

THE ICONOGRAPHIC PROGRAMME OF THE ZENO CHAPEL

AT SANTA PRASSEDE, ROME

by

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### ABSTRACT

The chapel of S. Zeno at S. Prassede, Rome, built by Pope Paschal I, 817-824, as a martyrs' shrine and a funeral chapel for his mother Theodora, is decorated with antique marbles and finished on its vault and upper walls with mosaics.

Many individual components of the mosaic programme, both figural and abstract, can best be related to antecedents in the Early Christian art of Rome; for others, parallels must be sought in Ravenna. Intermediary manuscripts and pattern drawings are proposed. Other elements in the mosaic decoration are related to the antique marbles assembled by Paschal in S. Prassede and the Zeno chapel. Such patterns, based ultimately on other Italian mosaics or sculptures, together formed the repertory of a group of mosaicists working in glass in the Roman tradition, and probably using recycled tesserae.


Drawings by Cassiano dal Pozzo show the seventeenth-century appearance of the Zeno chapel, before alterations had destroyed the lower zone of mosaics and eliminated the burials. The drawings are used as the basis for a reconstruction of the original layout of the chapel and its decoration.


The decorative programme is found to be an expression of the theme of salvation as it related to the dead woman. The components can be read together as a visualisation of the prayers for the deceased offered at the funeral service; the intercessions of the most powerful advocates for humanity, Mary and John the Baptist, being reinforced by the prayers of those saints who had strong personal ties with this church and this pope. The aim was to recreate the intercessions in perpetuity so that Theodora's soul would reach Paradise.

A decorative programme such as that of the Zeno chapel with a hierarchical arrangement of holy images in a vaulted symbolic space, is seen to stem from the second council of Nicaea of 787, which gave rise to the typical post-iconoclastic, Middle-Byzantine scheme of church

decoration. It is therefore proposed that the Zeno chapel's programme is an illustration of the ideas about religious imagery formulated at this council, brought to Rome from the East at the start of the second wave of iconoclasm which coincided with the start of Paschal's pontificate. The pope turned to Roman mosaicists with their traditional repertory of images to carry out a commission that illustrated the most advanced thinking of the early ninth century. I would therefore propose a reassessment of Paschal I, who has been seen as an antiquarian pope dedicated to the re-creation of the past. He should rather be seen as in touch with the latest trends, and limited only by the materials available and the repertory of traditional images that was at hand. These limitations, however, were overcome, and Paschal's vision of a newly glorious Rome has survived in his mosaics until today.

  
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## INTRODUCTION

The iconography of the S. Zeno chapel at S. Prassede, Rome, was chosen as the subject of this study for several reasons, the most important of which was its interest as a substantially intact funerary monument and martyrs' memoria of the early ninth century that is securely documented to the patronage of Pope Paschal I, 817-824. Its papal connection suggests that the quality of construction and decoration was the finest available, and that the content of the programme in theological terms must also have been decided at the highest level. This confirms what has been evident to the eye for the mysterious beauty of the mosaics is complemented by the use of precious marbles in floor, walls and furnishings, which gives an overall impression of great richness. Although no comprehensive study of the chapel exists, enough has been written to draw attention to a perplexing problem: the position of the Zeno chapel mosaics in relation to Western and Byzantine decorations of the Early Christian and Middle-Byzantine periods. The presence of this example of a seemingly post-iconoclastic, Middle-Byzantine iconographic formula thirty years "too early" and in the West, has been inadequately explained by the various authors, who, writing about the Middle-Byzantine system of church decoration, consigned the Zeno Chapel to a footnote as an unexplained anomaly.

The aims of the study were fourfold. First, to make a written inventory of the mosaics, based on detailed personal observation. Second, to study each individual element of the decorative programme in its historical context, searching for comparative material in the extant monuments and in the literature. Third, to explain the significance of each individual component of the iconographic programme in general terms and in the context of a funeral chapel or a martyrs' shrine; and fourth, to examine the overall meaning of the programme, on the presumption that this might be more than the sum of its individual parts. I also hoped to be able to make a contribution to solving the

puzzle of the presence of this apparently post-iconoclast, Eastern monument in the West thirty years before the end of iconoclasm.

The practical part of the work was accomplished in Rome in May and June 1983: it consisted of close, detailed visual inspection of the mosaics, using binoculars where necessary, and the writing of a minutely detailed description, area by area, using sketches where appropriate. Other Roman mosaics of the Carolingian era, and earlier examples in Rome and Ravenna, were also studied for comparative purposes.

The thesis is divided into four chapters. In the first, the evidence from primary sources for attributing the Zeno chapel to the patronage of Pope Paschal I, 817-824, who built it as his mother's mausoleum, is presented. Other published information on the history and architecture is also assembled, and the possible symbolic content of the architectural form of the chapel and of the non-mosaic elements of the decoration--especially the opus sectile floor--are considered.

The second and third chapters contain the body of the thesis, a detailed, step-by-step description of the mosaics, figural in Chapter II, non-figural in Chapter III. Each descriptive section is followed by a discussion of its iconography in terms of history and content. The main vault and drum decorations are seen as the zone where Christ, attended by angels, receives the prayers of Mary, the Baptist, the apostles and the saints, for the soul of the deceased. The side niches' present state, and seventeenth-century condition as known from drawings, are examined, the available evidence supports location of Theodora's tomb in the left hand niche, while the right hand one received relics of the saints. Decorations were appropriate to each location. On the right, the lunette contained a mosaic of Christ between male saints, while on the left, the whole niche was enveloped in decoration down to the level of the sarcophagus which stood there. Here, appropriately, the theme was Christ's resurrection, with its promise of salvation through baptism and through intercession of the saints on behalf of the deceased individual. The altar niche featured the transfiguration of Christ, illustrating the dogma of Christ's dual

nature as man and son of God. The outer facade of the entry wall, also decorated, bears a double arc of mosaic medallion portraits: an attempt is made to identify these and to interpret Paschal's choice.

These figural scenes are surrounded and enriched by border patterns. Abstract and vegetal designs occupy the vaults and window embrasures. These patterns give additional information on the affinities of the mosaics with earlier examples from Rome and Ravenna.

Chapter IV deals with two sets of questions: technical and iconographic. The technical data enable these mosaics to be seen as part of the Roman tradition, where glass rather than marble was the favoured material for tesserae. Evidence points also to the use of recycled tesserae, which may explain the impressionistic style of the results. Detailed examination of the iconographic data as well as the overall programme in light of the doctrinal developments in the Eastern church put forward in 787 at the second Council of Nicaea, and of the type of church decoration that emerged after the end of iconoclasm in 843, enable us to see the Zeno chapel as an illustration of these ideas modified for use in a funeral chapel. In this chapel every element of the decoration was designed to work together to ensure the salvation of the deceased woman, through the reiteration of the intercessions of the liturgy and the funeral prayers. The Zeno chapel, with its references to Early Christian Rome and Ravenna, has sometimes been seen as the conservative production of an antiquarian patron: here it is found to illustrate the most advanced thought of the early ninth century. Only the individual elements of the decoration are taken from the repertory of bygone days, as workmen sought models for the new programme among the resources known to them in Rome and Ravenna.



Frontispiece. Pope Paschal I, holding a  
model of his church, S. Prassede

## CHAPTER I

## THE SAN ZENO CHAPEL: HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE

The San Zeno chapel at S. Prassede, Rome, caught the attention of both pilgrims and writers long before the era of organized scholarship. Its small size, its rich, marble revetment and the lavish use of precious antique spoils--columns, bases and architraves--its opus sectile floor fashioned of purple porphyry and coloured marbles, and above all, the mosaics which clothe the vault and the upper walls inside and out, combined to produce an extraordinary effect on the pious. This led to the chapel becoming the focus of all sorts of traditions, among which were the acquisition of two popular names in the Middle Ages: Hortus Paradisi, "Garden of Paradise" and S. Maria libera nos a poenis inferni, "Holy Mary deliver us from the pains of hell."<sup>1</sup> It was also forbidden to women to enter the chapel except, perhaps, on Sundays in Lent: on those days, it seems, men were excluded. The penalty for transgression was excommunication.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, the chapel was considered a holy and powerful place, full of mystery, a mystery imparted to it by its decor: the cave-like, vaulted space glittering with gold glass mosaic, against which the figures of the holy saints were depicted, in a programme which could be understood on several levels of meaning, from the abstractly theological to the simply pious or even superstitious.

Fortunately, the mystery does not extend to matters of dating, for the Zeno chapel is unusually well documented and can be firmly attributed to the patronage of the Carolingian pope, Paschal I, 817-824. The accuracy of this dating depends on two inscriptions carved in marble and one written in mosaic, all at S. Prassede. In addition, the Liber Pontificalis entry for Paschal's reign includes information on his patronage and the circumstances in which he built and decorated both church and chapel.

The inscription, + PASCHALIS PRAESULIS OPUS DECOR FULGET IN AULA QUOD PIA OPTULIT VOTA STUDUIT REDDERE DO, followed by Paschal's monogram (Text-Fig. 2A), carved in the marble lintel of the outer side of the Zeno chapel doorway (Figs. 2, 22A) tells how the pontiff Paschal offers by his pious vow the beauty of the (mosaic) work that blazes in the chapel. This has been rated by Baldracco as

la testimonianza più tangibile, diretta e incontestabile dell'opera di Pasquale 1,3

for it is carved on an integral part of the door frame beneath the cornice and signed by Paschal's own monogram.

The second inscription is much longer, on a marble plaque now attached to the pier outside the Zeno chapel door, and forms part of the long list of relics which were brought from the catacombs by Paschal and interred in his church, S. Prassede.<sup>4</sup> It tells how Paschal interred the remains of his mother Theodora Episcopa to the right of the basilical entrance in the place where the bodies of Zeno the priest and two others lay.<sup>5</sup> This can be taken, with the other evidence, to mean that Theodora was buried in the Zeno chapel.<sup>6</sup> Paschal's portrait (frontispiece) carrying a model of his church--a model which itself features a small side chapel--appears on the extreme left of the S. Prassede apse-mosaic. His monogram, also, appears on the arch, and the long inscription in mosaic beneath the figural scene on the bowl of the apse, describes, in six lines of verse, how the church which was once falling into decay now shines with the beauty of colours and metal (presumably gold), the gift of the pontiff Paschal in honour of S. Praxedis.<sup>7</sup>

In the Liber Pontificalis<sup>8</sup> we read that Paschal, finding that the church of the martyr Praxedis, which had been built in ancient times, was now much weakened by age and in danger of collapse, rebuilt it in another place not far away so that it was better than it had ever been. He decorated the apse of the church with mosaics in various colours, and added a triumphal arch in the same style. The account tells of the

relics of the saints gathered by Paschal from the catacombs and reinterred here, and of an oratory decorated with mosaics and dedicated to Zeno, martyr of Christ, whose body was placed inside along with those of two unidentified saints.<sup>9</sup>

These then are the texts which confirm the involvement of Paschal I in the building and decoration of the Zeno chapel and of its mother church S. Prassede. Using the texts, it is also even possible to pinpoint the actual date of construction, for the marble plaque gives the precise date--July 20th of the 10th indiction--on which the pope brought the saints' bodies from the cemeteries, placing them under the altar of the basilica with his own hands. The only 10th indiction to fall within the seven year reign of Paschal was that of 817.<sup>10</sup> This, therefore, was the year of construction of S. Prassede and its Zeno chapel. Paschal, elected pope by acclamation on January 24, 817, lost no time in starting an extensive building programme, since S. Prassede and its chapels were ready to receive the relics of the martyrs six months later, on July 20th of the same year.

Speed in building and enthusiasm for all sorts of artistic patronage were hallmarks of the pontificate of Paschal I. In the seven years between 817 and 824 he was responsible for the rebuilding of three major Roman churches, S. Prassede, S. Maria in Domnica and S. Cecilia in Trastevere, all of which he enriched with mosaic decorations which survive until today. He also built chapels at some of these churches, and at others close to the papacy, as well as monastery buildings for the monks who would serve his foundations. In addition he organised endowments for their upkeep. His Liber Pontificalis biography lists--often with monetary values--the gifts of furnishings in gold and silver, and of sumptuous woven and embroidered figured hangings, which he made to his own foundations and to many other of Rome's churches. Lists of gifts of both buildings and furnishings figure prominently in his biography, and should be seen in context, as part of a continuing programme of papal munificence which had started with the renewed prosperity and sense of security which Rome enjoyed through its Frankish alliance. Paschal's predecessors had

already carried out repairs and refurnishings at the great fourth-century basilicas of St. Peter's, S. Paolo fuori le mura and S. Giovanni in Laterano, and at the important fifth-century church of S. Maria Maggiore. Thus the way was left clear for Paschal to attend to some of Rome's lesser churches, which were falling into decay after a long period of declining prosperity and shrinking population in Rome.<sup>11</sup> The obvious pious concern of the papacy in restoring these churches was matched by political expediency, for they were situated in the disabitato, the depopulated areas of the city, areas which the papacy was thus able to keep within its sphere of influence.

The patronage of the first Carolingian pope, Hadrian I, 772-795, took place in the aftermath of the Lombard sieges of 756 and 773. He put money into civic works and repaired both the walls and the aqueducts. Urgent repairs were undertaken at the Constantinian basilicas which were reroofed using huge beams from the Spoleto forests, the gift of Charlemagne, the "new Constantine."<sup>12</sup> Hadrian also revived the custom, dormant since the sixth century, of giving icons, liturgical silver and other rare furnishings to the churches, largely to replace those lost from the unprotected basilicas outside the walls during the Lombard sieges. Hadrian's successor, Leo III, 795-816, continued to refurbish the churches, with notable gifts in precious metals recorded in his biography in the Liber Pontificalis as weighing a total of 1,764 pounds of gold and 22,000 pounds of silver.<sup>13</sup>

Paschal's patronage is unusual not only because of its broad range--we know from the Liber Pontificalis that he commissioned architecture, mosaic and paintings, metalwork, marble inlay and fabric--but because so much of it has survived, especially in the categories of architecture and mosaic. Significant examples also remain of enamel, silver, woven cloth, wall paintings and inlaid marble floors. His reign of less than a decade leaves many surviving objects which bear his name or monogram and which can, as a result, be accurately dated. These include all his churches and their mosaics; the Zeno chapel, including its mosaics, its opus sectile floor and many of its relief

carvings; and the enamel cross reliquary from the Sancta Sanctorum chapel at the Lateran, as well as a cruciform reliquary box in embossed silver made for another cross from the same chapel. From all these objects a picture can be built up of the patronage of Paschal which sheds light on his own attitudes and interests, light which should also inform us on the particular object of our interest, the S. Zeno chapel at S. Prassede and its iconographic programme.

It is clear from the documents quoted that the stimulus which led to the rebuilding of Paschal's church of S. Prassede was the need to provide a safer location for the Early Christian saints and martyrs whose bodies had become vulnerable in the cemeteries outside the walls. Although the Western church had long disapproved of the transfer of the bones of the saints, such transfers are known to have taken place in the mid-seventh century by the order of the "Eastern" popes, John IV and Theodore I. Nearer to Paschal's time, in 761, Paul I transferred the remains of "innumerable bodies of saints" to the newly-finished church of S. Sylvestro in Capite from the Roman catacombs.<sup>14</sup> This precedent was followed by all intervening popes up to Paschal's time. The importance attached by the Papacy to this campaign of translations is underscored by the speed with which Paschal became involved in it after his accession. The cemeteries were vulnerable in two respects. Most importantly, since they lay outside the walls, they were unprotected in the event of siege, and difficult at the best of times to protect from theft and vandalism. The changing attitudes towards the remains of the saints also caused problems. The cult of relics had been growing throughout Christendom since the Arab conquest of Jerusalem in 638 had made it more difficult for Christians to visit their most holy shrines. Relics of Roman saints and martyrs had become even more important during this period. The only way to protect them seemed to be to bring them inside the city walls. The importance of relics lay in their supposed supernatural properties. Christians in the West who had earlier resisted eastern ideas of veneration of relics per se, preferring to revere the holy places or burial sites, now found

a new need for the relics' wonderworking powers. Even the tiniest fragment of a saint's mortal remains contained that saint's praesentia or spiritual presence and hence its power for good. This powerful praesentia was strongly desired by churches far from the early Christian sites who longed for the presence of the "holy" close at hand.<sup>15</sup> Naturally this led to the trade in--and often theft of--relics. Both of these problems got worse during the spate of church building north of the Alps under the Carolingians,<sup>16</sup> for each new church needed relics, not only for their miraculous powers, but in order to attract pilgrims.

As far as S. Prassede is concerned, the marble plaque on the pier outside the Zeno chapel lists by name or category 2,300 saints whose remains, taken from the cemeteries by Paschal "with his own hands," were reinterred in the church itself, in the twin chapels of San Zeno and S. John the Baptist, and in the oratory of S. Agnes at the nearby monastery. Popes, bishops, priests and deacons, virgins and widows are named, and others whose identity had been lost were recorded as having their names "written in the book of life."<sup>17</sup> In addition to the burial of S. Zeno and his companions in the Zeno chapel, the chapel of St. John the Baptist received the bodies of S. Maurus and forty others, while S. Agnes' oratory was selected to receive the relics of S. Pastor.

A great deal is known about the arrangement of Paschal's relic room in the crypt of S. Prassede, even though it has not survived in its ninth-century form. Pope Benedict XIII and the titular cardinal of S. Prassede, Ludovico Pico da Mirandola, carried out an excavation of the crypt between January second and May fifth, 1729, during which the entire Paschalian complex of high altar, ciborium and relic room underneath was destroyed.<sup>18</sup> Fortunately, however, the Vallombrosan abbot, Don Benigno Aloisi, who accompanied the excavators kept a daily journal during this time, from which we can reconstruct the layout of Paschal's relic room.<sup>19</sup> In this room, which measured 2 x 1.65 m., were two antique strigillated sarcophagi supported on large blocks of

travertine. One contained two wooden chests with the remains of Praxedis and Pudentiana, the other, a large quantity of bones and cloths. Above these sarcophagi were four cypress-wood chests full of relics, placed two on each side with a space 88 cm. wide between them. This space was directly under the altar, and was described by the abbot as a "tabernacle." It was visible through the confessio grille to pilgrims who descended the lateral staircases of the semi-annular crypt. It contained a painting of three standing female saints. The centre one, taller and diademed, had her hands raised in blessing; the other two, wearing stoles, held virgins' crowns.

The saint on the right was inscribed "Pudenziana" at foot level. The painting, then, was of the crowned Virgin between saints Praxedis and Pudentiana: it was copied by the painter G. B. Bigetti and then destroyed in the process of excavation.<sup>20</sup> A second painting stood on the altar of the confessio which was in a second, smaller niche: here, the titular saints flanked a cross. It is not clear what happened to this painting. Beyond the niche was a small chest containing three cypress wood vases which crumbled away when touched. Inside the altar foundation was a strigillated vase of white marble which contained some ashes and a bloodstained sponge.<sup>21</sup> The whole subterranean complex was covered with a thin vault, above which rose the main altar. This altar contained a compartment measuring 88 x 88 cm. and 80 cm. deep, which held the most precious of all the relics: three skulls. One was wrapped, along with other bones, in a pitch-soaked cloth saturated with aromatics such as aloe and myrrh: doubtless these were the relics of Praxedis and her family. The abbot noted that their sanctified odour filled both church and sacristy.

These must have been the most important of the relics. Less important, or unidentified, bones were buried in the transept, where the abbot caught sight of a multitude of earthenware jars in antique, "pagan" style. Many were broken, and revealed that they had served to hold the ashes of the nameless dead.<sup>22</sup>

Under the Zeno chapel, also, a crypt exists: its entrance was

noted in 1914 during the paving of the S. Prassede floor with cosmatesque marbles. It is not recorded that a room or remains were found on this occasion. During the 1729 excavations, though, a rough sarcophagus with two bodies in it was found in this general area during a search for the body of Paschal, who was erroneously thought to be buried here. On finding two bodies, not one, which moreover gave off a stench of decay and then crumbled to dust, the search was called off.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps these were the 'aliorum duorum' of the marble plaque.

In passing, it should be noted that the main crypt was remodelled by Pico in 1729 and at this time the two strigillated sarcophagi of the Aloisi description were mysteriously joined by two more, placed on top of them (Fig. 4). One pair was placed on each side of the new relic room in Pico's crypt, which is a widening of the corridor he opened up through the confessio, with access by stairs to the sanctuary in front of the altar. All four sarcophagi are of the same style, and it seems certain that the extra two are also part of Paschal's collection of antique marbles. I will suggest that before 1729 one or both may have occupied niches in the Zeno chapel, where one may even have served for the burial of Theodora Episcopa herself. They had also probably served as models to the mosaicists working on the anastasis panel above Theodora's burial place.

An important function, then, of both church and chapel, was the housing of the precious relics of the saints. The chapel had an additional function as Theodora's mausoleum. The type of structure--an attached chapel--that Paschal built for this purpose had ample precedent in both Rome and Ravenna. Richard Krautheimer has demonstrated that such memorial chapels were common additions to the naves and transepts of the Roman basilicas throughout the fourth, fifth and even sixth centuries,<sup>24</sup> so Paschal's choice of attached chapels for his paired martyria is a clear reference to the Early Christian past. Some of these early structures survive; many more are known from the records. A fourth century chapel adjoining the transept of S. Paolo fuori le mura, in use since 1930 as a baptistery but originally

probably a memorial chapel built for relics, has the exact form of the Zeno chapel--groin vaulted, with four short, tunnel-vaulted arms, the corners of the groin vault held up on columns.<sup>25</sup> The Alfarano plan of Old St. Peter's before the demolition shows it to have had a continuous accretion of side chapels around the nave and transept walls, many of them cruciform or centrally planned.<sup>26</sup> In addition, others were partitioned off inside the church. One of the two built by Paschal I occupied an inner corner of the right transept. Dedicated to the martyr saints, Processus and Martinianus, who were buried there, it was probably designed as the pope's own mausoleum as well as a martyrium, and here he actually was later buried. Judging by the account in the Liber Pontificalis, the chapel was similar in architecture and mosaic decoration to the Zeno chapel, having a mosaic of beautiful "metals" in the four-fold vault above the columns.<sup>27</sup> Two cruciform chapels of Early Christian date also survive at the Lateran Baptistery, dedicated to the two saints John. A Carolingian example that is comparable to the Zeno chapel is the ninth-century chapel of S. Barbara at the church of the SS. Quattro Coronati in Rome, probably built in the reign of Leo IV (847-855). This small, vaulted structure adjacent to the nave of the basilica has three apses, and there were once four corner columns holding up the impost blocks which are inserted diagonally into the upper corners of the structure. Only these last survive. They are sections of an antique architrave and seem to hang in space where once they, and their supporting pillars, must have appeared to hold up the quadripartite vault.<sup>28</sup>

Outside Rome, the most important surviving example of this type of chapel is the so-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna.<sup>29</sup> The cruciform chapel, decorated with mosaic over all the main and subsidiary vaults as well as the four lunettes, will be found in this study to be a possible primary source for the iconographic programme of the Zeno chapel, as well as of patterns for much of the detail of its decoration, both figural and abstract.

The Zeno chapel itself is also cruciform, and consists of a

central area 3.5 x 3.6 metres square, from which open four niches of unequal size (Fig. 3A). The largest, at the back of the chapel, is 2.5 metres wide and 1.5 metres deep. It contains the altar. The two side niches are narrower at 1.7 x 1.3 metres, and were cut through, probably in the eighteenth century, to give access to the adjoining chapels on either side. The entrance to the chapel is through the fourth and narrowest niche. The main vault is groined and appears to be held up by four antique columns standing on high, carved bases. Three bases, of ninth-century date, bear flat designs of vases with stylised vine tendrils imitating the design on the fourth, a late antique spoil which consists of a reversed capital on a socle.<sup>30</sup> The columns, (two grey, one greenish, and one black and white), are of granite and are of different heights with unmatched classical Corinthian capitals, on top of which are identical tall brackets.<sup>31</sup> The heights of the bases vary according to column length: one column, shorter than the others, has a double base, the ninth-century socle resting on a slab of carved marble of sixth-century date.<sup>32</sup>

The altar, covered with an eighteenth century marble revetment, bears an aedicule containing a mosaic, probably of thirteenth-century date,<sup>33</sup> in a niche which is framed by a pair of spiral alabaster columns resting on plain, antique bases. The capitals are ninth-century copies of ionic, a style not used in Rome since the fifth century.<sup>34</sup> It is possible that the original plan did not include an altar, and that there were sarcophagi in all three arms of the chapel, as at the mausoleum of Galla Placidia.

The main doorway (Fig. 2), also, is made up of classical spoils supplemented, where necessary, with new work of the ninth century. The doorframe itself is Carolingian and is decorated with a flat interlaced pattern. It is framed by classical columns of different diameters and materials: one serpentine, the other black and white granite. They rest on wide, white marble bases of early Empire date: their capitals are ionic and of the ninth-century, and hold, on shallow Carolingian impost blocks with flat, zig-zag carving, an

impressive and monumental segment of architrave from the third or fourth century A.D.<sup>35</sup> The ends of this piece are carved in shallow imitation of the deep and lively designs on its front. This architrave acts as the sill of the window above: its centre bears a strigillated urn which may possibly be the one discovered beneath the high altar in 1729.

It will be obvious from this account that Paschal assembled a whole collection of valuable classical marbles for the Zeno chapel, putting them together to make a harmonious whole.

The structure of the chapel itself merits attention. Baldracco, measuring it, noticed that the vault masonry is actually off centre, as if this vault were not part of the original building. Its centre is almost at the level of the back walls of the lateral niches. The windows too are asymmetrically placed except for the entry wall window above the main door. The side windows are cut off by the insertion of the vault, the window above the altar is not quite on the central axis. Baldracco believed that the original plan of the chapel, like that of the mausoleum of Galla Placidia, was a Latin cross, and that the new aisle wall of Paschal's basilica cut right across its long arm. This might explain the assymetry of the vault.<sup>36</sup> It may be possible to resolve this issue by brickwork studies. Krautheimer et al.<sup>37</sup> show the whole Zeno chapel as of Carolingian construction. While they did find that the outside of the chapel gave a count of six brick courses to the Roman foot, most of the exterior was hidden by refacing. Thus the question of whether the Zeno chapel is entirely Carolingian or whether it has a core of earlier date must remain unresolved.

Two or more areas of decoration in the chapel must be mentioned: the marble-covered lower walls and the floor (Figs. 3A, 3B).

The walls, according to Krautheimer "are covered with a marble revetment, original though largely restored."<sup>38</sup> Some slabs which come from Christian catacombs bear funerary inscriptions.<sup>39</sup> Brenk has suggested that since some mosaic areas have been truncated at the

bottom, the marble revetments cannot all be original:<sup>40</sup> this amount of alteration, though, might be covered by Krautheimer's expression "largely restored."

The floor is paved with a rare ninth-century design in opus sectile (Figs. 3A, 3B). In the centre is a huge porphyry disc measuring 1.55 metres in diameter, which is bordered by a ring of small squares of alternating porphyry and serpentine. Outside are two rings of triangles which form a sawtooth design. The teeth are alternately dark (serpentine and porphyry) pointing in, and light (grey and mixed grey and white marbles, and giallo antico) pointing out. The circular design is set in the middle of a square checkerboard which measures 2.60 metres on each side and has alternating dark and light squares, 7 cm. to a side, set in diagonal rows. "Dark" again means green and red, "light" white through grey to giallo antico. The patterned area of the floor entirely fills the central area of the chapel, reaching to the bases of the four corner columns (Fig. 3A).

The symbolic significance of porphyry in floors has been traced by Dorothy Glass.<sup>41</sup> It was always associated with the emperors as the purple colour itself symbolised royalty. In the late Antique period, circular porphyry discs or rotae had a part in both secular and religious ceremonies, marking the actual location where the emperor would stand. In Rome, there were four porphyry rotae in St. Peter's, of which one survives, and in Ravenna porphyry roundels marked the burial place of more than one bishop.<sup>42</sup> Agnellus, bishop of Ravenna in the ninth century, recorded that Galla Placidia knelt in the centre of four porphyry rotae, probably on the central rota of a quincunx, when she passed a night in prayer in her church, S. Croce, in Ravenna.<sup>43</sup> Dorothy Glass suggests that Agnellus' account of this anecdote may underline "the interest of [Agnellus'] own era in the significance of porphyry."<sup>44</sup>

Agnellus' own era, of course, is also that of Paschal, and it is reasonable to suppose that the Zeno chapel rota is there both as the symbolic marker of the burial place in the crypt below, and as the

ceremonial centre of the chapel, marking the place where Paschal himself would pray when visiting his mother's tomb.

Later, in the twelfth century, the absolute centre of cruciform churches was marked with a sign of the cross in ashes during the dedication ceremony, and this ceremonial centre was designated by a porphyry rota or quincunx.<sup>45</sup> This, Glass feels, might be an "oblique reference to the ceremonial rota in St. Peters; and, the iconology of the pavements may be seen both as a revival and an embellishment of Constantinian practice."<sup>46</sup> The Zeno chapel rota also, with its references to imperial custom in Rome and Ravenna, should be seen as an example of Carolingian revival of the great Constantinian past. But it is not only the porphyry rota, spectacular though it is visually and symbolically, that refers back to the late Antique period. The actual use of opus sectile as a decorative medium had fallen into disuse during the interregnum between Antiquity and the Carolingian era. Charles McClendon has shown that the typical floor of this intermediate period was in opus tessellatum or mosaic.<sup>47</sup> The Carolingian opus sectile floors thus constitute a true revival, and are so close in materials and technique to some secular examples from late Antiquity, according to McClendon, as to make it a virtual certainty that some or all of the materials used were classical spoils. This would fit in with the many examples of use of spoils--bricks, marbles, architectural sculptures, even mosaic tesserae, which characterise the Carolingian revival in Rome. A period in which effects were re-created using recycled classical materials might well have antedated the full flowering of these same techniques in the later Middle Ages, as exemplified by the marble work of the Cosmati in Rome and its surroundings.

The Zeno chapel, then, makes reference through its architecture and the decorative elements chosen for its vault, walls, and floor, to a great era of the church's past in Rome, and beyond that to the might of the Imperial period. It reaches back to the time when such chapels proliferated around the sepulchral churches outside the walls, offered

as memoriae to the Roman saints and mausolea for Rome's great families. It also expresses an architectural symbolism which had grown up at the sacred sites in the Holy Land: domes represented the greater dome, the Vault of Heaven; while their cubical supports symbolised the four corners of the earth.

Christian symbolism is obviously present in every cruciform building: in addition to this general reference to the cross there may be a specific reference to Justinian's Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, shrine of the apostles' relics as well as imperial mausoleum, where Justinian and his descendents were laid to rest among the saints.

Chapter I Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>E. Baldracco, "Note sull'Oratorio di S. Zenone," RAC, 19, 1942, 190, and B. Davanzati, Notizie al Pelegrino della Basilica di S. Prassede, Roma, 1725, 230, 292f., and 409f.

<sup>2</sup>Baldracco, Note, 190 and note 2. In Davanzati's time (1725) there was a plaque over the door of the Zeno chapel "in questa santa capella non possono entrare Donne sotto pena di scomunica."

<sup>3</sup>Baldracco, Note, 185.

<sup>4</sup>E. Baldracco, "La Cripta del sec. IX nella Chiesa di Santa Prassede a Roma," RAC, 18, 1941, 282

"... una antichissima lapide di marmo, che anticamente stava appiedi del suddetto altare (the high altar) ma che poi era stata di li portata e murata nel pilastro di chiesa, avanti la cappella della santa Colonna"

--a quotation from the 1729 Relazione of Dom Benigno Aloisi.

<sup>5</sup>Text of the marble plaque reproduced in full in Duchesne (ed.), Liber Pontificalis, II, 64. References to Theodora Episcopa, lines 38-42.

<sup>6</sup>A discussion of Theodora's burial site will follow in Chapter II, section 3c.

<sup>7</sup>The text of Paschal's dedication on the S. Prassede apse mosaic.

"EMICAT AULA PIAE VARIIS DECORATA METALLIS  
PRAXEDIS DNO SUPER AETHRA PLACENTIS HONORE  
PONTIFICIS SUMMI STUDIO PASCHALIS ALUMNI  
SEDIS APOSTOLICAE PASSIM QUI CORPORA CONDENS  
PLURIMA SCORUM SUBTER HAEC MOENIA PONIT  
FRETUS ET IIIS LIMEN MEREATUR ADIRE POLORUM."

<sup>8</sup>Liber Pontificalis, II, 54.

<sup>9</sup>Liber Pontificalis, II, 55. "Quinimmo et in eadem ecclesiam fecit oratorium beati Zenonis Christi martyris, ubi et sacratissimum eius corpus ponens musibo amplianter ornavit."

<sup>10</sup>See R. Krautheimer, Corpus Basilicarum Cristianarum Romae, III, Città del Vaticano, 1962, 234.

<sup>11</sup>Krautheimer, Rome, Profile of a City, Princeton, 1980, 65, notes that the population of Rome, around 800,000 in A.D. 400, had

dwindled to about 100,000 by A.D. 500 and to fewer than 30,000 after the Gothic siege of the mid-sixth century, (when, indeed, for 40 days the capital lay empty). Large parts of the area within the walls were given over to ruin-studded farms, where once there had been villas and tenements.

<sup>12</sup>R. Krautheimer, "The Carolingian Revival of Early Christian Architecture," Art. Bull., 24, 1942, 236, notes that scribes of the papal chancellery and other late eighth-century contemporaries both addressed and referred to Charlemagne as "the new Constantine."

<sup>13</sup>References to the patronage of Hadrian I and Leo III in Krautheimer, Rome, Chapter 5; and in Jean Croquison, 'L'iconographie chrétienne à Rome d'après le Liber Pontificalis,' Byzantion, 34, 1964, 535-606.

<sup>14</sup>For transfers by John IV, 640-2, of relics of Salona martyrs to S. Venanzio chapel at the Lateran Baptistery see J. J. Wilkes, Dalmatia, London, 1969, 427-37. For Theodore I's removal of bones of Saints Felicianus and Primus from the Roman catacombs to S. Stefano Rotondo see Krautheimer, Rome, 90, and for the transfers made by Carolingian popes, *ibid*, 113.

<sup>15</sup>See P. Brown, The Cult of the Saints, Chicago, 1981, especially Chapter 5, "Praesentia."

<sup>16</sup>See P. Geary, Furta Sacra--Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages, Princeton, 1978, especially Chapter 2, "The Cult of Relics in Carolingian Europe."

<sup>17</sup>Marble plaque, Liber Pontificalis, II, 64, lines 1-10 and 29.

<sup>18</sup>For a detailed account of this excavation, see Baldracco, Cripta, 277-96.

<sup>19</sup>The original manuscript of Don Benigno Aloisi's Relazione is lost but it was copied in 1881 by Abbot Battistoni, and this copy is in the archives of S. Prassede. Baldracco, Cripta, 278.

<sup>20</sup>The Aloisi description of this painting, quoted by Baldracco, Cripta, 290, exactly fits the fresco above the altar in the eighteenth-century crypt. Probably this is Bigetti's copy.

<sup>21</sup>The sponge relic must pertain to SS. Praxedis and Pudentiana, who according to their Acts, cared for the bodies of the martyrs and cleaned up their blood. Acta Sanctorum, XXXII; Julii 20-24, p. 130-32, July 21 (Praxedis); and XVII, Maji 17-19, p. 295-303, May 19 (Pudentiana). Also see C. R. Morey, Lost Mosaics and Frescoes of Rome, Princeton, 1915, Chapter 5.

<sup>22</sup>Relazione, X Giornata in Baldracco, Cripta, 295.

<sup>23</sup>Paschal, a canonised saint, should have given off an "odour of sanctity," and been buried alone. He was actually buried in the place "which he constructed in his lifetime" in St. Peters, probably his chapel of SS. Processus and Martinianus. Duchesne, L.P. II, 68 note 46, quoting Thégan.

<sup>24</sup>R. Krautheimer, Carolingian, 219.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 219 and 248, note 131. At the time of conversion to a baptistery bones were found beneath the floor along with frescoes of fourth and fifth century style.

<sup>26</sup>Plan of S. Peter's basilica, Tiberio Alfarano, ca. 1590. Reproduced by Krautheimer, Carolingian, 423, Fig. 79.

<sup>27</sup>L.P. II, 53.

<sup>28</sup>S. Barbara's chapel at SS. Quattro Coronati described and illustrated in Krautheimer, Rome, 134 and Fig. 108.

<sup>29</sup>Doubt has been expressed over the original function of the so-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia--mausoleum of the Empress or memorial chapel to S. Lawrence who is depicted there. It was originally attached to the now-lost narthex of Galla Placidia's basilica of S. Croce. It will be referred to as "the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia" throughout this study without this constituting an opinion on its original purpose.

<sup>30</sup>Krautheimer, Rome, 134 and Figs. 110, 111. This reversed capital, carved in one piece with its impost block beneath, is described by Baldoria, Capella, 272, as the best example of sixth-century sculpture in Rome. He compares its quality with the carving on Maximian's Ivory throne in Ravenna. Baldracco, Note, 203, agrees with this date. Krautheimer, Corpus, describes it as "late antique." R. Cattaneo, L'architettura in Italia, Venice, 1888, said it was "un bellissimo esemplare dell'arte classica."

