, “Angel Pinnacles in Duccio’s Maestà,” *Art Quarterly* 32 (1969), 130–152, 145; concerning the Perugia retable by Vigoroso da Siena, see Luciano Bellosi, Sergio Fusetti, and Paolo Virilli, “Vigoroso da Siena,” in *Dipinti, sculture e ceramiche della Galleria Nazionale dell’Umbria. Studi e restauri*, ed. Caterina Bon Valsassina and Vittoria Garibaldi (Florence, 1994), 91–94; Julian Gardner, “Nuns and Altarpieces: Agendas for Research,” *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 30 (1995), 27–57, especially 34–37.
5. White 1979, 63, 76–77, 91, especially 69; Van Os 1984–1990, 1:44–45.
6. Stubblebine 1979, 1:5–7, 38–39 (Chartres, Paris, Rome); Deuchler 1984, 21, 24, 58, 175–183 (Rome, Paris); White 1993, 297 (“Near Eastern centers of Byzantine Art”); Polzer 1994, 154 (Chartres, Paris). Van Os 1984–1990, 1:46, expresses doubt regarding Duccio’s supposed travels to France and Rome.
7. Van Os 1984–1990, 1:39: “The Maestà was indeed a unique altarpiece,” and 44: “Any discussion of the design of the Maestà is complicated by the fact that it was an unusual commission. Exceptional commissions produce exceptional paintings, and it is notoriously difficult to fit exceptions into an organic development. The Maestà stands alone.”
8. First steps in this direction can be found already in the work of Antje Middeldorf-Kosegarten, “Zur Bedeutung der Sieneser Domkuppel,” *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 21 (1970), 73–98, especially 78, and in White 1979, 95–102 (“Social Significance and Setting”); most recently particularly see Dietmar Popp, *Duccio und die Antike. Studien zur Antikenvorstellung und zur Antikenrezeption in der Sieneser Malerei am Anfang des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1996).
9. Belting 1988, 236.

10. The lack of plausible evidence in many of the interpretations put forth by scholars on this subject has been noted already by White 1979, 101: "Such considerations may or may not have played their part in Duccio's own planning."
11. See Van Os 1984-1990, 1:46: "The various elements of the *Maestà* were already well established in the Sienese altarpiece tradition."
12. Hager 1962, 113, fig. 164, surmises that Cimabue's lost retable in Pisa featured such an arcade of apostles under rounded arches. Research to date, however, does not support his attempt to reconstruct the altarpiece, and favors rather a version without this apostle arcade; see further Gardner von Teuffel 1979, 41-44.
13. Concerning early Italian retables and the possible adoption and new use of the Byzantine iconostasis beam, which crowned the chancel, see Belting 1990, 33-34, 278. In this context mention should also be made of the series of apostles in the chancel in the cathedral of Torcello; see Hager 1962, 69, 71, fig. 85, and Belting 1990, 266. White 1979, 122, highlights the rarity at this time of the apostle theme and the identification of all the apostles. White's hypothesis that Duccio had already introduced the arcade of apostles in earlier polyptychs is contested by some scholars; see White 1979, 71 and 74, where polyptych no. 47 is dated prior to the *Maestà*.
14. The *Legenda Aurea* is mentioned repeatedly in this context as a textual basis, but a more detailed investigation into the iconography of the scenes from the Life of Mary has not yet been undertaken; see White 1979, 88; Deuchler 1984, 74-77, 168.
15. Raymond Koechlin, *Les ivoires gothiques français*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1924), 2:89-94 and 3:pls. LII-LIII. DeWald 1955, 384, note 52, pointed to the customary sequence of Death of the Virgin, Assumption, and Coronation on the middle panel of French ivory tabernacles and already recognized a similarity with Duccio's *Maestà*.
16. The observations I made in my conference paper at the Dutch Institute in Florence (June 1998) on Duccio's sources of images and on the reconstruction of the original series of Epiphany scenes from the *coronamento* will be published in a separate article.
17. Kees van der Ploeg, "Architectural and Liturgical Aspects of Siena Cathedral in the Middle Ages," in Van Os 1984-1990, 1:105-156, especially 133; and Kees van der Ploeg, *Art, Architecture and Liturgy. Siena Cathedral in the Middle Ages* (Groningen, 1993), 83-95, related specifically to the *Maestà*: 111-115.
18. Van der Ploeg in Van Os 1984-1990, 1:133, and Van der Ploeg 1993, 70.
19. Van der Ploeg in Van Os 1984-1990, 1:134, and Van der Ploeg 1993, 63-81, especially 74: "This second altar was very probably used for the canons' conventual masses. At such an early date it cannot have functioned yet as the altar of the Blessed Sacrament, as I have argued earlier. Proper sacrament-altars came into use only in the fifteenth century, though not in Italy."
20. Van der Ploeg in Van Os 1984-1990, 1:139, and Van der Ploeg 1993, 93 and 95.
21. Deuchler 1984, 58 and 190.
22. In this context, see for instance August B. Rave, *Fronleichnam in Siena. Die Maestà von Simone Martini in der Sala del Mappamondo* (Worms, 1986), 23: "The Madonna front side and the Passion back side of Duccio's *pala* for the main altar of Siena cathedral clearly point to a double consecration of the high altar: to Christ and to Mary." See also, among others, William Tronzo, "Between Icon and Monumental Decoration of a Church: Notes on Duccio's *Maestà* and the Definition of the Altarpiece," in *Icon: Four Essays*, ed. Gary Vikan (Baltimore and Washington, 1988), 36-47; Philip J. Earenfight, "Manuscript to Altarpiece: Duccio's *Maestà* Passion Cycle and Medieval Illuminations," *Source* 13.3 (1994), 6-13; Gardner 1997, 14; Bellosi 1998, 12.
23. Belting 1988, 231.
24. Van Os 1984-1990, 1:44-45.
25. Van Os 1984-1990, 1:43, 51; Deuchler 1984, 190; Bram Kempers, *Painting, Power, and Patronage. The Rise of the Professional Artist in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Beverly Jackson (London, 1994), 109; Bellosi 1998, 12; similar comments already in White 1979, 99.
26. Regarding the interpretation that places the Wedding of Cana in the center of the predella because of its eucharistic symbolism, see White 1979, 123; Deuchler 1984, 66; Van Os 1984-1990, 1:45. Several different possibilities for the reconstruction of the predella on the reverse of the altarpiece have been proposed by scholars: DeWald 1955, 367 and 386, note 59, assumes, like Weigelt earlier, that there were ten scenes, but he does not give any indication as to their sequence; Cooper 1965, 170, was the first to place the Wedding of Cana at the center of the Ministry of Christ cycle; James H. Stubblebine, "The Back Predella of Duccio's *Maestà*," in *Studies in Late Medieval and Renaissance Painting in Honor of Millard Meiss*, ed. Irving Lavin and John Plummer (New York, 1977), 430-436, especially 436, note 26, also agrees with Cooper's assumption and emphasizes "the stabilized composition and iconographic weight of the Cana episode." He postulates eleven scenes: the Baptism, Temptation in the Wilderness, Temptation on the Temple, Temptation on the Mountain, Wedding of Cana, Calling of Peter and Andrew, Christ and the Woman of Samaria, Healing of the Man Born Blind, Transfiguration, and on the two narrow sides of the panel the Baptist Bearing Witness and the Raising of Lazarus; see also Stubblebine 1979, 1:52-54; White 1979, 86, concludes that there were nine scenes and assumes that the present sequence "from the Temptation on the Temple to the Raising . . . was almost certainly preceded either by the First Temptation or by the Baptism of Christ, with the balance of probability favoring the latter." This

