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Illustration on p. 2: Prayer rug, 16th century. Attributed to Iran. See fig. 1, p. 44.

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MANUSCRIPT GUIDELINES FOR THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM JOURNAL

Founded in 1968, the *Metropolitan Museum Journal* is a double anonymous, peer-reviewed scholarly journal published annually that features original research on the history, interpretation, conservation, and scientific examination of works of art in the Museum's collection. Its scope encompasses the diversity of artistic practice from antiquity to the present day. The *Journal* encourages contributions offering critical and innovative approaches using a broad range of methodologies that will further our understanding of works of art, including their provenance, collection, and exhibition histories.

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ABBREVIATIONS

MMA The Metropolitan Museum of Art
MMAB *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*
MMJ *Metropolitan Museum Journal*

Height precedes width and then depth in dimensions cited.

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Women at the Altar of Jesus's Tomb in the Anastasis

ALLY KATEUSZ

A delicately carved ivory pyxis in The Metropolitan Museum of Art depicts five women participating in an early Christian liturgy, or religious ritual. The sculptor carved two of the women swinging censers of incense on opposite sides of a small altar, and the other three with their arms raised in a procession around the side of the circular vessel (figs. 1–3). The pyxis (hereafter MMA pyxis) dates to the sixth century, as early as about 500. This article demonstrates that its scene represents the liturgy at the altar of Jesus's tomb.

Built by Constantine about 326, the shrine of Jesus's tomb was the most famous in Christendom. It was situated inside the rotunda church called the Anastasis, also known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre or the Church of the Resurrection, which still stands in

fig. 1 Pyxis with women carrying censers at an altar, 6th century, Early Byzantine. Eastern Mediterranean/Syro-Palestinian. Elephant ivory with metalwork and paint, overall with lid 4¼ × 5 × 4¾ in. (10.8 × 12.7 × 12.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.57a, b)



fig. 2 Back of pyxis (fig. 1) showing three women with arms raised

fig. 3 Lock plate of pyxis (fig. 1)



Jerusalem. According to Christian tradition, the tomb was cut from solid rock around the cave where Jesus's body was laid after it was taken down from the cross, and where, early Easter morning, he rose and encountered the fearless women coming to anoint his body.¹

Ivory pyxides may have been manufactured as containers for Eucharistic bread to be taken to those who were sick and could not attend the service.² Sometimes they were used as reliquary boxes for the precious bones of saints.³ The provenance of the MMA pyxis is uncertain; a 1906 Parisian auction catalogue vaguely notes, "The piece seems to have been found in Spain and to have been part, during a very remote era, of the religious furnishings of a Spanish church."⁴ It was sold as part of the collection of Dimitri Schevitch, who had been the Russian ambassador to Spain, and the opacity of this description of its provenance may allude to its

having been quietly excavated from the ruins of an ancient church in Spain. There is general agreement, however, that the pyxis was not made in Spain; its origin is usually assessed as Palestine or ancient Syria, or somewhere else in the eastern Mediterranean.⁵

This article first demonstrates that the two women swinging censers on the MMA pyxis represent clergy in an Easter liturgy that reprised the roles of Mary Magdalene and the other Gospel women who encountered Jesus at the empty tomb.⁶ The second section proves that in shape, color, and detail, the MMA pyxis is the most accurate surviving representation of the Constantinian shrine. The last section establishes that the sculptor also depicted the three arms-raised women in the Easter liturgy.

TWO WOMEN SWINGING CENSERS

The sculptor of the MMA pyxis carved two women swinging censers on either side of the altar. Mark 16:1 and Luke 23:56 specify that the women who went to Jesus's tomb brought spices so they could anoint him, but none of the Gospels mention the women censuring. Four pieces of evidence support the conclusion that the two women portrayed with censers on the MMA pyxis represented women who censured with incense during the Easter liturgy at the tomb shrine. First is an early twelfth-century liturgical manual called a *Typikon* that describes the Easter liturgy in the Anastasis with two women censuring at the tomb. Second are sixth- and seventh-century pilgrim souvenirs that depict two women approaching the tomb, with one of the women swinging a censer. The third is a fifth-century manuscript of the *Six Books* Dormition narrative about the later life and death of Jesus's mother, which describes Mary burning incense in a censer at her son's tomb. The final piece of evidence is the pilgrim Egeria's late fourth-century travel diary, in which she wrote that during the Easter morning liturgy, "They take censers into the cave of the Anastasis, so that the whole Anastasis basilica is filled with the smell."⁷

Typikon

A detailed description of women with censers, called myrrhophores or myrrhbearers, censuring at the tomb during the Easter liturgies in the Anastasis is in Codex Stavrou 43, a Greek liturgical manuscript dated 1122.⁸ Its editor, Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus, argued that it was copied from a late ninth- or early tenth-century manuscript.⁹ This *Typikon* describes the liturgies for the churches of Jerusalem, including those for the late-night Saturday and early Sunday Easter services

in the Anastasis at the shrine of Jesus's tomb, which the *Typikon* calls the Holy Sepulchre.