<sup>31</sup>Colours and materials from Baldracco, Note, 202-03. Krautheimer, Corpus, 254, refers to "the shafts of black granite, all of different lengths." Baldoria, Capella, identifies them as marble, but agrees with Baldracco on colour.

<sup>32</sup>Krautheimer, Rome, Fig. 111. Baldracco, Note, 204, follows Baldoria who attributes it to the sixth century.

<sup>33</sup>See Appendix 2 for discussion of this mosaic.

<sup>34</sup>See Krautheimer, Rome, 134-37 for architectural details of these classical spoils and the ninth-century copies, also Baldracco, Note, 199f.

<sup>35</sup>Baldracco, Note, for date of architrave. Elsewhere, Krautheimer, Rome, 134, attributes it to the first century A.D. and also describes the framing columns as "a pair of porphyry columns." Photographs and discussion of many of these architectural elements and sculptures are to be found in Corpus della Scultura altomedievale, VII, La Diocesi di Roma, I, La IV Regione Ecclesiastica, Spoleto, 1974, Plates XXV-XLV and pages 134-44.

<sup>36</sup>Baldracco, Note, 195 and Fig. 5.

<sup>37</sup>Krautheimer, Corpus, III, Plan of S. Prassede.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 255.

<sup>39</sup>Baldracco, Note, 204.

<sup>40</sup>See Beat Brenk, "Zum Bildprogramm in der Zenokapelle in Rom," Archivio Espanol de Arqueologia, 45-47 (1973-4), 213-221.

<sup>41</sup>Dorothy Glass, Studies in Cosmatesque Pavements, Oxford, 1980. Especially Chapter VI, "The Iconology of Cosmatesque Pavements."

<sup>42</sup>Ursus, Bishop of Ravenna (370-396), Neon (ca. 450-455). See Glass, Studies, 49, for further details and references.

<sup>43</sup>Agnellus, Liber Pontificalis of Ravenna. Quoted by C. McClendon. "Opus Sectile pavements in Rome and the Vicinity," PBSR, XLVIII, 1980, 163 and note 28, and Glass, Studies, 48-49.

<sup>44</sup>Glass, Studies, 49.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 50.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 52.

<sup>47</sup>McClendon, Opus Sectile, 162, cites the sixth-century presbytery floor at S. Maria Antiqua in Rome as typical of a "recognisable group of pavements" of the period.

## CHAPTER II

## THE MOSAICS: FIGURAL SCENES

The Mosaics of the Zeno Chapel

The mosaic decoration of the Zeno chapel covers the entire vault and walls of the chapel above the marble revetement. The chapel's outer facade in the south aisle of S. Prassede is also decorated with a rectangular mosaic panel centred around the lunette window above the main door.

The mosaics can be divided into several main groups: those of the main vaults; those of the upper walls below the dome; those of the three arms of the cruciform structure including the three lunettes and three tunnel vaults; the facade mosaic; and various decorative areas and strips that frame and define the individual mosaic scenes.

1. The Vault Mosaic (Figs. 5, 14)

In the centre of the vault there is a wreath formed of three concentric circles of stylised leaves. The outer and inner circles consist of leaf-like shapes roughly "sketched" in thin red lines on the gold ground of the vault. This design, though superficially leaf-like, is actually a linear variant of egg and dart design.<sup>1</sup> Between these circles, on a medium blue ground, leaf shapes are drawn in gold and pale blue. They outline the triple laurel leaves of a stylised victory wreath, which is punctuated at the top and bottom by a double circle design.<sup>2</sup> Within this wreath, as in a clipeus, is a bust-length image of Christ. His red-rimmed golden nimbus contains three wide gold rays edged in red and white; red also outlines the fold of his golden robe. His left hand is hidden beneath the wreath, and his right holds the top end of a rolled-up scroll. Christ's long hair is brown and he has a short, fringing beard and a moustache. His large, widely-opened eyes and eyebrows are also brown. His expression is serious but mild. His

figure would, if full-length, be by far the largest figure in the chapel.<sup>3</sup>

The bust of Christ and its framing laurel wreath float on a ground of golden mosaic which covers the vault surface, extending down the walls to meet the molded top of the marble revetement. Within this space, at each corner of the groin-vault, an angel stands on a small blue globe, holding up the floating wreath with upstretched hands. Thus angels fulfil the dual functions of apparent caryatids and of heavenly attendants on Christ. The four identical angels, next largest figures in the chapel after Christ<sup>3</sup> are dressed in white tunics with a vertical red stripe or clavus on the left shoulder. Another clavus on the right side is visible only at the hem, being hidden higher up by a white garment which envelops the body and falls from the right shoulder. The tunics' folds are indicated by light blue contour lines, the cloaks have a linear pattern of folds in shades of brown. The wings are light tan with a feather tracery in dark brown and are symmetrically outstretched. The angels' haloes are of a radiant cerulean blue, defined by a single row of white tesserae at the outer edge. The angels are seen in full face, their long, wavy chestnut hair bound by white fillets and their features defined by dark outlines to the eyes and eyebrows, with orange and red tesserae used to indicate the lips and chin and to give colour to the cheeks and brows. Their arms are outlined in brown on the inner edge, the outer edge and palms are detailed in red.

The angels' feet and their supporting globes are given an optical connection with earth by their position right above the high, molded impost-blocks which crown the columns in the corners of the chapel. Thus the angels seem to span the space between earth and heaven while holding up Christ's image in the highest and holiest place in the vault.

#### Discussion: The Vault Composition

An iconographic formula in which standing or flying figures

hold up an image in a vault has a long history reaching back into the Roman imperial era where such figures included the legendary Atlas, holding up the sky.<sup>4</sup> The victory, taken over by the Romans from Greek art,<sup>5</sup> is the ancestor of the Christian angel. This connection can be confirmed by comparing the winged victories which adorn the spandrels of so many triumphal arches with the modestly-draped flying figures which hold up a garland on the front of the late fourth-century Sarigüzel sarcophagus.<sup>6</sup> The attitudes are identical: only the presence of the chi-rho symbol in the garland confirms what the garments have suggested, that these figures must be identified as Christian angels.

In mosaic, the earliest surviving precursors of the Zeno chapel vault iconography are to be found in Ravenna. In the Archbishops' chapel, ca. 500 A.D., four large angels, their feet on green hills, hold up a central disc with the chi-rho symbol.<sup>7</sup> The angels, as at San Zeno, occupy the groins of the vault, but here the spaces between them are filled with large Evangelist symbols. In the later San Vitale (dedicated 547 or 548 A.D.), paired angels hold up clipeate crosses above the presbytery crossing arches on each side, and a third pair holds up a disc with an eight-rayed star over the apse arch.<sup>8</sup> In the actual vault of the presbytery, four angels hold up a central disc with the Lamb of God.<sup>9</sup> These relatively small angels stand upon discs supported on the central acanthus motif of the vault decoration rather than on the corner pilasters. Visually, it seems the disc is supported by the garland-decorated vault groins, rather than by the angels, who stand on the main, non-architectonic axes with only a tenuous visual connection to the ground through the acanthus elements and the open archways below.

In Rome itself, a formula similar to that of the Ravenna Archbishops' chapel, and the Zeno chapel, existed until 1588 at the Lateran Baptistery chapel of S. Croce.<sup>10</sup> The chapel was built by Pope Hilarius, 461-468, probably in a pre-existent second or third century structure. O. Panvinio, writing in the sixteenth century, described it thus

This chapel is square and has 4 rectangular apses. In one of them is the door, in the other 3 as many altars. . . . The ceiling is vaulted and covered with a very elegant gold mosaic showing 4 angels who carry the Holy Cross.

From the drawing of this mosaic by Giuliano da Sangallo, ca. 1500, it seems that the whole building was converted from a previous pagan use, for the angels are portrayed as half-clothed cupids. The cross, appropriately enough in a shrine of a relic of the true cross, must have replaced a secular trophy in the original scheme. This may have been Hilarius' only alteration to the original.<sup>12</sup>

There was, then, ample precedent in both Ravenna and Rome for a formula in which standing figures hold up a symbol in the apex of a vault. The real innovation in the Zeno chapel is the substitution of a bust-length representation of Christ in human form for the cross, lamb or chi-rho symbol.<sup>13</sup> This change may be in response to the ruling of canon 82 of the Quinisext (Trullan) council of 692, which required that Christ be shown as a man rather than the symbolic lamb so as to remind Christians of his sacrifice.<sup>14</sup> Beat Brenk maintains that whereas the 82nd canon had been strictly adhered to in the East since its inception, (that is presumably from 692 to the start of iconoclasm in 726); it was unknown in the West until after the second council of Nicaea (787), in which it had played an important part.<sup>15</sup> This would bring the theological basis for the innovation at the Zeno chapel significantly closer to 817. However, P. J. Nordhagen has shown that the 82nd canon is already illustrated in the unique fresco of the 'Adoration of the Cross' on the triumphal arch of S. Maria Antiqua, dating from the reign of John VII (705-707), which can best be explained as an 'Adoration of the Lamb' in which the central figure, the sacrificial lamb of the book of Revelation,<sup>16</sup> has been replaced by an image of Christ crucified.<sup>17</sup> Nordhagen's work suggests that papal patronage in the eighth century in at least one instance did actually adhere to the ban on showing Christ as Lamb. In view of the repeated appearance of the symbolic lamb in Paschal's mosaics, including three prominent examples in S. Prassede,

one of which, (the lamb on the Hill of Zion in the left lunette) is in the Zeno chapel itself, it seems somewhat irrational to explain the vault figure as stemming from a strict interpretation of the "newly-discovered" 82nd canon. Rather, it seems the two formulae were interchangeable in the early ninth century. Where Christ appears as Lamb in Paschal's mosaics, the imagery is borrowed from the Early Christian past; on the other hand, where he appears as Man, the imagery refers to the discussions of the second council of Nicaea, 787, i.e. from the revival of religious imagery under the Empress Irene, 780-802. I will return to this point in the final chapter.

The innovative imagery which placed an actual image of Christ in the vault was to become formalised in the Middle-Byzantine period in the East after the end of iconoclasm. The vault, the most holy and lofty place in the church building--which itself was seen as a microcosm of heaven and earth--was always given over to Christ, in his role as Pantocrator, Lord of All, surrounded in his heavenly attendants, the angels.<sup>18</sup> Whereas earlier representations of Christ in the domes of churches had probably been full length, seated images,<sup>19</sup> now the bust-length figure enclosed in some sort of frame or clipeus became the norm. This has been seen as an attempt to emphasise Christ's divine or higher nature which was retained throughout his earthly life.<sup>20</sup> Although no example has survived in Constantinople, it is well known that such imagery was in use there soon after the end of iconoclasm in 843, for contemporary descriptions of actual examples accord with the slightly later decorative schemes of the eleventh century monastery churches in Greece, and these undoubtedly reflect what was current in the capital.<sup>21</sup> Features of the Zeno chapel's decoration, including the bust-length image of Christ in the dome, are shared with these later programmes, and pose some interesting questions about the common ancestry of both, which must necessarily have been earlier than both the end of iconoclasm in 843 and the reign of Paschal I, 817-824. The ancestral model must also have been available in the West as well as in Constantinople. These questions will be examined in the concluding

chapter.

Clipeate images of Christ are known from surviving mosaics in both Rome and Ravenna which antedate the Zeno chapel, but they tend to occupy the apex of an arch rather than the dome. Examples are to be found in Ravenna's Archbishops' chapel, S. Vitale and S. Apollinare in Classe,<sup>22</sup> and at S. Giovanni in Laterano in Rome. They follow a standard iconography, the right hand blesses while the left holds the gospel book. In contrast, the Christ of the Zeno chapel vault holds a rolled up scroll, the scroll of the New Law. His right hand holds its top end, his left is hidden behind the laurel wreath. This position of the hands "holding the roll in the manner characteristic of antique philosopher figures" has been described as relatively archaic even for the Justinianic decoration at the Panagia Kanakaria at Lythrankomi on Cyprus.<sup>23</sup> Megaw and Hawkins suggest that already by the sixth century the normal position for the scroll was to be "held vertically between the lowered left hand and the knee"<sup>24</sup> while the right hand was raised in the orators' gesture of speech which was not yet thought of as a blessing. However, while this may have been the general rule in the East, in Rome several examples survive from the eighth century in which the Child on his mother's knee holds the roll in the manner of the Zeno chapel Christ. One of these can be securely dated to the reign of Pope Zacharias (741-52).<sup>25</sup> At the Zeno chapel, there is no blessing gesture, Christ is young and does not have the awesome severity of expression of the typical, older Pantocrator. His body presents a simple, narrow or "closed" shape in contrast to the wider, more open outline of the later Pantocrator type, where both hand and blessing arm may be held outside the main outline of the body.<sup>26</sup> The "closed" image is related to one of two coin types of the reign of Justinian II (685-695, 705-711) and to its prototype, probably a famous preiconoclastic icon in Constantinople such as the one at the Chalke Gate.<sup>27</sup> It differs from it, however, in several minor but iconographically significant details. These include the blessing hand which emerges from the folds of the garments at wrist level, the jewelled book, and

the double lock of hair at the parting, all of which are present in the image on the coins but absent in the vault image of the Zeno chapel. Both image types probably owe their "closed" outlines to the confining circles in which they are contained. The details of the Zeno chapel image may depend ultimately on ninth century beliefs about Christ's actual physical appearance. The interest of that era in the "corporeal nature of Christ"<sup>28</sup> is suggested by a description attributed to the monk Epiphanius, an iconodule who wrote about 800 A.D. This description has much in common with our image. Epiphanius writes

. . . he was extremely handsome, six feet tall with blondish hair, not too thick and lightly waved; the eyebrows black and not very arched, the eyes clear and brilliant (joyous); he had beautiful eyes, a long nose and a long, blondish beard since a razor had never touched his head. . . . The neck slightly bent, just enough to avoid being rigidly erect, his colour that of wheat; his face was not round, but, like that of his mother, drawn towards the chin, the cheeks lightly coloured, just sufficiently to reveal his pious nature, sage, docile and maintaining always a serene humour without anger.<sup>29</sup>

Although the detail of hair colour and length of beard does not fit the Zeno chapel image, the general, idealised type is obviously the same.

This correspondence between the ninth century text and the image may well mean that the intention of the Zeno chapel programme was to portray Christ's actual human likeness rather than the more generalised, supernatural supreme ruler of the universe, or Pantocrator. Grabar has shown that in the sixth and seventh centuries double images of Christ were often used on the same object, or on closely-related objects, to suggest his two natures, earthly and divine, as defined at the council of Chalcedon. These double images were, in a sense, anti-monophysite statements in art.<sup>30</sup> The widespread use of these two iconographic types, both of which go back to Early Christian times, shows there was a real interest in distinguishing between Christ, the teacher and sacrifice offered for man's redemption, and Christ, King of Kings, Lord of the Universe.

The type of Christ image in the Zeno chapel vault, young, mild, only incipiently bearded and with the scroll of a philosopher, definitely suggests his role as teacher in his ministry. I would also suggest that in this particular location, which is analagous to that of the lamb clipeus in S. Vitale, Ravenna, the image of the youthful Christ has the same meaning as that of the symbolic lamb--namely, Christ as the sacrifice offered for mankind's salvation through the incarnation. The position of the image in the vault, attended by angels and overseeing all, foreshadows the typical Middle-Byzantine programme centred on the Pantocrator. Nevertheless, there may be another shade of meaning here, for while the image itself obviously stresses Christ's humanity, it is displayed in a position--the holy vault which suggests the whole universe--that emphasises his divinity. Therefore, the content may differ from that of a Pantocrator image by stressing the dual nature of Christ.

## 2. The Mosaics of the Upper Walls

Each of the four sections of the upper walls fits up into the curve of the vault, and each is divided into two by a window. The areas of decoration thus fit into irregular rhomboid, triangular or horseshoe-shaped spaces with base lines which follow the curves of the tunnel vaults.

### a. The Wall over the Altar (Figs. 6, 7)

The large, square window over the altar leaves only a small, triangular section on either side for decoration. Here, facing each other across the window space are images of the Primary Intercessors for mankind: the Virgin on the left, and John the Baptist on the right. They are labelled by inscription SCA MARIA, SCS JOHANNIS. Mary wears a gold-edged, medium-blue maphorion over a long-sleeved chiton of the same blue; the wrists and neck edge are decorated in gold and a white wimple is visible around her brows, hiding her hair. Her shoes are red. Her halo, like the background, is gold, outlined with a single row of white tesserae inside a single row of red ones. Single rows of

black cubes mark the folds in her garment and define the body beneath; across her upper arm and body the folds are characteristically drawn in as close, parallel lines separated by one, or, at most, two rows of tesserae. Her right leg supports her body weight while with the left she seems to step off the green grass of paradise. Her face is highlighted with orange, the chin and lower eyelids drawn in with terracotta, and other features--eyes, eyebrows, mouth, dimple in chin--are outlined in black, as are the details of her hands, though the creases of her left palm are shown not in black but in orange. With both her hands she gestures towards her left.

On the other side of the central window, John the Baptist, also stepping off the triangle of green onto the gold band which frames the altar niche, wears a brown cloak with folds drawn in black over a yellow dalmatic with two red clavi. Its folds are shown in red, and its cuff is edged with two red stripes. His right hand is raised, his left holds a long-stemmed cross with a disc at its centre. This grey-blue disc bears the image of a lamb, and the cross is held like a crook on his left shoulder.<sup>31</sup> His halo is like the Virgin's. His gaze, like hers, is directed out and up. His full brown beard and moustache, and long brown hair, are outlined in black, as are his large, expressive eyes and eyebrows.

#### Discussion: The Deesis over the Altar

C. Walter has shown that the modern use of the term deesis to indicate "the iconographical type which shows the most powerful advocates for humanity bent before Christ in prayer"<sup>32</sup> only dates from the late nineteenth century, and that old inventories of Byzantine icons use this term for various other compositions involving prayer or petition.<sup>33</sup> Here, it will be used in its usual sense of "Christ represented between the Virgin and St. John the Baptist,"<sup>34</sup> with the additional shade of meaning that it is a theme of intercession symbolising the day of judgment.<sup>35</sup>

However, if in the usual sense of the term deesis Christ is to

be between the Virgin and the Baptist, who turn to him in prayer, the image over the Zeno chapel altar poses an immediate problem, for there is only the emptiness of a window between the Primary Intercessors.

G. Matthiae has attempted to solve this problem by postulating that the central figure--that of Christ--is suppressed, and that the "real presence" on the altar below, the Mystical Body of Christ, takes its place.<sup>36</sup> Indirect support for this theory might come from the iconoclast attitude to images, namely that "a true image had to be consubstantial with its model" or prototype, and hence "the only genuine image of Christ was the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist."<sup>37</sup> Although the intercessors' figures are indeed placed on either side of the altar, their gestures and glances are not directed downwards at the altar, but outwards and slightly upwards towards the figure of Christ in the dome. This is the central image of the deesis composition, I believe, the one to whom the prayers for humanity are addressed. It is of course possible that neither of these alternatives was intended, in which case the composition could still be a deesis in the older Byzantine sense of "petition," describing a picture of a saint or the Virgin at prayer. Walter has shown that deesis was the usual word for a petition, and that the church fathers described the need for a mediator in heaven with a role analagous to that of a courtier who presents a petition to an emperor on behalf of an individual too humble to intercede for himself.<sup>38</sup> Whichever way the scene is interpreted its significance is the same, as a reminder of the second coming of Christ, when all will be judged according to their merits, and according to the support they could hope for through the mediation of the saints.

It is difficult to find a single, incontestable deesis image, in the sense of prayers for humanity offered before Christ at the last judgment by the Primary Intercessors, that dates from before that of the Zeno chapel. The earliest may be the one at St. Catherine's, Mt. Sinai, where the clipeate images of a man and a woman in the outer corners of the triumphal arch are often referred to as a deesis. The

central figure would be either the small Lamb of God in the centre of the arch<sup>39</sup> or, possibly, the transfigured Christ in the apse itself. Although the two medallion images have been identified by local tradition as Justinian and Theodora, the founders, the gesture of the "Baptist," who points with his right hand towards Christ on his left, inclines me towards the deesis interpretation, as does the iconographic type used for the woman, which is diagnostic of Mary.<sup>40</sup>

b. The Side Walls (Figs. 8, 9, 10, 12)

The lateral walls of the chapel have an identical layout and complementary decoration. In each wall there is room for one figure in the triangle near the altar, but ample space for two on the other side of the window. On the left (east) wall, the subject is the Roman women martyrs, Agnes (Fig. 10), Praxedis (Fig. 12) and Pudenciana (Fig. 10), identified by blue inscriptions beside their haloes. On the right wall are three apostles, also identified by inscription. John the Evangelist occupies the triangle near the altar (Fig. 9), Andrew and James are in the larger space (Fig. 8). All six saints have golden haloes outlined in red.

The virgin martyrs stand in a row, their stance identical with the weight on their left legs and their right legs slightly bent. Each holds out a martyr's crown on her left arm, which is veiled with a white towel bordered with red geometric designs. The saints' tunics are of opaque yellow, as are their diagonal dalmatics which are girdled with jewels: the intensity of the yellow matches the surrounding gold but light is reflected differently from it. Nevertheless, the impression is created of golden garments against a golden background. These garments have single and double fold-lines in red. The saints' chitons have blue-grey and gold pattern on their cuffs. Over the chitons, they wear loose white garments with wide sleeves edged in turquoise blue pattern. Between their gold tunics and dalmatics the saints wear long, straight aprons in white with red borders. Each wears a white veil, apparently attached behind her right shoulder, and

patterned in blue. These veils blow out slightly to their right. The saints wear the red slippers of Byzantine empresses. Their rank is indicated by their jewels, which include wide jewelled collars with "pearls" on their blue borders, and orange and pale blue "gems" within.<sup>41</sup> Agnes and Praxedis also wear thin necklaces of alternate orange and white "gems."<sup>42</sup> All three saints wear earrings, which consist of an orange jewel on the ear, a thin black hoop, and drop stones of "pearls," large or small, triple in the case of Praxedis and Agnes, and single in the case of Pudentiana.<sup>43</sup> These earrings differ in colour but not in general type from those worn by Praxedis and Pudentiana in the S. Prassede apse-mosaic, which are blue and gold. The grey-blue martyrs' crowns have orange arches, there are orange and blue "jewels" on the rims. The saints are also wearing crowns or diadems on their hair.

The virgin martyrs float against the golden background above the flower-strewn green grass: they are separated from this symbolic meadow by nine courses of gold tesserae. This device enables them to appear to be the same height as the taller apostles on the opposite wall. These apostles are standing on the meadow, their feet separated from it only by the gold-edged soles of their sandals. Their bodies are tensed for movement beneath their garments and they seem to be about to step off the green grass into the heavenly golden heights above. In the larger space Andrew on the left and James on the right are identically dressed, but distinguished by inscription and by iconographic type. Andrew's long grey hair, centre-parted, has alternate rows of blue-grey and white tesserae. James is also shown as an elderly man with cap-like grey hair and a long, pointed, white beard. Both are dressed in white cloaks over white dalmatics. The cloaks have grey-striped borders crossed by wider red stripes. They carry closed books flat on their veiled hands.<sup>44</sup>

John the Evangelist is named and conforms to the usual iconographic type--brown-haired, clean-shaven and young. He wears a golden-yellow mantle edged with brown and terracotta above a white

dalmatic with blue-grey stripes at the cuffs. Blue-grey lines indicate both folds and body contours. Unlike the other five saints of the upper walls he faces away from the altar and with veiled hands holds a jewelled book upright against his chest. Its golden front cover has a large cluster of red "jewels" in the centre surrounded by four "hyacinths," all set in brown. The white edge of the book is crossed by a narrow golden clasp, outlined in brown. John stands, neither offering his book nor presenting it to Christ, but holding it close. Whether it is his Gospel or Revelation is not made clear, but in view of the subject matter of both the arches in S. Prassede, and the funerary nature of the Zeno chapel, it is likely that this book is intended as the Apocalypse, especially as the other evangelists seem not to be present. John's gaze, significantly, is directed towards the prepared throne of Christ's second coming on the entrance wall.

#### Discussion of the Side-Wall Mosaics

Paschal's choice of subject matter for these important and well lit walls is obviously significant, and the inscriptions show that identification was not left to chance.

Praxedis and her sister Pudentiana are obvious choices for honour, since their relics were found by Paschal and transferred to this church, rebuilt in Praxedis' honour. As we have seen, they head the list of female saints on the ninth/thirteenth century marble plaque outside the Zeno chapel and their bones were translated from the catacombs on July 20th, 817, and interred in one of the two antique strigillated sarcophagi placed in the relic room under the high altar by Paschal I. Legendary daughters of Pudens, with whom Paul supposedly lodged on arrival in Rome, their deeds are recorded in the Acts of Saints Pudentiana and Praxedis and apparently stopped short of actual martyrdom, though they gave away all their goods to the poor, and incurred great danger succouring the martyrs, spongeing up their blood, and preparing their corpses for burial.<sup>45</sup> The mosaic apse inscription in S. Prassede tells how Paschal decorated the church, placing the

bodies of S. Praxedis and others in it, hoping to gain entrance to heaven by their intercession.<sup>46</sup> Their relics, then, sanctified this very place: Paschal by placing their images in his mother's funerary chapel invoked their intercession for her soul also. Agnes' image is present in the chapel not only because she was one of the most venerated of Roman martyrs, but because there was, from at least the early eighth century, a monastery dedicated to her on the Esquiline hill adjacent to the site of S. Prassede.<sup>47</sup> An oratory dedicated to Agnes and situated in the monastery called Duo Furnas received a gift from Leo III, 795-816, according to the Liber Pontificalis entry for his reign.<sup>48</sup> The entry for Paschal records three chapels at S. Prassede, dedicated to John the Baptist, Zeno and Agnes.<sup>49</sup> This chapel of Agnes was probably the Duo Furnas oratory, incorporated into the new monastery, for by the tenth century this foundation is referred to as "SS. Praxedes et Agnes qui appellatur Duas Furnas."<sup>50</sup>

The choice of saints John the Evangelist, Andrew and James reflects the order of precedence among the apostles wherever they are listed in the New Testament. Even though there are great variations in the placing of the less important apostles, Andrew, brother of Peter, and James and John the sons of Zebedee always occupy the second to fourth places after Peter. In Matthew's and Luke's gospels Andrew is in second place followed by James and John.<sup>51</sup> In St. Mark and the Acts of the Apostles, James is listed second followed by John and then Andrew.<sup>52</sup> In the Zeno chapel, John is set apart, while James and Andrew form an abbreviated procession, James in front. They hold books rather than the martyrs' crowns which they had earned: in this they follow such iconography as at the Poreč 'Basilica Euphrasiana' where the twelve apostles on the arch hold crown, book or scroll in sequence and not according to logic.<sup>53</sup>

Further reasons for the inclusion of Andrew and James have been sought among the known facts of their lives and deaths, and of the disposition of their relics. James, both witness of the transfiguration and present at Christ's passion in Gethsemane, was the

first of the apostles to suffer martyrdom:

About that time Herod the King laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John and when he saw that it pleased the Jews he proceeded to arrest Peter also.<sup>54</sup>

we read in the Acts of the Apostles. James is sometimes also referred to as the brother of Christ.<sup>55</sup> He is the patron of Jerusalem where he was martyred.

Andrew, the first disciple to follow Christ's call, led his brother Peter to Christ.<sup>56</sup> He became first bishop of Constantinople<sup>57</sup> and apostle of Asia Minor and the Balkans. His remains had been in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople since 357 A.D. and were rediscovered when it was demolished in about 554. At this point some relics were obtained and taken to Ravenna by Bishop Maximian, along with relics of other important saints including John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, Peter, Paul and James,<sup>58</sup> a list, incidentally, that coincides with the programme of the upper walls of the Zeno chapel, at least as far as the apostles and the Baptist are concerned.

Iconographically, all the five apostles shown on the upper walls of S. Zeno belong to the group of important disciples who, appearing often in Christian art, had acquired some degree of individuation by the fourth century. Earliest to achieve a recognisable identity were Peter and Paul, standardised by the middle of the third century, Peter as an older man with curly grey or white hair and a short, full beard; Paul as a balding, middle-aged man with an aquiline nose, long face, and dark or grizzled pointed beard.<sup>59</sup> Andrew, after an initial period of uncertainty when he was depicted with short hair and beard, as at the fifth century Orthodox baptistery in Ravenna, achieved a standard and distinctive iconography as a grey-haired man with wild, unkempt hair and a straggly beard. This is the type adhered to in the Zeno chapel, and already found at Poreč, the Archbishops' chapel and S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, and St. Catherine's, Mt. Sinai.

James, in most surviving early renderings, (for example all the monuments listed above) is shown as young, brown-haired and sometimes clean-shaven. At Lythankromi, however, he is shown as a grey-haired figure with a short, round beard. He is named by inscription<sup>60</sup> and evidently followed an earlier iconographic tradition. This same tradition is followed in Ravenna at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, where, in the north lunette

an unnamed elderly figure is paired with a recognisable Andrew. That this is James, in what is apparently fourth place since Peter and Paul are unmistakable in the adjoining east lunette is confirmed by the seniority given him elsewhere in Ravenna: fifth in the Orthodox Baptistery, fourth in the Archiepiscopal chapel.<sup>61</sup>

Of these alternative formulae for James, it is the second that was chosen by Paschal's mosaicists. In the Zeno chapel, named by inscription, and on the triumphal arches at Paschal's churches S. Maria in Domnica and S. Prassede, James is unmistakable. He is shown as a recognisable elderly man with cap-like grey hair cut straight across the brow and around the ears.<sup>62</sup> This shift in iconography towards an earlier and much more elderly type may indicate two things: one, the search for an Early Christian model such as that of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, and second, a change of emphasis away from the young James of the Gospels towards the patriarch and martyr of thirty years later, in keeping with Paschal's--and the ninth century's--preoccupation with the cult of martyrs.

If their status as patrons of Jerusalem and Constantinople was an element in the choice of James and Andrew, the absence of St. Mark, patron of Alexandria, and St. Luke, of Antioch, should cause surprise. Explanations might include their presence in the decoration of the long lost twin chapel of St. John the Baptist, or their inclusion among the unnamed "Twelve" in the clipei around the entrance door of the Zeno chapel. It was common, especially in the East, to include the evangelists among the apostolic collegium if they or their symbols had not been included elsewhere. At Sinai, for example, where Peter, James

and John are included in the rendering of the transfiguration on the apse, their places are taken by Mark and Luke, as well as Matthias, in the apostle series that frames the apse. I will suggest that at the Zeno chapel the series of medallions which frames the arched entrance window as if around an apse does include saints Mark and Luke. This would mean that all four evangelists were included on the entrance panel, for the iconographic types chosen for James and John are unmistakably present.

Another possible explanation for the inclusion of James and Andrew does relate to their roles as patrons of the Eastern Church. Doula Mouriki, writing of the iconographic programme of the funerary chapel of Michael Glabas (d. ca. 1315) at S. Mary Pammakaristos, Istanbul, relates it to the intercession "in the form of a theotokion, which concludes the funeral service."<sup>63</sup> In this prayer, the Virgin, Baptist, and saints, are called upon to intervene with Christ for the salvation of the deceased. There is a marked ecumenical tendency in the choice of holy figures named in the theotokion, Mouriki points out, such as had already been shown in a non-funerary context in the decorative scheme at S. Sophia, Ohrid (eleventh century).<sup>64</sup> In view of the conservatism of the Byzantine liturgical books, the portrayal here of the founders of the churches of Constantinople and Jerusalem among the intercessors for the soul of Theodora cannot be accidental. Their very presence invokes the prayers of the whole and undivided Christian church, and they witness for all time to the prayers that were spoken here on behalf of Theodora. Could there be a hint here that she was herself a member of the Byzantine church?

The group of female saints, and the apostles who face them across the chapel form a procession on each side of the building reminiscent of the processions of martyrs in the nave of S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna<sup>65</sup> (Fig. 11). Just as there, each figure repeats the rhythms of its neighbour. There are also correspondences in iconography between the Rome "martyr processions" and those of Ravenna which seem to confirm that these general similarities are more than

coincidental.

The women martyrs in the Zeno chapel reflect those of S. Apollinare Nuovo in their stance and in the general colouration of their clothing--gold and white--on a similar gold background. They are on the left wall of both chapel and church, perhaps in the case of the church, for liturgical reasons which reflect the segregation of the sexes in the early congregation.<sup>66</sup> Their clothes and ornaments agree in many details, from the jewelled diadems, collars and girdles, to the red shoes. Their diagonal dalmatics have jewelled borders. The yellow dalmatics of the Zeno chapel give a not dissimilar effect to the patterned gold ones of Ravenna. In each case the layered garments are revealed at the sleeve: jewelled cuff at the wrist, loose white three-quarter length undersleeve, and golden dalmatic sleeve over all. Each has a patterned apron and a veil; a jewelled martyr's crown is held by hands which are always covered in the Zeno chapel, but may be veiled or not at Ravenna.

These similarities might only reflect the conservatism of Byzantine court dress, an interval of four centuries perhaps being unimportant in a static society, and the simplifications at the Zeno chapel being inevitable provincialisms. If this were so, and each set of figures reflected a new look at the ancient reality of court costume, one would expect each version to be logically depicted from a functional point of view. One notable exception to this rule supports the idea that the Zeno chapel figures are copied from a model rather than life: this is the depiction of the veils. In the Ravenna version (Fig. 11) the veils of the women clearly hang from the diadems. The filmy white material passes in front of the halo on either side and hangs almost to the hemline on each saint's right. On her left, the same veil is used to cover the hands. In the Zeno chapel (Fig. 10) the logic of these veils is lost, they do not come from the diadem nor do they pass in front of the disc of the halo. Rather, they emerge from behind the right shoulder and bell out on the right side only. On the left, a completely different cloth with patterned ends is used to veil

the hands and hold the crown. I suggest this as evidence that the Zeno chapel martyrs are actually copies of those in Ravenna, via an intermediate line-drawing with colour indications. This would explain similarities in colour values and line, and differences in patterning, as well as the flatness of the Zeno chapel figures. By the simple omission of only two or three lines from an outline drawing the irrational Zeno chapel veils could have been derived from a Ravennate model. It should be noted that the triumphal arch of the Paschalian church of S. Cecilia, destroyed in 1706, bore a mosaic in which a central Virgin and Child enthroned with angels were attended by ten female saints, advancing in procession from each side, offering crowns, and interspersed with palm trees, a feature of the procession of women martyrs at Ravenna. This composition, known from a seventeenth-century drawing (Fig. 13), would give valuable extra insights into the source materials of Paschal's mosaicists if it had survived.<sup>67</sup> Even from Cassiano dal Pozzo's drawings it is clear that the ten saints were identical with the Zeno chapel virgin martyrs in stance, garments, haloes and martyrs' crowns. A sense of the swift movement of the procession from the heavenly cities on either side towards the Theotokos was given by the billowing veils: attached as at S. Prassede behind the right shoulder of each saint, they blow out to the left on the left side of the mosaic, and lower down to the right on its right side, giving the effect of passing diagonally behind the saints' backs before flying free.

Cassiano's drawing includes four palm trees (Phoenix dactylifera) on either side between the saints. These are of the same general type as those at Ravenna. Date palms, they have a heavy cluster of fruit at either side atop the trunk, which is crowned with fronds. At S. Cecilia, suckers spring up from the base at either side, while at S. Apollinare Nuovo this space is filled with tall flowering plants bearing white lilies and small roses. Such palm trees, signifying paradise, are quite common in Roman art also: the nearest examples in date are to be found in S. Maria Antiqua, at the doorway of

the Theodotus chapel, but it is only at Ravenna, in the martyrs' panels at S. Apollinare Nuovo, that they are used to punctuate, as it were, a procession. This suggests, again, a Ravennate origin for Paschal's model.

c. The Wall over the Entrance Door (Fig. 15)

Facing the deesis over the altar is an upper wall area of distinctive shape like a wide inverted horseshoe, centred on a tall lunette window over the door. On the usual gold ground framed with border patterns the throne of Christ is shown in the middle above the window, flanked by the gesturing figures of saints Peter and Paul, whose feet are planted on the flowery green grass of Paradise.

The throne is a low-backed chair with a cushioned seat borne on jewelled columns; in front of it is spread a golden footstool with a jewelled edge. The gold cross on the cushion identifies it as Christ's throne, both the symbol of his continuing mystical presence and the seat prepared for his arrival at the second coming.

The throne is fitted with a long cushion with five fine longitudinal stripes or seams, four black and one gold. The curved back repeats the line of the vault under which it fits, and is covered with a trelliswork of fine red lines on gold, bearing a red jewel with a central "pearl" in each interstice. The back rail of the throne bears fifteen finials, oval blue jewels tipped with white--representing sapphires and pearls. The front of the seat and sides of the backrest are medium blue, highlighted with a row of large white "pearls." The lower supports of the throne are jewelled with horizontal rows of rosettes, two or three to a row, white on grey blue, or, exceptionally, on blue. The upper end of each leg has an ionic capital design crudely outlined in blue grey on a yellow ground. The unusual perspective enables all four to be seen at once.