hypothesis is also supported by Deuchler 1984, 74. Ruth Wilkins Sullivan, "The Anointing in Bethany and Other Affirmations of Christ's Divinity on Duccio's Back Predella," *Art Bulletin* 67 (1985), 32–50; she postulates eleven scenes: the Baptism (on the narrow side), Temptation in the Wilderness, Temptation on the Temple, Temptation on the Mountain, Calling of Peter and Andrew, Wedding of Cana, Christ and the Woman of Samaria, Healing of the Man Born Blind, Transfiguration, Raising of Lazarus, and Anointing in Bethany; see also Ruth Wilkins Sullivan, "Duccio's Raising of Lazarus Re-examined," *Art Bulletin* 70 (1988), 374–387; Bellosi 1998, 18, assumes nine scenes, including the eight that have survived and apparently the Baptism at the beginning of the sequence.

27. See, for example, White 1979, 66.

28. Deuchler 1984, 63.

29. Deuchler 1984, 63, note 87, suggests a relationship between the appearance of Passion altars or altarpiece paintings of the Passion of Christ and the influence of Pope Innocent III. This relationship should have been more clearly defined. His terse, bibliographic reference without any commentary ("Innocenzo III, *De sacro altaris mysterio*, in Migne, PL 37") is not very helpful. Neither, for the same reasons, is the following comment by Bellosi 1998, 12: "Il retro, con le storie della Passione di piccolo formato, . . . funzionava come un altare della Passione, una tipologia prevista dalla riforma liturgica di Innocenzo III." For clarification on this point, see *De sacro altaris mysterio libri sex*, in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, 217 vols. (Paris, 1878–1890), 217:773–916. See also Julian Gardner, "Altars, Altarpieces, and Art History: Legislation and Usage," in *Italian Altarpieces 1250–1550. Function and Design*, ed. Eve Borsook and Fiorella Superbi Gioffredi (Oxford, 1994), 5–19.

30. See Florens Deuchler, "Le sens de la lecture, à propos du boustrophedon," in *Études d'art médiévale offertes à Louis Grodecki*, ed. Sumner McK. Crosby, André Chastel, Anne Prache, and Albert Châtelet (Paris, 1981), 251–258; see also: Deuchler 1984, 58–68 (with reference to older literature on the subject); Earenfight 1994, 6–13; Jürgen Krüger, "Erzählstrukturen in Duccios *Maestà*," in *Festschrift für Johannes Langner zum 65. Geburtstag am 1. Februar 1997*, ed. Klaus Gereon Beuckers and Annemarie Jaeggi (Münster, 1997), 33–43.