According to the *Typikon*, after the late Saturday service before Easter, two myrrhophores remained to cense and anoint the stone shelf in the cave where Jesus's body was believed to have been laid.¹⁰ Easter morning, the myrrhophores and other clergy changed into white vestments.¹¹ Valerie A. Karras writes, "The rubrics for the paschal matins service make it impossible not to understand the term 'clergy' to include the myrrhbearers,"¹² which can be gleaned in this quote:

The doors of the church are immediately opened and the patriarch together with the clergy enters the church, chanting the "Christ is risen." The patriarch and the arch-deacon immediately enter the Holy Sepulchre, these two alone, with the myrrhophores standing before the Holy Sepulchre. Then the patriarch shall come out to them and say to the women: "Rejoice: Christ is risen!" Then the myrrhophores fall at his feet and, rising, they cense the patriarch, sing the *polychronion* [hymn of acclamation for the patriarch] to him and return to the place where they customarily stand.¹³

The scene of the two myrrhophores standing before the entrance of the Holy Sepulchre and then falling at the feet of the patriarch appears to be a liturgical re-creation of Matthew 28:1-10, which describes Mary Magdalene and the other Mary at the empty tomb early Easter morning, where first an angel greeted them and then Jesus met them and they embraced his feet. Afterward he sent them to tell the frightened men that he had risen. The myrrhophores walked with the other clergy in the procession to the altar area, then stood at the entrance to the Holy Sepulchre and censed during the service, after which they reentered the cave and censed and anointed the stone shelf:

Immediately the two deacons go with the censers, and two subdeacons with two candlesticks before them, until they enter the Bema [altar area] and stand in the middle of the solea [a raised platform at the front of the altar area]. In the same way also the two myrrhophores enter before the two deacons, having the triskellia [portable lectern] and before them two deaconesses, they also having two candlesticks and lit candles before them and thus they stand, one on the right of the life-giving Sepulchre and the other on the left. They cense until the holy Gospel has been read and then they enter the Holy (Sepulchre), cense it and anoint it.¹⁴

This passage specifies two deaconesses and two myrrhophores in the procession. Allie Ernst proposes that the myrrhophores may have been deaconesses who had the additional role of myrrhophore Easter services.¹⁵ Karras provides considerable evidence of women deacons in the Eastern church, and Christian women censing during this era.¹⁶ Women deacons were well known in the East from an early date.¹⁷

Pilgrim Souvenirs

Sixth- and seventh-century pilgrim souvenirs depict two women with a censer approaching the tomb with an angel opposite. Pewter ampoules for holy oil appear to have been a popular medium for this scene.¹⁸ Raffaele Garrucci's careful drawings of these small gray ampoules (ca. 1880; figs. 4, 5) provide more detail than is easily

fig. 4 Raffaele Garrucci (Italian, 1812-1885). Drawing of Monza ampoule no. 5, reverse, ca. 1880. Photograph in Grabar 1958, pl. 11. Ampoule dated to late 6th-early 7th century. Palestine. Pewter, Diam. approx. 1 1/8 in. (4.7 cm). Museo e Tesoro del Duomo di Monza. Garrucci 1880, pl. 434, fig. 5

fig. 5 Raffaele Garrucci. Drawing of Monza ampoule no. 9, front, ca. 1880. Photograph in Grabar 1958, pl. 14. Ampoule dated to late 6th-early 7th century. Palestine. Pewter, Diam. approx. 1 1/8 in. (4.7 cm). Museo e Tesoro del Duomo di Monza. Garrucci 1880, pl. 434, fig. 6



visible in photographs. Albeit abbreviated due to their small size, the ampoules provide architectural details consistent with the latticework barrier that encircled the tomb.¹⁹ Egeria mentioned the lattice barrier ten times when describing the liturgies at the tomb.²⁰ She called it *cancellus*, Latin for “a latticed barrier or grating, grille.”²¹ She distinguished between the latticed barrier and the tomb, which she called the “cave.”