Most of the remaining space on this wall is filled with the figures of saints Peter, on the right of the Mystical Presence on the throne, and Paul, on the left, named in inscriptions beside their

haloes, and displaying the typical iconography of the Princes of the Apostles. Peter carries a large gold key; Paul, a scroll. Each indicates the throne with his raised right hand, that of Peter crossing his body in the process. Each saint's golden halo is outlined in red: that of Peter has a wider border. The garment of each consists of a white dalmatic with red clavi, and a chlamys, also white, with a rolled border decorated by various widths of stripe. The dalmatic has fold-lines--often double--in grey and light blues; the chlamys has bright turquoise blue fold-lines. Outlines are double, black without, turquoise within. The apostles' sandalled feet are outlined in orange and black, with a gold edge to the sole.

### Discussion

The theme of the witnessing apostles is an old one in Christian art, and the figures of Peter and Paul seem to be derived from the pairs of saints whose figures adorn the upper walls of earlier centrally-planned monuments. The oratory of S. Croce at the Lateran Baptistery, for example, dating from 461-68, and certainly known to Paschal, is recorded as having "the walls between the windows . . . covered with mosaics, representing Peter and Paul, John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, Lawrence and Stephen, James and Philip."<sup>68</sup> This was below the vault mosaic where a central cross was supported by angels. It was demolished in 1588. Another similar decoration, which survives, is in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna, where there is a pair of unnamed saints on each upper wall. One pair conforms to the iconographic types of the Princes of the Apostles. Peter carries a key and has short and thick white hair and beard. Paul, with a scroll, is balding and has a long, grizzled, grey beard. They gesture, each with his right hand, towards the same spot, either the dove of the Holy Spirit above them in the tabernacle, or perhaps to the cross in the starry sky of the chapel's main vault. A further decoration in Ravenna, in the vault of the Arian Baptistery, features the procession of the twelve apostles, led by Peter and Paul. They appear to present

keys and a scroll to the Invisible Presence, or, possibly, to receive them from him. This Presence, Christ, is symbolised by a cross on the empty throne.

In this baptistery there is a hint of the traditio legis, an iconographic formula in which Peter, or, in Ravenna, Paul, actually receives the scroll of the new law from Christ.<sup>69</sup> So, despite the apparently significant juxtaposition of the Princes of the Apostles with Christ's throne, the apostles' gestures and their participation in a procession of the collegium seem to imply that a meaning other than witness or intercession is intended. I would therefore suggest that the Zeno chapel follows a model such as those provided at S. Croce or the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia.

As far as the actual throne itself is concerned, it is well known that the Roman emperors' presence in the law courts of the empire was symbolised by an empty throne. After the Peace of the Church, the throne was among the imperial attributes which were attached to Christ in his role as ruler of the universe, and symbolised his presence in the same way. In the mid-fifth century basilica of S. Maria Maggiore in Rome, where it tops the triumphal arch, at the Orthodox Baptistery in Ravenna, where there are four empty thrones in the third zone of decoration below the dome, and in the Arian Baptistery there, where the procession of the apostles leads towards a throne, it occupies an important place in the decoration. The council of Ephesus of 431 "congregated under the presidency of Christ our Lord for on a holy throne lay a venerable gospel."<sup>70</sup> The empty throne represents the "glorious presence of Christ,"<sup>71</sup> who is symbolised by a cross, as in the Zeno chapel, or a gospel book. Thus the throne is not thought of as empty, but as occupied by an invisible presence. However, in the setting of the Zeno chapel, where the whole meaning of the programme is related to its funerary content, the throne certainly signifies, in addition, the prepared throne of Christ's second coming, the etoimasia. Here on judgment day he will take his seat to weigh the merits of the deceased as a candidate for heaven. This additional meaning, typically

Eastern and post-iconoclastic, fits the throne for inclusion in the specifically eschatological context of a mausoleum.

Discussion: The Theme of the Upper Walls or Drum

The deesis, with its content "an evocation of the Last Judgment" was often chosen for the decoration of the main apse of Byzantine funerary chapels from the post-iconoclast period onwards, right through the Palaeologan period,<sup>72</sup> so it is not surprising to find this theme in a conspicuous position directly above the main "apse" of the Zeno chapel, itself a mausoleum. The presence of the Princes of the Apostles, founders of the churches of the Jews and the Gentiles, as well as the patrons of the churches of Asia Minor and Palestine, beside the recorder of the apocalyptic vision and the local women martyrs dear to Paschal, all on the same level as the deesis in the drum of the vault, must mean that there is an overall meaning to this zone of the decoration which relates to the intercession of Mary and the Baptist at the last judgment. It is clear that the processions of saints on either side are joining the prayers for humanity as they are expressed in the Nekrosimon theotokion of the burial rite.<sup>73</sup> Even Peter and Paul are often associated with the deesis,

appearing constantly in the context of the great deesis, which constitutes a favourite subject for the icons of Byzantine and post-Byzantine templa.<sup>74</sup>

The interpretation of the whole of the upper zone of decoration of the chapel as a unified "great deesis" or intercession, explains the choice of each participant in terms of his inclusion in the actual funeral rite. Their depiction on these walls would seem to ensure their mystical presence in the Zeno chapel beside Theodora to intercede on her behalf at the last judgement.

3. The Mosaics of the Three Niches

The three arms of the cruciform chapel have tunnel vaults and

end in lunettes. Both vaults and lunettes are decorated with mosaic. The abstract patterns of the vault mosaic will be dealt with in Chapter III. Each niche has suffered considerable alteration in medieval and later times: the central one by the insertion of an altar which obscures the lower part of the ancient mosaic; the side ones by the cutting of doors in the lunette walls. The door on the left gives access to an adjacent aisle; that on the right leads into a chapel where a relic, the column of the flagellation, has been housed since the eighteenth century. Both side niches still had their rear walls intact when drawings were made of them in the 1630s.<sup>75</sup>

a. The Altar Niche (Figs. 16, A and B)

The mosaic in this lunette, which is largely obscured by the high reredos of a later altar, represents the transfiguration of Christ, who stands in the centre, his halo a red circle with its dull-green, inscribed cross picked out in red. Behind him is the outline of a mountain, also dull green and a mere two tesserae wide. It crowns his head with a mandorla-like effect, and gives rise to small green contour lines, two to his right and four to his left. Beside him are the figures of two prophets, identified in the biblical text as Elijah and Moses. Elijah, on Christ's right, is an old man with long, centrally-parted grey hair and a lock of hair at the parting. Moses, on his left, is young with an oval face and short brown hair heavily outlined in black and coming to a 'widow's peak.'

Lower down on the sides are two of the three apostles who were present, according to textual sources. Peter, iconographically recognisable, is beside Elijah. His nimbus has a red outline. John, also a distinct type, is beside Moses, and raises one hand in blinded amazement. In spite of an apparent absence of restoration, he has no halo.

This mosaic is distinguished from all others in the chapel by the liberal use of green in the folds and shadows of the garments as well as in Christ's halo and the outline of the mountain behind. All

five figures are dressed in greyish white, with red clavi done in terracotta and light orange tesserae. The outlines of all bodies and heads are black. Faces are in various shades of flesh colour and the outlines of Moses' and John's upraised hands are terracotta. Elijah's grey hair is unique in the chapel, having yellow rather than grey-blue shadows.

### Discussion

The transfiguration is an event in the life of Christ which is described in all three synoptic gospels.<sup>76</sup> Taking the disciples Peter, John and James with him, Christ went into the mountains to pray. There, he appeared to them in the midst of blinding light on the slopes of Mt. Tabor with the prophet Elijah, and with Moses, giver of the books of Jewish law. The blinding light or doxa is "an aura of unnatural brilliance associated with mystical experiences elsewhere [in the Bible]."<sup>77</sup> The texts explicitly state that Moses and Elijah spoke with Christ about his approaching death and resurrection, which he had just described in a sermon.<sup>78</sup> Otto von Simson has pointed out that patristic commentary on the transfiguration always emphasised this connection.<sup>79</sup> Pope Leo I, 440-461, in his sermon on the subject, for example, taught that Christ appeared transfigured to his disciples so as to "free their hearts from the scandal of the Cross" and to convince them that his way of suffering would lead to his resurrection and to the redemption of mankind.<sup>80</sup>

Despite its theological importance, the transfiguration is not a common theme in early medieval art. It is, however, the subject of two great apse compositions of the mid-sixth century, at S. Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna (ca. A.D. 549) and at the almost contemporary monastery church at St. Catherines, Mt. Sinai (A.D. 548-565).<sup>81</sup> These two great survivors of iconoclasm share a theme but not its iconography: at St. Catherine's the apostles, in human form, start back from the blinding radiance of Christ's mandorla of light, beside which the two prophets stand.<sup>82</sup> At Ravenna, by contrast, the treatment is symbolic:

Christ is represented by a medallion in the centre of a tall, jewelled cross on a starry background; the disciples, conforming to a common convention, appear as sheep, one to his right, and two to his left. Below, the orans figure of S. Apollinare imitates in his gesture the sacrifice of Christ.<sup>83</sup> A fundamental difference in meaning is expressed by these juxtapositions of images. At Ravenna, the medallion with Christ's likeness is overshadowed by the huge, glowing, jewelled cross, and its meaning is underlined by the presence of the martyr below; it is the redemption of mankind through the triumph of the cross. Half-figures of the prophets float in the clouds of glory on either side of Christ, and from the crown of the vault above a hand representing God the Father emerges, symbolising the words spoken from out of the aura. "This is my beloved and chosen son."<sup>84</sup> At Sinai, the text is followed more literally: Christ, his garments "glistening, intensely white as no fuller on earth could bleach them"<sup>85</sup> stands in the dazzling light of the mandorla; the symmetrically disposed apostles to the right, left and below his feet fall stunned to their knees, their wide open eyes attesting to the quality of the experience, an inner vision rather than a literal blinding by the light's overwhelming intensity.<sup>86</sup> Elijah and Moses stand on either side, their right hands raised in the gesture of speech--as in the text "and . . . two men talked with Him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared with Him and spoke of His departure which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem."<sup>87</sup> Weitzman has pointed out that the prophets in the Old Testament had not seen the Voice of God that spoke to them, while here at Sinai they are depicted, following the text, as both seeing and speaking to him. This he sees as an allusion, hidden within the transfiguration dogma, to the incarnation of Christ.<sup>88</sup> It is this relationship of the incarnation to the transfiguration that would often be stressed in art, from the now ruined transfiguration on the outer east wall of the Basilica at Poreč, (ca. 550 A.D.), itself dedicated to Mary and showing her enthroned with the incarnate Child within the apse,<sup>89</sup> to the triumphal arch programme at SS Nereo ed Achilleo at Rome, a gift of Leo III, 795-816,

where the transfiguration occupies the narrow central space over the arch, between images of the annunciation to the left, and the Virgin and Child, to the right. Both programmes, like that at S. Apollinare in Classe, also stress the triumph of the cross: at St. Catherines a huge bronze cross of Justinianic date survives and probably crowned the chancel screen before the altar.<sup>90</sup> At SS. Nereo ed Achilleo, the lost apse mosaic which completed the decorative programme featured a tall, jewelled cross draped with a purple cloth.<sup>91</sup> Thus, all these antecedents to the Zeno chapel transfiguration underline the connection between the incarnation, the Word made Flesh through the Holy Spirit, and the revelation on Mount Tabor of Christ's status as Son of God and instrument of the salvation of the world through the cross.<sup>92</sup> It is not surprising then to find that this dogmatic imagery was used at those times when a need was apparently felt to refute the theories of heretics concerning the dual nature of Christ. Orthodox theology since the council of Chalcedon (451) had taught that Christ was both human and divine: heretical thought believed him to be divine only (Monophysitism) or human only and adopted by God the Father (Adoptionism).

The three surviving transfiguration mosaics from Justinian's time, at Ravenna, Sinai and Poreč, all dating from the mid-sixth century and all on the very fringes of empire, may well be survivors of a much more numerous group which proclaimed the dogma of Chalcedon. All date from just after the death of Theodora, whose monophysite leanings are well known.<sup>93</sup> At this time the church under Justinian experienced a return to orthodoxy, and these great works may be seen as a sort of dogmatic propaganda. It is curious that more than three centuries later the doctrine of the transfiguration should again be expounded in mosaic, at SS Nereo ed Achilleo, and this time also (according to Diega Giunta)<sup>94</sup> as an anti-heretical statement. In the eighth century there had been a late revival of Adoptionism, which had spread throughout Visigothic Spain. This doctrine taught that although "Christ the word was son of God by nature, Jesus was a man and son of

God only by virtue of his adoption by the Word."<sup>95</sup> Condemned by Charlemagne in 794, the heresy was refuted by Alcuin in 802 or 803 in his Doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The erection of the mosaic at SS. Nereo and Achilleo late in the reign of Leo III, 795-816, can be seen, then as an antiadoptionist statement by the papacy.<sup>96</sup>

The transfiguration at S. Zeno occupies an important position above the altar,<sup>97</sup> though it is now an obscured and awkward location since a marble altar reredos was built in front of it at some unspecified moment of its history. It is not possible to determine whether the intention of the programme was to link the transfiguration with the adjacent panels, and endow it with an extra shade of meaning in context with them, as in the sixth-century examples and at SS. Nereo ed Achilleo. It is certainly possible that a relationship was intended with the image of Christ in the vault, or with that of the Virgin which was in the east niche above Theodora's tomb.<sup>98</sup> In terms of a possible propaganda context, the closeness of date (ca. 817) to the SS. Nereo ed Achilleo image might suggest a similar message, but for the private nature of the chapel as a funerary monument. Nevertheless, the choice of subject matter, and the unusual use of green here, in the SS. Nereo ed Achilleo mosaic and in the Lateran Triclinium fragments, does suggest that the same workshop was responsible for all three works.<sup>99</sup>

The peculiarities of the Zeno chapel transfiguration include, in addition to the use of green, lack of a mandorla and absence of the third apostle. At Sinai, the third disciple is shown lying across the picture below Christ's feet. Although this part of the composition is hidden or lost in the Zeno chapel, there seems to be inadequate space available to complete Christ's figure and include a figure at his feet. The solution may perhaps be found in early drawings, for example that of the seventeenth century in the Windsor collection which shows the altar wall of the Zeno chapel<sup>100</sup> (Fig. 16B) and is remarkable for showing part of a kneeling figure on either side in the mosaic triangle visible beside the altar entablature. Whereas on the left this figure

must have been an invention of the artist, for the original mosaic survives on this side and consists of the contour outline and deeper base of Mt. Tabor in green on gold with no figure, the space on the right is bare of mosaic and it is possible that an extra figure existed there as late as the seventeenth century. If so, the mosaic followed the usual grouping found in the west, with two apostles to Christ's left and one--Peter--on his right.

Brenk has compared this transfiguration with one from the early ninth century Chludov Psalter (Moscow, State Historical Museum, MS. 129), in which Moses and Elijah stand with Christ inside a mandorla.<sup>101</sup> These two examples would be the only ones known of this iconography. A closer examination of the Zeno chapel scene, however, reveals that what appears to be a nimbus around the three figures is in fact the rather uneven outline of Mt. Tabor. This observation is confirmed by Wilpert's careful photograph.<sup>102</sup> The confusion seems to have arisen among scholars who have followed Canina's drawing of 1846.<sup>103</sup> This, perhaps following Cassiano dal Pozzo,<sup>104</sup> (Fig. 16B) shows Christ and the prophets inside a perfectly hemispherical mandorla. It was probably impossible to distinguish the details of the scene either in the 1630s or the 1840s: even in 1891 Baldoria had trouble because of the extremely dirty condition of the mosaics, the result of centuries of candle soot.<sup>105</sup> It is certain however that there is no mandorla and hence that the prophets cannot stand beside Christ inside it. Whether the mosaicist intended the mountain outline of Tabor to double as a mandorla is not clear; if so, it is without precedent, as indeed is the complete omission of this iconographic element.

b. The Right (West) Niche (Figs. 17A and B)

The right niche contains a truncated mosaic in the lunette above the door. Christ, taller, occupies the centre of the space; on either side of him is an elderly male saint. There is no framing border along the bottom, suggesting that the panel has been cut there.

Christ's figure ends at waist-level, the saints are cut off at mid-thorax. They must once have been more complete, possibly full-length, as bust-length figures in ninth century art were usually confined within the outline of a clipeus.

Christ is shown as a young, lightly-bearded man with brown hair who wears a golden robe with a broad red clavus on the left outlined in black. Actual gold tesserae are used rather than yellow ones. The tunic's folds are indicated in red, it has two red stripes on the cuff. The right sleeve has a loose pattern of gold lines. Christ's halo is gold and contains a pale blue cross; both halo and cross are outlined in red. He gestures towards a book held in his left hand. This has a striped border in blue and beige, and a central orange jewel surrounded by alternate black and white tesserae. The corner jewels are turquoise blue. The edges of the pages are flesh-coloured.

On Christ's right is a tonsured, grey-haired and bearded priest in a red chasuble holding in his left hand a golden book with a black and white jewelled border which he indicates with his right hand. The saint on Christ's left is also bearded and grey, he is not tonsured and wears the secular court dress of the day: a white cloak, its details outlined in black, over a green dalmatic with a fan-shaped orange design on the shoulder and a red tablion on the front.<sup>106</sup> He holds a small golden cross in his right hand and, possibly, the remnant of an orange martyr's crown in his left.

### Discussion

Christ's figure is of exactly the same iconographic type as that in the chapel's dome. The identities of the haloed saints on either side of him are not easy to establish, since there are no inscriptions. Perhaps inscriptions originally present have been eliminated by the large areas of restoration in the gold background.<sup>107</sup> Any identification must therefore be based on documentary evidence. A drawing by Cassiano dal Pozzo shows this side of the chapel as it was

in the 1630s<sup>108</sup> (Fig. 17B). The drawing shows that as recently as the seventeenth century there was a complete rear wall in this niche, and that the mosaic figures, already truncated, were cut off by a section of the molding that crowns the chapel's revetment. At the foot of this wall, Cassiano shows, there was an antique sarcophagus with a gabled lid. Its front was divided by four colonnettes into three equal sections, of which the central one bore a lattice design.<sup>109</sup> This section bears a strong resemblance to the relief panels in pelta and overlapping scale patterns which flank S. Agnes' orant figure on the fourth-century altar front in the subterranean confessio of S. Agnese fuori le mura, Rome.<sup>110</sup> Above the decorative front of the sarcophagus, with its colonnettes or pilasters with bases and capitals, Cassiano shows a plain section with a molding at the top and bottom, which must represent a plain, gabled lid.

Apparently, the column of the flagellation stood on an altar right in front of this sarcophagus, for in 1570 Panvinio wrote that the bodies of S. Zeno and S. Valentine lay "beyond the column."<sup>111</sup> It seems most unlikely that the mosaic figures still in place over the site of this tomb, which itself survived in situ at least until 1699, could depict any others than those whose relics lay there.<sup>112</sup> Nevertheless, Ciampini, writing in 1690-1699, recognised the images as those of saints Pius and Pastor, an idea picked up by Baldoria and later by Waetzoldt.<sup>113</sup> The pontiff, S. Pius I, according to legend, was the founder of the Titulus sanctae Praxedis and hence of the original foundation on which Paschal's rebuilt church was situated, and his brother Pastor, a priest, was the virgin saints' legendary mentor and author of their Acts.<sup>114</sup> A Pastor is also mentioned in the marble slab in S. Prassede as having been buried in the oratory of S. Agnes, "high up" in the monastery, and possibly located in the original foundation to which Paschal's monastery was attached.<sup>115</sup> His likeness, then, might well have been included. The fact that neither saint in the mosaic is shown wearing the pallium implies that neither is intended to represent Pope Pius I, although it is possible he was

included elsewhere, specifically as one of two popes pictured in fresco outside the Zeno chapel door, which preceded the later mosaic versions visible there now.<sup>116</sup> Pastor is a possibility for the elderly priest on Christ's right, the more so since he is the only one of the various priests linked with the chapel by tradition (Zeno, Valentine, Pastor) who did not die a martyr. The priest in the mosaic lacks martyrs' attributes. The lay figure on Christ's left could then be Pudens, father (or grandfather) of the virgin saints, who is linked by biblical text to Paul's ministry in Rome, which started in his house, the Titulus Pudentianae.<sup>117</sup> If Pudens was honoured in mosaic in the Zeno chapel, it was as a representative of the earliest days of the church in Rome.

Such an identification, however, cannot be substantiated without first considering all the evidence that the figures might represent Zeno and Valentine. Evidence for Zeno's presence in the chapel from the very beginning is overwhelming, as we have seen. To recapitulate, the marble plaque tells that his remains were placed in the chapel to the right of the basilica entrance where Theodora Episcopa lay. Although part of this plaque is a thirteenth-century copy of a ninth-century text, or even an eighteenth-century replacement, the general authenticity of the text is not in question.<sup>118</sup> The Liber Pontificalis for Paschal's reign also recounts how the Pope built a chapel at S. Prassede dedicated to a certain Zeno, "martyr of Christ."<sup>119</sup> In the marble plaque, he is described as "Zeno the priest."<sup>120</sup> Thus any representation of him should distinguish him as a priest with martyrs' attributes. The two figures in the lunette are precisely differentiated as a priest who is not a martyr, and a layman who possibly is. Neither exactly fits the "Zeno the priest" and "Zeno the martyr of Christ" of the texts.

Even if the priest beside Christ could be firmly established as Zeno, what evidence is there for the identity of the other? It might, of course, represent one of the anonymous aliorum duorum of the marble plaque. It might also represent Valentine, whose name is linked

to Zeno's, and to the chapel, by persistent legend. First mention of his relics being taken to the chapel seems to date from the thirteenth century, though its source is unclear.<sup>121</sup> Panvinio in 1570 already placed the relics of Valentine with those of Zeno "beyond the column."<sup>122</sup> De Rossi was the first to point out that the Zeno whose remains were translated on July 20th, 817, was identical to the Zeno of the Praetextatus cemetery on the Via Appia, who was named there "brother of Valentine," perhaps meaning brother in martyrdom or in Christ. This Zeno's cult came to be identified with Valentine's liturgically and historically.<sup>123</sup> De Rossi also put forward an ingenious solution to the problem of Zeno and Valentine, namely, that a stonemason's error had been responsible for omission of two key words from the marble slab text, putting Zenonis presbyteri in place of Zenonis fratris Valentini presbyteri. This idea is made more likely by the history of the slab itself, which, we have seen, was copied at least once and possibly twice. If de Rossi's solution is correct (and it was already accepted by Baldoria in the 1890s)<sup>124</sup> there would be every reason for naming the two saints in the west niche as the brothers Valentine, a priest, and Zeno, a martyr. However, it would not be easy to explain Valentine's omission from the Liber Pontificalis account in view of his importance as a major Roman saint with his own cult centred in his own basilica on the Via Flaminia--a cult of equal importance to that of Zeno, whose basilica stood at his grave site in the Praetextatus cemetery.<sup>125</sup>

In summary, it is clear that Zeno's body was transferred to the chapel from the catacombs by Paschal I, and that it lay in a sarcophagus in the west niche. Whether it was joined at a later date by that of Valentine, or whether his assimilation to the site was caused by the liturgical connection of shared feast days and his supposed relationship with Zeno, is not known. On the available evidence, the two pictures cannot be identified with certainty. The priest seems most likely to be Zeno or Pastor; the lay person, Pudens.

c. The Left (East) Niche (Figs. 18-21)

The mosaic decoration of the left niche includes a double composition in the lunette above the door, and two panels facing each other on the side walls below a "carpet" style vault mosaic.

The lunette mosaic is divided into two unequal parts horizontally by a wide band of pelta pattern outlined above and below by a broad, deep blue stripe. The upper panel occupies the semi-circular space of the lunette top, and is framed by a single row of white tesserae inside the deep blue stripe and jewelled chain that outlines the whole architectural feature. The lower panel is rectangular, bordered as the top panel but without the white stripe, and is edged at the bottom by a wide, dark-blue border which is part of an early restoration.

c/1. The Upper Half of the Lunette (Fig. 18)

The background of this section is gold. At the top, a nimbed lamb stands on a small, flat-topped hill, from which four streams flow and spread outwards. Below there is a pair of deer on each side: the stags in front bend to drink, and the does behind lift their heads toward the lamb.

The deer are rendered naturalistically in four shades of pale brown, with black outlines and blue-grey underbellies and chins. The stags have multi-branched antlers drawn in single rows of black cubes.

The white lamb is also outlined in black and has a long and wide tail.<sup>126</sup> The shadows are drawn in an opaque, pale green glass, elsewhere used only very sparingly, in the adjacent anastasis mosaic. They include a contour line around the body, head and tail inside the black outline, and two circular bands around the belly, each of two-tessera width. In its crude three-part division of the body with a barrel-shaped belly between the fore and hind quarters, the lamb is a miniature version of the Paschalian sheep in the apse at S. Cecilia. Anatomically, the Zeno chapel lamb is unsatisfactory. It appears to be a pastiche of a normal, three-quarter side view of a body, with a

head seen from the side but rotated into the vertical position so that it has a single, cyclopean eye. The lamb has a large, cerulean blue halo with both its circumference and its wide, inscribed cross outlined in white.

The lamb stands on a black-edged, purple disc on the flat golden top of a little mountain--the hill of Zion. Four blue streams, rippling with blue-grey waves, pour from the golden disc and fan out towards the bottom of the picture. They are the four waters of paradise.

### Discussion

The idea of four rivers has its roots in Jewish writings, going back to the story of creation as told in Genesis

A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.<sup>127</sup>

There is no doubt that the fathers of the early church went back to the creation story and selected metaphors with which to describe Christ, the church and the gospels. St. Cyprian, for example, wrote that

the church, like Paradise, includes fruit-bearing trees within her walls . . . she waters the trees from four rivers, which are the four gospels, by which she dispenses the grace of Baptism.<sup>128</sup>

Again, from S. Hippolytus of Rome

Eden is the name of the new garden of delights, planted towards the East, furnished with every good tree, by which must be understood the company of the just. . . . the harmony of all . . . . is the Church, God's spiritual garden, planted in Christ as in the East: here may be seen every sort of tree [and he lists prophets, apostles, saints and churchmen]. An inexhaustible river flows through this garden, and from it

four streams water the whole earth. So is it with the church, Christ is the river, and he is proclaimed to the world by the four gospels.<sup>129</sup>

So the church is seen as the garden, with Christ the inexhaustible river, and the four streams which arise from it are his gospels, through which the faithful receive grace. Grace comes through baptism, which is by means of water.<sup>130</sup>

That these ideas were actually translated into Christian art is clear from the description of Paulinus of Nola of his (lost) apse mosaic in the basilica of S. Felix:

He himself, the Rock of the Church, is standing on a rock from which four seething springs issue, the Evangelists, the living streams of Christ.<sup>131</sup>

The early liturgies also mentioned the four rivers in their rites for consecration of the water used in baptism.<sup>132</sup> The Gelasian liturgy at Rome reads:

It is why I bless you, O Creature water, by the living God, by the Holy God, by the God who, in a single word at the Beginning, separated you from the earth, and, dividing you into four rivers, commanded you to water all the earth.<sup>133</sup>

At Hippo, in North Africa, S. Augustine tells that the baptismal candidates chanted psalm 42 while preparing for the ceremony: the words "As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God,"<sup>134</sup> are clearly the source for the metaphor in any baptismal imagery that features deer. The deer, then, symbolise the thirst of the catechumens for baptism, and there are many examples of their portrayal in palaeochristian baptisteries. The Lateran baptistery, for example, received a papal gift of a baptismal font with a gold lamb weighing 30 pounds, and seven silver deer pouring out water and each weighing 80 pounds.<sup>135</sup> Surviving baptistery mosaics featuring

deer include the vault decoration at the Naples baptistery of S. Giovanni in Fonte, early fifth-century, which is the oldest surviving example of deer slaking their thirst in this context.<sup>136</sup> Surviving mosaic floors include those at Butrinti (Albania), Salona (Yugoslavia) and Valence. At Butrinti, a panel in front of the font features a large cross triumphant flanked by two cypress trees, and a pair of deer at its foot drinking from a jet of water.<sup>137</sup> At Salona, the court in front of the site of the baptistery has a panel where among acanthus scrolls and flowers, two deer quench their thirst at a cantharus: the scene bears the inscription,

sicut cervus desiderat ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat  
anima mea ad te, Deus,

the exact words of Psalm 42,<sup>1</sup> and written proof of the precise meaning of the motif.<sup>138</sup> At Valence, the font was originally surrounded by an octagonal band decorated by sixteen deer of which seven only survive.<sup>139</sup> At Ravenna, the Orthodox baptistery features a pair of stucco deer on either side of a vase.<sup>140</sup>

The presence of Christ, as Lamb, standing on the hill of Zion (surprising perhaps at this period when the Quinisext Council had supposedly suppressed such symbolic use of the lamb in favour of Christ's human form) seems to depend here on literal adherence to the text of the Apocalypse, which was always more popular in the West than in the East. There we read

Then I looked, and lo! on Mt. Zion stood the Lamb, and with him stood a hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and his father's name written on their foreheads.<sup>141</sup>

The number is a symbolic expression for the whole number of the saved, and the abbreviated scene, without the congregation of the blessed, stands for Christ the Lamb, the sacrifice for salvation. This is the key to the meaning of this seemingly baptismal imagery in a funerary

context: the resurrected Lamb through his sacrifice is the source of the gospels and hence of salvation, and salvation is achieved through baptism. At baptism, there is a symbolic death of the unregenerate soul, and rebirth by "water and the spirit"<sup>142</sup> into the church, just as death, for the Christian, may be thought of as a rebirth into eternal life. As S. Paul wrote in his epistle to the Romans

Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus were baptised into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.<sup>143</sup>

These ideas are also occasionally expressed in funerary art, when, as at the Zeno chapel, the imagery of deer drinking from flowing streams or overflowing vessels is used in a mausoleum. At the mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna, each side lunette shows a pair of deer entangled in the acanthus and drinking from a pair of rivers.<sup>144</sup> The total, as at S. Zeno, is two pairs of deer and the full four rivers of paradise. At the catacomb of Pontianus in Rome a painting of Christ's baptism includes a deer advancing to the river Jordan. This location deep in the cemetery can never have been a baptistery, even though it is now flooded. The motif was even used on early Christian sarcophagi, juxtaposed with the image of the giving of the Law, or the cross triumphant.<sup>145</sup>

Although this motif is not unknown in a funerary context, it is, nevertheless, quite unusual. Its occurrence at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia suggests--when taken with the other parallels between the two chapels--that the Ravenna chapel may have been one source for Paschal's iconography.

c/2. The Lower Half of the Lunette (Figs. 18, 19A and B)

This area contains the bust-length images of four women. The one on the left, distinguished by a "square halo" is an older woman,

the other three, all nimbed, are young, and the equal and open spacing between the three indicates that they form a group, in which the central figure, while not noticeably bigger, is elevated and occupies a larger space. This stresses her exalted rank and hints that the figure, when complete, was either standing on a step or footstool, or seated on an elevated throne. Lack of a border pattern below suggests alterations, as the figures are crudely truncated at mid-thorax. A large area, between one-half and one-third of the remaining mosaic is restored. This area includes almost all of all four bodies, the lower half of the second face from the left, and the chin of the right-hand face.<sup>146</sup> In the restored area the gold has been replaced by larger, shiny tesserae. The women's garments, while agreeing in some details with those of the other female figures in the chapel, differ from them in some apparently anachronistic features, such as their front opening cloaks. It would seem that impressions on the setting bed made by the original tesserae were sometimes followed, but often misunderstood.

The elevated figure, second from the right and cut off below the shoulders, is obviously Mary, though it is not inscribed as such; her restored dress consists of a light blue cloak over a red tunic.<sup>147</sup> There is a dark-blue area at each shoulder which is continuous with the gold-edged dark blue maphorion over her head, suggesting that she originally wore an enveloping, all blue garment such as she wears in the deesis mosaic. There is a striped cap of white and blue grey under her maphorion and she wears a short necklace of eight gold cubes, all set in different directions to reflect light, in typical ninth-century style. It is a remnant of the edge of her maphorion, and continuous with the golden border around her face. Her face has the same outline and features as those of the deesis Virgin: recognisable features which are characteristic of Paschal's mosaic style. Her golden nimbus is outlined with a double row of red tesserae.

On either side of Mary is the figure of a young woman, cut off at a higher point, just below the shoulders. The one on Mary's left,

despite the restored chin, is recognisable as Pudentiana, as portrayed in the apse mosaic. She wears an orange and blue diadem, a cluster of three jewels on an orange band, and hoop earrings. Her halo, like Mary's, is gold outlined with two rows of red. The young woman on Mary's right has the pointed chin and broad brow of Praxedis. She wears a tall crown above an orange head band. The crown is bordered at the top and bottom with "pearls" on blue, and has large orange, gold and turquoise gems in between. It is crowned by three blue and orange clusters like those on Pudentiana's diadem. Her halo matches those of the other two women.

On Praxedis's right, in the place of honour, an older woman is portrayed. Her hair is completely hidden by a white veil with blue shadows and a black outline. She wears a jewelled collar, a blue and white necklace and a red cloak with orbiculi on the shoulders. Her dress has been restored and does not match her headdress, which is possibly that of a religious. Her interest to us lies especially in the square halo and the inscription above it and to the left. The halo, edged with white inside black, is similar to Paschal's in the S. Cecilia apse mosaic in that there is no attempt to indicate a box-like depth. The inscription reads in dark blue letters horizontally above the halo, EPISCOPA, and on the left, vertically, THEODO[RA]. The last two letters, which are missing, fall within the area of restoration.

### Discussion

A seventeenth-century drawing of the east niche by Cassiano dal Pozzo<sup>148</sup> gives an idea of the arrangement and decoration of the area in the 1630s (Fig. 20). The figures of the women were already cut off at mid-thorax at that time. Cassiano's drawings, while faithful to the details of figures and inscriptions, render decorative elements in a fanciful, baroque style. Bearing this in mind, I will try to interpret Cassiano's rendering of the niche as it was then.

The most obvious difference was that in Cassiano's time the

rear wall was still in place. Its lower third was undecorated, and on the evidence of Cassiano's shading, was flush with the upper part of the wall. This area was the right size for a sarcophagus. Above it, Cassiano shows a horseshoe arch filled with abstract, decorative pattern. The edge is clearly outlined with "jewelled chain,"<sup>149</sup> like other architectural features in the chapel. I believe this to be Cassiano's version of the back of an arcosolium filled with a mosaic panel, probably of acanthus scrolls, which are suggested by his formalised design. This would be analagous to the design in the side lunettes at the mausoleum of Galla Placidia. The horseshoe shape seems to be based on Cassiano's misplacing of his segment of a circle, so that he includes rather more than a hemisphere. If an exact semi-circle based on the width of the niche is inserted above the tomb area, enough room remains for the completed figures of Theodora and the saints standing beside the seated figure of Mary, as I shall propose.

The positioning of Mary and the two female saints, certainly Praxedis and Pudentiana, suggests that the central subject was a "Virgin Enthroned between attendant Saints." The spaces on either side of Mary are wider than the one that separates Praxedis from Theodora, and the pattern of restoration in the gold background beside her rises to the level of her chin on each side. The spacing and the outline of the restored area suggest that a throne with back posts was once depicted, and that Mary was seated, almost certainly with the infant Christ in her lap. If we accept the idea that the restoration of Mary's clothing followed the marks left behind on the setting bed, but that these were not well understood, I believe we can interpret the outline of her cloak, which is drawn in to a central gold clasp and then pulls apart again to form a circular outline below (Fig. 19A), as following the outline of the Child's halo, with the gold clasp marking the position of the upright of its inscribed cross. The Virgin would have been of a Nikopeia type, with the Child central on her lap, looking straight ahead. Such an image still exists in the medallion over the outer door of the chapel. A similar image, again from

Paschal's patronage, still forms the main subject of the apse at S. Maria in Domnica. The mosaic on the Zeno chapel altar, while later, seems to be related to the lost Virgin and Child on the former triumphal arch at S. Cecilia, which is known from Cassiano's drawings. Both were of the Nikopeia type, with a Child whose arms were flung apart in greeting.<sup>150</sup> Grabar has derived such frontal images from pagan funerary steles, where, also, the child was held on the axis of the mother's body.<sup>151</sup> Such Theotokos Nikopeia images, in Byzantine thought, were the Christian equivalent to the imperial victory imagery.<sup>152</sup>

Theodora's position beside the group of saints (Figs. 18, 19B) surely reflects that this was her own funeral monument over her sarcophagus, and that she sought the help and protection of the Virgin and of the Child through the intercession of Praxedis, just as Paschal himself sought the intervention of the saints on his own behalf at the threshold of paradise.<sup>153</sup> The portrait's funerary role would seem to be analagous to that of the Greek monk beside the ninth-century anastasis painting in the Lower Church of S. Clemente, Rome, which has been convincingly identified by John Osborne as a funeral portrait of S. Cyril, Apostle to the Slavs, (d. Feb. 14, 869).<sup>154</sup> The use of the square halo to denote a funerary portrait rather than a donor image was originally Eastern but widespread in Rome as early as 800 A.D.: one example is found at the tomb of an early abbot of Farfa.<sup>155</sup> Although a square halo in such a setting may not indicate an actual portrait, its use implies that some attempt at a likeness has been made. Its use and shape is derived ultimately from funerary practices in Egypt in the early centuries A.D. There, rectangular portraits of the deceased were painted on their coffins, or wooden panels were added to mummified figures. Already by about 550 A.D. the motif was in use at St. Catherines, Mt. Sinai, apparently to distinguish donor portraits from the idealised, haloed representatives of the saints.<sup>156</sup> By about 600 A.D. it was beginning to be used in Rome: its meaning-- that the likeness was a portrait--was given by the ninth-century

biographer of Pope Gregory I.<sup>157</sup>

The description "Episcopa" applied to Theodora has given rise to misunderstanding, for there is no record of women ever being ordained as bishops or even priests in the Roman church. In the ninth century there were still women who bore the title "deaconess," though they no longer had a liturgical role. These probably were the consecrated wives of deacons and ministered to the needs of families in their congregations.<sup>158</sup> It should not be assumed either that Theodora was the wife or widow of a bishop, for there is no record that Bonosus, Paschal's father, was ever ordained.<sup>159</sup> Rather, the title must refer to her role at the Lateran Palace as hostess for her son.<sup>160</sup> At any rate, her funerary portrait, surviving in the upper part of a scheme which must have been unique in its richness and in the fact that it was prepared for a woman, remains the sole well-preserved example of a woman with a square halo to come down to us.<sup>161</sup>

c/3. The South Wall Mosaic, the Anastasis (Fig. 21A)

The small narrative scene in the panel on the right wall of the east niche is also cut off, so that the central figure, Christ, is shown only to waist level, while the other figures are even more truncated. The scene represents the anastasis or "harrowing of hell," wherein the triumphant Christ descends into Hades after his death on the cross to offer salvation to the "just souls" who had died in the ages before his incarnation, and thus had had no chance of redemption.