31. The documents that have been preserved do not, in fact, even indicate whether, from the beginning of the design, the back of the altar panel was intended to be embellished with painted scenes. See White 1979, 82; on the relevant documents, see also Deuchler 1984, 48.

32. Kosegarten 1970, especially 74–75; see also White 1979, 99; Van der Ploeg 1993, 71, 72, 83–88.

33. The assumption that mass was celebrated on both sides of the altar was apparently prompted by an example from the sixteenth century. In his investi-

gation into the redesign of the chancel in the Pieve of Arezzo by Vasari, Isermeyer points out that Vasari created a new structure for the high altar, on the broad sides of which, facing the choir and nave respectively, an altar was placed, so that mass could be said for the canons of the church as well as the parishioners. See Christian Adolf Isermeyer, "Die Capella Vasari und der Hochaltar in der Pieve von Arezzo. Zu dem letzten Blatt aus Vasaris Libro de' Disegni in der Hamburger Kunsthalle," in *Eine Gabe für Carl Georg Heise zum 28.6.1950*, ed. Erich Meyer (Berlin, 1950), 137–153, especially 140 and 145; and, by the same author, "Il Vasari e il restauro delle chiese medievali," in *Studi Vasariani: Atti del Convegno Internazionale per il IV Centenario della prima edizione delle 'Vite' del Vasari* (Florence, 1952), 229–236, especially 231. Gardner 1983, 298–299, referring to the latter study, supposed that especially in the case of "unusually deep altars" one has to reckon with a double-sided use. As "testimony, admittedly slight," he mentions the panel in Berlin by the Master of the Osservanza. This painting is discussed later in the text of this article. Concerning the historical occurrence of double-sided altarpieces, see Gardner 1974, especially 61 and 101; see also Julian Gardner, "Fronts and Backs: Setting and Structure," in *La pittura nel XIV e XV secolo. Il contributo dell'analisi tecnica alla storia dell'arte*, vol. 3 of *Atti del XXIV congresso internazionale di storia dell'arte*, ed. Henk van Os and J. R. J. van Asperen de Boer (Bologna, 1983), 297–322; Julian Gardner, "Some Franciscan Altars of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," in *The Vanishing Past: Studies of Medieval Art, Liturgy, and Metrology Presented to Christopher Hohler*, ed. Alan Borg and Andrew Martindale (Oxford, 1981), 29–38; Gardner 1955, 39 and 50; Gardner 1997.

34. Gardner 1983, 299.

35. Edith Struchholz, *Die Choranlage und Chorgestühle des Sienerer Doms* (Münster, 1995), 9–15.

36. Struchholz 1995, 17–33.

37. Struchholz 1995, 33; see also Van der Ploeg in Van Os 1984–1990, 1:137.

38. The expression "megalomaniacal" is used by Van Os 1984–1990, 1:39, and by Belting 1988, 233. The latter also refers in this connection to the "grand, utopian reconstruction of the cathedral," which the Siense planned a few years later.

39. See White 1979, 102 and White 1987, 289; Tronzo 1988; Belting 1988; Earenfight 1994.

40. Paul Veyne, "Propagande expression roi, image idole oracle," *L'Homme. Revue française d'anthropologie* 30, no. 114 (1990), 7–26. It seems worth mentioning in this context that the chronicler Agnolo di Tura provides only limited and inaccurate information on the iconographic program of the *Maestà* and concludes his description with a reference to the high cost of the altarpiece. Agnolo di Tura del Grasso, "Cronaca," in *Cronache senesi*, ed. Alessandro Lisini and Fabio Iacometti, *Rerum*

italicarum scriptores, new ed., 15.6 (Bologna, 1931-1937), 313: "La qual tavola è dipenta dietro parte del testamento vecchio co' la passione di Jesu Cristo, e dinanzi la vergine Maria con 'l suo figl[i]uolo in collo co' molti Santi dal lato, ornato tutta con oro fino; e costò tremilia fiorini doro."

41. Deuchler 1984, 58: "Il ciclo della Passione, per sua ampiezza, il primo e—per molto tempo—unico esempio del genere."

42. The side portals are clearly recognizable in the drawing of the facade by Bernardino Poccetti; see John Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic Sculpture: An Introduction to Italian Sculpture*, 3d ed. (New York, 1985), 182-183, fig. 37. On the facades of the cathedrals in Siena and Orvieto, which are repeatedly mentioned in connection with Duccio's, there is no use of the capped and flattened gable form. Somewhat later in sepulchral monuments we encounter similar forms, for example in Tino di Camaino's tomb for Cardinal Riccardo Petroni (died 1314) in Siena cathedral. In an earlier, but completely isolated example dating from before 1306, we find two gabled rectangular elements, one above the other, as part of the structure of the sarcophagus in the tomb of Luca Savelli in Santa Maria in Ara Coeli in Rome. Concerning this monument, see Julian Gardner, *The Tomb and the Tiara. Curial Tomb Sculpture in Rome and Avignon in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1992), 77-78, fig. 41.

43. White 1979, 64.

44. Pietro Torriti, *La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena. I dipinti* (Genoa, 1990), 20-22, no. 14.