On the ampoules, the two women approach lattice gates. On some, the architecture is severely abbreviated as two double doors with a triangle above.²² Others provide more detail, yet lack uniformity.²³ Nonetheless, almost all the ampoules portray the first woman swinging a censer.²⁴ Many also depict the second woman carrying a container with a lid, as is clearly shown in figure 5.²⁵ Perhaps this container represented the alabaster jar that three of the Gospels described in the context of a woman anointing Jesus in preparation for his death.²⁶ Regardless, two women carrying a censer and a jar to Jesus’s tomb evokes the *Typikon*’s description of the two myrrhophores who censed and anointed there. Thus it seems reasonable to conclude that in the sixth century when the ampoules began to be produced, myrrhophores were already a feature of the Easter liturgy at Jesus’s tomb.

A small painting on the inside cover of the sixth-century *Sancta Sanctorum* box (fig. 6) helps explain why the scenes on the ampoules are identified as two women at the shrine inside the Anastasis. This painter similarly portrayed two women approaching the open doors of a metalwork enclosure. However, the artist painted the rotunda’s large round roof above the scene.²⁷ The rotunda church of the Anastasis was not built until several years after the marble-clad shrine.²⁸ Before that, the decorative metal barrier would have served to protect the shrine and to manage access to it. After the



fig. 6 Upper left section of inside lid of a wooden box, 6th century. Paint on wood, approx. 2¾ × 3⅝ in. (7 × 8 cm). *Sancta Sanctorum* treasure from the Lateran. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Museo Sacro (inv. 1883 A-B)

Anastasis was built, the lattice barrier would have remained the first thing a pilgrim saw upon entering the rotunda. It would have been memorable, which explains why it was so frequently featured on pilgrim souvenirs.

Six Books Dormition Narrative

The third piece of evidence to evince a long tradition of women censing at Jesus’s tomb is a passage in the Old Syriac (Aramaic) *Six Books* Dormition narrative about the later life and death of Jesus’s mother, Mary. The text of the oldest nearly complete *Six Books* manuscript is the lower script of a palimpsest dated to the second half of the fifth century or possibly the start of the sixth century.²⁹ It describes Mary visiting her son’s tomb daily and burning incense in a censer.³⁰ This fictive scene may reflect the author’s knowledge of actual women censing at the tomb. Stephen Shoemaker dates the composition of the *Six Books* to the fourth century, so it seems possible that women were censing at the shrine from the time it was consecrated.³¹

Egeria’s Travel Diary

Lastly, the pilgrim Egeria wrote in her late fourth-century travel diary about the censing at the tomb during the Easter morning service in the Anastasis. Her account, though much shorter, is consistent with what the *Typikon* described regarding the two myrrhophores. She wrote, “They take censers into the cave of the Anastasis, so that the whole Anastasis basilica is filled with the smell.”³² Yet the text of the sole surviving manuscript with Egeria’s diary, the eleventh-century *Codex Aretinus* 405, does not specify the gender of the clergy who did the censing. Perhaps Egeria did not specify their gender because everyone knew the myrrhophores were women. But the codex has significant gaps and omissions, and another possibility is that during the seven centuries that passed between when Egeria wrote her diary and when *Codex Aretinus* 405 was penned, a copyist redacted the scene.³³ Indeed, later copyists redacted *Six Books* scenes of Mary and other women using a censer.³⁴ For example, as mentioned above, the text of the oldest *Six Books* manuscript, the palimpsest, describes Mary burning incense in a censer at her son’s tomb. A later copyist preserved Mary bringing incense, but omitted the censer.³⁵ Yet another redacted both censer and incense, but kept the fragrant smell. A third cut everything to do with incense at Jesus’s tomb, even its scent.³⁶ It is thus plausible that during the seven-hundred-year manuscript tradition of Egeria’s diary, one or more scribes, uncomfortable with the idea of women using censers, simply omitted them.

fig. 8 Front of a pyxis depicting an altar area, 6th century. Eastern Mediterranean. Elephant ivory, overall $3\frac{3}{8} \times 5$ in. (8.5 × 12.7 cm). Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund (1951.114)



by two small extrusions and faced east, the direction he said the cave-tomb faced, which is still the case.⁵⁰ A rectangle inside this circle (usually labeled “sepulchrum”) indicates the stone shelf upon which Jesus’s body was thought to have been laid, and it is on the north wall, the same wall where the shelf is today. The two outermost circles seem to represent the thick walls of the rotunda, drawn with three small apses inset. This leaves a circle between the thick walls and the cave-tomb, perhaps representing the metal lattice barrier that encircled the tomb. The corridor between the lattice barrier and the tomb could have been used for liturgical processions, like the procession of women sculpted around the MMA pyxis.