Christ, facing right, wears an off-white robe. Its outline and details are shown in black, with some lines doubled in two shades of blue grey. There is a pair of gold stripes across the right shoulder, and a long green stripe down the left border. His hair is long and dark and his moustache and short beard are chestnut brown with a black outline. The face is pale with orange and red highlights and the gaze is determined. Christ's golden halo contains a broad, tilted, cerulean blue cross; cross and halo are defined in red, as are the five fingers of his left hand, which grasp a beige scroll. His right

arm reaches forward across his body towards Adam and Eve, who stand before him at a slightly lower level. Christ's figure is framed by the oval top of a lozenge-shaped, blue mandorla: figure, halo and mandorla are all tilted forward, for Christ is shown striding forward in such vigorous movement that his accompanying aura of heavenly light is moving and tilting with him. This aura is shown with a broad and brilliant cerulean blue outline of three-tessera width, and an interior zone of lighter and duller shades of blue and blue-grey mixed at random. One quadruple and five triple sets of light-rays originate from Christ at neck-level and break through the outline of his mandorla. They are shown as parallel lines of dazzling white.

Adam is shown as an ancient, white-haired man with a long beard. The hair, beard and moustache are actually worked in all shades of pale and medium blue and blue-grey and only the highlights of the beard are literally white. His small, orange mouth is almost completely outlined in black, his robe is white with blue shadows and a red clavus. Eve, veiled in a yellow maphorion with red folds and details and a black outline, stands beside and a little behind Adam.

On the left, partly hidden by the mandorla, a black-haired man dressed in a red robe, outlined in black, over a blue tunic looks towards Christ. His dark eyes are blue-shadowed, his beard, yellow in a black outline. Between him and Christ is a blurred shape which is usually interpreted as another figure with grey hair: it is possible to distinguish a single eye, a nose (impressionistically rendered in yellow), and a small mouth in the middle of a short, white beard. The neck is pink and below it there is the orange border of a robe. These two figures stand behind a rectangle of wavy, vertical stripes in grey-blue and white: it is a strigillated sarcophagus. These, then, are the Old Testament kings rising up in their tomb. Above their heads is a checkered area in dark grey and white with little trefoils in red and blue on the top edge. This must represent their crowns, with cruciform ornaments and jewelled clusters on the top edge.

On Christ's left, hovering above him, and peering out from

behind the mandorla, there is another figure. Like the angels in the vault, this figure has a halo of radiant cerulean blue outlined in pure white, and a wing with feathering drawn in black on golden yellow. This angel has a white robe with a longitudinal green stripe on the left border. Its hair is yellow and grey-brown, bound with a narrow white fillet. Its gaze, like that of Christ, Adam, and the resurrected king, is directed outward towards the right, where perhaps the trampling of Satan was once portrayed. Of all the panel's figures, only Eve looks towards Christ.

### Discussion

The anastasis is often depicted in both Byzantine and Western art. Although it has no textual foundation in the Gospels, it is the scene most typically chosen, at certain periods, to signify the resurrection of Christ. The Gospels remain silent on the actual details of the resurrection, dwelling rather on the witness of those who found an empty tomb on the third day. Indeed, that is the figural scene most frequently chosen to represent the resurrection, and is the only one to be used in the decorations of the early church. The three Marys, who, finding the empty tomb, speak to its attendant angel, are found in such Christological cycles as that in S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, and continue to be depicted in the Byzantine east through the post-iconoclastic period. Both the anastasis and the empty tomb may be found in the same narrative cycle of Christ's life, as at Nea Moni on Chios (ca. 1056). Other resurrection scenes in art include New Testament parallels, among them the raising of Lazarus.

The anastasis, while often included as an important scene in the festival cycle of Christ's life, may occur also, for obvious reasons, as the main decorative feature of a tomb. A Roman example from the ninth century is the tomb of S. Cyril at S. Clemente.<sup>162</sup> This would seem to be further evidence for the presence of Theodora's burial in this niche.

The remote origins of anastasis iconography, Grabar has shown,

lie in Roman imperial art: the emperor triumphant pulls up the people of the conquered nations from their captive status, and receives them into the higher realm of the Roman Empire. So it is with Christ, the heavenly emperor, who pulls up from the domains of the king of the underworld, Satan, those pious souls who have unwillingly dwelt with him. Grabar sees the adoption of this iconography as occurring at the very end of the antique period, which would fit in with the known date of the apocryphal text which it illustrates.<sup>163</sup>

This apocryphal text is the Gospel of Nicodemus, and more particularly its Descensus chapter.<sup>164</sup> The Gospel itself is known in both eastern (Greek) and western (Latin) versions, with the Greek the earlier. However, the text is not known before about the sixth/seventh centuries even in the earlier Greek version. The slightly later Latin text differs from the eastern version in possessing the Descensus chapter; this is rarely found in the East and then only at comparatively late dates.<sup>165</sup> It is precisely this chapter which deals with the subject of Christ's descent into hell.

The beliefs of the early church about the events between the crucifixion and the resurrection are summarised in the two early creeds. The Apostles' creed only states that Christ was "crucified, dead and buried: he descended into hell, the third day he rose again from the dead." The Nicene creed affirms "He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures."<sup>166</sup> The Gospels are hardly more explicit, telling only of Christ's death and his burial in a sealed tomb under guard, which was found empty by the witnesses on the third day. The Gospel of Nicodemus fills an obvious void admirably. Not only does it tell of Christ's triumph over death, hell and Satan, but it also solves the problem of the fate of those "just souls" symbolised by Adam and Eve, who had died before Christ's coming.

The popularity of the Descensus chapter in the west has been seen by C. Davis-Weyer as linked to the status of the Apocalypse. Whereas in the east the canonical character of the Revelation of John

was doubted right up to the end of the ninth century, in the west its apostolic nature was accepted.<sup>167</sup> The fact that Christ's descent could be linked to the events of John's Revelation was the subject of much exegesis, centred especially on the millenium that loomed ahead at the year 1000, for according to John's vision an angel carrying a chain would then go down from heaven, and put Satan into bondage for the next thousand years.<sup>168</sup> Later commentators, however, believed that the events of this passage had already taken place, at the exact time of the resurrection.<sup>169</sup>

The exact moment when Christ, accompanied by an angel, rescued the "first parents" of mankind from the depths, witnessed by the Old Testament Kings, David and Solomon, is the one represented in the Zeno chapel. No doubt the missing lower part of the panel contained the customary chained devil, recumbent under Christ's feet. The main clue to the relationships of this and other anastasis panels, and to the exact textual source used, is the presence of the angel, for it is by no means a common iconographic feature, and is absent from all other eighth and ninth-century Roman examples. The John VII mosaic from Old St. Peters (705-707), known from Grimaldi's drawing,<sup>170</sup> and the two paintings from S. Maria Antiqua which have been dated to the same pontificate,<sup>171</sup> all omit the angel, and, in spite of the fact that David plays a major part in the Gospel of Nicodemus text, the Old Testament kings are also absent. The implication that the Zeno chapel version comes from a different source from these other Roman versions is inescapable.

Cecilia Davis-Weyer has linked the presence of the angel in the Zeno chapel anastasis with the Greek recension, late and rare though it was, of the Descensus chapter.<sup>172</sup> This is because only in this Greek text was Christ specifically described as accompanied by angels on his descent:

Then the King of Glory took hold upon the head of the chief ruler Satan and delivered him into the angels and said 'Bind down with irons his hands and his feet and his neck and his mouth.'<sup>173</sup>

This identification is in question, though, not only because of the discrepancy in the numbers of angels, but because of the existence of other texts in which a single angel does play an important part. For example, in the Latin recension of the Descensus chapter, following right after the previously quoted passage we read that Christ

holding the hand of Adam [as in the Zeno chapel panel] delivered him into Michael the Archangel and all the saints followed Michael the Archangel and he brought them all into the glory and beauty of Paradise.<sup>174</sup>

The Apocalypse itself also refers to a single angel:

And I saw an angel coming from heaven with the key of the abyss.<sup>175</sup>

and it is possible that, in view of the western interest in the Revelation of John, which Davis-Weyer sees as influential in the origin of the Descensus chapter there, a mixed source might be possible for anastasis imagery, drawing on both the Apocalypse itself and on the Latin version of the Gospel of Nicodemus, if it is not indeed a straight illustration of the Latin text, which seems more likely.

Although it is obviously impossible to draw comparisons based on such features of the iconography (Hades, Satan, gates of hell) as are missing from the Zeno chapel mosaic, the angel itself has been the basis of comparisons by Davis-Weyer with Lombard frescoes and manuscripts of the early ninth century. These include the frescoes at Müstair (ca. 800),<sup>176</sup> and the manuscript illustrations of the Stuttgart psalter (ca. 820),<sup>177</sup> in both of which the anastasis rendering includes an angel. This iconographic formula, Davis-Weyer suggests, originated in Ravenna, passing from there to Lombardy, and thence to the Zeno chapel, which she feels is transitional in location and date between the Lombard examples and late tenth-century manuscript illustrations of the anastasis from southern Italy.<sup>178</sup>

Another solution to the problem is clearly possible if Davis-Weyer is correct in her derivation of the formula from Ravenna, and this is, of course, that the model arrived in Rome independently from the Exarchate rather than via an intermediate stage in Lombardy, and this would seem the preferred solution in view of the many other Ravennate elements in the Zeno chapel decoration.

One last element of the Zeno chapel anastasis must be mentioned as clearly originating right there in the chapel: the strigillated sarcophagus. This unique feature is almost certainly based on one or other of the fine strigillated sarcophagi which Paschal collected for his relic room and chapel. Visible to the mosaicists of 817, they are still present in the restored crypt under the high altar (Fig. 4).

#### c/4. The Panel on the North Wall (Fig. 21B)

The north (left) wall of the left-hand niche also includes an area beneath the vault-mosaic which undoubtedly once held a figural mosaic facing the anastasis panel across from it. Little remains of this mosaic but a heavily restored golden background with two light green spots in the upper left area and one pale blue fragment in the corner below them that were first noted by Brenk and are quite unreadable.<sup>179</sup> However, at the bottom right hand corner of the panel, partly hidden behind an electric cord, is a small circular motif, a black circle outlining a white dot, with two horizontal black stripes each of sixteen tesserae and separated by a narrow white line, right below it. I shall attempt to explain this feature--the last organised fragment of the mosaic panel--as a tiny piece of an architectural or manufactured object such as a tomb or sarcophagus.

#### Discussion

In contrast to other areas of the chapel in which the mosaics are limited to the area above the revetment, the burial site in this niche was enveloped by mosaic down to the level of the sarcophagus, making a splendid setting for Theodora's tomb. The subject matter of

the surviving side panel--Christ's resurrection and the salvation of human souls--was an appropriate choice in this location and must contain clues as to the nature of the scene right across from it which is now completely destroyed.

The panel must have had a meaning related to its precise location, adjacent to the tomb, to the portrait of its occupant, to the Virgin and saints, and to the scene of Christ's resurrection. Among likely subjects would have been a matching resurrection panel, such as the discovery of the empty tomb on Easter day, in which the tiny mosaic feature might have been part of the roof line of the tomb. Equally possible would be the raising of Lazarus, in which the mosaic detail would be the top line of Lazarus's upended tomb. It is worth noting that in the eighth century John VII mosaic at St. Peters, known from Grimaldi's drawing,<sup>180</sup> the raising of Lazarus and the anastasis occupied matching locations at bottom left and right corners of the panel, as befitted their status as "foretelling" and "fulfilling" images of the same dogma, and it was this subject, I would speculate, that occupied the destroyed panel above Theodora's tomb.

#### 4. The Mosaics of the Outer Entry Wall (Figs. 22 A and B)

The facade mosaic occupies a rectangular space over the door and is centred on the lunette window above it. There are two concentric series of medallion busts around this tall window. The inner arc contains eleven medallions of equal size on a golden panel shaped like an inverted horseshoe, with an inner frame of blue. At the summit, Mary, dressed in a dark blue maphorion with gold crosses above the brow and on the shoulders and a continuous gold border around her face, holds the Christ Child in front of her. We recognise Mary's features from her likeness inside the chapel. The Child wears a golden robe trimmed with red, and his "halo" is marked by triple gold lines which, although not contained in a circle, suggest a cross behind his head. His figure is cut off by the clipeal frame at the base of the neck. Mary, like all the other saints on this façade, has

no inner nimbus, but the circular outline of the clipeus fulfils the function of a halo. The background of this "halo" is gold, the frame a double row of red.

In the place of honour on Mary's right is a cleric, young and tonsured, dressed in a yellow tunic with two thin red clavi on either shoulder. His features, especially the pointed chin and the hair, which covers his brow to the tops of the ears, are those of the unnamed young deacon on the extreme right of the apse mosaic at S. Prassede. On Mary's left is the same tonsured, bearded and white-haired priest, dressed in a red chasuble with a thin white border around the neck, that appears in the west niche of the chapel on the right hand of Christ.

Below these in additional medallions, four to a side, are the bust-length images of eight young women, all brown-haired and wearing crowns, hoop earrings and jewelled collars. The top two must represent Praxedis and Pudentiana; the identities of the others will be discussed below. The clipeal discs, framed in red with an inner white line, are cerulean blue. The saints' crowns, all different but all equally elaborate, are of the type worn by Praxedis in the east lunette. Their earrings are gold hoops, each with three pendant jewels indicated by single tesserae. Their jewelled collars are of different designs but equal dimensions. Their young and beautiful faces are individualised. The clipei of this series touch or almost touch each other; a slight assymetry of the layout makes the bottom one on the right noticeably higher than its pair on the left. The zone of clipei is framed by a wide, dark-blue stripe following the horseshoe shape.

Outside this inner zone there is a wider arc of dark blue on which, like beads on a string, are clipei containing the bust-length figures of the apostles, six on either side of Christ, who occupies a larger clipeus overlapping the golden zone above Mary's head. Just as the gold background of the inner group was framed in blue and then gold, so here the blue background is outlined in gold with a narrow blue frame beyond, enclosing both clipeate zones. This frame is

itself enclosed in a jewelled chain outline, as is the whole rectangular mosaic panel. The two concentric horseshoe-shaped decorative panels entirely fill the rectangular space except for two triangles at the top corners, where busts of prophets in golden clipei outlined in red are set on a blue ground framed in a wide gold and a narrow blue stripe; and for two oblong panels at the bottom corners, where there are representations of two popes in double tiaras which reflect the subject matter of earlier paintings in this location.<sup>181</sup>

The clipei of the outer arc are of approximately the same size as those of the inner one, with the exception of that of Christ, which is twice as large, and those of the prophets, which are of intermediate size. Christ, a gold cross outlined in the gold disc behind his head, wears golden clothing--tunic and cloak--detailed in red. The front edge of his cloak, the tunic's neckline, his dark brown hair and his lighter moustache and short, fringing beard are all outlined in black. His hair has two black locks at the central parting. His right hand is raised to bless in the Greek style. The broad cross in his "halo" is defined in red; each of its rays contains three white stripes. His gaze is directed outwards.

The six busts on either side of Christ are not inscribed with names, but conform, at least in part, to the recognised iconography of the apostles, which will be discussed below. They are all shown in three-quarter view, their heads and shoulders turned towards the central figures of Christ and the Theotokos. They are identically dressed in white cloaks and tunics with the folds and details picked out at random in blue, black or red. The prophets in the top corners of the panel are similarly dressed. Both are old, with long, white hair and a lock at the brow. The one on the left, of identical iconographic type to Elijah in the transfiguration mosaic inside the chapel, has a round, rosy face and forked white beard; the other one has a thinner face and pointed beard.

### Discussion

The presence of clipeate images of apostles, prophets and saints on the façade of the Zeno chapel is another example of Paschal's choice of traditional formulae for his mosaic programmes. The clipeus or medallion portrait bust had been used in sculptural settings through the classical and Hellenistic periods in Greece and was adopted also in the victory iconography of the Romans and used on their funerary monuments. Many examples have come down to us on late Antique sarcophagi. Related forms are found on commemorative gold glass portrait beakers which also occur in Roman burials: these portrait busts also are enclosed in a circular frame which is here set into the base of the cup. Christian examples of this iconography seem to date from after the Peace of the Church, and, Grabar has suggested, have assimilated both the victory and the funerary meanings of the pagan motif, combining them in a statement of the Christian's victory over death.<sup>182</sup> So, in the Christian setting, these almost always represent deceased but victorious saints, apostles or martyrs; or they are images of the Theotokos in her aspect as Virgin of Victory, the Nikopeia, or of the risen Christ himself. The images are presented in frontal or near frontal view, like icons prepared for the devotion of the faithful.

From the fourth century, such imagines clipeatae also occur in groups, like portrait galleries, and these groups also have classical precedents, for in antiquity it was common to commemorate a group of famous men, such as doctors or philosophers, in this way. The earliest surviving Christian example occurs on the Brescia casket, a fourth-century ivory box with clipeate images of Christ and the twelve apostles.<sup>183</sup> Several early Roman churches were decorated with pictures of the "collegium" of the apostles: among the earliest the full-length figures of the apostles on the apse at S. Agata dei Goti.<sup>184</sup> Most significant in connection with the Zeno chapel's collegium was the decoration formerly on the triumphal arch at S. Sabina (422-432). This, while lost, is known from a seventeenth-century drawing<sup>185</sup> and

was certainly visible in Paschal's time. The clipeate images of fourteen--possibly sixteen--apostles flanked that of Christ at the height of the arch: the arrangement following the arch's curve was reminiscent perhaps of the classical groups so often portrayed seated at a sigma table. As at the Zeno chapel they framed an archway, and each clipeus not only framed the image but also suggested a halo. Here, too, inscriptions seem to have been absent, and the figures were shown in three-quarter view.

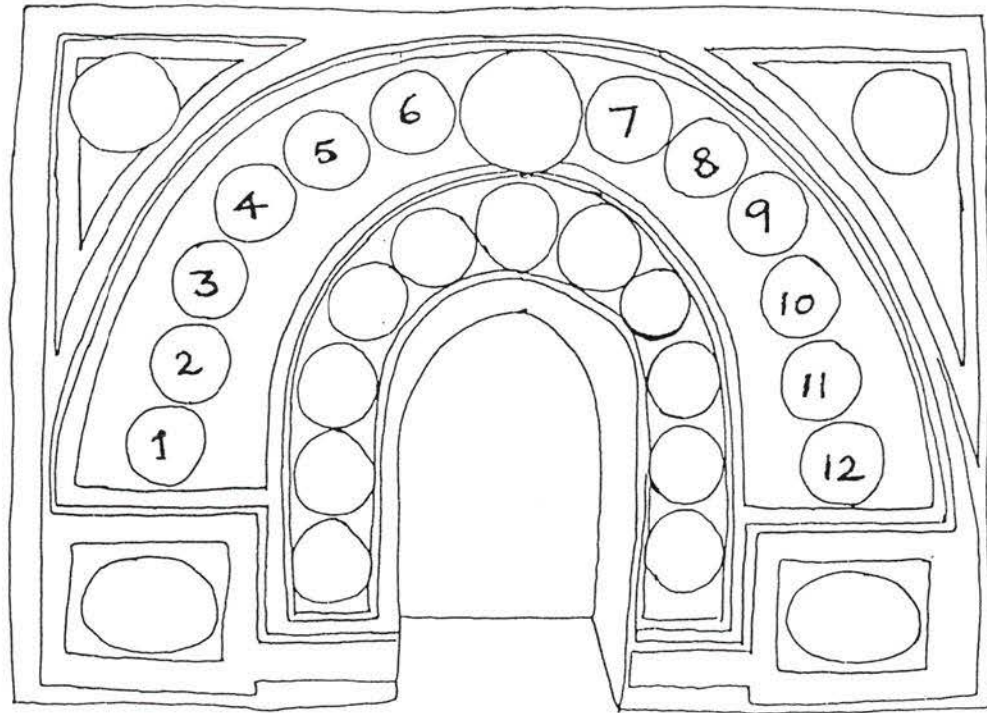
Ravenna was also the site of several sets of apostle images in medallions, two of which survive.<sup>186</sup> The church of S. Vitale has "portraits" of Christ, the Twelve, and the Ravenna martyrs Protase and Gervase,<sup>187</sup> in elaborate frames and inscribed, in the soffit of the bema arch. A second set of clipeate images survives in the Archbishops' chapel (ca. 510) where they occupy the soffits of the four niches of the little chapel: in each niche there are six, surrounding an image of Christ or of his symbol. In the east and west arches the twelve apostles are found, named by inscription. The clipei in the north and south arches feature six virgin martyrs and six church fathers, likewise named. The six women chosen, from left to right, are Cecilia, Eugenia, Eufimia [sic], Daria, Perpetua and Felicitas. They are rare prototypes for the Zeno chapel's series of virgin martyrs on the façade, their rarity underlined by the fact that only one other comparable series has survived from the period, the series at Poreč (ca. 550) where they adorn the soffit of the main arch of the apse, flanking the image of the Lamb. There, the medallions are alternately dark and light blue, contained in gold outlines which also serve as haloes. Named by inscription the virgin martyrs chosen are, from left to right, Felicitas, Basilissa, Eugenia, Cecilia, Agnes and Agatha, Eufemia, Tecla, Valeria, Perpetua, Susanna and Justina. Common to both these programmes are Felicitas, Perpetua, Eugenia, Euphemia and Cecilia. Von Simson, discussing the choice of virgin martyrs in the long procession in S. Apollinare Nuovo, points out that it represents those saints who are listed in the diptychs of the Roman

or Ambrosian canons of the Mass plus those who are specially invoked in Ravenna's ancient litanies, and that all these were seen as being present at every eucharistic rite.<sup>188</sup> It seems likely that the same sort of thinking may have inspired Paschal to include in his group of virgin martyrs on the Zeno chapel façade those who were invoked in the Roman rite, whose names would have been so familiar through repetition, that, like the apostles, they did not require naming by inscription. The canon of the Roman Mass names Felicitas, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucia, Agnes, Caecilia and Anastasia. These, in addition to Praxedis and Pudentiana, seem to be the most likely candidates for inclusion in Paschal's programme, with Praxedis and her sister; Cecilia, Agnes and Agatha the most certain of all, for all were subjects of Paschal's devotion, as evidenced by their inclusion in his other mosaics. Only three places remain, to be filled by the other four saints from the liturgical list, Perpetua, Felicitas, Lucia and Anastasia. A possible solution might be the omission of Felicitas altogether for her usual iconography shows her as an older woman dressed in a simple maphorion.<sup>189</sup> She was, after all, a slave and a mother in her earthly life. Perhaps Paschal chose only those of the Roman canon saints who could reasonably be shown as young and beautiful princesses in Byzantine court dress: Agnes, Agatha, Cecilia, Anastasia, Lucia and Perpetua. Of course, this identification must remain entirely conjectural, in the absence of any inscriptions or documentation. Attending on Mary, who again appears as Virgin Nikopeia, (as I have proposed she was originally shown in the left niche of the chapel), the female saints flank the figures of two male saints who occupy the places of honour beside her.

The elderly tonsured cleric in a red chasuble on Mary's left is identical with the priest who stands on Christ's right in the west lunette. He has been identified as Zeno or Pastor. Zeno seems more likely since it is his recorded burial place. Logically, he should be in the position of honour, beside Christ inside; beside Mary on the façade. The younger cleric on Mary's right, who seems identical with the deacon on the S. Prassede apse mosaic has sometimes been seen as

Zeno,<sup>190</sup> but there is little reason to suppose this young deacon represents the Zeno, priest and martyr, of the inscriptions. I would prefer Krautheimer's identification of the young man as one of the brothers of Praxedis, which would be supported by the legend of their lives.<sup>191</sup> According to their Acts<sup>192</sup> the sisters had two brothers, Novatus, and Timothy, a priest. Novatus is recorded in the Roman martyrology as a saint who, dying young, left his worldly goods to Praxedis and her guardian, Pastor, for use in the Christian ministry. He, like his brother and sisters, was instructed in the Faith by the apostles and baptised by them. Like them, he represented the very first generation of Roman converts made by the apostles themselves. Moreover, by his example and his legacy, he made Praxedis' saintly life possible. These would be the reasons for his inclusion in Paschal's mosaic programme. The outer zone of medallions is centred on an image of Christ which is almost identical to the two portrayals inside the chapel. It is distinguished from them by the two locks of hair at the brow and the hand raised to bless. This version of Christ may be related to one on the coinage of Justinian II, 685-95, 705-11.

The apostle medallions beside Christ pose several questions, as to which of various possible groupings was chosen, the degree of individuation attempted, and the order of precedence as indicated by their arrangement. In the West, the lists given in the synoptic gospels were usually followed, while that in the Acts of the Apostles was often preferred in the East.<sup>193</sup> There, also, a full set of the four evangelists often replaced some of the less important apostles, for there seems to have been resistance to the idea of showing any grouping in excess of twelve, even through any comprehensive list that included the evangelists, Paul, and replacements for Judas would have numbered fourteen to sixteen.<sup>194</sup> No doubt the number twelve had mystical significance. Doubtless, also, any group of twelve men portrayed with Christ needs no inscription for its meaning is clear. However, our success in identifying the particular group depicted here will depend on the degree of individuation achieved by each apostle.



Text-Figure 1. Facade Mosaic-Plan.

The leading apostles are easily recognisable on the façade, for they have a defined iconography and are named inside the chapel; they also occur on the S. Prassede triumphal arch inside the heavenly city, where, although lacking inscriptions, they can also be recognised.<sup>195</sup> Thus Paul is on Christ's right, balding and with a long, pointed beard, according to established tradition. Peter, to Christ's left is also recognisable, as are Andrew and James beside him, who follow exactly the formulae established for them inside the chapel. The other eight apostles (numbered 1-5 and 10-12 in text-Fig. 1, p. 79) are more problematical. In position 10, next to James, his brother, it would appear that we have John (though 4 and 12 are of the same iconographic type). In position 3, we may have Bartholomew, who appears at Lythrankomi,<sup>196</sup> Poreč,<sup>197</sup> S. Vitale, Ravenna<sup>198</sup> and Sinai,<sup>199</sup> as here, as a young, dark-haired, bearded man. Philip should be in position 11, for the dark-haired type with a pointed beard matches the iconographic type of Philip at Sinai, Lythrankomi, S. Vitale and on the sixth-century Cleveland tapestry.<sup>200</sup> Thomas, a young, clean-shaven man throughout Early Christian art, may be in position 4. Positions 1 and 2 I believe to be filled by Mark and Luke respectively: frequently in Eastern versions these evangelists displace James Alphaeus, Jude or Simon, as at Lythrankomi and Sinai.<sup>201</sup> Although both are shown grey at S. Vitale and Sinai, at Lythrankomi and on Maximian's throne, Ravenna,<sup>202</sup> each has dark hair and an incipient beard, as here. On the Zeno chapel façade they exactly conform to Megaw and Hawkins' words about the Maximian's throne evangelists:

the narrow, pointed head of his neighbor conforms with the normal type of Luke" and "the broad-headed, somewhat uncouth figure . . . is surely Mark, the servus servorum Dei.<sup>203</sup>

The grey-haired apostle in position 5 should be Matthew, whose usual iconographic type has white hair and beard, as at S. Vitale, Poreč and

Sinai, (though he is young and beardless at the earlier Ravenna Archbishops' chapel). This leaves only 12 undecided: his portrayal as a dark-haired, clean-shaven young man suggests various possibilities, among them Simon, who is shown thus at Ravenna's Orthodox baptistry and at Poreč, or James Alphaeus or Jude, who are also of this type at Poreč. It is not possible to make a final decision on the available evidence.

The two elderly bearded figures in the top corners of the panel adhere to the generalised, venerable type laid down for the major prophets in iconographic guides such as that of Elpius the Roman, of the ninth or tenth century.<sup>204</sup> The prophet on the right, with his double-pointed beard, has features identical with Elijah's on the transfiguration panel inside the chapel, and should be so identified. The formula adopted for the left hand prophet is too generalised to make a certain identification possible: perhaps Isaiah or Ezekial is intended, for they are usually portrayed as aged men with white beards and fine features. In view of the apocalyptic and eschatological focus of the chapel's programme, one should also consider the "two witnesses" of Revelation, 11, who were given power to prophesy and give testimony about the end of the world, and are variously identified as Zerubbabel and Joshua, or Elijah and Moses.<sup>205</sup> Since the Descensus chapter of the Gospel of Nicodemus provides the text for other parts of the programme, the prophets Enoch and Elias (Elijah), "two men, ancients of days" who had been taken alive into paradise to fight the Antichrist, and, according to the Latin version of the Descensus chapter, were encountered there by Michael the Archangel with the saints he had brought to paradise from Hades, are also a distinct possibility.<sup>206</sup> This would make the choice Moses or Enoch: the iconographic type would seem to favour the latter, though Enoch is rarely if ever depicted in the art of the early Middle Ages. Oakeshott's identification of them as the two saints John<sup>207</sup> seems unlikely in view of the rarity of an elderly formula for St. John the Evangelist.

Chapter II Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>A. Ovadiah, Geometric and Floral Patterns in Ancient Mosaics, Rome, 1980, 118, notes that egg and dart is a common architectural and painted pattern in the classical period and derives it ultimately from architecture. In mosaic, it is used in Ravenna as the upper part of the frame of the 'Theodora' panel at S. Vitale, 547 A.D., at Milan in the chapel of S. Victor at S. Ambrogio (late fourth century) and in Rome in the Lateran baptistery narthex.

<sup>2</sup>Alison Frantz, 'Byzantine Illuminated Ornament,' Art. Bull., 16, 1934, 43-76, writes of the wreath motif (p. 47) that the ribbon bows which originally tied the wreath at the bottom became drawn up within the circle and lost their original meaning. Perhaps this is what has happened here: the prototype wreath of laurel leaves was bilaterally symmetrical, necessitating a change of direction at both top and bottom, which is here marked by the double circles.

<sup>3</sup>If the figures of the saints on the upper walls are taken as the unit of size, the angels are approximately twice, and Christ's figure three times as large.

<sup>4</sup>Cited by Paolo Verzone, 'Il Palazzo Arcivescovile e l'oratorio di S. Andrea di Ravenna,' XII Corso di Cultura sull'arte Ravennate e Bizantina, Ravenna, 1966, who also notes the long history of this iconography: in Egypt, on a stone soffit at Dendera; in the Roman Imperial era, the sky held up by Atlas or by Victory; even in mosaic pavements, as in one at the Vatican; and in a vault, as at Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli.

<sup>5</sup>Numerous examples include the Winged Victory of Samothrace.

<sup>6</sup>Sarigüzel sarcophagus! Istanbul Archaeological Museum. J. Beckwith, Early Christian and Byzantine Art, plate 33.

<sup>7</sup>The Archbishops' chapel dates from era of Peter II, Bishop of Ravenna (494-519). G. Bovini, Eglises de Ravenna--The Churches of Ravenna, Novara, 1960, plate, p. 72.

<sup>8</sup>Bovini, Eglises, plate, p. 122.

<sup>9</sup>Bovini, Eglises, plates, pp. 120, 121.

<sup>10</sup>Richard Krautheimer, Rome, 51.

<sup>11</sup>Cecilia Davis Weyer, Sources and Documents, ed. Janson, Early Medieval Art, 300-1150, Englewood Cliffs, 1971, 34-36.

<sup>12</sup>Krautheimer, Rome, 51, Fig. 47; Vatican Library Barb. lat. 4424 fol. 33r: "Sixteenth century archaeologists called them angels, but half-naked as they were, they might as well have been pagan geni. They carried on raised arms a roundel enclosing a cross, perhaps the only feature added by pope Hilarus," Krautheimer, Rome, 51.

<sup>13</sup>An earlier date than 817 has been suggested for this iconography, based on the description by the tenth-century poet, Constantinus Rhodius, of the Church of the Holy Apostles, Constantinople, which included in the centre of a raised dome

"a representation of Christ as if he were the sun, a wonder exceeding all wonders."

This has been seen by some scholars as preiconoclast, even as early as the reign of Justin II (565-578); others, Cyril Mango included, have seen it as Middle Byzantine, in which case it would fit into the supposed evolutionary sequence of vault imagery. Mango, The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453--Sources and Documents, Englewood Cliffs, 1972, 199, gives a translation of Constantinus Rhodius' poem on the Church of the Holy Apostles. See especially verses 626 and 737.

<sup>14</sup>Gervase Mathew, Byzantine Aesthetics, London 1963, 99 and 173, note 10, gives the text of the 82nd canon as follows:

"In order that perfection be represented before all peoples even in paintings, we ordain from now on that the human figure of Christ our God, the Lamb, who took on the sins of the world, be set up even in the images instead of the ancient lamb. Through this figure we realise the height of the humiliation of God the Word and are led to remember his life in the flesh, his suffering and his saving death and the redemption ensuing from it for the world."

<sup>15</sup>Brenk, Bildprogramm, 214.

<sup>16</sup>Revelation, 5<sup>8</sup>, 7<sup>9</sup>, 14<sup>1</sup>, etc.

<sup>17</sup>Per Jonas Nordhagen, "John VII's 'Adoration of the Cross' in S. Maria Antiqua," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 30 (1967), 388-90.

<sup>18</sup>A discussion of this idea will be found in O. Demus, Byzantine Mosaic Decoration, London, 1948, 144.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 53; 18-19.

<sup>20</sup>See R. J. H. Jenkins and C. A. Mango, "The Date and Significance of the 10th Homily of Photius," DOP, 9/10, (1956) 123-41. Also, Mango, Art, 203, gives a quotation from sermon 34 of Leo VI (866-912), in which he refers to the Pantocrator image in the church of Stylianos Zaoutzas, built around 886-893 "In the centre (of

the church), i.e. in the segment of a sphere that rises at the summit, is an image that lacks the lower part of the body. I think that the artist wishes, by means of this treatment of the picture, to offer a mystical suggestion of the eternal greatness inherent in the one represented, i.e. that his incarnation on earth did not detract from his sublimity, and even when he submitted to the ultimate humiliation he retained the majesty he had previously enjoyed with his Father . . . this is how I understand the artist's intention, namely, why he excised from the image the lower members of the body."

<sup>21</sup>The description of the post-iconoclastic mosaic decoration of the palace church at Constantinople (Michael III's S. Mary of the Pharos rather than Basil I's Nea Ekklesia as originally thought) occurs in Homily X of the Patriarch Photius, which was probably delivered at the inauguration of the church in 864. Jenkins and Mango, Date, 125-140. Summary in Mango, Homilies of Photius, Dumbarton Oaks, 177-183, with a translation of the text, 184-192.

<sup>22</sup>This image has been variously set in the seventh or the ninth century. See M. Chatzidakis, "An Encaustic Icon of Christ" in Studies in Byzantine Art and Archaeology, London, 1972, 202, note 20.

<sup>23</sup>Here Christ, shown as an older child on his mother's knee, holds the scroll in this fashion. A. H. S. Megaw and E. J. W. Hawkins, The Church of the Panagia Kanakaria, Dumbarton Oaks, 197, plate 135. The authors suggest an early Justinianic date for the mosaic, perhaps in the late 520s (pp. 137-40).

<sup>24</sup>Megaw and Hawkins, Church, 90-91. This iconography of the scroll can be seen in the right apse of S. Costanza, Rome; at S. Vitale; and in the lost apse mosaic of S. Agata Maggiore, Ravenna.