45. White 1979, 66. On the relation between horizontal rectangular dossals and the *Maestà*, see also Victor M. Schmidt, "Die Funktionen der Tafelbilder mit der thronenden Madonna in der Malerei des Duecento," *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome* 55 (1996), 44-82, especially 58.

46. Klaus Lankheit, "Eucharistie," in *Realexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 6 (Munich, 1973), 154-254.

47. See Peter Springer, *Kreuzfüsse. Ikonographie und Typologie eines hochmittelalterlichen Gerätes*, vol. 3 of *Bronzegeräte des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1981), 13-32.

48. See Hager 1962, 75-81; Staale Sinding-Larsen, "Some Observations on Liturgical Imagery of the Twelfth Century," *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 8 (1978), 193-212; Hans Belting, *Das Bild und sein Publikum im Mittelalter. Form und Funktion früher Bildtafeln der Passion* (Berlin, 1981), 218-224; Klaus Krüger, *Der frühe Bildkult des Franziskus in Italien. Gestalt und Funktionswandel des Tafelbildes im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1992), 149-172; Anne Derbes, *Picturing the Passion in Late Medieval Italy: Narrative Painting, Franciscan Ideologies, and the Levant* (Cambridge, 1996), 4-9, especially note 14 with bibliography.

49. See Van Os 1984-1990, 1:12-14, 28-29.

50. See Gordon 1982, 76.

51. Stubblebine 1979, 1:160 and 2:figs. 385-387. The elevated position of the crucifix in the central gable above the Madonna also occurs in other regions. I mention here only one example: the retable signed by Giovanni Baronzio now in the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche of Urbino (inv. no. 125); see Pier Giorgio Pasini, *La pittura riminese del Trecento* (Rimini, 1990), 141 with illustration.

52. See Carlo Volpe, *La pittura riminese del Trecento* (Milan, 1965), 71 (nos. 11-12), 77-78 (no. 44), 82 (no. 77), 83 (nos. 80-81), 86 (no. 96); Daniele Benati, "Pittura del Trecento in Emilia Romagna," in *La pittura in Italia. Il Duecento e il Trecento*, ed. Enrico Castelnuovo, 2 vols. (Milan, 1986), 1:119 (fig. 181), 201 (fig. 306), 203 (fig. 309), 209 (figs. 321-322); *La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna. Catalogo generale delle opere esposte* (Bologna, 1987), 4 (nos. 6-7); Miklós Boskovits, *Gemäldegalerie Berlin. Katalog der Gemälde: Frühe Italienische Malerei* (Berlin, 1987), 15-18 (no. 8) and 144-146 (no. 58); Miklós Boskovits, *The Thyssen Bornemisza Collection. Early Italian Painting, 1290-1470* (London, 1990), 131-137 (no. 21); Pasini 1990, 53-58, 138, 154; *Il Trecento riminese. Maestri e botteghe tra Romagna e Marche*, ed. Daniele Benati (Milan, 1995), 172-173 (no. 13), 174-175 (no. 14).

53. The best-known example is without doubt the mosaic diptych in the Opera del Duomo in Florence (second quarter of the fourteenth century); it encompasses twelve scenes from the Life of Christ. See Wolfgang F. Volbach and Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Byzanz und der christliche Osten*, vol. 3 of *Propyläen Kunstgeschichte*, 2d ed. (Berlin, 1984), 181, fig. 47; for further examples, see Kurt Weitzmann, "Byzantine Miniature and Icon Painting in the Eleventh Century," in *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination*, ed. Herbert L. Kessler (Chicago, 1971), 271-313, especially 193, figs. 293-294.

54. The suggested dates for this piece in the pertinent published scholarship vary between "around 1300" and "around 1330." See Evelyn Sandberg-Valalà, "A Venetian Primitive," *Burlington Magazine* 61 (1932), 27-32; R. Langton Douglas, "Assistant of Duccio: Scenes from the Life of Christ and from the Lives of the Virgin and Saint Francis, with Fourteen Figures of Saints," *Art Quarterly* 10 (1947), 19-30, especially 25; Edward B. Garrison, *Italian Romanesque Panel Painting. An Illustrated Index* (Florence, 1949), 147, no. 385; Bernard Berenson, *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance. A List of Principal Artists and Their Works with an Index of Places. Venetian School*, 2 vols. (London, 1957), 1:205; Gertrude Coor-Achenbach, "Two Trecento Paintings in the Church of Saint-Nicholas-des-Champs, Paris," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 50 (1957), 5-15, especially 11; Rudolfo Pallucchini, *La pittura veneziana del Trecento* (Venice, 1964), 65-66; Myra Nan Rosenfeld, "Problems in Iconography in Italian Painting," *Apollo* 171 (1976), 384-391, especially 384; Carla Travi, "Il Maestro del trittico di Santa Chiara. Appunti per la pittura veneta de primo Trecento,"

Arte cristiana 80 (1992), 81–82; Petra Meschede, *Bilderzählungen in der kölnischen Malerei des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts. Eine Untersuchung zum Bildtypus und zur Funktion* (Paderborn, 1994), 103–107; *Important and Fine Old Master Pictures* [sale cat., Christie's] (London, 8 December 1995), 104–105, no. 62 (with color illustration).