As noted above, various pilgrims reported that an altar stood in front of the cave-tomb, and Arculf and Bede further specified that it was the smaller of the two altars made from the famous stone. All copies of Arculf’s floor plan illustrate two squares or two rectangles, one at the entrance to the cave, and the other closer to the east wall of the rotunda, where Arculf and Bede said the larger of the two altars stood.⁵¹ Although Arculf apparently did not describe a ciborium, the two extrusions drawn at the entrance of the tomb

could signify the structure of one above the altar, extended slightly past the wall of the round tomb. In that case, the small square at the mouth of the tomb and the altar carved beneath the ciborium on the MMA pyxis could represent the same altar. If so, then the entrance into the tomb would have been situated behind the striped curtains on either side of the altar, which would have been pulled open or closed depending upon the dramatic moment in the liturgy.⁵²

The shape of the tomb is usually deemed polygonal or round, as seen in Arculf’s diagram. On a round edifice a half-hexagon ciborium would have been more proportional and aesthetically pleasing than a square one, which would have jugged out. The sculptor of the MMA pyxis depicted a beautiful half-hexagon ciborium that abuts its round white wall.

Remarkably, another ivory pyxis, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, also depicts a half-hexagon ciborium above an altar (fig. 8). This pyxis is thought to have been part of the treasure of the church of Saint André-le-Bas in Vienna, where in 1612 it was a reliquary for the jawbone of a saint.⁵³ The architecture of the altar areas on these two pyxides is so similar that Archer

St. Clair says, “The most significant difference between the Metropolitan and Cleveland pyxides is the introduction of a cross behind or upon the altar in the latter.”⁵⁴ On both, the four columns of the ciborium are spiral and form a half-hexagon; the altar is a tripod table with spiral legs and a lamp above; and the curtains have horizontal stripes. Both have three long curved steps with similar segmentation that lead up to the altar area. The Cleveland pyxis, however, does not depict the liturgy; the two men seen on either side of its altar area are facing away, part of the Gospel scenes that encircle the rest of the vessel. Both sculptors, however, preserved the incense burning on either side of the altar: the MMA pyxis depicts two women swinging censers, while the Cleveland pyxis shows what appear to be two thymiateria, a type of censer on a stand with an open top for a large lump or cone of incense.⁵⁵ Despite minor differences, the architecture and furnishings of the altar area seen on both pyxides is so similar and so unusual (especially the half-hexagon ciboria) that it seems highly likely both ivory sculptors rendered the same altar area. Multiple representations, especially on items as expensive as ivory pyxides, suggest

a famous and sacred site like the tomb shrine inside the Anastasis.

A seven-foot-long fragment of a floor mosaic that uncontroversially represents the shrine may help elucidate its architecture (fig. 9).⁵⁶ The mosaic is dated about the sixth century and is believed to have originated in the Near East, perhaps ancient Syria.⁵⁷ Its large size permitted a detailed illustration of the latticework barrier that encircled the tomb—a double-winged design with small red hearts. Here we see the ornate double gates, a small censer hanging between them. The mosaic depicts four columns. The outer two are set farther back, indicating a half-hexagon ciborium structure, a shape emphasized by the angles of the gold band around the three sections of its red canopy. This ciborium appears to abut a white wall decorated with two rosettes, much as the ciboria on the two pyxides abut white walls. A large lamp, like the lamp hanging above the altar on the MMA pyxis, hangs from the midpoint of the mosaic ciborium. Two thymiateria stand on either side, and their tops, which are almost all that can be seen before the lattice begins, look similar to the tops of the two thymiateria that flank the altar on the Cleveland pyxis. On the mosaic, however, what appears to be a tall cone of tan-colored incense is affixed above each stand, smoke or flames emanating from its tip.⁵⁸ Other markers on the mosaic such as the striped curtains or tripod altar may have been omitted due to the difficulty in this medium of illustrating details behind the ornate lattice barrier, which also could account for why the mosaic artist did not include the rest of the bases of the two thymiateria.