<sup>25</sup>The Madonna and Child with saints and Pope Zacharias from the Theodotus chapel at S. Maria Antiqua, now in the Antiquarium Forense, Rome. J. Osborne also cites an example in S. Clemente, Rome, and one (now lost) in S. Lorenzo fuori le mura as probably also eighth-century examples of the same iconographic type. John Osborne, "Early Medieval Painting in San Clemente, Rome: The Madonna and Child in the Niche," Gesta, XX, 1981, 300, 305, 307.

<sup>26</sup>The term "closed" was suggested by Chatzidakis, Icon, who distinguishes an icon Christ-type on this basis from the related bust-length Pantocrator. The sixth-century Sinai icon of Christ belongs to this "closed" type.

<sup>27</sup>Chatzidakis, Icon, Fig. 10, Solidus of Justinian II in Numismatic Museum, Athens.

<sup>28</sup>Chatzidakis, Icon, 201 and note 15, translation in text with Greek original in footnote.

<sup>29</sup>Chatzidakis, Icon, 201.

<sup>30</sup>A. Grabar, L'iconoclasme Byzantin, dossier archeologique, Paris, 1957.

<sup>31</sup>See G. Ferguson, Signs and Symbols in Christian Art, Oxford, 1954, 21. The lamb alludes to S. John's "recognition of Christ as the Lamb of God at the time of His Baptism." Usually the lamb is held in his left hand, as is this cross: a further example is found on the sixth century ivory chair of Maximian in Ravenna where the lamb is on a disc held in the left hand of the saint. Beckwith, Early Christian, plate 94.

<sup>32</sup>C. Walter, "Two Notes on the Deesis," Revue des études Byzantines, (26) Paris, 1968, 311-36, esp. 324, reprinted in Studies in Byzantine Iconography, Variorum reprints, London, 1977.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 323.

<sup>34</sup>J. Beckwith, The Art of Constantinople, London 1961, 169.

<sup>35</sup>Walter, Notes, gives these extra shades of meaning, attributing the idea of prayer to Th. Von Gogyay and that of Judgment to L. Bréhier.

<sup>36</sup>G. Matthiae, Mosaici Medioevali delle Chiese di Roma, Rome, 1967, 241.

<sup>37</sup>This idea discussed in Mango, Art, 149-150, quotation, idem, 150.

<sup>38</sup>Walter, Notes, 327, 332.

<sup>39</sup>For a discussion and plates of the Sinai "Deesis" see George Forsyth, Kurt Weitzmann et al., The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai, the Church and Fortress of Justinian, Ann Arbor, 1965, especially the Introduction by K. Weitzmann, and plates CIII, CXXII, CXXIII. The Lamb of God in the centre of the arch is proposed as the third person of the deesis by Weitzmann, Introduction, 13.

<sup>40</sup>This question, of the meaning of the medallion images, remains an open question in the literature.

<sup>41</sup>These collars are similar to those worn by the ladies of Theodora's court in the mosaics of S. Vitale, Ravenna, lacking only the drop pendants. Katharine Brown, "The Mosaics of San Vitale: Evidence for the Attribution of some Early Byzantine jewelry to Court Workshops," Gesta, 18/1, 1979, 57-58 and Figs. 2-4, has remarked on the similarities between the Ravenna mosaics and a gold collar of the sixth or seventh century found in Egypt and now in Berlin.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., Fig. 7.

<sup>43</sup>Pudentiana's earrings are of the type shown in K. Brown, Mosaics, Fig. 13. Similar earrings are worn by S. Albina in a wall painting at Zagarolo near Rome, see J. Osborne, "Notes on early Wall-Painting in Lazio," Medieval Lazio, B.A.R. International series, 125, 1982, 297, plates 5, 11. The child in the donor panel of the Theodotus chapel paintings (eighth century) at S. Maria Antiqua, Rome, is also shown wearing this type of earring. K. Brown, Mosaics, 57, points out the preference of the Romans for pearls, the most prized of jewels. Smaragdus (emeralds) and hyacinths (blue) were also popular, hyacinths especially from the sixth century on.

<sup>44</sup>Although these books might be interpreted as scrolls, I prefer Baldoria's interpretation of them as closed books. N. Baldoria, Capella, 260.

<sup>45</sup>Reau, Louis, Iconographie de l'art Chrétien, Paris, 1956, Vol. III, 3. P-Z (Répertoires), 1119--Praxède et Pudentienne--"Vierges romaines du IIe siècle qui, sans avoir elles-mêmes subi le martyre, furent associées ou même assimilées aux vraies martyres parce qu'au péril de leur vie, elles epongeaient le sang des chrétiens suppliciés, lavaient et enterraient leurs cadavres."

<sup>46</sup>Inscription of S. Prassede apse mosaic: Chapter 1, note 7.

<sup>47</sup>Ferrari, Guy. Early Roman Monasteries. Notes for the history of the monasteries and convents at Rome from the fifth to the tenth century--Vatican, 1957, 3-10, notes the first mention of this monastery in the early eighth century.

<sup>48</sup>"Oratorio sanctae Agnetis qui ponitur in monasterio qui appellatur Duo Furna fecit canistrum ex argento pens lib II unc VIII." Liber Pontificalis, II, 24.

<sup>49</sup>Liber Pontificalis, II, 55, lines 1-11.

<sup>50</sup>Ferrari, Monasteries, 4.

<sup>51</sup>Lists of Apostles: Matt. 10<sup>2-4</sup>, Luke 6<sup>14-16</sup>.

<sup>52</sup>Also Mark 3<sup>16-19</sup>, Acts 1<sup>13f</sup>.

<sup>53</sup>C. Ihm, Die Programme der Christlicher Apsismalerei, Wiesbaden, 1960, Fig. XV, 2.

<sup>54</sup>Acts 12<sup>1-3</sup>.

<sup>55</sup>"But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother," Galatians, 1, 19.

<sup>56</sup>John 1, 25-31.

<sup>57</sup>Otto von Simson, Sacred Fortress, Chicago, 1948, 17. This was a legend, apparently. But the actual relics of S. Andrew were in Constantinople from 357 A.D.

<sup>58</sup>According to Agnellus. Von Simson, *ibid.*, 130, note 54, and 17-18.

<sup>59</sup>Earliest examples of this iconography cited by A. Grabar, Christian Iconography, Princeton, 1968, especially Chapter 3, "The Portrait" and pages 68-70.

<sup>60</sup>Megaw and Hawkins, colour plate 142, plate 65, also 112-113. The Church of the Panagia Kanakaria . . ., DOP studies 14, 1977.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 112, note 483.

<sup>62</sup>Baldoria, Capella, 266, credits Müntz, Revue arch., 1874, 176, as having first noticed that the apostles named by inscription inside the chapel were recognisable by individual feature on the triumphal arch at S. Prassede, where they are unnamed.

<sup>63</sup>Hans Belting, Cyril Mango, Doula Mouriki, The Mosaics and Frescoes of St. Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) at Istanbul, Dumbarton Oaks, 1978, esp. chapter 2, "The Iconography of the Mosaics," by Doula Mouriki, and 71-73.

<sup>64</sup>Where the bishops were portrayed "in their role as representatives of the patriarchates of Orthodoxy," see Underwood in DOP 14, 218, and Mouriki, *ibid.*, 71, note 117.

<sup>65</sup>See Baldoria, Capella, 262, for an early note of this resemblance.

<sup>66</sup>Suggested by von Simson, Sacred Fortress, 102.

<sup>67</sup>This mosaic is known from two drawings of Cassiano dal Pozzo in the Royal Library, Windsor castle. Vol. 166, Antique Mosaics II, catalogue numbers 9221 (left half of arch) and 9218 (right half). Date: between 1630 and 1640. S. Waetzoldt, Die Kopien des 17 Jahrhunderts nach mosaiken . . . in Rom, München, 1964, 31, inventory numbers 64, 65; plates 34, 35.

<sup>68</sup>In the words of the sixteenth-century Roman antiquarian, Panvinio, translated by Davis-Weyer, Sources and Documents, 34-36.

<sup>69</sup>For a discussion of the traditio legis, and particularly of the Ravennate custom of showing Paul, not Peter, receiving the New Law, see Kostof, The Orthodox Baptistery of Ravenna, Yale, 1965, 68-70.

<sup>70</sup>From a letter of Cyril of Alexandria to Emperor Theodosius II, quoted by Kostof, *ibid.*, 80f.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>72</sup>Mouriki, Iconography, 58.

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*, 73. This prayer concludes the funeral service.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>75</sup>Drawings by Cassiano dal Pozzo illustrated in Waetzoldt, Kopien, Figs. 501, 502, and in Figs. 16B, 17B and 20 in this study.

<sup>76</sup>Matthew 17<sup>4-6</sup>, Mark 9<sup>2-8</sup>, Luke 9<sup>28-36</sup>.

<sup>77</sup>H. G. May and B. M. Metzger (editors), New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha, New York, 1973, 1258, note 9, 28-36.

<sup>78</sup>For example, in Luke 9, <sup>30</sup>.

<sup>79</sup>Von Simson, Sacred Fortress, 43.

<sup>80</sup>Von Simson, *ibid.*, 44 and 133, note 19 for Sermon 51 of Leo.

<sup>81</sup>Roof beam inscriptions at St. Catherine's date it between the death of Theodora, 548, and that of Justinian in 565.

<sup>82</sup>Forsyth, Weitzmann et al., Monastery of St. Catherine, plate 103.

<sup>83</sup>Von Simson, Sacred Fortress, chapter 3, esp. 40f., discusses the idea of martyrdom as a re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice.

<sup>84</sup>Luke 9, <sup>35</sup>.

<sup>85</sup>Mark 9, <sup>4</sup>. New Oxford edition.

<sup>86</sup>Forsyth, Weitzmann et al., Monastery of St. Catherine, 12, and W. C. Loerke, "Observations on the Representation of Doxa in the Mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore, Rome and St. Catherines, Sinai," Gesta, XX/1, 1981, for analysis of this scene.

<sup>87</sup>Luke 9, <sup>30</sup>.

<sup>88</sup>Weitzmann, in Forsyth, Weitzmann et al., Monastery of St. Catherine, 15.

<sup>89</sup>Beckwith, Early Christian, 55.

"At one time there was a large representation of the

Transfiguration on the eastern facade above the central apse . . . [it] is almost impossible to read."

Beckwith notes that the entire programme "stresses the Incarnation of the Son of Man and the Divine Nature of Christ."

<sup>90</sup>Forsyth, Weitzmann et al., Monastery of St. Catherine, 80.

<sup>91</sup>Drawing reproduced in Diega Giunta, 'I Mosaici dell' Arco absidale della Basilica dei SS. Nereo, ed Achilleo e L'Eresia Adozionista del sec VIII,' Roma e L'età Carolingia, Roma, 1976, 75 and Fig. 200.

<sup>92</sup>This idea stressed by C. Ihm, Programme, 69, who sees a dichotomy between eastern and western programmes. In the East, the connection between the transfiguration and the incarnation was brought out; in the West, that of the transfiguration and the victory of the cross. However, all four representations do seem to refer to both these dogmatic corrolaries, perhaps because Ravenna and Sinai and Poreč were all in the eastern sphere of influence and even SS. Nereo ed Achilleo shows eastern features, as in its architecture.

<sup>93</sup>Presumably the monophysites obtained some protection during Theodora's lifetime.

<sup>94</sup>See Diega Giunta, Mosaici, 195-200.

<sup>95</sup>See J. B. Russell, Dissent and Reform in the Early Middle Ages, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1965, 155.

<sup>96</sup>See Diega Giunta, Mosaici, 197, and Davis-Weyer, review of F. Rademacher, Die Regina Angelorum in der Kunst des Frühen Mittelalters, Dusseldorf, 1972, in Art. Bull., 1974, 598-99, esp. 599.

"Another western representation with Christological emphasis is a mosaic of Leo III in Santi Nereo ed Achilleo in Rome. . . . here we find the Regina Angelorum side by side with representations of the Transfiguration and Annunciation. This can best be understood . . . as a belated anti-adoptionist statement."

<sup>97</sup>The transfiguration was in the second most important location in the chapel (main apse) before the later Virgin and Child (Appendix 2) was inserted into the space below and partly in front of it.

<sup>98</sup>O. Demus, Byzantine Mosaic Decoration, 20, suggests that a Pantocrator image in such a location is an abbreviated ascension scene.

<sup>99</sup>W. Oakeshott, The Mosaics of Rome, Greenwich, Conn., 1967, 202, states that "on the white draperies (of the Triclinium fragments) the lines of the drawing were in green, as in S. Nereo."

<sup>100</sup>By Cassiano dal Pozzo, illustrated in Waetzoldt, Kopien, Fig. 504. Windsor Inv. 8933, Cat. no. 993; and Fig. 16B in this study.

<sup>101</sup>Brenk, Bildprogramm, and for the Chludov psalter illustration: M. B. Shepkina, Chludovskoi psalteriini, Moscow, 1977, 88; illustration to verse 12 of psalm 88.

<sup>102</sup>Wilpert, Die Römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der Kirchlichen Bauten vom IV-XIII Jahrhundert II, Freiburg 1917, plate 114, 1.

<sup>103</sup>L. Canina, Tempi Cristiani, Roma, 1846, 87 f. and plate XLIX.

<sup>104</sup>See note 99 above.

<sup>105</sup>Baldonia, Capella, 266, "I mosaici di questo capella erano arrivati a noi tutti sudici in modo da non potervisi quasi più distinguere neppur le figure. . . ."

<sup>106</sup>The cloak and dalmatic with tablions are identical in detail to those worn by S. Valerian, husband of S. Cecilia and a layman, in Paschal's apse mosaic in her basilica in Trastevere. See Oakeshott, Mosaics, plates 129, 131.

<sup>107</sup>See the restoration diagram in Matthiae, Mosaici.

<sup>108</sup>Windsor collection no. 8931. Waetzoldt, Kopien, Fig. 502, and 73, kat. no. 991. Also Fig. 17B.

<sup>109</sup>A chest of similar type forms the base of the twelfth-century tomb of Alphanus in the porch of S. Maria in Cosmedin, Rome. See John Osborne, "The Tomb of Alfanus in S. Maria in Cosmedin, Rome, and its place in the tradition of Roman funerary monuments," PBSR, 51, 1983, 240-47 and plate 13.

<sup>110</sup>Illustrated in von Simson, Sacred Fortress, plate 24c. Cassiano, while relatively accurate in his depiction of figures and inscriptions, is notoriously inaccurate in his renderings of non-figural, decorative elements such as border patterns. This, I believe, lends weight to the theory that his lattice-work panel was based on an actual pelta relief on the tomb, which may in turn be reflected in the pelta mosaic in the entrance soffit of the chapel.

<sup>111</sup>O. Panvinio, Le Sette Chiese di Roma, Roma, 1570, 332, "in quest' oratorio la ripose, sopra la quale (the column of the flagellation) sono i corpi di santo Valentino e di santo Zenone." See also Baldoria, Capella, 263-64, "scrive il Panvinio che i corpi di san Zenone e di san Valentino giacevano sopra di questa colonna, la quale fu ivi collocata nell'anno 1223."

<sup>112</sup>The date 1699 from Apollonj-Ghetti, Santa Prassede, Le chiese di Roma illustrate, 66, Roma, 1961 (Zeno chapel, 66-77), who mentions that the chapel contained a marble chest containing the relics of SS. Valentine and Zeno, which were removed in 1699. There is no information as to their present location.

<sup>113</sup>Champini, Vetera Monumenta, 1690-99 II, 143f., quoted by Baldoria, Capella, 264. Waetzoldt uses this identification in his catalogue of Cassiano dal Pozzo's drawings in the Windsor Collection. Waetzoldt, Kopien, 73.

<sup>114</sup>See C. Morey, Lost Mosaics and Frescoes of Rome, chapter 5. The Acts of Saints Pudentiana and Praxedis by "Pastor":-Migne, Patr. Graec. II, col. 1019 ff. are in the form of letters from Pastor, a priest and advisor to the children of Pudens, to Timothy, the eldest son, concerning Pudentiana's legacy of her worldly goods to Pastor and Praxedis.

<sup>115</sup>Liber Pontificalis, ed. Duchesne, II, 64.

<sup>116</sup>Baldoria, Capella, 266. "Al tempo del Ciampini (Vet. Mon., 151) queste due figure erano dipinte."

<sup>117</sup>See II Timothy 4,<sup>21</sup>. F. Holweck, A Biographical Dictionary of the Saints, St. Louis and London, 1924, 838, suggests that the virgin saints' father, Roman Senator Quintus Cornelius Pudens, was the son of another senator, also named Pudens. This older Pudens was the friend of Paul. Holweck thinks the saints' legend originates after the translation of relics in 817. This translation, he claims, included the relics of the senator Pudens.

<sup>118</sup>R. Krautheimer et al. According to Corpus, III, 235, the present plaque was apparently prepared during the 1730 restorations, but appears to follow, in general, the wording of what was a thirteenth-century original, and 236, "Ludovico Pico della Mirandola, Titular cardinal 1728-31 . . . apparently replaces with a more legible version the thirteenth-century original purporting to be the relic list of Paschal I." But see also J. Osborne, "The Portrait of Leo IV in San Clemente, Rome," PBSR, XLVII, 1979, esp. 62 where he quotes Ursula Nilgen's work concluding that only the first 37 lines of the inscription are original work of the ninth century and that the rest is a fourteenth-century replacement (probably following the original text).

<sup>119</sup>"Quinimmo et in eadem ecclesiam fecit oratorium beati Zenonis Christi martyris, ubi et sacratissimum eius corpus ponens musibo amplianter ornavit," Liber Pontificalis, II, 55.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., II, 64, gives text of marble plaque: ". . . et in ipso ingressu basilicae manu dextra ubi utique benignissimae suae genetricis scilicet domnae Theodoraepiscopae corpus quiescit condidit

iamdictus praesul corpora venerabilium haec Zenonis presbiteri et aliorum duorum."

<sup>121</sup>A text which would date the transfer of relics of Valentine to the papacy of Nicholas IV, 1288-1292, could not be reconfirmed by J. Osborne in the alleged source manuscript (cod. Vat. 3407, fol. 20). See J. Osborne, "Early Medieval Wall-Paintings in the Catacomb of San Valentino, Rome," PBSR, XLIX, 1981, 82-90, note 2.

<sup>122</sup>See note 110, above.

<sup>123</sup>de Rossi, Mosaici Cristiani di Roma, fasc XI e XII, quoted in Baldoria, Capella, 256, note 2. See also Baldoria, 258, for associations of Zeno and Valentine.

<sup>124</sup>Baldoria, Capella, 258.

<sup>125</sup>This basilica was repaired by Hadrian I (772-795) according to the Liber Pontificalis for his reign. See Baldracco, Note, 188. Zeno the brother of Valentine is listed in the De Locis Sanctorum Martyrium as buried in the Praetextatus cemetery along with Agapatus and Felicissimus who also share a saint's day--February fourteenth--with him and Valentine.

<sup>126</sup>A feature of an eastern variety of sheep.

<sup>127</sup>Genesis 2,<sup>10</sup>. The waters are thought of as having flowed out to the four corners of the known world.

<sup>128</sup>J. Daniélou, Primitive Christian Symbols, London, 1964. The quotation is translated from Cyprian's Epistolae, 73,<sup>10</sup>. Cyprian: Bishop of Carthage, 248-58, A.D.

<sup>129</sup>Daniélou, ibid., 30. A translation of Hippolytus of Rome's Commentary on Daniel, 1,<sup>17</sup>. Hippolytus: a mid-third century Roman priest, whose work is primarily concerned with exegesis--"the first Christian writer whose continuous commentaries on books of the Bible we possess." See Daniélou, "Patristic Literature," in the Pelican Guide to Modern Theology, Vol. II, Historical Theology, Penguin Books, 1969, 71-72. Daniélou remarks that Hippolytus' works contain the "symbols of the church which are destined to remain dear to the Roman church" including "the vine whose branches are the saints and whose clusters are the martyrs; the Paradise whose trees are the righteous and whose four rivers are the preaching of the Gosepl."

<sup>130</sup>Other patristic writers (Philon of Alexandria, Ambrose, Augustine) equate the four rivers with the four cardinal virtues. See Jean-Louis Maier, Le Baptistère de Naples et ses mosaïques, Fribourg, 1964, 134 f.

<sup>131</sup>C. Davis Weyer, Early Medieval Art, 20. This extract is from a letter dated 403 A.D. from Paulinus to a friend in Gaul who was building a church. Paulinus had devised both the programme at S. Felix, Nola, and the verses that explain it.

<sup>132</sup>Maier, Baptistère, 136. This was true for the Ambrosian and Gallican liturgies as well as the Gelasian.

<sup>133</sup>Translation from Maier's text in Baptistère, 136,  
 "C'est pourquoi je te bénis, Ô créature d'eau par le Dieu vivant, par le Dieu saint, par le Dieu qui, d'une seule Parole, au commencement te sépara de la terre et, te divisant en quatre fleuves, te commanda d'arroser toute la terre"  
 which in itself a translation from L. C. Mohlberg, Liber Sacramentorum Romanae Ecclesiae (Gelasianum), Roma, 1960, 73.

<sup>134</sup>Psalm 42,<sup>1</sup>. Augustine of Hippo: early fifth century. Already in the fourth century, S. Zeno of Verona (ca. 360-370) writes of the inclusion of this psalm in the baptismal liturgy, Maier, Baptistère, 133.

<sup>135</sup>Liber Pontificalis, I, 172 lines 6-12 and 174, lines 12-16, quoted by J. Croquison, "L'iconographie chrétienne à Rome d'après le Liber Pontificalis," Byzantion, XXXIV, 1964, 535-606. Maier, Baptistère, 138, remarks on the continuity of the use of deer as water spouts with similar usage in antique Roman baths, casting doubt on the meaning of such deer, which spout forth water rather than slake their thirst, in the baptismal context.

<sup>136</sup>Maier, Baptistère, 138.

<sup>137</sup>L. M. Ugolini, "Il Battistero di Butrinto," RAC 11, 1934, 265-83, esp. 271, and plate 267.

<sup>138</sup>E. Dyggve, History of Salonitan Christianity, Oslo, 1951, esp. 29-30 and Fig. II.

<sup>139</sup>A. Blanc, Le Baptistère de Valence, Gallia, 15, Paris, 1957, 111-1129, Fig. 21; summarised by Maier, Baptistère, 140.

<sup>140</sup>Maier, Baptistère, 131.

<sup>141</sup>Revelation 14,<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>142</sup>John 3,<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>143</sup>Romans 6,<sup>3-4</sup>.

<sup>144</sup>See S. Bottari, ravenna, il mausoleo di Galla Placidia, Tesori d'arte Cristiana, Bologna, 1966, 68, Fig. 1.

<sup>145</sup>Maier, Baptistère quotes Wilpert, Sarcofagi 1, Roma, 1929, 18, Fig. 5 and 16, Fig. 3.

<sup>146</sup>Restoration diagram in G. Matthiae, Mosaici.

<sup>147</sup>This colour scheme is more typical of Renaissance versions of Mary than those of the early Middle Ages.

<sup>148</sup>Waetzoldt, Kopien, Fig. 501, and 73. Cassiano's drawing: Inv. no. 8930, Antique Mosaics I, Windsor Castle Royal Library, Vol. 165; also Fig. 20 in this study.

<sup>149</sup>See Chapter III, section 2, for discussion of this border pattern.

<sup>150</sup>Waetzoldt, Kopien, 31, and Fig. 134. Windsor Inv., 9221. This drawing is small and sketchy but certainly represents a Nikopeia type image. It is shown in my Fig. 13.

<sup>151</sup>A Grabar, Christian Iconography, 36, cites a pagan funerary monument in the Aquileia Archaeological museum, comparing it with the Zeno chapel facade mosaic medallion of Mary as Virgin Nikopeia (plate 94).

<sup>152</sup>Grabar, Christian Iconography, derives this view from the writings of George Pisides, court poet of Heraclius.

<sup>153</sup>As evidenced in his inscription on the apse mosaic at S. Prassede. Chapter I, note 7.

<sup>154</sup>J. Osborne, "The Painting of the Anastasis in the Lower Church of San Clemente, Rome," Byzantion, LI, 255-87, esp. 282.

<sup>155</sup>Charles McClendon, "An Early Funerary Portrait from the Medieval Abbey at Farfa," Gesta, XXII/1, 1983, 13-26.

<sup>156</sup>For a full discussion of the "square halo" with references, see J. Osborne, Anastasis, esp. 269 f.

<sup>157</sup>Ibid., 270, note 44, refers to John the Deacon's Vita of Gregory I, Migne, PL 75, col. 231, written in the second half of the ninth century.

<sup>158</sup>For the role of women in the Roman Catholic church in the early Middle Ages, see Andrieu, Les Ordines Romani de Haut Moyen Age, IV, Louvain, 1965, 145 and note 1.

<sup>159</sup>For Paschal's parentage, see Liber Pontificalis, II, 52, line 1.

<sup>160</sup>Andrieu, Ordines Romani, 145.

<sup>161</sup>Though the daughter of Theodotus in the Theodotus chapel of S. Maria Antiqua, Rome, has a square halo, the head and halo are not well preserved.

<sup>162</sup>See page 64 and Chapter II, note 153.

<sup>163</sup>Grabar, Christian Iconography, 125.

<sup>164</sup>For text of Gospel of Nicodemus (Acta Pilati), see H. Kim, Gospel of Nicodemus, and M. R. James (tr.), The Apocryphal New Testament, Oxford, 1924.

<sup>165</sup>C. Davis Weyer, "Die Altesten Darstellungen der Hadesfart Christi, des Evangelium Nikodemi und ein Mosaik der Zeno-Kapelle," Roma e l'età Carolingia, Roma, 1976, 183-95, notes that in the east the earlier version was already widely distributed when the Descensus chapter surfaced in the west. Early eastern Anastasis iconography was based on elements which antedated the Gospel of Nicodemus, such as the figures of Adam and King David, and the shattered gates of hell, all present in many ancient liturgical texts and homilies.

<sup>166</sup>Quotations from Apostles' and Nicene Creeds from King James version, Book of Common Prayer.

<sup>167</sup>Davis-Weyer, Hadesfart Christi, 187.

<sup>168</sup>Revelation, 20<sup>1-2</sup>.

<sup>169</sup>Davis-Weyer, Hadesfart Christi, points out that even the young Augustine believed in a future Millenium, but that Ticonius' commentary on Revelation convinced him that the enchainment of Satan had already come about during Christ's lifetime. See Augustine, City of God, book 20, quoted by Davis-Weyer, *ibid.*, 187.

<sup>170</sup>Waetzoldt, Kopien, plate 478.

<sup>171</sup>Wilpert, R.M.M., plates 168, 2 and 167, 1. For evidence on dating see Nordhagen, "The Earliest decorations in Santa Maria Antiqua and their date," Acta R. Norv. 1 (1962), 53-72, esp. 70-71. See also J. Osborne, Anastasis, 251-87, esp. 261, for these eighth-century Roman examples.

<sup>172</sup>Davis-Weyer, Hadesfart Christi, 189.

<sup>173</sup>James (tr.), Apocryphal N.T., 136, Gk VII (XXIII).

<sup>174</sup>*Ibid.*, 140, Lat. A, IX.

- 175 Revelation, 20<sup>1-3</sup>.
- 176 C. Davis-Weyer, Hadesfart Christi, Fig. 189.
- 177 Stuttgart psalter: Wuerttembergische landesbibliothek, Stuttgart, Bibl. Fol. 23.
- 178 Exultet Roll, Vat. Lat. 9820; *ibid.*, Fig. 192, 193.
- 179 Brenk, Bildprogramm, 217.
- 180 Waetzoldt, Kopien, 69 cat. no. 897, and Fig. 480.
- 181 See Chapter II, note 115.
- 182 A. Grabar, L'imgo clipeata chrétienne, reprint 50 in L'art de la fin de l'antiquité et du moyen age, I, Paris, 1968.
- 183 Brescia casket: third quarter of fourth century. Brescia, Museo Cristiano. Beckwith, Early Christian, plate 35.
- 184 S. Agata dei Goti: apse mosaic destroyed by collapse of the apse in 1589, but known from drawings of Ciampini. See Ihm, Programme, Fig. IV-1.
- 185 S. Sabina, built and decorated with mosaics during the pontificate of Celestine I, 422-432. Modern copies of clipeate images in situ, shown in Basilica di santa Sabina all' Aventino, Roma (published by Dominican order, date and author unknown). Copies follow Ciampini, Vet. Mon. 1, plate XLVII; see Ihm, Programme, 151-53.
- 186 A lost decoration in S. Giovanni Evangelista, Ravenna, included portrait busts of 21 members of the Imperial family on the triumphal arch. This decoration was made to the order of Galla Placidia and is known from the account of the ninth-century archbishop Agnellus. Ihm, Programme, 16-17, 169-70, and Fig. 2, page 17.
- 187 Sons of S. Vitale, Gervase and Protase were especially venerated in Ravenna and listed in its diptychs. Von Simson, Sacred Fortress, 24-25.
- 188 *Ibid.*, 84.
- 189 Felicitas is portrayed as an older woman wearing a maphorion in the Archbishop's chapel in Ravenna. This formula was also followed in a painting discovered in 1812 in the Baths of Titus, Rome. This apse decoration, probably of seventh-century date, was dedicated to her and her seven martyr sons. See Ihm, Programme, 115, 147-48 and plate 26/3 which reproduces Ruspi's nineteenth-century drawing of the

apse composition. F. G. Holweck, Dictionary, 388, determined that the Roman saint of the seven sons, who died ca. 162, was not the same individual as the Carthaginian slave and mother who died with Perpetua in Carthage in 202-03. Whichever Felicitas is intended, the maphorion seems to have been appropriate. See also The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas, tr. R. E. Wallis, in The Ante-Nicene Fathers, III, Tertullian, London, 1931, 697-706.

<sup>190</sup>For example, by Oakeshott, Mosaics, 207.

<sup>191</sup>Krautheimer, Rome, 126.

<sup>192</sup>Acta Sanctorum, XVII, Maji, 17-19, 288-91.

<sup>193</sup>See Chapter II, notes 51-52.

<sup>194</sup>But the very early version at S. Sabina does seem to have had 14-16 medallions; they may not have included more than the twelve apostles, plus some local saints, as at S. Vitale.

<sup>195</sup>Baldoria, Capella, credits V. Muntz with being the first to recognise that Paschal's mosaicists were creating and maintaining recognisable facial types for each apostle in the 2-1/2 Collegia at S. Prassede and the Zeno chapel.

<sup>196</sup>For Lythrankomi, see Megaw and Hawkins, Church.

<sup>197</sup>For Poreč, Basilica Euphrasiana, see M. Prelog, Les Mosaïques de Poreč, and Ihm, Programme, 167-69, and plate XV/2.

<sup>198</sup>For San Vitale, Ravenna, see G. Bovini, Eglises.

<sup>199</sup>For Sinai, see Forsyth and Weitzmann, Monastery.

<sup>200</sup>For the Cleveland Tapestry, see D. Shepherd, "An Icon of the Virgin. A Sixth Century Tapestry Panel from Egypt," Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art, Jan. 1969.

<sup>201</sup>Megaw and Hawkins, Church, 107. The exclusion of James Alphaeus and Jude is allowed by the Synaxarion, Patmos manuscript, Patmos cod. 266, of the late ninth or early tenth century. The Cleveland tapestry, woven not long after the mid-sixth century in Egypt, must have had an earlier monumental model in which the extra evangelists had already displaced two of the apostles (Shepherd, Tapestry, 115).

Lythrankomi excludes James Alphaeus and Simon. The Cleveland tapestry excludes Simon, admits Matthias, Archbishop of Ethiopia.

<sup>202</sup>Maximian's throne, Beckwith, Early Christian, plate 94, Ravenna Archepiscopal Museum.

<sup>203</sup>Megaw and Hawkins, Church, III, note 473. Both these types are exactly followed at Lythrankomi. The Cleveland tapestry Mark is also of this type.

<sup>204</sup>Mouriki, Iconography, 48-51 and note 21.

<sup>205</sup>See Revelation, 11, <sup>1-13</sup>, and New Oxford Annotated Bible, 1502, note to Rev. 113.

<sup>206</sup>See James (ed.), The Apocryphal New Testament, Acts of Pilate, Latin A, IX, page 140.

<sup>207</sup>Oakeshott, Mosaics, 241, note 125.

## CHAPTER III

ABSTRACT AND VEGETATIVE ELEMENTS IN THE ZENO CHAPEL:  
THE NON-FIGURATIVE MOSAICS

(Text Fig. 2, p.100; Figs. 6, 8, 10, 12, 23-25, etc.)

There is no doubt that the figural scenes at the Zeno chapel are both the most noticeable and the most studied elements in its decorative programme. They would, however, give an altogether less rich effect were it not for the wealth of abstract and vegetal design which surrounds and enhances them. Rarely mentioned in the literature and almost never discussed, these designs will be found to shed additional light on the origins of Paschal's imagery, and to reinforce certain other conclusions about the use that he made of available source materials.

Each of the three arms of the cruciform chapel has a short barrel vault decorated with an abstract or vegetative design. The soffit of the deep archway over the main door also has a mosaic decoration, as do the embrasures of the three windows high up on the east, south and west walls. In addition, the figural scenes themselves and the architectural forms of the vault are framed and outlined with bands of decorative, abstract pattern.

The vault over the altar, and the embrasure of the rectangular window immediately above it are both decorated with acanthus scrolls inhabited by birds and beasts and enriched with leaves, flowers and fruit. The lateral vaults are enriched with carpet-like, geometric designs, while the entrance arch soffit bears an overall abstract design possibly based on the double axe or on the pelta shield, and related to one of the linear framing designs. The blocked side windows also have decorated embrasures; a simple mosaic pattern of concentric circles and starbursts between varicoloured stripes.

Text Figure 2

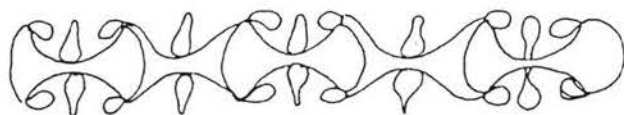


A. Monogramme of  
Paschal I.

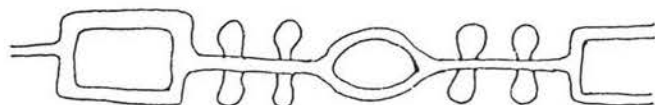


B.

Pelta chain



C.



D. Jewelled chain

### 1. The Soffit of the Entrance-Wall Arch (Figs. 23A-C)

The open archway over the entrance door frames an antique, alabaster vase, and seems to have little function other than as a setting for it. The vase stands at the midpoint of the section of classical architrave that forms the door frame lintel.<sup>1</sup> This vase appears to be part of Paschal's collection of antique marbles, and to have been part of the original decor, but there seems to be no record of its contents. It may hold, or have once held, relics of the saints that Paschal transferred to the church and chapel.<sup>2</sup> Its architectural frame, the archway, is decorated in a sumptuous mosaic pattern, made up of interlocking hourglass-shaped units outlined in white. Alternate units are shaded in dark blue through red to orange, and dark blue to green, which produces a rich, shaded abstract effect. At the middle of each unit there is a narrow, dark blue "waist," on either side of which is a white dot formed of a single white tessera.

### Discussion

The hour-glass or spool-shaped basic unit of this pattern has been traced back through classical antiquity to Minoan Crete. The motif, which occurs on a frieze at Knossos, may be based on the sacred double axe, and it is given this name by O'Connor, despite his suggestion that it is ultimately derived from "lotiform" pattern elements in ancient Egypt.<sup>3</sup> More recently, Ovadiah has used the term pelta for the pattern, referring to the motif's likeness to a pair of crescent-shaped Scythian shields.<sup>4</sup> The term pelta will be used here for convenience, while it is acknowledged that allometric transformations may make the double motif look more or less like a spool, a double-axe, or a pair of shields and that such resemblances are probably accidental.

Pelta was in widespread use as a floor pattern in Italy and North Africa throughout the Roman Republic and Empire. For example, it has been found in Italy at Pompeii,<sup>5</sup> and in North Africa, at Timgad.<sup>6</sup> It was very common up to the third century, but its

popularity declined between the third and sixth centuries. It was believed to have a prophylactic value, especially when it included other devices such as the ivy leaf in each unit, as at Timgad.<sup>7</sup> Widespread in the Roman world from Gaul to Greece<sup>8</sup> and Africa, and often embellished with the ivy leaf or arrow head motif in the centre, it disappeared from use in architectural settings around the sixth century<sup>9</sup> only to reappear among the many decorative patterns in use in Carolingian manuscripts of the Court School (mid-eighth to late ninth centuries). I shall attempt to show that pelta is used in these manuscripts in a way that clearly betrays that the original model was a mosaic, probably the decoration of an archway framing a venerable image or object, and that this model was probably transmitted from Ravenna to Charlemagne's scriptorium via a manuscript. A similar Ravennate pelta model was probably also transmitted to Rome, where it reappears in mosaic, once only, in the Zeno chapel. There, it decorates an archway in exactly the way pelta was employed in Carolingian manuscripts,<sup>10</sup> and, I would suggest, in some lost mosaic decoration in Ravenna which had served as a model for the manuscripts which found their way to Aachen and to Rome.