55. On calendar icons, see Kurt Weitzmann, *The Icon. Holy Images, Sixth to Fourteenth Century* (London, 1978), 72–73, no. 17 (an eleventh-century example with an almost square format); Weitzmann 1984; Belting 1990, 279–286; Ševčenko, “Menologio,” in *Enciclopedia dell'arte medievale*, vol. 8 (Rome, 1997), 303–306. Christian cycles have also been documented on bilateral icons; see Weitzmann 1971, 281–285, 296–312. For a number of summarizing references, see Barbara Schellewald, “Die Ordnung der Bilderwelt. Bilder und Bildprogramme im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert,” in *Kaiserin Theophanu. Begegnung des Ostens und Westens um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends*, ed. Anton von Euw and Peter Schreiner, 2 vols. (Cologne, 1991), 2:41–62; Barbara Schellewald, “Die Bilder nach dem Ende des Bilderstreits,” in *Byzanz. Die Macht der Bilder*, ed. Michael Brandt and Arne Effenberger [exh. cat., Dom-Museum Hildesheim] (Hildesheim, 1998), 67–88, especially 79–83.

56. The panels were stolen in 1971 and have not been recovered. The size of the individual painted panels is 16.5 × 13.5 cm, each with a modern frame measuring 41 × 83 cm. The suggested dates of origin for these panels also vary between “around 1300” to “around 1330.” See Giuseppe Fiocco, “Trésors d'art des églises de Paris,” *Arte veneta* 10 (1956), 232–236, figs. 255–257; Coor-Achenbach 1957, 5–15; Pallucchini 1964, 69, fig. 230; Meschede 1994, 107–108.

57. Depictions of the Crucifixion in calendar icons do not normally have a highlighted format. A thirteenth-century Byzantine mosaic icon of the Crucifixion in the Vatopedi monastery on Mount Athos exhibits a framework of scenes that are likewise reminiscent of *vita* icons. On the embossed silver frame, which was, to be sure, not added until the fourteenth century, we see the twelve main church feasts represented. For further details, see Walter Felicetti-Liebenfels, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Ikonmalerei von ihren Anfängen bis zum Ausklänge, unter Berücksichtigung der maniera greca und der italo-byzantinischen Schule* (Olten-Lausanne, 1956), 66, pl. 75.

58. Inv. no. 11279, measurements: 78 × 105 cm; the suggestions for dating the origin of this piece vary within the first third of the fourteenth century. On this panel, see Garrison 1949, 146, no. 381; Coor-Achenbach 1957, 10; Meschede 1994, 108–109.

59. See Langton Douglas 1947; Meschede 1994, 104–105, 108.

60. Concerning the reception of eastern icons in the West, see Hans Belting, “Die Reaktion der Kunst des 13. Jahrhunderts auf den Import von Reliquien und Ikonen,” in *Il medio oriente e l'occidente nell'arte*

del XIII secolo, vol. 2 of *Atti del XXIV congresso internazionale di storia dell'arte*, ed. Hans Belting (Bologna, 1983), 35–53, especially 43–45; Belting 1981, and Belting 1990.

61. For an assessment of the tradition and distribution of these panels, see White 1979, 9–10.

62. Measurements of the piece: 70 × 180 cm; see Garrison 1949, 142, no. 367; Derbes 1996, 2:162–168, figs. 4, 91.

63. See Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting, Section III*, vol. 6 (New York, 1956), 149–152, pl. XLIII; Fern Rusk Shapley, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection. Italian Schools, XIII–XV Century* (London, 1966), 23.

64. Other examples of altar tabernacles from the fourteenth century have not been documented; see Hans Caspary, *Das Sakramentstabernakel in Italien bis zum Konzil von Trent*, 2d ed. (Munich, 1964), 4.

65. “Leben Jesu,” *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 8 vols., ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum et al. (Rome, Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna, 1968–1974), 3:39–85, especially 75; Meschede 1994; see also Robert Suckale, “Arma Christi. Überlegungen zur Zeichenhaftigkeit mittelalterlicher Andachtsbilder,” *Städel-Jahrbuch* 6 (1977), 177–208.

66. Inv. no. 6; see Rainer Budde, *Köln und seine Maler 1300–1500* (Cologne, 1986), 202; Meschede 1994, 20–33. The later examples do not contain a highlighted, large-format Crucifixion scene. They can be compared in this respect to the central panel of the Venetian triptych from Santa Chiara in Trieste (Trieste, Museo Civico d'Arte e di Storia). See also Michelangelo Muraro, *Paolo da Venezia* (Milan, 1969), fig. 73.

67. Garrison 1949, 146–147; Meschede 1994, 111: “one should rather consider their function as a painting to inspire meditation” (because of the small format).

68. This is true especially for the diptychs and triptychs. On the dossal in San Diego, see Derbes 1996, 162–168, 243–245, note 4; see also Victor M. Schmidt's review of Derbes' study in *Simiolus* 26 (1998), 116–120, especially 119.

69. Concerning similar cases of functional transformation, see Krüger 1992, 163 (panel Cross, Madonna panels with wings).