O'Connor could find no example of the use of pelta in monumental art, ivory or metalwork from either the eighth or the ninth century (he seems to have been unaware of the example in the Zeno chapel: its unique status does underline the rarity of the motif by this time). Nevertheless, the double axehead pattern was used extensively in the manuscripts of Charlemagne's scriptorium, from the earliest, the Godescalc Evangelistery (781)<sup>11</sup> to the latest, the Lorsch Gospels (ca. 810)<sup>12</sup> and the Gospels of St. Médard of Soissons.<sup>13</sup> The pattern was also repeated in those later Ottonian manuscripts which followed Court School models.<sup>14</sup> Pelta is used as a decorative motif in the circular and rectangular frames of illuminated pages, as well as on the narrow bands which frame the pages of text. It is also used as an all-over enrichment of the archways which are such a regular feature of canon table and Evangelist pages. The columns of these

archways have been shown to be inspired by the screen of vine-clad columns before the altar of Old St. Peters, Rome.<sup>15</sup> These framed the altar, just as the archways in the manuscripts frame and emphasise the subject of the miniatures, whether it is a figural image or the tables of biblical concordance.

In the Godescalc evangelistary, the pelta pattern is used in the upper left and lower right corners of the rectangular frame of the Christ in Majesty page.<sup>16</sup> Already here the narrow "waist" of the pattern unit bears three white dots on either side, in place of the ivy leaves of antiquity.<sup>17</sup> The circular frame of the analogous page of the Lorsch gospels<sup>18</sup> is decorated all over with pelta in pink or red shaded to dark blue, again with three dots on each side of the centre. The Lorsch "initial page"<sup>19</sup> which faces the Christ in Majesty has a pelta frame which uses a pair of single white dots in each double pelta unit. The Lorsch Canon Decimus page<sup>20</sup> has an archway with an all over pelta pattern in gold, grey and dark blue outlined in white. Similarities in the use of pelta in the manuscripts and the Zeno chapel include placement--on an archway--and details: white outline, white dot and shading. It seems likely that they do depend ultimately on a common model. The small white dots suggest that this model may have been in mosaic, each dot representing a tessera in the original. The connection between the Court School manuscripts and monumental prototypes, probably from Ravenna, has been worked out by Elisabeth Rosenbaum and Hugo Buchthal, among others, who have searched for late antique models for the figural and architectural elements of these manuscripts.<sup>21</sup> Although no page of a supposed intermediary manuscript has survived, it is thought that a variety of manuscripts--pre-iconoclast Byzantine, Ravennate, and Roman--were available as models in Charlemagne's scriptorium.<sup>22</sup> Rosenbaum, noting similarities between the Evangelist figures in the Godescalc manuscript and those in S. Vitale, Ravenna, makes a good case for a sixth-century manuscript illuminated in Ravenna being in use in the scriptorium.<sup>23</sup> Thus, even though the pelta pattern does not survive in Ravenna it probably did

occur there. This presumption is supported by the survival there of a similar, shaded and outlined, abstract pattern, the three-dimensional "Greek key" or "Maze" design. This not only frames a vault in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, but occurs alternately with pelta in the circular frame of the Lorsch "Christ in Majesty." It is also used in the illuminated text borders of the same manuscript, but does not seem to have survived elsewhere.

## 2. The Vault over the Altar (Figs. 24A, B, C)

This vault is richly decorated with a double "inhabited scroll" on a gold background.<sup>24</sup> The dull green scroll grows on either side from a large vertical acanthus leaf with a curly edge and a tall, triangular, central rib. From either side of the base a volute arises; the inner and outer whorls that are formed are filled with decoration. Much of the detail of this decoration can be deciphered, despite the poor condition of the mosaic, which has areas of heavy restoration.

Starting at the bottom left, facing the altar, the first two volutes contain a goose and a half-leopard. Above them are two generalised quadrupeds, perhaps a deer and a dog. Between these, a dove stands on the triple binding that links the two scrolls at their closest point. Next, a deer (?) faces inward towards an undecipherable, grey, half-animal. At the top of the arch, near the back wall is a damaged peacock (?), while near the outer edge is a half-lamb (?). Continuing to the right, the next two animals are undecipherable, though the outer one may be a half-rabbit. Next there is a white horse (?) on the inside; beside it a bird protome holds an orange twig in its mouth. At the bottom, another major acanthus motif containing a tall yellow rib gives rise to rich acanthus volutes on a background of restored red and orange flowers.

The thick main stems are dull green, while the fine stems are in terracotta and bear terracotta and orange flowers and fruit. Animal and bird figures are not modelled: their heavy black outlines are filled with white, yellow or grey tesserae, producing a crude, cut out

effect. Beaks and mouths are picked out in orange. These figures are mostly so generalised as to be virtually unidentifiable.

### 3. The Embrasure of the Window over the Altar (Figs. 14, 26B)

There is another inhabited scroll in this embrasure. Its single acanthus stem, in cobalt and copper blues, grows from triple leafy bases on either side. These bases are in light blue outlined with dark. The central leaf of each base has a pronounced vertical rib, and the two sides match. Each side of the embrasure carries four volutes, but the contents of the two lowest ones cannot be deciphered. In the second from the base on each side a white bird with two rings on the neck--a dove--pecks at a bunch of red grapes.<sup>25</sup> Each of the third volutes contains a large red rose, and each fourth one, a large bunch of red and dark blue grapes. Across the top of the window-frame several thin stems in dark or light blue carry red and royal blue flowers. The central area of mosaic is missing, though traces remain on the setting bed. It is not known if the sill is decorated, but the precedent of similar windows with undecorated sills at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia suggests that it is not.<sup>26</sup>

### Discussion of the Inhabited Scroll Decoration of the Altar Vault and Deesis Window

Toynbee and Ward-Perkins have traced the history of this decorative motif back to its Hellenistic roots, where it is first found in metalwork in the fourth century B.C.<sup>27</sup> The earliest friezes contained whole human figures rather than human or animal protomes. Both the single and the double running scroll, framing various living things, are found at Pergamon. In early Imperial Rome, both the acanthus plant and the contents of its volutes are shown in naturalistic form in sculptures, such as the relief decorations on Augustus' Ara Pacis, famous for their elegance of line. The motif continued to be used in sculptural reliefs and in the decoration of Corinthian capitals, along with the vine scroll, which was often similarly inhabited by

putti, birds and animals. Use of the motif continued through the ninth century. Toynbee and Ward-Perkins illustrate some pilaster faces which formerly framed the inscriptions on the tombs of five popes, the latest being Leo III, 795-816, and Leo IV, 847-855.<sup>28</sup> The year 855 thus constitutes a terminus ante quem. These decorations, they feel, show the "final stage of degeneration in the sculptured scrolls of Italy" with their half-beasts which are "grotesque wooden creatures" and "flat, plate-like flowers within the hard frills which do duty for acanthus whorls."<sup>29</sup>

Acanthus and grapevine motifs are also well-known in mosaic from the late Antique and Early Christian periods. Roman examples include the fourth-century vault mosaic at Sta. Costanza with its "vintaging putti"<sup>30</sup> among the grape vines, and the apse mosaic in the Lateran baptistery narthex featuring "luscious tendrils, gold and green on a deep blue ground."<sup>31</sup> At Ravenna, notable examples include the inhabited acanthus scroll at S. Vitale in the presbytery vault, green on gold or gold on green, and filled with birds and animals--rams, horses, leopards, cranes, peacocks and so on. The side lunettes at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, as has been noted, have all-over acanthus scrolls where deer step among the scrolls and are entwined by them.<sup>32</sup> The vault mosaics above these lunettes bear hybrid scrolls: triple acanthus bases with pronounced central yellow ribs giving rise to volutes with grape leaves and fruits. The upper scroll at S. Zeno is a hybrid also, bearing bunches of grapes on an acanthus stem. Grapes and vines owed their long popularity to the fact that although they originally had Dionysiac significance, they were taken over by Christian art, where they acquired new meaning, the vine signifying Christ, the True Vine,<sup>33</sup> the harvest, the gathering in of Christian souls.<sup>34</sup> It is not at all surprising, then, to find grapes among the vegetal scrolls at the Zeno chapel. The more classicizing acanthus scrolls themselves must be present because of the numerous Roman precedents and, perhaps, of the desire of Paschal I to return to the great days of the past.

Both the single and the double acanthus scrolls arise from leafy bases with tall, triangular yellow ribs. The S. Zeno acanthus can be compared with that of the lateral vaults at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, where the triple leafy bases have similar prominent, yellow ribs. The Ravenna scrolls, inhabited by a prophet figure on either side, are of pure and elegant classical form in gold on a deep blue background. Both windows in the chapel's left arm are also decorated with double acanthus scrolls, though these do not run around the embrasures, nor are they inhabited.<sup>35</sup> Is the Zeno chapel acanthus merely a ninth-century descendent of such an ancestor? This attractive idea is supported by the similarities in degeneration of style both in the Ravenna and Zeno chapel acanthus, and in the earlier and later sculptural examples discussed by Toynbee and Ward Perkins. However, I believe an additional element influenced the Zeno chapel acanthus, whose mosaicists had the opportunity to copy directly a set of classical models which were actually in the church of S. Prassede at its rebuilding by Paschal I. These were the six classical columns in the sanctuary which probably formed part of its fastigium.<sup>36</sup> Each of these fluted columns is bound at regular intervals by four bands of vertically-placed acanthus leaves: the large central leaf of each bunch has the same form as the acanthus bases in the Zeno chapel. Even the tall, tapering rib is identical. It would not be the first time the Zeno mosaicists found their patterns in the exceptional classical architectural spoils which Paschal had gathered in his emerging church and chapel.

The "living contents" of the acanthus scrolls tentatively described above as, among birds, goose, dove, peacock and "bird protome" and, among animals, leopard, deer (2), dog, lamb, rabbit and horse accord with the variety of animals and birds used as scroll fillers in mosaic floors of the fourth to the seventh centuries in the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>37</sup> In a survey of animals from these floors, Dauphin found the dog occurred most frequently, followed by the rabbit.<sup>38</sup> Among birds, pigeons and doves taken together outnumbered

all others, closely followed by peacocks.<sup>39</sup> Dauphin adduced the use of pattern books from the presence of "exotic" species in the mosaics: in the Zeno chapel inhabited scroll the peacock and leopard come into the "exotic" category, but the animals are so poorly portrayed in basic flat colour surrounded by a crude outline that they seem as far from nature as from any competent or sophisticated model. However, this does not mean that the choice of subject is not significant. Overall, the animals add to the richness of the design, and individually each was probably chosen for its symbolism. The more obvious ones include the peacock for immortality and the lamb at the arch summit for Christ's own presence, analogous to the Chi-rho symbols at the crown of the lateral vaults of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. Others may relate back to late Antique myths and legends.<sup>40</sup> Whatever their innate significance, they seem to be direct descendents of the inhabitants of the scroll at S. Vitale, Ravenna. There, among many other mammals, we find horses, dogs, leopards and deer, while among the many recognisable species of birds is a pair of peacocks. Many animals are shown whole, in action; others, especially in the south quadrant of the vault, take the form of protomes which seem to jump out of the trumpet-shaped flowers.

In summary, the presence of inhabited scrolls featuring various animals and birds, many drawn from the classical repertory; the symbolic grapes of the Christian harvest; and flowers, which may represent souls in paradise,<sup>41</sup> indicates a fusion between Christian symbolism on the one hand, and on the other, an ancient Roman pattern which, originating in the East, appeared in the artistic repertory of Rome from the first half of the third century. Inhabited scrolls were used in similar locations in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia but the coincidence of details is not close enough to permit the suggestion that they provided the specific model for the Zeno chapel vault. However, the idea of such vaults, ornamented with rich acanthus scrolls was common to Roman, Ravennate and other<sup>42</sup> monuments in late Antiquity, and it is this rich tradition that Paschal may have wished to revive

in the Zeno chapel. Whether this demonstrates his desire for a return to Early Christian themes is not clear, for acanthus scroll mosaic decoration continued in use in the East throughout the iconoclast period. For example, an iconoclast decoration in the Church of the Mother of God at the Blachernae in Constantinople is described in the Life of St. Stephen the Junior, written by the deacon Stephen in the year 806.<sup>43</sup> "Having thus suppressed all of Christ's mysteries, he<sup>44</sup> converted the church into a storehouse of fruit and an aviary," Stephen writes, "for he covered it with mosaics (representing) trees and all kinds of birds and beasts, and certain swirls of ivy leaves (enclosing) cranes, crows and peacocks." Clearly, the tradition of the inhabited scroll was very much alive in eighth-century Constantinople. It is not surprising then, to find it used in early ninth-century Rome also.

### 3. The Lateral Window Embrasures (Figs. 8, 10)

High up on the altar side of each lateral wall of the chapel there is a small, rectangular window. The dome of the roof has cut off the top corner of each window on the altar side. Both windows are blocked up and their surfaces are heavily plastered and painted with a design of concentric circles like a triple tartan.<sup>45</sup> The mosaic decoration of the east window embrasure consists of concentric discs with red centres. Surrounding the centre are two rows of gold tesserae, followed target fashion by one row of copper-blue, one of red, and one of cobalt blue. Between the discs are starbursts with gold centres surrounded by white circles from which turquoise rays--three upper and three lower--project. The pattern, on a red ground, is framed by red, white, and dark blue stripes and a deep band of "jewelled chain." The west window embrasure has a similar but not identical decoration. Both decorations are in fair condition.

### Discussion

We have already noted that the off-centre position of the side

windows led Baldracco to suggest that the Zeno chapel was built in a pre-existing structure--either a chapel or a secular building--which Paschal incorporated into his church.<sup>46</sup> All three windows seem to be set too high in the walls; the lateral ones which are truncated by the arch of the vault suggest that perhaps the vault was inserted into a taller, windowed structure.

The extremely simple nature of the decoration implies that bright colour, gold and bold pattern were considered appropriate for these out-of-the-way and poorly-lit locations.

The concentric circle as a decorative motif is almost as old as mosaic decoration itself<sup>47</sup> and was found in Greece and Asia Minor, as well as Italy, in the classical period. It probably was invented over and over again as a natural product of basic mosaic technique. Neither this pattern nor the starburst design seem to have any symbolic meaning beyond the purely decorative. Window embrasures at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia also have colourful geometric decorations, such as herringbone<sup>48</sup> in the south lunette window, and a ribbon pattern in all the windows of the upper walls beneath the dome.

#### 4. The Lateral Vaults (Fig. 25A, B)

The tunnel vaults in the lateral arms of the chapel bear all-over lattice designs in mosaic, differing but slightly from each other. The one on the left has a double network of fine, red lines on a gold background. In each square of the net is a turquoise-blue disc bearing a gold cross, and at each interstice a smaller, royal blue disc bearing a minute white cross made of five tesserae. Each of the smaller discs gives rise to a twelve-rayed star in red. The right hand vault is similar, with the larger discs in royal blue, and smaller ones consisting of a white tessera outlined with a red circle which gives rise to the rays of a star. Both vault designs, like carpets, are outlined with wide borders of dark blue and gold. The designs seem to reverse themselves by an optical illusion according to whether they are lit naturally or artificially, changing from red on gold to

gold on red. Probably the latter effect was intended, as the chapel, especially under the vaults, is normally extremely dark. If these lateral arms of the chapel were sarcophagus sites, votive candles would have provided such illumination.

### Discussion

The few authors who have mentioned these mosaics have always compared them with textiles. Baldoria calls one of them a splendid decoration like a rhomboid chessboard and refers to its rich, oriental carpet effect, which depends on the harmonious combination of colours: gold, red, blue and white.<sup>49</sup> Apollonj-Ghetti, apparently following him, refers to the vaults as covered with splendid motifs like oriental carpets.<sup>50</sup>

The overall impression is indeed one of textiles, bright with gold in warp and weft, which are anchored and embellished with little crosses, discs and stars. Such textiles were among the gifts which Paschal I is recorded as having given so generously to various Roman churches, including S. Prassede.<sup>51</sup> It is not hard to imagine a reference here in the vaults over the supposed burial sites to draperies of precious textiles. The golden stars lit up by candlelight in the dark building, could be a reference to the starry vault of heaven.<sup>52</sup> Crosses had been a common motif in vault decorations, either singly, as at Ravenna in the centre of the starry vaults, or repeated, in geometric overall patterns. In Rome, the entrance bay of the ambulatory vault at S. Costanza incorporates crosses in a geometric design in black and gold on white; the crosses are so well integrated in the design that their Christian significance is open to doubt. However, at Hagia Sophia in Salonica, the decoration of the vault of the choir in front of the apse consists of

a green and gold carpet of mosaic . . . an all-over pattern of small crosses, geometric devices and stylised leaves.<sup>53</sup>

The Salonica mosaic is dated by inscription to the period between the two waves of iconoclasm, and was the gift of Empress Irene and Constantine VI, 780-797. Perhaps the "carpet" mosaics at the Zeno chapel reflect a combination of Early Christian and iconoclast elements as well as the desire for luxurious decoration of the sites of the burials of the saints and of Theodora Episcopa.

#### 5. The Border Patterns (Text Fig. 2, B-D; Figs. 6, 8, etc.)

All the architectural elements in the vault of the Zeno chapel are outlined by one of two bold patterns which define the areas or abstract design. These two patterns occur separately or together, sometimes on the same ground, sometimes separated by a stripe in the background. They are the "jewelled chain with pearls" pattern (Jewelled chain) (Text Fig. 2, D) and the linear pelta design (Pelta chain) (Text Fig. 2, B, C).

The "jewelled chain" consists of alternate square and oval jewels in turquoise blue, surrounded by dark blue and outlined in gold. The jewels are connected by a gold thread. Between each pair of major jewels there are four white "pearls," two on each side of the connecting thread. The background is always red.

The "pelta chain" consists of double axehead elements shaped like dumb-bells end to end. The narrow waist of each is in dark blue, the expanded ends in turquoise (rarely green), each area outlined in gold and decorated with "pearls." The background here is also usually red.

The jewelled chain delineates all architectural angles, both inner and outer, and sometimes has a pelta chain on either side of it on the same red ground. The pelta chain may be used by itself to frame flat picture spaces; it outlines the curves of the vaults and the lateral windows. Usually, it is itself framed with single or multiple blue bands on either side.

The use of these elements as frames is so consistent that one can be sure that wherever both are absent--as at the bottom of the

mosaic panels in the side lunettes--it is as a result of alterations to the original, and this is confirmed by other evidence.

### Discussion

There is nothing unusual about the use of jewelled chain borders in mosaics. This pattern occurs in Early Christian mosaic art from Cyprus, Poreč, Ravenna and of course from Rome itself, where it is used for the framing elements of the triumphal arch at S. Maria Maggiore and at SS. Cosma e Damiano, among numerous other examples.<sup>54</sup>

Its origin, Ovadiah has suggested, is from the common architectural decorative detail--beads or astragals--which is a linear pattern of raised circles and ovals in regular combinations.<sup>55</sup> This is a design which lends itself to the mosaic technique, thus accounting for its continued popularity. It gives an impression of richness and splendour, which derives partly from the bright colours and gold, and partly from the royal connotations of these jewels. Katharine Brown, studying the use of jewels in the mosaic panels and frames at S. Vitale, Ravenna, has concluded that the portrayal of pearls, emeralds and sapphires in mosaic symbolises courtly splendour.<sup>56</sup> This connotation is confirmed by the use of jewelled motifs on royal emblems such as thrones and footstools, and on the walls of the heavenly cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

The pelta chain pattern obviously derives from the same sources as the all-over pelta pattern of the entrance wall archway. However, the use of this pattern as a framing motif seems to be very rare in mosaic art. No examples could be found in Ravenna, Cyprus, Poreč or among surviving early mosaics in Rome.<sup>57</sup> In addition, the pattern is not used in other Roman mosaics from the period of the Carolingian renaissance, a good number of which survive. It is not used even in the mosaic programme at S. Prassede outside the Zeno chapel. However, a rather similar linear pelta pattern does occur in Carolingian court manuscripts, notably the Gospels of St. Médard de Soissons--Evangelist page of St. Mark, where a single line of pelta

units--but without the gold and pearl embellishments of the Zeno chapel--decorates the archway over the evangelist's head. One would therefore suppose a similar origin to that of the all-over pelta pattern, from some earlier manuscript, perhaps of Ravennate origin. It could, however, be an invention of the Zeno chapel mosaicists, based on the pelta element of the all-over pattern which they were using, and the pearls and gold outlines of the standard jewelled chain.

#### 6. The Flowers (Figs. 10, 12)

A striking feature of Paschal's mosaics, both here in the Zeno chapel, and in all his other programmes, is the inclusion of large, brilliant and stylised flowers which grow in profusion around and beneath the feet of the saints. These obviously provide a strong decorative element that can be used to fill oddly-shaped areas left over from the main scenes. They can also sometimes function as a semi-abstract border pattern. Flowers, however, have their own ancient symbolism, and Paschal's flowers must have a significance that extends beyond the merely decorative. This question will be examined in this section.

In the Zeno chapel all the flowered areas are to be found on the upper walls, where all the saints are shown as standing on a green meadow. It is here, on this meadow, that we find Paschal's typical red flowers, which grow on leafless plants. The flowers, both buds and mature blooms, have yellow stalks. Their small, yellow centres are edged with a single row of orange tesserae, outside this a simple red disc represents the petals. The buds are also red, confirming that the flowers are roses, for poppies, the only other possibility, would have green buds.<sup>59</sup> All the flowers in the Zeno chapel and in S. Prassede itself are red roses of this same type.

#### Discussion

For the ancient Romans the rose represented victory, Venus and triumphant love.<sup>60</sup> In Christian symbolism, the red rose came to mean

martyrdom and the white rose, purity. St. Ambrose recounted the story of how the rose got its thorns. Originally thornless when it grew in Paradise, its original home, it gained them on earth as tokens of man's fall from grace through sin, while its fragrance and beauty were to remind him still of the splendour of heaven.<sup>61</sup> It is not surprising then to find roses at the feet of the Christian martyrs, red in sign of their blood and thornless to denote the realm of paradise.

Paschal's other churches in Rome also show the saints standing on flowery paradise meadows but there the roses are intermingled with lilies. The apse at S. Maria in Domnica has an abundance of roses at the feet of Mary's attendant angels, while on the triumphal arch above there is a frieze of lilies below the twelve apostles, and tall rose bushes between them. At S. Cecilia, lilies and roses are intermingled at random between the feet of the saints in the apse mosaic while the triumphal arch had a frieze of lilies beneath the virgins' feet. Lilies have from the earliest days of Christian symbolism been the attribute of the virgin saints.<sup>62</sup> Paschal's churches never have any other paradise flowers than red roses and lilies.

There are few precursors of this imagery in Rome, the only surviving example to the best of my knowledge being in the seventh-century apse at S. Stefano Rotondo where the martyr saints Primus and Felicianus stand on a meadow among tall, straggly, red rose bushes.<sup>63</sup> Drawings of the lost apse-mosaic at the fifth-century church of S. Andrea in Catabarbara show it to have had a central figure of Christ standing on the Hill of Zion in the middle of a rose--and lily--sprinkled meadow.<sup>64</sup> The iconography of paradise as a meadow with flowers seems to have been the exception in Rome, however, and most early paradise-meadows are not flowered.<sup>65</sup> The churches of Ravenna, though, blossom with floral imagery, with only one exception, the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, where the pairs of saints on the upper walls are standing on plain green, grassy platforms. In all other locations where paradise is indicated, flowers occur: the apse mosaics of S. Apollinare in Classe and S. Vitale; the reconstructed apse

mosaic from S. Michele in Affricisco now in Berlin,<sup>66</sup> the lost apse mosaic from S. Agata Maggiore,<sup>67</sup> the Christ in Majesty and Enthroned Virgin panels from S. Apollinare Nuovo, and the martyr processions there, all are profusely supplied with flowers, not only red roses and white lilies, but white roses, white lilies with blue buds,<sup>68</sup> checkered red-and-white roses,<sup>69</sup> and various flowering shrubs. The Basilica Euphrasiana at Poreč has exactly the same sort of flowers in its apse mosaic, but none in its apostle frieze.

Similar flowers occur in Carolingian court school manuscripts such as the Godescalc evangelistery, where they occur on both sides of the throne on the Christ in Majesty page and above the inscription.<sup>70</sup> Rosenbaum, drawing attention to them, writes

these can be identified with the "celestial" flowers, lilies and roses, seen frequently in the sixth century mosaics in Ravenna. . . . As far as I know, these plants do not occur before the sixth century and then only in Ravenna and Parenzo (Poreč). In Rome, they appear only in the ninth century mosaics made under the popes Paschal and Gregory.<sup>71</sup>

This would have appeared to be another clear example of Ravennate influence on Paschal's mosaic programmes, were it not for the two early Roman examples--one as early as fifth century--which I have cited, both of which are restricted, as in ninth-century Rome, to red roses and lilies. Even though symbolic flowers were much more common and varied in Ravenna, Paschal's mosaic flowers cannot be securely derived from them, but must be seen as a reference to a much more widespread Early Christian symbolism.

It seems then that it is not necessary to see the origin of the Zeno chapel's medieval name, Hortus Paradisi--the Garden of Paradise--as a reference to its intrinsic artistic value or as connected to the legendary dream of Paschal wherein every fifth mass celebrated there would liberate a soul from purgatory into paradise.<sup>72</sup> Rather, the primary reason for this name must be the imagery on its

well-lit upper walls which symbolises paradise. Not only are the flowers chosen symbolically appropriate, but in a broader sense, the choice of floral imagery for this location is in itself significant, for it is clearly a reference to the garden that is paradise, wherein Christ, the gardener, cultivates the Christian souls that are the plants.<sup>73</sup>

Chapter III Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>The door opens into the relative darkness of the south aisle of S. Prassede. More light would have been admitted when all the clerestory windows (now alternately blocked up) were open.

<sup>2</sup>See Chapter I for a discussion of contents of a similar vase found under the high altar of the church. I have suggested a possibility that this vase may have been placed over the Zeno chapel entrance only in 1729.

<sup>3</sup>R. B. O'Connor, "The Mediaeval History of the Double-Axe Motif," A.J.A., 24, 1920, 151.

<sup>4</sup>A. Ovadiah, Geometric and Floral Patterns, 145.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>6</sup>S. Germain, Les Mosaïques de Timgad, Paris, 1961, plate 178, shows an all over pelta patterned caldarium floor.

<sup>7</sup>S. Germain, ibid., quotes M.G-Ch. Picard.

<sup>8</sup>O'Connor notes an example from Sorde in Gaul and another all over design dating from the reign of Nero, at the baths on the Cladeos in Olympia. Double Axe Motif, 151.

<sup>9</sup>Though O'Connor, ibid., 154, cites a seventh-century example from the Merovingian reconstruction of the Baptistery of St. Jean at Poitiers.

<sup>10</sup>R. Walker, "Illustrations to the Priscillian prologues in the Gospel Manuscripts of the Carolingian Ada School," Art. Bull., XXX, 1948, 1-10, "The surface of the great arch is often covered with the rich patterns so dear to the heart of the Carolingian illuminator."

<sup>11</sup>Godescalc Evangelistery, Paris, Bibl. Nat., Nouv. Acq. lat. 1203.

<sup>12</sup>Lorsch Gospels: Pal. lat. 50, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, and: Bibl. Doc. Batthyaneum, Alba Julia. Date of Lorsch gospels ca. 810, according to W. Kohler, Die Karolingischen miniaturen--Die Hofschule Karls des Grossen, II, Berlin 1958, quoted by W. Braunfels, The Lorsch Gospels, Introduction, Braziller, New York, 1967. Braunfels writes that the Lorsch Gospels was "the last in a chronological succession of all the ceremonial manuscripts which originated at the court of Charlemagne."

<sup>13</sup>Gospels of S. Médard of Soissons: Paris, Bibl. Nat. lat. 8850.

<sup>14</sup>O'Connor, Double Axe Motif, 157-161.

<sup>15</sup>E. Rosenbaum, "The Vine Columns of Old St. Peters in Carolingian Canon Tables," J.W.C., 18, 1955, 1-15.

<sup>16</sup>Godescalc, folio 3, recto.

<sup>17</sup>See O'Connor, Double Axe, 155, "the arrow points or ivy leaves of the original design are indicated by three small dots. These dots are a persistent characteristic of the motif in illumination, continuing, with variation in number, down to the twelfth century."

<sup>18</sup>Folio 19 verso--Christ in Majesty page.

<sup>19</sup>Folio 19 recto--Initial page.

<sup>20</sup>Folio 13 verso--canon table Johannis.

<sup>21</sup>Hugo Buchthal, "A Byzantine miniature of the Fourth Evangelist, and its relatives," D.O.P., XV, 1961, 129-39, esp. 135. Quoting Boeckler, Buchthal says the Palace School miniatures (with the exception of Godescalc) draw on several models of different date and origin, all Italian with strong Byzantine influence, and all made before iconoclasm. See also E. Rosenbaum, "The Evangelist Portraits of the Ada School," Art. Bull., XXXVIII, 1956, 81-90.

<sup>22</sup>W. Braunfels, Lorsch Gospels, 17-18, writes "Research workers have made a thorough inventory of the late Antique prototypes of these Evangelists. Not a single page of any book which could have served as a model has been preserved. It is certain that Charlemagne was able to assemble an impressive number of ancient luxury codices in his library, and his painters were as well acquainted with motifs from the Byzantine pre-iconoclastic illuminated books of the sixth century and contemporary works of Ravenna and Rome, as they were with a manuscript dating certainly from the eighth century which had already made a deep impression on Godescalc in his Evangeliary."

<sup>23</sup>Rosenbaum, Evangelist Portraits, 82: "We can (therefore) assume that a lost sixth century manuscript from Ravenna served as a model for the Godescalc pictures."

<sup>24</sup>C. Dauphin, "Byzantine Pattern Books: a re-examination of the Problem in the light of the Inhabited Scroll," Art History, 1, vol. 4, 1978, 400-23, prefers the term "inhabited scroll" to the "peopled scroll" of Toynebee and Ward Perkins. "Peopled Scrolls: a

Hellenistic Motif in Imperial Art," PBSR, XVIII, 1950, 2-43. M. Gough, Anatolian Studies 11, 1952, 82-150, coined the term "inhabited scroll" to avoid having to put animals and birds into the category "people."

<sup>25</sup>The grapes appear to have been modelled on the low-relief carving of grapes on the ninth-century base of one of the Zeno chapel's four corner columns. See Fig. 26B.

<sup>26</sup>Undecorated lower window sills are plainly visible in illustrations on pages 66, 67 of S. Bottari, Ravenna, mausoleo di galla placidia, tesori d'arte cristiana, Bologna, 1966.

<sup>27</sup>Toynbee and Ward Perkins, Peopled Scrolls, 3.

<sup>28</sup>The others: Leo I, 440-461; Leo II, 682-83; and Gregory III, 731-741. One of these pilasters is illustrated in Toynbee and Ward Perkins, Peopled Scrolls, plate XIX.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>31</sup>R. Krautheimer, Rome, 50.

<sup>32</sup>S. Bottari, Ravenna, plates pp. 66, 67.

<sup>33</sup>John, 15<sup>1-7</sup>, "I am the True Vine, you the Branches."

<sup>34</sup>Daniélou, Jean S. J., Primitive Christian Symbols, Chapter 2, "The Vine and the Tree of Life," quotes from Hippolytus of Rome, On the Benedictions of Isaac, Jacob and Moses: "The spiritual vine was the saviour. The shoots and vine branches are his saints, those who believe in Him. The bunches of grapes are his martyrs; the trees which are joined with the vine show forth the Passion; the vintagers are the angels, the baskets full of grapes are the apostles, the wine press is the church, and the wine is the power of the Holy Spirit." See also Chapter II, note 28, of this study.

<sup>35</sup>S. Bottari, Ravenna, illustration, p. 66.

<sup>36</sup>R. Krautheimer, Rome, 134. "In Sta Prassede six columns of extraordinary beauty and unusual design remain in the chancel; their fluted shafts are girded by four rings of acanthus and surmounted by densely-bunched laurel leaves, held together by a knotted string. (Fig. 109). Roman spoils, they may well have been re-used to form a colonnaded screen above and near the high altar, a fastigium much like that at St. Peters." These are the columns shown in Fig. 24C.

- <sup>37</sup>C. Dauphin, Pattern Books, 400-23.
- <sup>38</sup>Ibid. Dog. 8.6%; Rabbit 8.4% of animals in sampled floors.
- <sup>39</sup>Ibid. Pigeons and Doves 10.2%; peacocks 7%.
- <sup>40</sup>C. Dauphin, Pattern Books, discusses the De Animalibus of Timotheus of Gaza, ca. 580 A.D., which recounted many of these tales, some of which she found illustrated in floor mosaics.
- <sup>41</sup>Daniélou, Primitive Christian Symbols, compares paradise to a garden in which the baptised souls are the plants and the gardener is the Lord. Odes of Solomon, XI<sup>15-18</sup> and XXXVIII<sup>17-21</sup>.
- <sup>42</sup>Such as S. Prisca at Capua Vetere.
- <sup>43</sup>Cyril Mango, Documents, 152-53, Vita S. Stephani iunioris, col. 1120.
- <sup>44</sup>Constantine V. 741-75.
- <sup>45</sup>Perhaps the original alabaster, as at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, is under this plaster. Suggestions by Oakeshott, Mosaics, 210, that the window embrasures were built as niches for precious objects seem to have little validity, since the structures are so high up in an unlit area and have a corner cut off.
- <sup>46</sup>Baldracco, Note, 193-94.
- <sup>47</sup>Ovadia, Ancient Mosaics, 124-25.
- <sup>48</sup>S. Bottari, Ravenna, 67, Figs. 3 and 4, for embrasure of S. lunette window.
- <sup>49</sup>Baldoria, Capella, 262.
- <sup>50</sup>Apollonj-Ghetti, Santa Prassede--Le Chiese di Roma Illustrate, 66, Rome 1961, 66-77 on Zeno chapel.
- <sup>51</sup>Liber Pontificalis, II, 55.
- <sup>52</sup>As in the starry vaults at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia and the Archbishops's chapel, Ravenna.
- <sup>53</sup>Beckwith, Early Christian, 80, and Grabar, L'Iconoclasme Byzantin, Fig. 89.

- <sup>54</sup>Cyprus Church of Panagia Kanakaria at Lythrankomi, ca. 527-530.
- Poreč Basilica Euphrasiana, ca. 550.
- Ravenna S. Apollinare in Classe, 549.
- S. Vitale 547-548.
- Rome S. Maria Maggiore, ca. 432-440.
- SS. Cosma e Damiano, ca. 530.
- <sup>55</sup>Ovadia, Ancient Mosaics, 122.
- <sup>56</sup>Katharine Brown, "The Mosaics of San Vitale: Evidence for the Attribution . . .," Gesta, XVIII/1, 1979, 57-63.
- <sup>57</sup>Information gathered from a search of published materials, and, for Rome, a search of fifth to eighth century mosaics in situ. Oakeshott, Mosaics, 210, noted that this pattern was unique to the Zeno chapel "in particular the ornament is different in character, the motif here used being made up of two elements (one in the shape of an hourglass, with a ring around the centre, and the other a cup, which compose together into a single pattern). It does not appear to be based on the antique" and "the ornamental border used throughout, as opposed to the gemmed decoration used along the angles of the masonry structure, is not to be found elsewhere in Roman mosaics."
- <sup>58</sup>Gospel Book of S. Médard de Soissons, Paris, Bibl. Nat. lat. 8850. S. Mark Page, plate 76 in J. Hubert, J. Porcher and W. F. Volbach, The Carolingian Renaissance, New York, 1970.
- <sup>59</sup>Poppies have connotations of sleep and ignorance (see Ferguson, Signs and Symbols in Christian Art, Oxford, 1954, 37) and would thus be inappropriate as the flowers of paradise.
- <sup>60</sup>Ferguson, Signs and Symbols, 37.
- <sup>61</sup>Ibid., 37.
- <sup>62</sup>Ibid., 33.
- <sup>63</sup>See Krautheimer, Rome, 642-649 and Fig. 78 for S. Stefano Rotondo, and also Ihm, Programme, 143-44 and plate 21, Fig. 2.
- <sup>64</sup>For S. Andrea in Catabarbara, 470 A.D., see Ihm, Programme, 28, and plate 8, Fig. 1, which reproduces Ciampini, Vet. Mon. 1, plate 46, and shows roses only, though Ihm refers to lilies in the text.
- <sup>65</sup>For example, those of S. Cosma e Damiano 526-30, S. Agnese, 625-38, S. Teodoro sixth or seventh century, and S. Eufemia in Suburra, 688, known from a drawing of Ciampini, Vet. Mon., II,

plate 35, reproduced in Ihm, Programme, 156 and plate 26, Fig. 2. All dates from Ihm.

<sup>66</sup>S. Michele in Affricisco, Ihm, Programme, plate 8/2.

<sup>67</sup>S. Agata Maggiore, Ihm, Programme, plate 7/2, reproducing a drawing by Cesare Prontis.

<sup>68</sup>At S. Vitale, apse mosaic.

<sup>69</sup>Orthodox Baptistery, Ravenna, baptism scene.

<sup>70</sup>Rosenbaum, Evangelists, esp. 83 for celestial flowers and Fig. 17 for the Christ from the Godescalc Evangelistery.

<sup>71</sup>Rosenbaum, Evangelists, 83.