70. Gardner 1983, 301, refers to Gardner 1974, 63.

71. See Gardner 1997, 14.

72. Jürgen Schultze, “Ein Dugento-Altar aus Assisi? Versuch einer Rekonstruktion,” *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 10 (1961–1963), 59–66; Jürgen Schultze, “Zur Kunst des Franziskusmeisters,” *Wallraff-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 25 (1963), 19–150; Dillian Gordon, “A Perugian Provenance for the Franciscan Double-Sided Altar-Piece by the Maestro di San Francesco,” *Burlington Magazine* 124 (1982), 70–77; Serena Romano, Sergio Fusetti, and Paolo Virilli, “Maestro di San

- Francesco," in Bon Valsassina and Garibaldi 1994, 58–62, no. 4.
73. Gordon 1982, 72, with observations concerning the backs of individual, fragmentary panels. See also Dillian Gordon, "Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Umbrian Double-Sided Altarpieces: Form and Function," in this volume.
74. Scholars have sought justification for this premise above all in the alternating sequence of individual standing figures with narrative scenes, a sequence that appears in comparable fashion on the front predella of Duccio's *Maestà*. See Schultze 1963, 144; Gordon 1982, 71, note 29: "It is possible that the double-sided altarpiece was one of the inspirations behind Duccio's *Maestà*." Van Os 1984–1990, 1:19–20, speculates that already the dossal of the Madonna del Voto "was painted on both sides, with the Madonna and saints on the front, and scenes of the Savior on the back." Following this suggestion, Bellosi argued that these scenes of the Savior were the twelve scenes traditionally attributed to Guido da Siena and now divided among various collections. See Luciano Bellosi, "Per un contesto cimabuesco senese: (a) Guido da Siena e il probabile Dietisalvi di Speme," *Prospettiva* 61 (1991), 6–20, especially 13. On these panels, see also Barbara John, "Guido da Siena's *Misteri di Gesù Cristo*," in this volume.
75. Gordon 1982, 72–75.
76. The provenance for this altarpiece of the church of Sant'Antonio da Padua in Paciano is not well documented; see Rosaria Mencarelli, Rosanna Coppola, and Assja Landau, "Maestro di Paciano," in Bon Valsassina and Garibaldi 1994, 127–129, no. 24.
77. See Gardner 1983, 299.
78. See Gordon 1982, 76.
79. Gardner 1997, 14. Gordon's assumption is supported by the double-sided polyptych by Taddeo di Bartolo, which replaced the altarpiece by the Maestro di San Francesco in 1403. The programmatic representation of Francis as *alter Christus* was situated in the central panel of the reverse with saints on either side, while the Madonna surrounded by saints appeared on the front. A similar arrangement was chosen for the double-sided altarpiece painted by Sassetta in 1437 for San Francesco in Borgo San Sepolcro. On the back in the middle we find the figure of Francis, above him a scene of the Annunciation, on either side scenes from the lives of saints, and on the predella scenes from the life of Beato Ranieri. On the front the Madonna appears, flanked by saints, above her a Crucifixion, and on the predella scenes of the Passion of Christ. See Henk van Os, "Saint Francis of Assisi as a Second Christ in Early Italian Painting," *Simiolus* 7 (1974), 115–132; James R. Banker, "The Program for the Sassetta Altarpiece in the Church of San Francesco in Borgo San Sepolcro," *I Tatti Studies* 4 (1991), 11–58, especially 33; Dillian Gordon, "The Reconstruction of Sassetta's Altarpiece for San Francesco, Borgo San Sepolcro: A Postscript," *Burlington Magazine* 135 (1993), 620–622.
80. On the double-sided altarpiece of Meo da Siena, see Julian Gardner, "The Altarpiece by Meo da Siena for San Pietro at Perugia. Tradition versus Innovation," *Städel-Jahrbuch* 16 (1997), 7–34; see also for this altarpiece, as well as Meo da Siena's altarpiece in Subiaco, Dillian Gordon, "Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Umbrian Double-Sided Altarpieces: Form and Function," in this volume.
81. Now in Perugia, Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, inv. no. 27. See Ada Labriola and Assja Landau in Bon Valsassina and Garibaldi 1994, 86–88, no. 10.
82. Gardner 1974, especially 61–62, 79–80; Gardner 1997, 23–24.
83. Bram Kempers and Sible de Blaauw, "Jacopo Stefaneschi, Patron and Liturgist. A New Hypothesis regarding the Date, Iconography, Authorship, and Function of His Altarpiece for Old Saint Peter's," *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome* 47 (1987), 83–113, especially 101.
84. An additional variation of this combination of differing types of paintings and formats can be found in the double-sided Giottoesque polyptych of Santa Reparata, which, according to the premise stated repeatedly by numerous scholars, could have been the first high altarpiece in Arnolfo's newly erected cathedral of Florence. On the front are five half-length figures (Madonna and Child in the middle of four saints), while the back features an Annunciation scene, flanked by the standing figures of four saints. See Giovanni Previtali, *Giotto e la sua bottega*, 3d ed. (Milan, 1993), 119–120, 340, figs. 367–368; and Julian Gardner, "Giotto in America (and Elsewhere)," in this volume.
85. In Duccio's work there is only the Madonna of Mercy with three Franciscans (Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale), which indicates contacts with this order; on the other hand there is a whole series of evidence that indicates works commissioned by the Dominican order; see White 1979, 63; Schmidt 1996.
86. For representations of these Passion scenes, see Derbes 1996, 9–11, 138–157.
87. On Ruggiero da Casole, see Ferdinando Ughelli, *Italia sacra*, 10 vols. (Venice, 1717–1722), 3:562; William Bowsky, *A Medieval Italian Commune. Siena under the Nine, 1287–1335* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1981), 270–272; Daniel Waley, *Siena and the Siennese in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1991), 127–128.
88. On the tradition of the altar title, see Van der Ploeg in Van Os 1984–1990, 1:132.
89. On Duccio's Annunciation images, see Van Os 1984–1990, 1:46–49 (without any references to the motif of the book).
90. David Robb, "The Iconography of the Annunciation in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," *Art Bulletin* 18 (1936), 480–526, 485; Julia Liebrich, *Die Verkündigung an Maria. Die Ikonographie der italienischen Darstellungen von den Anfängen bis 1500* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 1997).