<sup>72</sup>Baldracco, Note, 190.

<sup>73</sup>Daniélou, Primitive Christian Symbols, Chapter 2, "The Vine and the Tree of Life." In the early church, the planting of a garden was likened to paradise, where the baptised souls are the plants; the gardener, Christ. See also note 41.

## CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS: 1. Technical  
2. Iconographic

The individual elements of the architecture and of the decorative programme of the Zeno chapel have proved to be full of symbolic and dogmatic meaning when analysed in terms of content, precedent and iconographic detail. It should now be possible to explore some questions which arise in connection with the whole building and its decorative programme. These questions fall into two main categories. The first group concerns the relationships of the Zeno chapel mosaics with others of the Carolingian era in Rome. Do their technical and stylistic features link them to other Roman mosaics, or are they related to the mosaic work of Ravenna or Constantinople? Is it possible to form an opinion about the mosaicists' provenance: native Italians, or Eastern immigrants? Were the tesserae produced locally or imported and were they new or recycled?

The second group of questions concerns the overall meaning of the programme. Does the programme as a whole convey a meaning that is separate from or in addition to the meaning of its parts? If so, how fully are the intentions of the patron revealed? In view of similarities between decorative programmes in the post-iconoclast period in Byzantium and the scheme carried out thirty years earlier in the Zeno chapel, should the Zeno chapel be thought of as a reflection of some pre-iconoclastic formula common to both East and West? Or does the chapel's programme perhaps follow ideas current in the capital between the two waves of iconoclasm, that is, between 787 and 814?

In an attempt to explain these features at the Zeno chapel which seem to link it to Byzantine models, Brenk has pointed out that Paschal's mother may have been Greek, since she had a Greek name, Theodora.<sup>1</sup> Indirect support for this idea comes from the content of

the programme of the upper walls, which appears to illustrate the intercession for the dead of the Byzantine funeral service. Even so, there is no direct information about Theodora's origins. Nevertheless, a documented Greek connection for the Zeno chapel, as Brenk himself pointed out, is provided by the presence at S. Prassede of a congregation of Greek monks, installed at the monastery there by Paschal to sing the Greek rite, according to his biographer in the Liber Pontificalis.<sup>2</sup> The dating of the chapel--817--seems too soon after the date of renewal of iconoclasm in the East--late 814--for this to be a mere coincidence. These monks are most likely to have been refugees from resurgent iconoclasm, housed by Paschal in his new foundation. If so, they were probably strong supporters of religious figural imagery, for the main reason that Byzantine clerics sought refuge in Rome in the eighth and ninth centuries has been shown to be the persecutions that iconodules endured in the East. The most persecuted were those who were especially associated with the production of images, the "artist-monks."<sup>3</sup> This may have been a crucial factor in the design of the Zeno chapel's decorative programme, and accounts for any Byzantine element in its programme. However, the Byzantine element is only one of several--along with Early Christian, Roman and Ravennate--to be present in the chapel. All of these influences will be discussed in the second part of this chapter.

#### Mosaic Technique in the Zeno Chapel

Variations in setting methods and in the selection of tesserae are both significant in the analysis of mosaic technique and style. The tesserae themselves, which may be made of glass or marble, can be of uniform or widely different size and shape. The setting also may vary: it may be close and regular, with almost no space between the individual cubes, or loose and relatively unstructured, with more or less setting bed showing between the tesserae. Closely-set cubes usually form a fairly level surface, more loosely set cubes are often inserted at various angles to reflect and maximise the incident light

at various times of day.

Per Jonas Nordhagen, in his study of the surviving fragments of the mosaic of Pope John VII, 705-707, from the oratory at Old St. Peters, Rome, has discussed them in the context of other Roman and Byzantine mosaics of the seventh and eighth centuries. His comparisons are based on technical factors. He distinguishes two mosaic schools at work in Rome in this period, the "glass school" using glass tesserae exclusively, even for faces, and the "marble school" in which flesh areas are done in marble.<sup>4</sup> The mosaics of the S. Venanzio chapel at the Lateran baptistery (ca. 640) are characterised by "strongly plastic" treatment of the heads contrasting with rather linear treatment of the clothing.

The flesh of the faces and the hair and beards are all set with tesserae of the same large size as those employed in the garments, and the material is exclusively glass.<sup>5</sup>

The mosaic fragment of S. Sebastian in S. Pietro in Vincoli, Rome (ca. 680) shows an evolution--even a degeneration--of this style, which has become even stiffer and more linear. However, the material is still exclusively brilliantly coloured glass and the style is impressionistic, as at the S. Venanzio chapel. Isolated patches of red tesserae form the facial highlights. The Zeno chapel mosaics also belong to this tradition. They match it in materials (all glass) and style (the garments have become completely linear, the faces are extremely impressionistic and have their highlights picked out as brilliant patches of orange). The tesserae remain large in size, both for faces and bodies.

In contrast to this tradition, Nordhagen found another school at work in Rome at S. Agnese (625-638), S. Stefano Rotondo (642-649) and in the John VII mosaics at Old St. Peters themselves. In this tradition, garments and backgrounds are of glass but flesh areas are made of smaller marble cubes. Modelling is achieved through gradations in tessera colour, rather than the impressionistic juxtaposition of

large, contrasting tesserae.<sup>6</sup>

These two Roman schools, Nordhagen believes, are descendants of two different traditions. The glass mosaics and the impressionistic style can be traced back to the late Antique period in Rome and Ravenna through a series in which the facial technique shows gradual, step by step changes. The steps, working backwards in time, are demonstrated in the sixth century Roman mosaics of SS. Cosma e Damiano, S. Teodoro and S. Lorenzo fuori le mura; in the fifth century works at S. Maria Maggiore in Rome and at Ravenna's Orthodox baptistery and Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, and in the fourth century apse mosaic at S. Pudenziana in Rome, which stands on the threshold of antiquity. This, then, is clearly the indigenous Roman style.<sup>7</sup>

Nordhagen, exploring the ancestry of the "marble school" finds it first at work in Italy at Ravenna around 500 A.D. At first it occurred as an occasional alternative to glass technique, along with other typical Byzantine features such as a gold background. It appears to be an imported, non-Roman style. At Rome, this "marble" technique first occurs in the mid-seventh century at S. Agnese. Whenever it occurs in Rome, it probably reflects the patronage of the long series of Eastern incumbents who dominated the Papacy between 642 and 742 A.D., and who probably imported materials and workmen from the East. Nordhagen finds technical similarities between the John VII mosaics and the few mosaics to survive in Constantinople and Salonica from this period, and thinks this means that "the pope (John VII) had a group of Byzantine mosaicists working for him in the Oratory."<sup>8</sup>

The revival of mosaic work in the Carolingian era in Rome is characterised above all by the use of "glass technique." Whereas the surviving fragments of Leo III's Lateran Triclinium mosaic (ca. 795-816) show the use of large marble cubes as facial materials, his church of SS. Nereo ed Achilleo, and the Paschalian mosaics all use glass exclusively. Nordhagen sees this as a retrospective tendency, part of a conscious revival of ancient forms that links the Carolingian popes with the Early Christian past<sup>9</sup>: a tendency also visible in architecture

(as demonstrated by Krautheimer),<sup>10</sup> and in iconography, as is shown in the revival of Early Christian imagery within S. Prassede and in the Zeno chapel. Krautheimer, however, believes these works use recycled mosaic materials,<sup>11</sup> in which case the exclusive use of glass may reflect necessity rather than a conscious revival of Early Christian technique. If the only tesserae available in the early ninth century were those taken from the monuments of pagan and, possibly, Early Christian, antiquity, the range of colours and sizes that could be obtained would necessarily have been restricted. This could account for the impressionistic style of Paschal's mosaics. Nordhagen, in a more recent publication, writes of "tessera wear" as

a feature seen in many of the early ninth-century mosaics in Rome . . . which stems from the practise of employing re-used cubes that have been "roasted" over an open flame to have the traces of lime removed<sup>12</sup>

and remarks that this wear can only be detected at extremely close range.

In summary, the consensus of recent opinion is that the tesserae available to ninth-century mosaicists were re-used, locally available, and probably originally of Roman manufacture. This source of supply explains the limited palette of colours (Appendix 1) as well as the small quantities of some colours, such as pale green, that seem to have been available. It also explains variations in the quality of the tesserae, such as, for example, the unusual peg-shaped opaque yellow tesserae used for the dalmatics of the Zeno chapel's virgin martyrs. These were aptly described by Baldoria as "tessere di pignoletto"--pine-kernel tesserae.<sup>13</sup> These must have been spoils, rather than a standard item ordered from a manufacturer. Whatever the source of ancient materials was, it must have been capable of providing the huge quantities of tesserae required for the extensive mosaic programmes of the ninth century. There is no evidence as to what this source may have been. Such re-use of tesserae was certainly not

unknown in the early ninth century: Charlemagne received permission from Pope Hadrian I, 772-795, to remove mosaic tesserae from Ravenna to use in the decoration of his Palatine chapel in Aachen, dedicated in 805. Patrons in Rome may even have been inspired by this example, though in Paschal's case recycling of materials was completely in keeping with his whole approach; his churches themselves were rebuilt from ruins, rather than being completely new foundations; the sculptural and architectural elements were carefully arranged ancient spoils, with modern work being used only to fill in gaps; it seems now that even his mosaics--the crowning glory of his patronage--were created not only to the iconographic formulae of bygone days, but out of the actual ancient materials. The harmony and beauty of the result must surely be considered even more remarkable.

Another interesting problem which has given rise to controversy is that surrounding the mosaicists themselves and their training. Mystery shrouds the origin of the mosaic school which is responsible for the revival of mosaic in Rome after the three-quarters of a century when, it seems, such work was not done there.<sup>14</sup> Suzanne Spain Alexander, following Carlo Bertelli, has proposed that Roman workmen trained "on the job," restoring the Early Christian mosaics of the nave at S. Maria Maggiore. She proposes a date during the reign of Leo III, 795-816, most probably between 809 and 814.<sup>15</sup> Spain-Alexander picked out a total of six panels which, she thought, had restorations which were recognisably Carolingian in style. All but one of these are disputed by Nordhagen on technical grounds.<sup>16</sup> This, though, is the "Miracle of the Quails," originally claimed by Bertelli as partly a ninth-century restoration.<sup>17</sup> In it the three figures on the right differ from the others in the panel in "colours, spatial relations, use of dark outlining, proportions, and drapery."<sup>18</sup> Bertelli also compared these figures in terms of proportion, lack of modelling, type of facial feature, and style of tessellation.<sup>19</sup> He found wide differences from fifth-century work, and significant stylistic affinities with the ninth century mosaic on the triumphal arch at SS. Nereo ed Achilleo.

According to Nordhagen the tessellation confirms the stylistic evidence, so all three authors are agreed on a ninth-century date for this one panel. This puts at least one area of restoration solidly into the ninth century. While this enables us to consider "on the job training" at S. Maria Maggiore, probably in 809 when Leo III is recorded as having repaired the roof of this church,<sup>20</sup> it actually only proves that these mosaics were restored in Carolingian times. The problem of identity of the mosaicists who produced the Lateran Triclinium mosaics, probably just before the coronation of Charlemagne in 800, must therefore remain unsolved.

With regard to the later relationships of these Carolingian restorations, S. Spain-Alexander sees a connection between the S. Maria Maggiore panels and the mosaics at SS. Nereo ed Achilleo (814). She also suggests that Paschal's apse mosaic at S. Maria in Domnica may be another product of the same workshop, and that it may reflect the iconography of the original apse mosaic at S. Maria Maggiore.<sup>21</sup> This idea is attractive, but backed up only by the presence of "fruit laden swags arising from the baskets . . . on the intrados of the apsidal arch in both churches,"<sup>22</sup> and the almost identical "jewelled chain" borders with four pearls. These same features also link S. Prassede to S. Maria Maggiore. The identical "jewelled chain" also occurs in the Zeno chapel. The evidence seems too slender to provide proof that the same workshop was involved here too. However, an unusual technical detail, the use of green folds in draperies, occurs in the Transfiguration panels of both the Zeno chapel and SS. Nereo ed Achilleo, and in the fragments of the Triclinium mosaic of Leo III. This implies that the same group of mosaicists was responsible for all three works, and may have executed other work in the Zeno chapel. Similarities of facial technique, above all in the details of mouths, eyes and eyebrows at SS. Nereo ed Achilleo and the Zeno chapel may also be significant.

The implications of the technical data seem to be that the Zeno chapel mosaics are Roman made, in traditional, even recycled, materials, and fit into the general pattern of antiquarian revival practised by

Carolingian era popes, starting with Leo III. However, even if both workmanship and materials are Roman, this need not imply that the programme and the iconography are Roman also. They may indeed have components from elsewhere. The second part of this chapter will examine this question.

#### Iconography in the Zeno Chapel: Discussion.

The purpose of sacred imagery in early medieval churches was neither primarily didactic nor simply decorative, but rather the expression of the canons of religious belief in visible form; the creation of dogmatic statements in art. Religious images were seen as reminders of the mysteries of the faith, but also had meaning even in the absence of a viewer as perpetual re-enactments of sacred events, and as extensions of their mystical reality into the world of the present. These ideas account to a large extent for the retrospective nature of Paschal's iconography, for it was logical to take as models those images which had been made in ancient days close to the era of the sacred events.

For this reason, elements of early Christian art which are common to both Rome and Ravenna, are also numerous in the Zeno chapel programme. They include the "caryatid" angels holding up a disc, as well as the clipeate images of Christ, his Mother, the prophets, apostles and saints. The jewelled throne, the gesticulating saints, the Lamb on the hill of Zion, the roses and waters of Paradise with their thirsting deer, the inhabited scrolls, laurel wreath, and jewelled borders, all have their antecedents in the Early Christian art of Rome, and many can be related also to that of Ravenna. It is known that the art of Ravenna was widely admired and copied in the Carolingian era, most notably by Charlemagne. It is regrettable, then, to be unable to prove with absolute certainty that the close similarities in form, size, location, function and decoration linking the fifth-century Mausoleum of Galla Placidia and the ninth-century Zeno chapel are more than coincidental. Others of the many attached cruciform

chapels of the Early Christian era in both Rome and Ravenna may have also shared these characteristics, and served as the direct model for the Zeno chapel. A closer connection may perhaps be discerned between the procession of virgin martyrs in the Zeno chapel and that at S. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, for the figures share many details of dress and stance. Again, a Roman model, now lost, cannot be ruled out. Nevertheless, it is entirely possible that the design was transmitted from Ravenna in a pattern book or manuscript,<sup>23</sup> as I have suggested. Such a source would account for those figural and decorative elements which seem to link the mosaics of the Carolingian period in Rome to the Early Christian works of Ravenna.

Another source which the mosaicists used almost as if it were a pattern book was the collection of carved marbles which Paschal had assembled at S. Prassede. The unique strigillated sarcophagus of the anastasis mosaic (Fig. 21A) is clearly based on the antique sarcophagi (Fig. 4) used for the relics and, probably, for the burial of Theodora at the foot of the panel. The etoimasia follows a standard, Early Christian model for such a throne, except that the jewel-studded, columnar legs terminate beneath the seat in ionic capitals, crudely outlined in a linear style (Fig. 15). Ionic capitals had been selected for the columns of the Zeno chapel's main doorway (Fig. 2), and for the side supports of the aedicule now on the altar. The outer elements of the victory wreath in the vault (Fig. 5) are plainly based on classical egg-and-dart moldings, such as are commonplace on the reused architrave sections at S. Prassede (Fig. 2). The inhabited scrolls, also, have elements plainly copied from sculptural models: the grapes of the altar window scroll (Fig. 26B) from the column bases in the chapel (Fig. 27A); the acanthus plants on the altar vault (Fig. 24A) from the "bindings" of the columns in the sanctuary walls which once probably stood before the altar (Fig. 26).

A Byzantine or Eastern element in the S. Zeno programme, frequently mentioned in the literature, has nevertheless not been precisely defined. Most recently, Brenk has listed several iconographic

elements and combinations which he feels to be related to Byzantine programmes from before or after iconoclasm. He notices, for example, similarities in the way Christ's mandorla is depicted in the early ninth-century Chludov Psalter<sup>24</sup> and in the Zeno chapel. He cites both the transfiguration mandorla (here found to be the outline of Mount Tabor)<sup>25</sup> and the one in the anastasis, with white rays breaking through its outline. This one does seem to be comparable to the Chludov psalter's illustrations of psalms 67,<sup>1</sup> and 81,<sup>11</sup>.<sup>26</sup> Hierarchically-arranged medallion portraits are compared by Brenk to those in the ninth-century Byzantine manuscript, The Homilies of Gregory of Naziansus in Milan.<sup>27</sup> A more probable source of inspiration, though, could be the set of apostle medallions on the arch at S. Sabina, Rome.<sup>28</sup> Dating from the fifth century, these must have been available to Paschal's mosaicists. Brenk also points out the resemblance between the Christ on the Zeno chapel facade and the one on the Byzantine coinage, and compares the portal's Virgin Nikopeia to the image on the seals of the Patriarchs Heraklios and Photius.<sup>29</sup> Since examples of these models must have existed in the West, their use does not prove a direct Byzantine connection but points once more to the eclectic nature of Paschal's inspiration.

The two iconographic combinations that Brenk considers to be Byzantine in origin are the deesis with the etoimasia, which next occur together in Cappadocia around the year 900,<sup>30</sup> and the deesis with the transfiguration, which he relates to the Sinai imagery, (though there is some doubt about whether the Sinai medallions really do form a deesis). The deesis is the common element in both these combinations, and is undoubtedly Eastern, for it always symbolises the last judgment in Byzantine art. Whereas images of the transfiguration or of the prepared throne have precedents in the West, any combinations that include the deesis must obviously have a Byzantine origin. At the Zeno chapel, the entire decoration on the upper walls and vault needs to be read together, for the combination of risen Christ, transfiguration, greater or expanded deesis, and prepared throne makes a logical and

coherent statement about the "four last things":--death, judgment, heaven and hell. This must mean also that the programme of this area that includes the deesis as an integral part, is Byzantine in inspiration.

The eschatological nature of this part of the programme makes it clear that the overall meaning of the chapel's decoration is related to its funerary purpose. It has already proved possible to give this sort of interpretation to the imagery in the niches where Theodora and the saints were buried. The subject is that last day when Theodora, represented by the intercessions of Mary and the saints as by the petitions of heavenly courtiers, will rise from her tomb and stand before Christ to be judged. The whole purpose of the decoration was to invoke the help of the most powerful advocates for humanity on behalf of the mother of Paschal so that she could achieve salvation.

Even though the chapel was built as a mausoleum rather than for the celebration of the Liturgy, one can find there many of the characteristics of the classical post-iconoclastic Byzantine church which have been described by Otto Demus.<sup>31</sup> Most importantly, church and chapel share the same theoretical basis for their decorative schemes. This theory dictates the placement of images and is hierarchical. The most important (holiest) images are both larger, and higher up in the building. Demus describes a system in which the placement of images in a centrally-planned church reflected the position of the prototypes of such images relative to each other in the universe. Thus the church was transformed into a microcosm of heaven and earth. The holiest image, that of Christ, was placed in the heavenly zone, the dome, where he was attended by his heavenly court, of angels. Mary was in the next highest place, usually the bowl of the apse. The "festival" icons, scenes from Christ's life, came to occupy the next highest zone, the squinches of the dome, though they were absent in the earliest, classical scheme. The most earthly, lowly zone was taken by saints: apostles, martyrs, church fathers, holy women, who were also hierarchically arranged, as if at a royal court.

Great emphasis was also laid upon a symbolic correspondence between the "cross in square" church architecture and the universe. The figures of the icons stood against a golden mosaic backdrop as if they were in front of golden walls which represented the "outer skin" of a magical space. Thus the interior of the church, the microcosm of the universe, was a space in which the holy saints were actually present, in accordance with the theory that the properly made icon had a "magical identity" with its prototype. The worshipper who entered the church mingled, as it were, with the saints, who, far from being mere images, peopled the interior space of the church and interacted across it as if the whole church constituted a three-dimensional, living icon.

These features of the Middle-Byzantine church also strike the observer at the Zeno chapel, and it is these similarities, far more than any resemblance between individual iconographic elements, that enable us to recognise a strong Byzantine component in its iconographic programme. Hierarchy, the positioning of individual images, and above all, their interactions across the interior space of the building are the important Byzantine elements in the mosaic programme of the chapel.

In the centre of the Zeno chapel vault, Christ, largest of all as well as highest, is positioned so as to appear upright to the worshipper who enters the chapel. He is attended by angels who raise his image in the dome which symbolises heaven. Although not strictly speaking a Pantocrator image,<sup>32</sup> he must represent the Lord of the Universe in his heavenly kingdom as well as Christ, the teacher, and Christ, the sacrifice for humanity. Demus has pointed out that the theological content of the post-iconoclastic Pantocrator image and the earlier ascension cupola, which was narrative in nature, was virtually identical, the Pantocrator scheme depicting "Christ in Glory after the Ascension."<sup>33</sup> The inclusion of the Pantocrator image as centre of a hieratic decorative scheme is essentially post-iconoclastic, according to Demus, and takes the place formerly occupied by the ascension imagery, by a process of evolution. This evolution, though, need not

necessarily proceed from the narrative scenes of the ascension<sup>34</sup> as Demus suggests, but might actually be the result of a rather small transformation of symbolic content from the medallions with the cross, chi-rho or lamb that were held aloft by angels in the vaults of so many Early Christian churches in Rome and Ravenna.

The figure of Christ presides over the Zeno chapel from the vault, and the individual elements of the programme also celebrate the articles of faith connected with his resurrection, and the implicit promise of salvation. His divinity is summarized by the transfiguration, his power to overcome death and bring the just to salvation is symbolised by the anastasis. The prepared throne refers to his actual presence and to his coming again in judgment and this judgment theme is again taken up by the intercession of the saints who join Mary and the Baptist in the deesis. All other images which are present in the chapel fit into the hierarchical scheme. The angels represent Christ's heavenly host, and the saints and apostles of the deesis procession form his heavenly court, symbolising the role of the whole communion of saints in the intercession for mankind on judgment day.

In addition to the hierarchy of size and placement many other elements of this programme remind us of the classical scheme put forward by Demus.<sup>35</sup> The golden mosaic background against which the frontal figures of saints stand, is typical. Even more significantly, we have already noticed the interaction of glance and gesture between the images of Christ, his mother and the saints by which the mosaicists have ensured the correct interpretation. The gestures of the Virgin and the Baptist in the deesis towards Christ in the dome; the attitude of S. John the Evangelist, who faces the throne of Christ that symbolises his second coming, with his closed book, logically the Apocalypse; the larger procession of saints who join the petition of the Primary Intercessors in the deesis, are all examples of this three-dimensional interaction of the images within the chapel, which make the programme seem truly Byzantine in its feeling, as well as in its hierarchical layout.

The presence of these Middle-Byzantine features in this small Roman monument thirty years before the end of iconoclasm surely needs some explanation. Brenk has pointed out that the Middle-Byzantine decorative scheme, far from arising de novo in the period after iconoclasm ended in 843, is rooted in the seventh general church council of Nicaea in 787, in which the validity of images was confirmed. At this council, several bishops are recorded as having individually agreed that images should henceforward be venerated and painted in churches.<sup>36</sup> The subjects for the images are listed, always in the same order: Christ, Theotokos, saints, apostles, martyrs, fathers and ascetics. Indeed, the fourth session of the synod officially agreed that these same images should be put up. Again, the order is the same, and is also that of the hierarchical decoration of a Middle-Byzantine church. The question is whether this sequence was expressed in art in the East before 816 and thus whether a model did exist there that antedates the Zeno chapel. Opinions on this question differ. Cyril Mango suggests that the brief period of revival of icon worship under the Empress Irene, 780-802, which is poorly documented, probably did not produce much artistic activity, and that what little there was, was non-figural.<sup>37</sup> Demus, however, attributes to this period the Virgin in the apse at S. Sophia, Salonika, which he thinks to be "the only surviving document of the short iconophile period under Irene, at the end of the eighth century."<sup>38</sup> Grabar goes further and postulates that the post-iconoclastic programmes had been prepared during the period after the ecumenical council of 787, and that although these works did not survive the second wave of iconoclasm they are reflected in Paschal's mosaics in Rome, especially those of the S. Prassede triumphal arch, and of the Zeno chapel

qui pour nous est le premier exemple conservé d'une décoration iconographique complète appliquée à un edifice en forme de cube avec coupole centrale.<sup>39</sup>

Brenk quotes Paul Speck who speaks of a "not unimportant artistic

activity in the interregnum after 787, in particular in the circles of monks,"<sup>40</sup> and notes that one can assume that the official art of the capital after 843 followed, after a considerable time lag, examples which had been formulated in the monasteries between 787 and 816. If this is so, then the migration of Greek monks, not just to Rome, but, thanks to Paschal, right into the monastery of S. Prassede, assumes a new significance, and the apparently forward-looking Eastern features of its iconography are explained.

So, although the Zeno chapel mosaics follow sources in the Early Christian art of Rome and Ravenna in their iconographic details, the overall plan of the chapel that relates to its function as a mausoleum depends on a Byzantine model. This raises an interesting question about the authorship of the programme and implies that Paschal put responsibility for it into the hands of the Greek monks at S. Prassede. This may have been because he wanted to affirm his support for the dogmas of the second council of Nicaea in 787 and for the veneration of images, in opposition to the newly-emerged iconoclasm of the Byzantine East. He also apparently wished to provide his mother with the most powerful and up-to-date religious imagery in her place of burial as an aid to her salvation. The actual work, however, was put into the hands of local mosaicists, who drew on models which were at hand and which had the authority of ancient usage.

What can we learn from the Zeno chapel mosaic programme and from the patronage of Paschal in general about the tastes and interests of this pope of seven short years? The son of a Roman, Bonosus, schooled at the Lateran Palace in the Old and New Testaments, the Psalter and church music, he came to the Papacy from a position as superior of the monastery of S. Stephen the Protomartyr near the Vatican. His biography speaks of his piety and modesty and of his great love for the poor and his ready charity, though his qualifications for sainthood are not known.<sup>41</sup> The portraits of Paschal which survive in his apse decorations show him to have been a tall, beardless man, tonsured, with a long face, large eyes and pronounced eyebrows, wearing

a white tunic with three clavi, an orange chasuble and the pallium. But apart from his physical appearance, marvellously preserved in mosaic three times over, and the flattering words of his biographer, a personality emerges from the study of his patronage. A Roman, conscious of the greatness of the era of Constantine and of the revival of patronage among his own predecessors, he sought to do honour to Mary, to those saints and virgin martyrs whose memory was especially venerated in Rome, scene of their martyrdom, and to Christ, the Redeemer whose millenium drew near. Above all, perhaps, he sought to honour the memory of his mother, and help her achieve paradise. Paschal's works, though hurriedly erected, have endured, so that we know more about Paschal as an individual than about any other pope of his era. We learn of an energetic patron, knowledgable in the Faith, and in the expression of this faith in art from Early Christian times, appreciative of the skill of the artisans of the ancient world, and determined by putting together old and new ideas, formulae and materials to inspire new works of faith which would proclaim his "gladness of heart"<sup>42</sup> as patron in building and decorating churches to endure through the ages.

Chapter IV Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>B. Brenk, Bildprogramm, 221, "Auch mag Theodora, wenn sie eine Griechin war (wie ihr Name andeutet) einiges beigetragen haben."

<sup>2</sup>L.P. II., 54, "construxit in eodem loco a fundamentis cenobium, quod et nomine sanctae Praxedis virginis titulavit; in quo et sanctam Grecorum congregatationem adgregans, quae die noctuque grece modulationis psalmodie laudes omnipotenti Deo sanctisque. . . . introduxit."

<sup>3</sup>John Osborne, Christological Scenes, 270.

<sup>4</sup>Per Jonas Nordhagen, "The Mosaics of John VII, (705-7 A.D.), The Mosaic fragments and their technique." Acta R. Norv., 2 (1965) 121-66, esp. 154.

<sup>5</sup>Nordhagen, *ibid.*, 155.

<sup>6</sup>Nordhagen, *ibid.*, 156.

<sup>7</sup>Nordhagen, *ibid.*, 156-57.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 157. Nordhagen compared these mosaics with those of Hagios Demetrios, Salonika, and Hagios Nicolaos, Istanbul.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>10</sup>R. Krautheimer, "Carolingian," Art. Bull. XXIV, 1942, 1 ff.

<sup>11</sup>Krautheimer, Rome, 126. "The glass cubes themselves . . . seem to have been taken from decayed ancient mosaics."

<sup>12</sup>Nordhagen, "The Archaeology of Wall Mosaics, a note on the Mosaics in St. Maria Maggiore in Rome," Art. Bull., 1983, 324.

<sup>13</sup>N. Baldoria, Capella, 262.

<sup>14</sup>The period between John VII's mosaics (705-707) and those of Leo III, at the end of the eighth century.

<sup>15</sup>Suzanne Spain Alexander, "Carolingian Restorations of S. Maria Maggiore in Rome," Gesta, 16/1, 1977, 13-21.

<sup>16</sup>Nordhagen, Art. Bull., 1983, 323-24.

<sup>17</sup>C. Bertelli, "Un antico Restauro nei mosaici di Santa Maria Maggiore," Paragone, LXIII, 1955, 40-42, cited by S. Spain Alexander, Carolingian Restorations, 20, note 1 and Fig. 1.

<sup>18</sup>S. Spain Alexander, *ibid.*, 13-14, a summary of Bertelli's argument.

<sup>19</sup>As summarised in *ibid.*, 14.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>21</sup>Which was replaced in the late thirteenth century when the transept was built. Torriti's apse composition may contain references to its Early Christian antecedent.

<sup>22</sup>S. Spain Alexander, Carolingian Restorations, 18.

<sup>23</sup>Such a pattern drawing (of twelfth-century date) survives in the Vatican Library: Rome, Bibl. Vat., Pattern Book, Cod. lat. 1976. Discussed in Ross, "A Late 12th Century Artists Pattern Sheet," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, XXV, 1962, 119-28. It contains outline drawings of the 12 minor prophets and was probably based on a Byzantine bible (Ross, *ibid.*, 128). See also Otto Demus, Byzantine Art and the West, New York, 1970, 32-33 and Fig. 34, for a discussion of this and other pattern books and sheets.

<sup>24</sup>Chludov psalter, Moscow, State Historical Museum, ms. 129. For a facsimile edition of the Chludov psalter see M. B. Shepkina, Miniatiurii Chludovskoi psalterini, Moscow 1977.

<sup>25</sup>See section 3a, Chapter II.

<sup>26</sup>Shepkina, Miniatiurii, 63 and 82.

<sup>27</sup>Milan, bibl. Ambrosiana, cod. E, 49-50.

<sup>28</sup>See Chapter II, section 4.

<sup>29</sup>Brenk, Bildprogramm, 217.

<sup>30</sup>In the painted chapel of Kiliçlar at Göreme.

<sup>31</sup>O. Demus, Byzantine Mosaic Decoration, London, 1948.

<sup>32</sup>See Chapter II, section 1.

<sup>33</sup>Demus, *ibid.*, 19.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 17-20. An ascension dome had been present in the pre-iconoclastic decorative programme of the church of the Holy Apostles, Constantinople.

<sup>35</sup>Demus based his analysis on descriptions of now-vanished decorations in S. Mary of the Pharos, Constantinople (formerly thought to be of Basil I's Nea Ekklesia) and on surviving decorations in eleventh-century Middle-Byzantine churches in Greece.

<sup>36</sup>Brenk, Bildprogramm, 220. The bishops were Basilius of Ankara and Theodosius of Amorion. Pope Hadrian also agreed with this opinion at the council.

<sup>37</sup>C. Mango, Documents, 149, refers to the apse mosaics in S. Sophia, Salonika.

<sup>38</sup>Demus, Byzantine Mosaic Decoration, 53.

<sup>39</sup>A. Grabar, L'iconoclasme Byzantin, 238-39.

<sup>40</sup>Brenk, Bildprogramm. "Man kann im Gegenteil sogar von einer nicht unbedeutenden künstlerischen Aktivität in dieser Zwischenzeit sprechen (nach 787) und zwar in Mönchskreisen . . ."

<sup>41</sup>Liber Pontificalis II, 52. See also, H. K. Mann, The Lives of the Popes in the Early Middle Ages, II, London, 1925.

<sup>42</sup>From the apse inscription of Paschal's mosaic at S. Maria in Domnica. Liber Pontificalis II, 65, note 17.

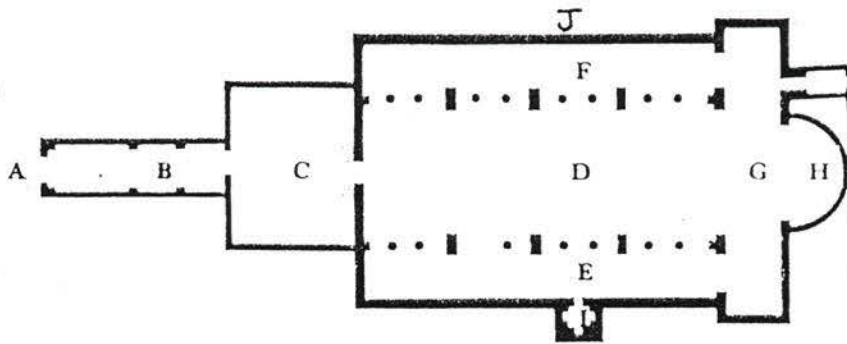


Figure 1A. Plan of Paschal's Basilica with Zeno Chapel

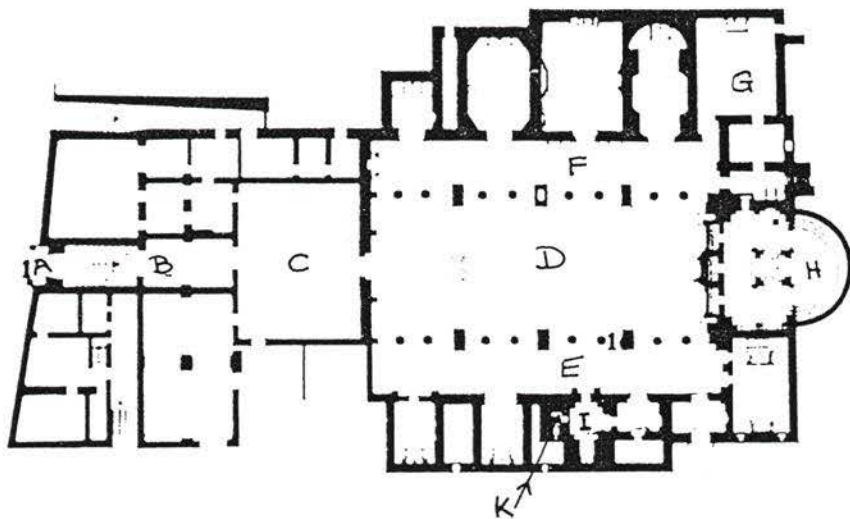


Fig. 1B. S. Prassede, Present Day: Plan

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| A. Entry      | H. Apse   |
| B. Staircase  | I. Zeno Chapel  |
| C. Atrium     | J. Supposed Location of Chapel<br>of St. John the Baptist |
| D. Nave       | K. Present Location of Column<br>of the Flagellation      |
| E., F. Aisles |   |
| G. Transept   |   |

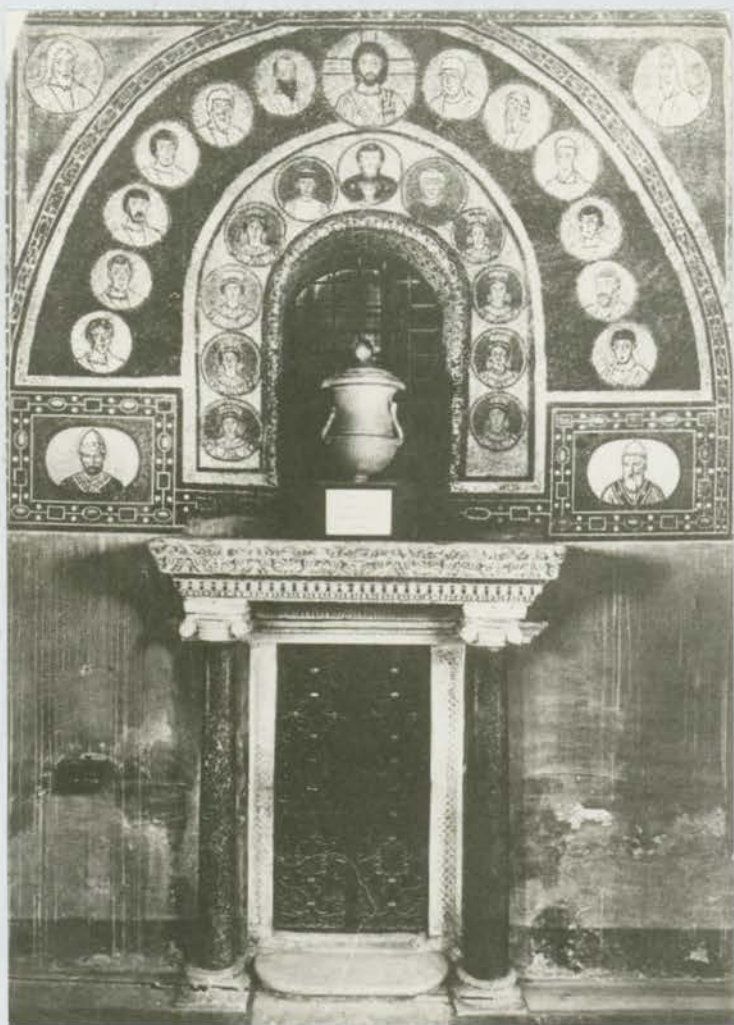


Fig. 2. S. Prassede, South Aisle.  
Entrance to Zeno Chapel.

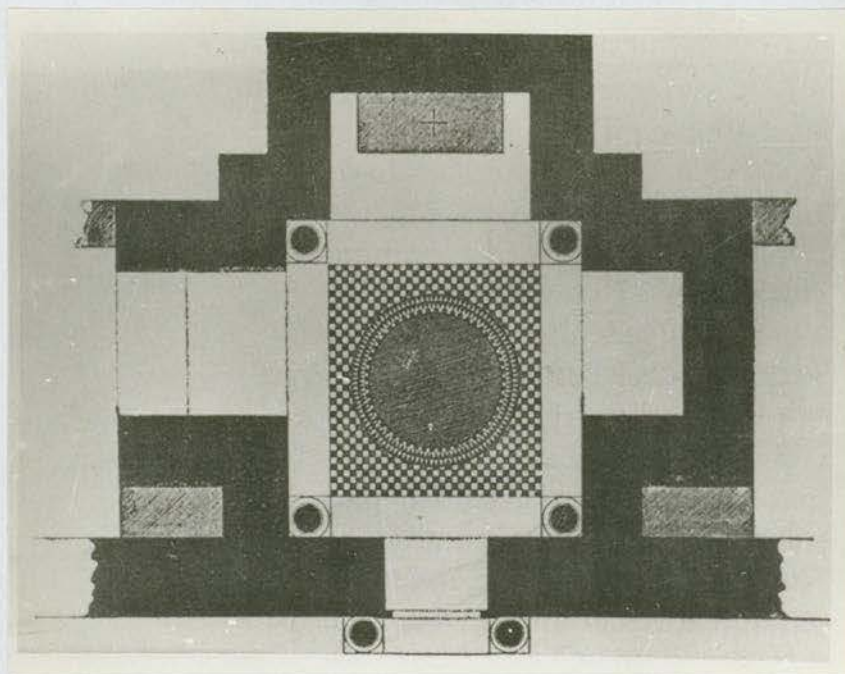


Fig. 3A. Floor Plan, Zeno Chapel

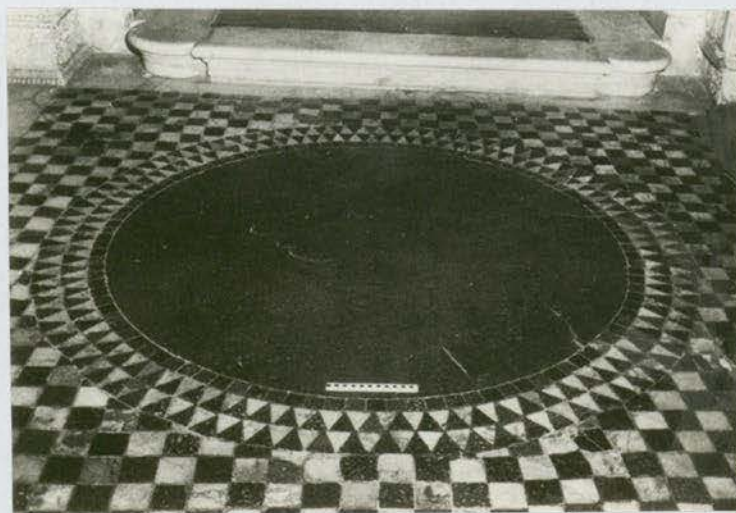


Fig. 3B. Opus Sectile Floor of Zeno Chapel,  
looking towards the Altar

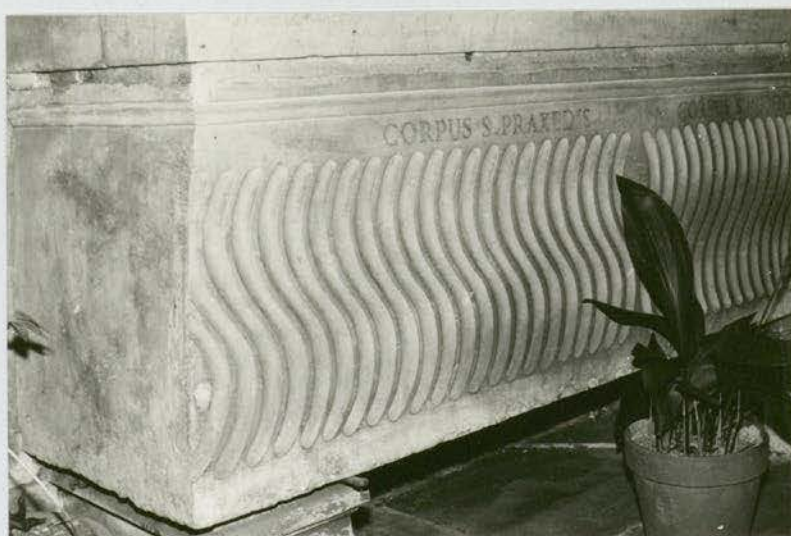


Fig. 4. Strigillated Sarcophagus from the Crypt of S. Prassede



Fig. 5. Zeno Chapel, Vault Mosaic

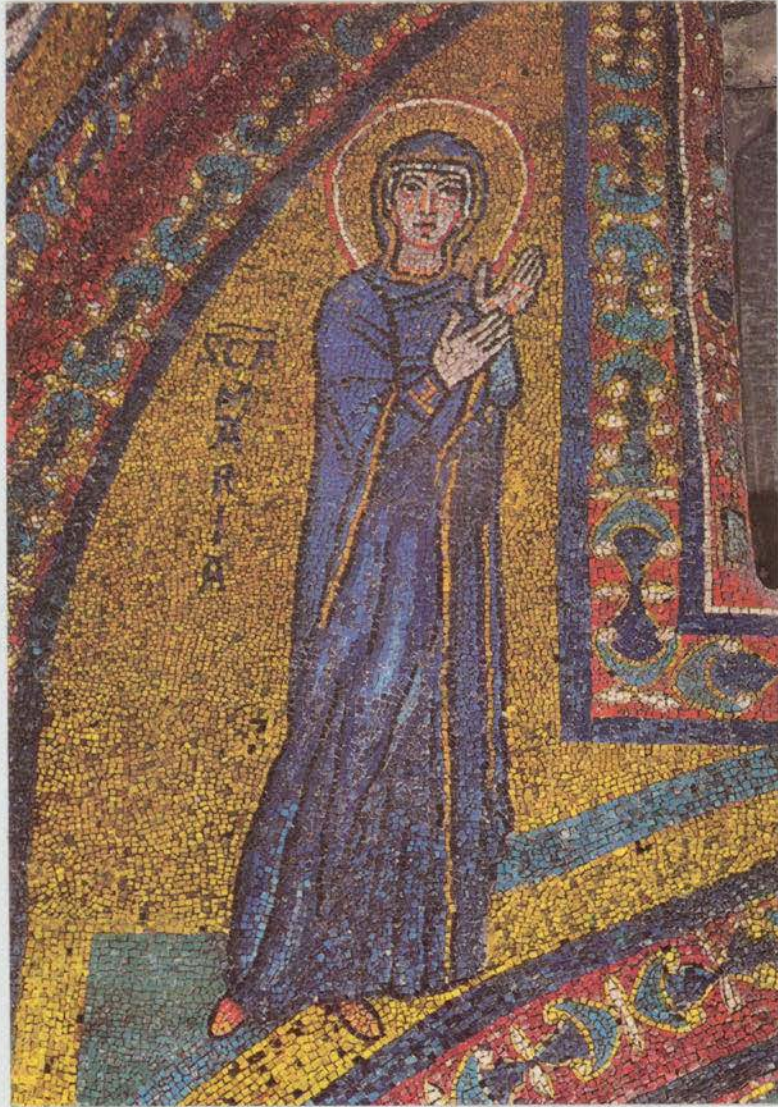


Fig. 6. Mary, from Deesis Mosaic



7A



7B

John the Baptist, from the Deesis Mosaic



8. Andrew (left) and James (right)



9.  
John the Evangelist



Fig. 10. Agnes (left); Pudentiana (right)



Fig. 11. Procession of Virgin Saints (detail) from  
S. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna



Fig. 12. Praxedis



Fig. 13. Cassiano dal Pozzo. Drawing of the  
Lost Mosaic from the Triumphal Arch,  
S. Cecilia. (left half)



Fig. 14. The Vault Mosaic: Christ and Angels



Fig. 15. Peter (left) and Paul (right)  
Prepared Throne



Fig. 16A. The Transfiguration Mosaic

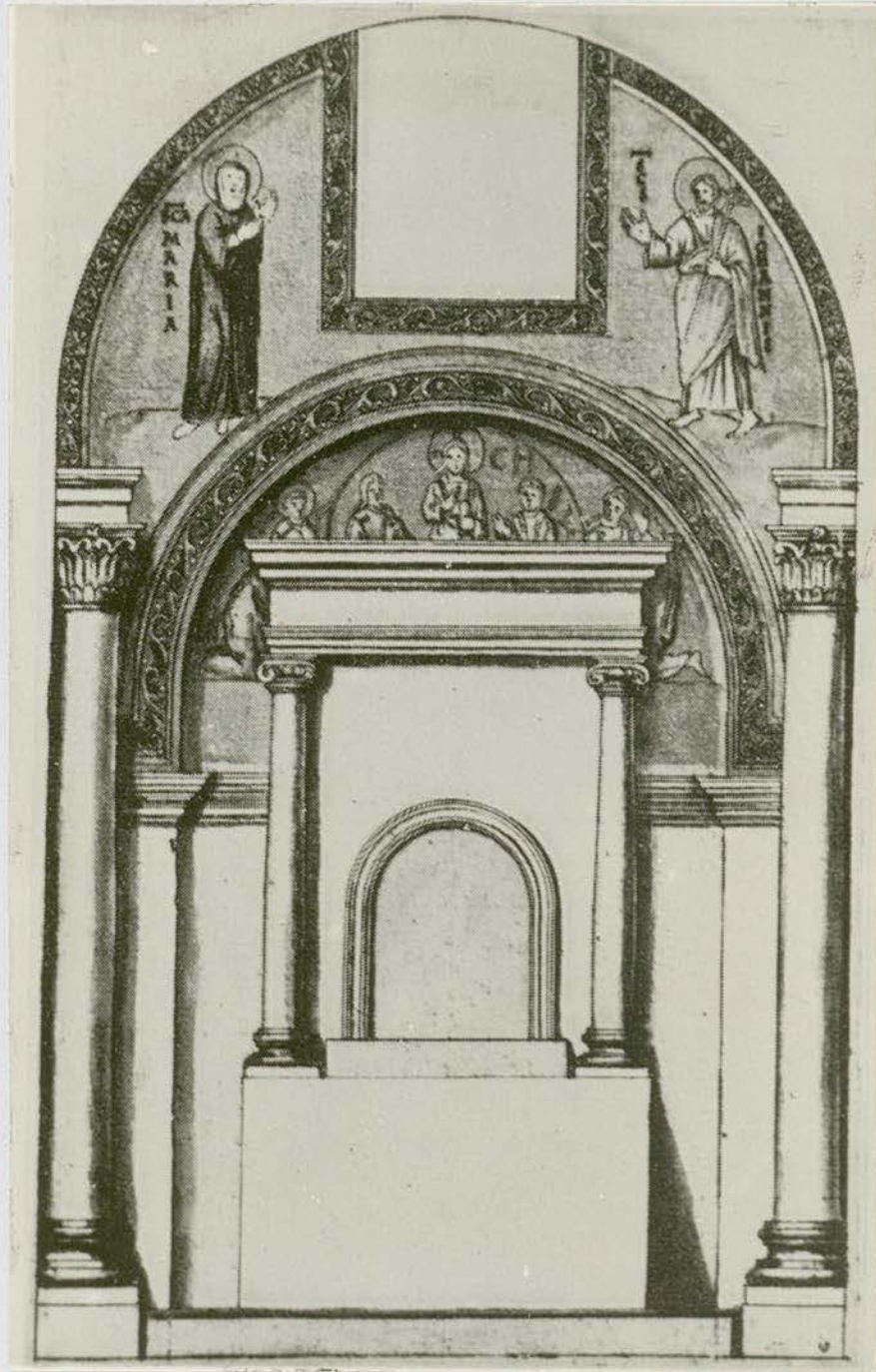


Fig. 16B. Cassiano dal Pozzo.  
The Altar Wall: ca. 1630.

*Roller*



Fig. 17A. West Lunette: Christ and Saints



Fig. 17B. Cassiano dal Pozzo.  
The West Wall and Lunette, ca. 1630.



Fig. 18. The East Lunette.



Fig. 19A. East Lunette, Detail:  
 Praxedis. Mary. Pudentiana.



Fig. 19B. East Lunette, Detail:  
 Theodora Episcopa. Praxedis.



Fig. 20. Cassiano dal Pozzo.  
East Wall and Lunette, ca. 1630.

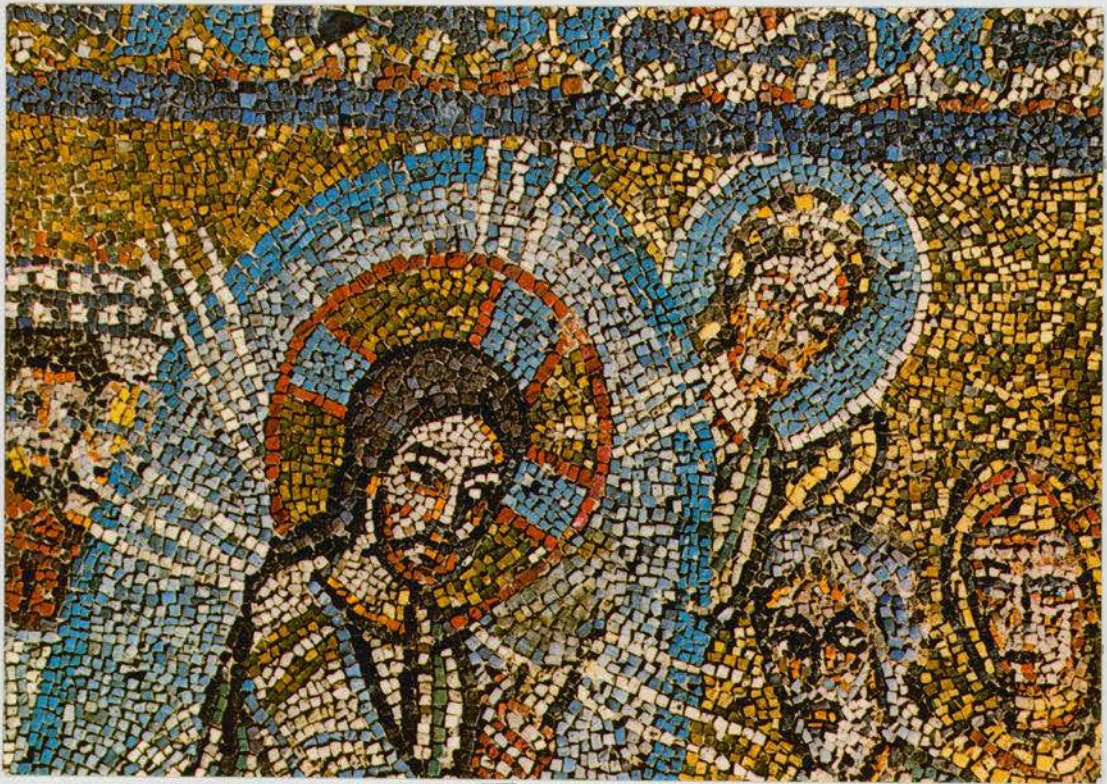


Fig. 21A. The Anastasis Mosaic

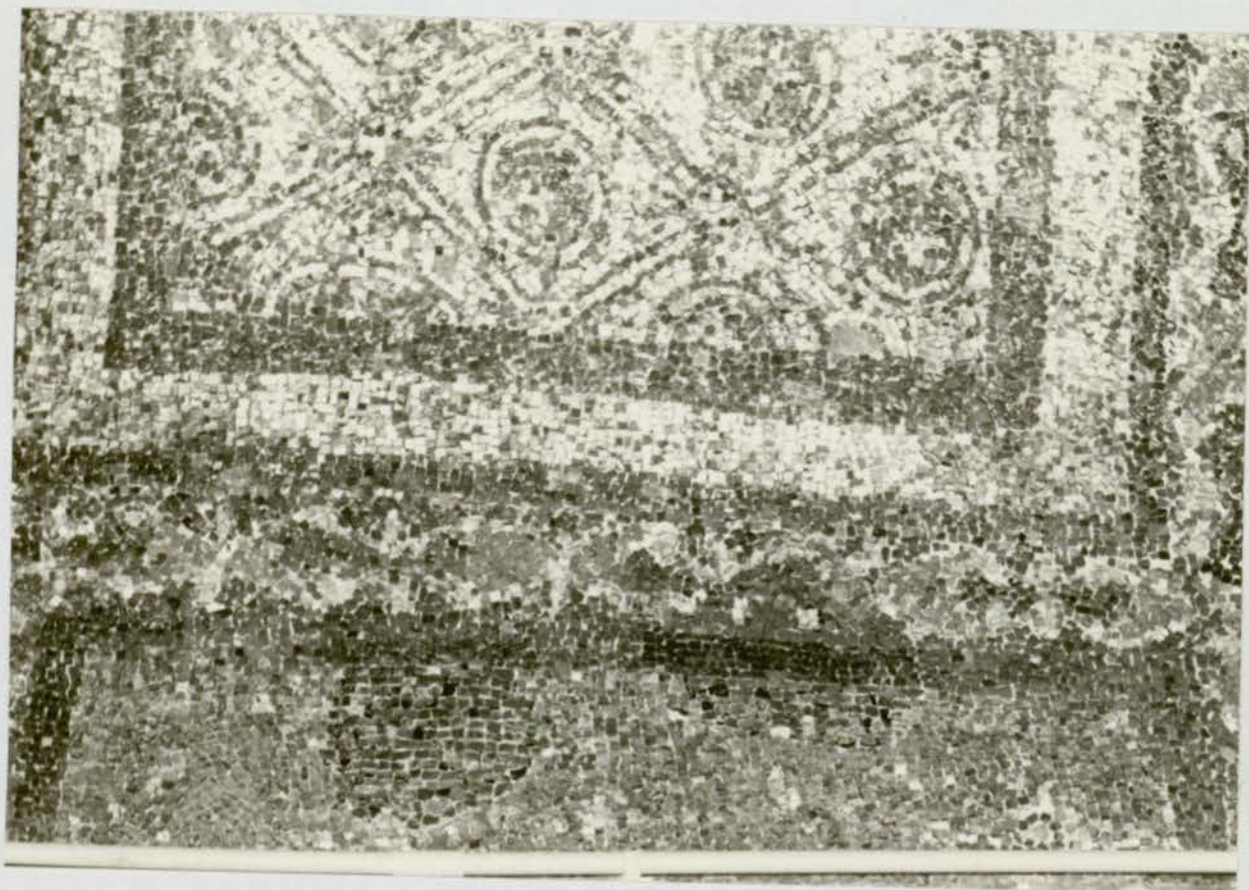


Fig. 21B. The Panel Opposite the Anastasis

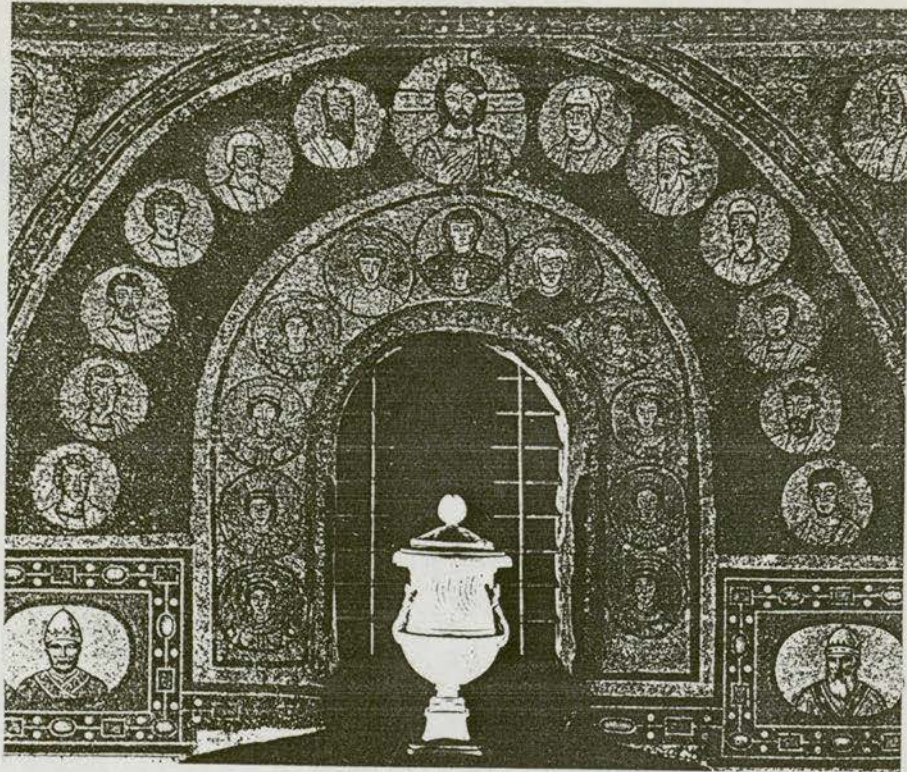


Fig. 22A. The Facade Mosaic.

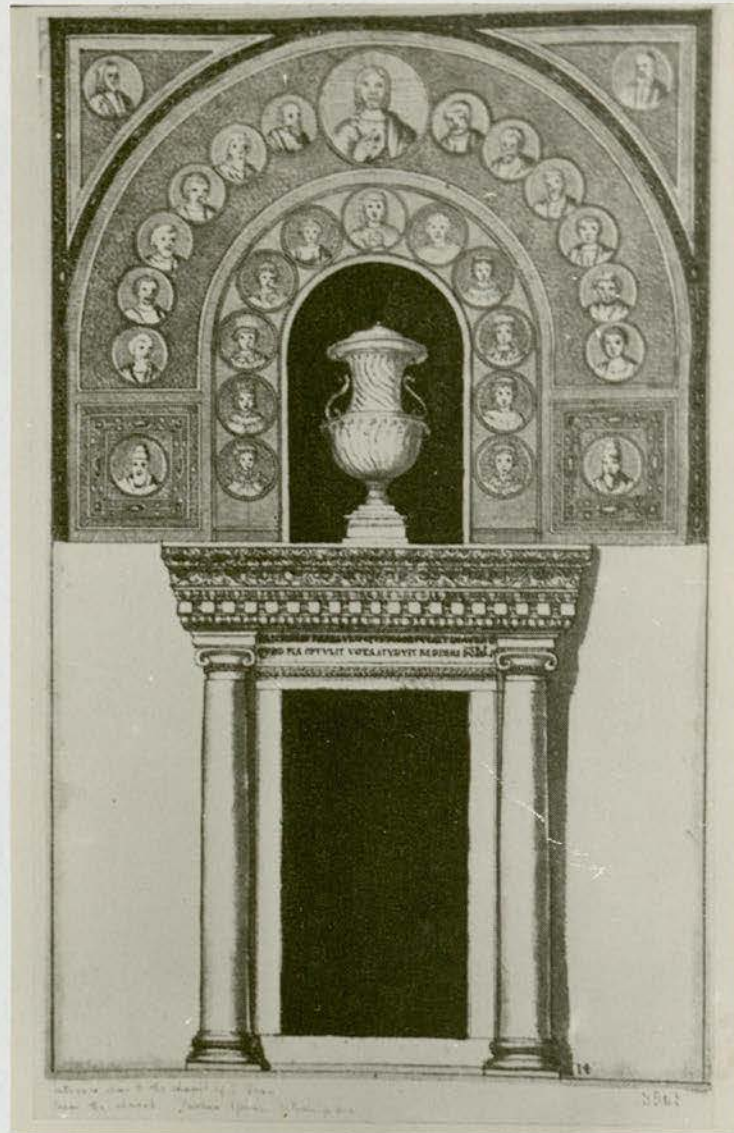


Fig. 22B. Cassiano dal Pozzo:  
Facade Mosaic and Door, ca. 1630.

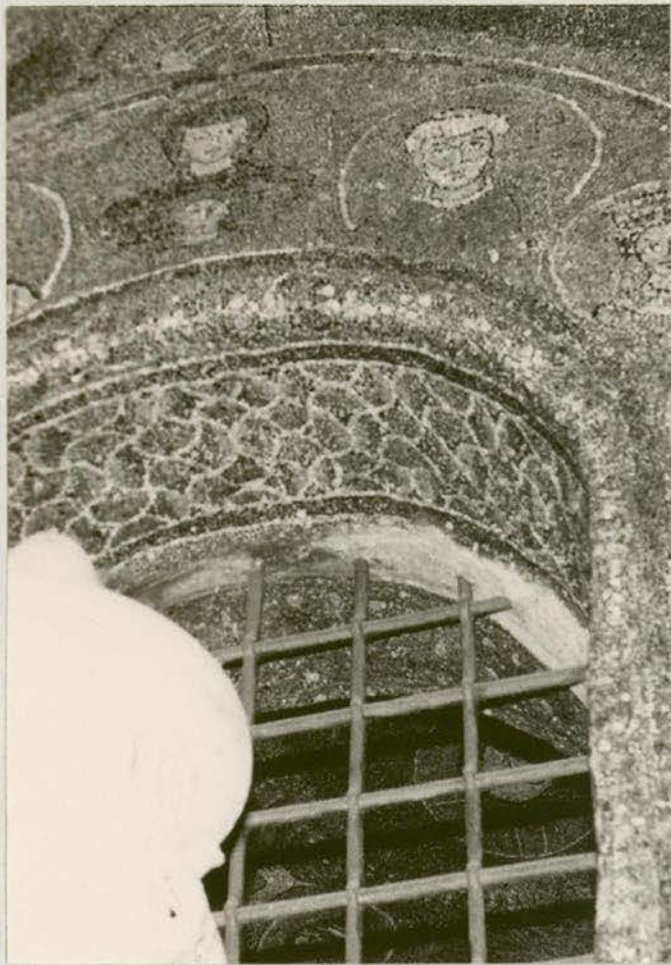


Fig. 23A. Entry Way  
Soffit with Pelta  
Design, from Outside.

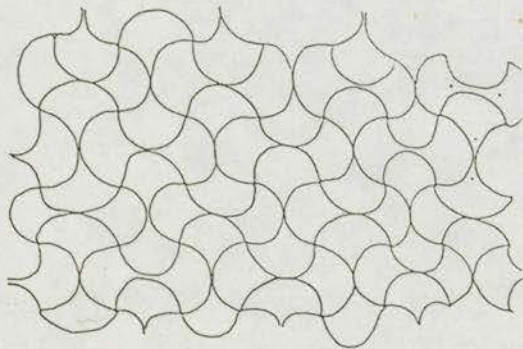


Fig. 23B. Pelta Design.

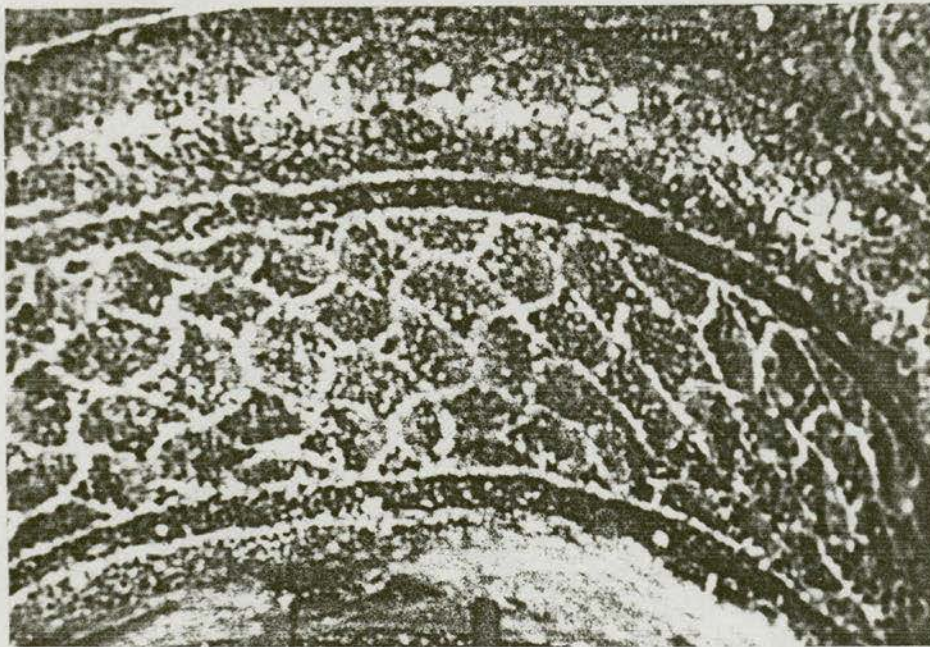


Fig. 23C. Detail of 23A.



Fig. 24A. Altar Vault:  
The Inhabited Scroll,  
Left Side.

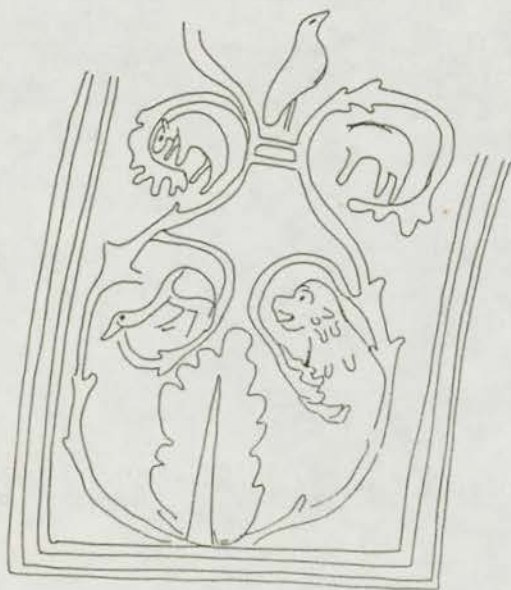


Fig. 24B. Drawing of 24A.



Fig. 24C. Classical Columns in S. Prassede Sanctuary.



Fig. 25A. Lateral Vault: Carpet Design.

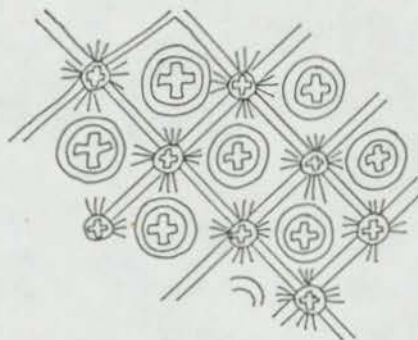


Fig. 25B. Drawing of Carpet Design.



Fig. 26A. Column Base, Ninth Century.  
Relief Panel with Grape Vine Design.

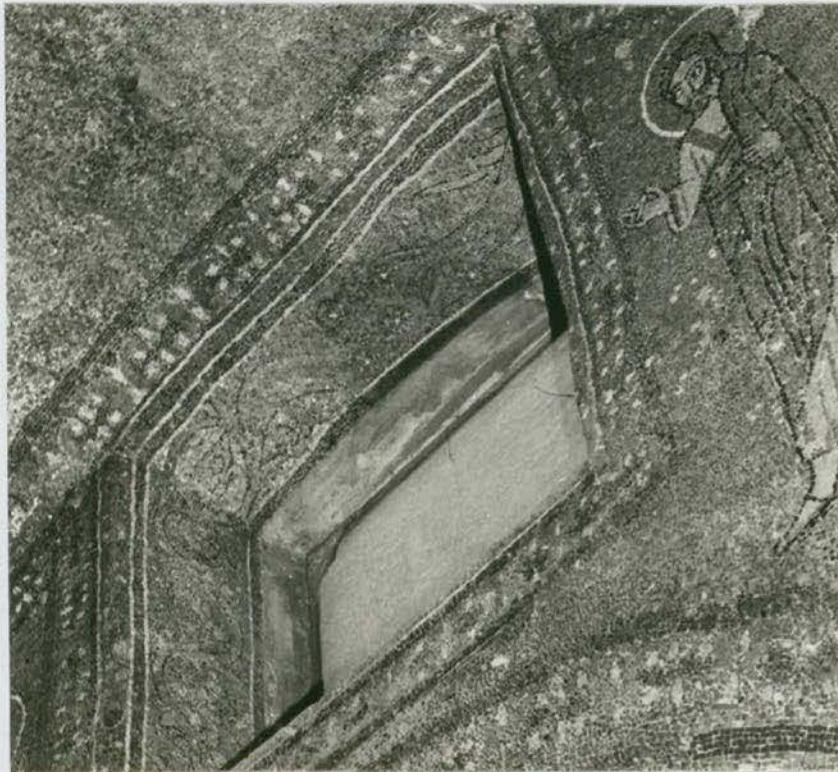


Fig. 26B. Altar Window Embrasure:  
Scroll Design with Flowers, Grapes and Doves.

## APPENDIX 1

## COLOURS USED IN THE ZENO CHAPEL MOSAICS

Gold  
 Black  
 White  
 Dull green (Terre-verte)--2 shades  
 Pale opaque green--several shades--(? 4)  
 Opaque yellow  
 Royal blue  
 Medium blue  
 Cerulean blue  
 Grey blue--several shades--(? 2)  
 Pale blue--several shades--(? 4)  
 Red  
 Terracotta  
 Orange  
 Greyish-pink--several shades--(? 3)  
 Brown--several shades--(? 4)  
 Tan

This total of 30 might be increased by a few on closer examination of some of the subtler shades but is nearly complete.

The relatively small choice of colours and shades gave a limited and rather harsh palette to the Zeno chapel mosaicists (compare with more than 143 shades of colours in use in the tenth century Byzantine church of S. Sophia, Kiev).<sup>1</sup>

This limited palette, I believe, accounts for the impressionistic style of Carolingian and especially Paschalian mosaics in Rome. There simply were not enough shades of most colours to attempt the subtle contouring of forms of the antique and Early Christian styles.

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<sup>1</sup>L. Hrihorly, Kiev's Hagia Sophia, Kiev, 1971, 16.  
 129 gradations of colour in 18 groups  
 14 achromatic variations  
 25 shades of gold and silver

## APPENDIX 2

## THE MOSAIC IN THE ALTAR NICHE

The "Virgin and Child between Saints Praxedis and Pudentiana" which occupies the small niche on the altar and is in front of the lower part of the Transfiguration mosaic, has usually been considered to have been a later addition to the chapel's decoration.

The Virgin, enthroned, inscribed MRΘH and dressed in a blue maphorion, holds the Child centrally: he flings his arms wide apart and in his left hand holds a scroll inscribed "Ego sum lux." The saints on either side, named by inscription, indicate the Virgin and Child with their right hands. There is a shell-like velabrum above Mary's head in the apex of the niche.

This mosaic differs from all the others in the Zeno chapel in the following respects:

1. The gold glass tesserae use a red-tinged glass, rather than the greenish glass of all the other gold tesserae in the chapel.<sup>1</sup>
2. The tessellation is regular rather than chaotic.
3. The tesserae are of different sizes, with the smallest sizes used in the faces.
4. The pupils "swim in the whites of the eyes."<sup>2</sup>
5. Faces have modelling.
6. The dry folds of the garments are illuminated with gold.
7. A velabrum is present.

Although Oakeshott compares this mosaic with the entry door lunette at Grottaferrata (ca. 1000 A.D.) or even with that in the apse at S. Sophia, Istanbul (mid-ninth century)<sup>3</sup> the consensus of opinion

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<sup>1</sup>Oakeshott, Mosaics, 208.

<sup>2</sup>Baldoria, Capella, 262.

<sup>3</sup>Oakeshott, Mosaics, 208.

would place it in the twelfth or thirteenth century. Baldoria, for example, noting the differences in technique listed above, relates the mosaic to those in the apses of S. Francesca Romana, S. Clemente and S. Maria in Trastevere (twelfth century).<sup>4</sup> Carla Falda Guglielmi prefers to place it in the thirteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Baldoria, Capella, 262.

<sup>5</sup>Carla Falda Guglielmi, "Roma/S. Prassede," Bologna, n.d., 20, "un mosaico entro una piccola nicchia . . . è opera più tardiva, del XIII secolo."

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<u>Acta R. Norv.</u>	<u>Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam</u>
<u>AJA</u>	<u>American Journal of Archaeology</u>
<u>Art. Bull.</u>	<u>Art Bulletin</u>
<u>D.O.P.</u>	<u>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</u>
<u>JWC</u>	<u>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</u>
<u>PBSR</u>	<u>Papers of the British School at Rome</u>
<u>RAC</u>	<u>Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana</u>

Other abbreviations are noted after individual entries in the bibliography.

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