91. Deuchler 1984, 214.
92. Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1993), 2:78. For the original Latin text, see Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea vulgo historia lombardica dicta*, ed. Th. Graesse, 3d ed. (Bratislava, 1890; reprinted Osnabrück, 1965), 504: "omniaque loca filii sui, scilicet locum baptismi, jejunii, orationis, passionis, sepulturae, resurrectionis et ascensionis, quoad vixit, devotione sedula visitavit."
93. Klaus Krüger, "Bildandacht und Bergeinsamkeit. Der Eremit als Rollenspiel in der städtischen Gesellschaft," in *Malerei und Stadtkultur in der Dantezeit. Die Argumentation der Bilder*, ed. Hans Belting and Dieter Blume (Munich, 1989), 187–200. The concept of meditation on painted religious images outside the liturgical context corresponds with the underlying principle of the Franciscan panels of the Life of Christ. The *Maestà* panel is distinct from these, to be sure, since it does not call to mind Francis, but rather Mary as the *exemplum perfectae contemplationis*. For comparison of the meditation of Francis with that of Mary, see Krüger 1992, 177.
94. Various scholars have ascribed the panel to Sassetta; most recently it has been attributed to the Master of the Osservanza; see Keith Christiansen, "Master of the Osservanza," in *Painting in Renaissance Siena, 1420–1500*, ed. Keith Christiansen, Laurence B. Kanter, and Carl Brandon Strehlke [exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art] (New York, 1988), 138–167, 104–123, especially 108; Erich Schleier, "Meister der Osservanza. Die Messe des Hl. Antonius Abbas," in *Gemäldegalerie Berlin, Geschichte der Sammlung und ausgewählte Meisterwerke*, ed. Henning Bock, Rainald Grosshans, Jan Kelch, Wilhelm H. Köhler, and Erich Schleier, 2d rev. ed. (Berlin, 1990), 287–289; Struchholz 1995, 55. See also Gardner 1983, 299 (with bibliographical references).
95. Van der Ploeg 1993, 49, 93, 118.
96. Concerning the subsequent location of the *Maestà*, see Van der Ploeg 1993, 53, 117–118; Struchholz 1995, 35–36, 55.
97. Jacobus de Voragine 1993, 1:93. The original Latin text in Jacobus de Voragine 1890, 104, reads: "Antonius cum XX esset annorum et audiret legi in ecclesia: si vis perfectus esse, vade et vende omnia, quae habes et da pauperibus, omnia sua vendens pauperibus erogavit et eremiticam vitam duxit."
98. Christiansen 1988, 108; Schleier 1990, 287.
99. On the offertory, see Josef Andreas Jungmann, *Missarum Solemnia. Eine geistliche Erklärung der römischen Messe*, 2d ed., 2 vols. (Vienna, Freiburg, and Basel, 1962), 2:3–126.
100. Schleier 1990, 108.
101. Christiansen 1988, 108.
102. Van der Ploeg 1993, 93, also seems to assume a permanent depository for the eucharist on the back of the altar. He mentions this possibility, however, only in connection with his hypothesis that the high altar "allowed liturgical celebrations from both sides." Concerning the keeping of the eucharist, see Otto Nussbaum, *Die Aufbewahrung der Eucharistie, Theophaneia. Beiträge zur Religions- und Kirchengeschichte des Altertums* 29 (Bonn, 1979).
103. That saints prayed outside of liturgical practice at altars where the eucharist was deposited is also documented elsewhere. See Nussbaum 1979, 327, for the case of the Blessed Béatrice d'Ornacieu (c. 1260–1303 or 1309). See also Peter Browe, *Die Verehrung der Eucharistie im Mittelalter* (Freiburg, 1967), 11–25 (chapter 2, "Die Verehrung des Sakraments ausserhalb der Messe").
104. This translation is quoted from Stubblebine 1979, 1:34–35; the Italian text of the inventory reads: "Uno altare maggiore di marmo con una tavola suvi dipenta da ogni parte colla figura di Nostra Donna e più Santi et con tutta la Passione di Yesus Christo, colle coltarelle da capo in quatro bordoni di ferro, con tre tabernacoletti dentro vi tre angoletti rilevati et dorati e quali discendono all'amministrazione della santa messa con hostia et co'lanbiechi e col velo per le mani. Et più quatro angoletti con candelieri in mano, che stanno al servizio del'altare dietro e dinanzi. Et ne' canti di detto altare sonno due graticolette di ferro con una tenda vermiglia per coprire la tavola del detto altar con frangie di seta dipenta nel mezo due angiole che tengono uno tabernacolo dipento [con] el Corpo di Christo. Et due cassetine dipente co'l'arme dell'Uopera che stanno in sul detto altare nele quali si mettono le limosine. Et due huova di struzo dinanzi al detto altare attachate ad alto con cinque candelieri da cancelli di ferro." Archivio dell'Opera della Metropolitana di Siena, 1492, 3, Opera Metropolitana, p. 867, 3 c., 17r. Inventory of 1435, quoted according to Struchholz 1995, 57; *L'Archivio dell'Opera della Metropolitana di Siena, Inventario*, ed. Stefano Moscadelli, *Die Kirchen von Siena, Beiheft 1* (Munich, 1995), 187.
105. Van Os 1984–1990, 1:55.
106. In the inventory of Charles V, a lost painting is described as the "holy sacrament, carried by two angels," referring possibly to an angelic pietà. See Gert von der Osten, "Engelspietà," *Reallexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 5 (Stuttgart, 1967), 602–621, 603. See also Belting 1981, 123; for other representations of pairs of angels related to the exhibition of the eucharist, see Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1991), 293.
107. Nussbaum 1979, 327.
108. I am grateful to Margrit Lisner for reminding me of the high altar in the Santo. See Horst W. Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello* (Princeton, 1963), 179; Caspary 1964, 71–72; Joachim Poeschke, *Donatello. Figur und Quadro* (Munich, 1980), 70.
109. Stubblebine 1979, 1:34; the Italian text reads: "l'Altare Maggiore. Una tavola dipinta da ogni parte co' le figure di Nostra Donna e di più Santi, co le voltarelle da capo in quattro bordoni di ferro, con tre

tabernacoletti dentrovi tre angoletti rilevati e dorati, i quali descendono a ministrare a la sancta messa colla eucaristia et limbicchi et pannicello per le mani. E più quattro angoletti con candelieri in mano che stanno a servitio de'altare distro e dinanzi: con due graticole di ferro ne canti dietro l'altare; con una tenda vermiglia per cuprire el detto altare; et un tenda per cuprire la predella, con franzie di seta di più colori dipenta in mezo; con due capsettime dipente che stanno in sul ditto altare con l'arme de l'opera, per pigliare le elemosine, e due huova di struzo dinanzi per adornezza d'esso altare." Inventory of 1423, Archivio di Stato, Siena, Opera Metropolitana, 28, fol. 13v, cited according to Cesare Brandi, *Duccio* (Florence, 1952), 146; see also Van der Ploeg 1993, 114.

110. Caspary 1964, 15; Enzo Carli, *Il Duomo di Siena* (Siena, 1979), 61, pl. xcvi. The preservation of the eucharist in the wall behind the altar has been documented repeatedly; see Nussbaum 1979, 44, 383, 404, 411, 424-426, 428, 440.

111. According to Caspary 1964, 1, 5, portable sacrament tabernacles were in use since the thirteenth century.

112. Eve Borsook, "Cult and Imagery at Sant' Ambrogio in Florence," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 25 (1981), 147-202, especially 154: "A few cathedrals and monastic churches reserved a place for the Eucharist on the high altar—such as the cathedral of Siena, where during the thirteenth century a permanently installed pyx was used." See also Van der Ploeg in Van Os 1984-1990, 1:139; Van der Ploeg 1993, 75.

113. The text of this document is given by A. Lisini, "Notizie di Duccio pittore e della sua celebre ancona," *Bullettino senese di storia patria* 5 (1898), 23, and in English translation by Stubblebine 1979, 1:34. Hager 1962, 147, assumes, without providing convincing argumentation, that the figure of the candelabra angel was part of the *Maestà's* baldachin. Van der Ploeg 1993, 113, on the other hand, also assumes that this angel figure was placed on the mensa of the altar.

114. Stubblebine 1979, 1:34; Van der Ploeg 1993, 113-115, 118, believes that the baldachin above the *Maestà* was installed shortly after the altar painting was erected. Concerning figures of angels in connection with the eucharist, see also Nussbaum 1979, 416.

115. Agnolo di Tura del Grasso 1931-1937, 313; on the assumption that the celebration of Corpus Christi was introduced in Siena during the tenure of Bishop Ruggiero da Casole, see Rave 1986, 26-27.

116. Agnolo di Tura del Grasso 1931-1937, 313.

117. Browe 1967, 79-80.

118. "Officium de festo corporis Christi," in *Reportationes Opuscula dubiae authenticitatis*, vol. 6 of *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis opera omnia*, ed. Roberto Busa (Gallarate, 1980), 275-281; see also Browe 1967, 70-76; W. Düring, "Fronleichnam. I. Fest," *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 14 vols. (Freiburg, 1957-1968), 4:405-406; Nussbaum 1979, 150-154; Derbes 1996, 18; Rubin 1991, 164-199.