Finally, the MMA pyxis has significant points of contact with the fragmentary Narbonne model that is considered an important representation of the shrine behind the lattice barrier (fig. 10). However, as Biddle says: “there is reason to believe that this may be a relatively crude and architecturally uncanonical version.”⁵⁹ Both the MMA pyxis and the Narbonne model display a round tomb with nine columns, four of which are in the front and compose a ciborium-type structure.⁶⁰ On the Narbonne model, the four front columns and almost all the rest of the ciborium structure are missing, but the four column bases form a rectangle, suggesting that its sculptor visualized a common square ciborium. The half-hexagon ciborium sculpted on the MMA and Cleveland pyxides is much more architecturally balanced. The only known architectural element that is on the Narbonne model but not on the pyxides is the cornice above the tomb, the omission of which may be due to the way the pyxides were manufactured, from slices



fig. 9 Fragment of floor mosaic, ca. 6th century. Origin unknown, most likely from an early Byzantine church in the Near East, possibly ancient Syria. H. approx. 7 ft. (2.15 m). National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen (inv. 15.137)

fig. 10 The Narbonne model. Marble fragment of a three-dimensional sculpture used to illustrate Jesus's tomb. Dated before the 10th century, possibly as early as the 5th century. Pyrenean marble, H. 48 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (124 cm). Musée Narbo Via, Narbonne, France



of elephant tusk.⁶¹ The MMA pyxis itself appears to preserve the most detailed and accurate surviving representation of the shrine and its altar area, as well as of the Easter liturgy that took place there.

In 1923, Adolph Goldschmidt cited Arculf's description of the altar at Jesus's tomb and concluded that the altar on the MMA pyxis depicted the altar at the tomb.⁶² More than fifty years later, however, in two publications related to The Met's 1977–78 exhibition *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century*, Archer St. Clair and Margaret E. Frazer rejected Goldschmidt's conclusion. In an issue of *Gesta* dedicated to the exhibition, St. Clair argued that the sculptor of the MMA pyxis did not depict a scene at Jesus's tomb in the Anastasis, but a scene in some other Palestinian or Syrian church, and Frazer, in her article on the pyxis for the exhibition catalogue, briefly said the same.⁶³ Both cited as their main reason the fact that the MMA pyxis did not have the grille seen on depictions of the shrine on pilgrim ampullae and the Sancta Sanctorum box.⁶⁴ The absence of the grille on the MMA pyxis, however, is entirely explainable if the pyxis, like the Narbonne model, rendered the marble-clad shrine *behind* the latticed barrier. St. Clair added another reason, that the pyxis had prominent steps "and none of the representations or pilgrims' descriptions depicts the shrine itself as approached by steps."⁶⁵ St. Clair was incorrect. Seven years earlier John Wilkinson had proposed that holes bored into the front of the Narbonne model indicated that originally it had a

short flight of steps, and that is how he illustrated the shrine in his influential reconstruction of the Narbonne model.⁶⁶ In addition, an illustration of the shrine without a grille and with prominent steps is in one of a series of mosaic panels that depict Gospel scenes in the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna where, when portraying the two Marys at the tomb, the artist illustrated the tomb as a domed structure with four columns, long curved steps, and no grille.⁶⁷ It is known, however, that the Cleveland pyxis, which St. Clair also discussed in detail, like the MMA pyxis, has prominent steps and no grille, and it is unlikely that both ivory sculptors would have carved the altar of an obscure church instead of the one at the famous tomb inside the Anastasis, just as Goldschmidt concluded.

Perhaps most surprising, St. Clair and Frazer further argued that the altar carved on the MMA pyxis was not meant to show an actual altar, and that the artist had substituted it for the tomb of Christ. They pointed to the fact that in the East the altar was sometimes called the tomb of Christ because his metaphorical flesh and blood (bread and wine) were laid upon it.⁶⁸ With this rationale St. Clair referred to "the substitution of altar for tomb," while Frazer wrote, "substituting an altar for the actual tomb."⁶⁹ Yet if the sculptor had intended to render a tomb instead of an altar, he or she could have portrayed two women approaching a sarcophagus beneath a ciborium structure, as seen in the mosaic in Sant'Apollinare Nuovo and on the Sitten pyxis, which St. Clair also described.⁷⁰ To my knowledge, art historians have never suggested that any other altar was substituted for Jesus's tomb—only this altar, flanked by two women swinging censers and three arms-raised women processing toward it. The interpretive problem in 1979 seems to have been that the sculptor carved women instead of men. In any case, St. Clair determined that the nearly identical altar on the Cleveland pyxis was indeed an altar.⁷¹

THREE WOMEN WITH ARMS RAISED

Around the side and back of the MMA pyxis the sculptor carved three women with arms raised (fig. 2). Women in this orant pose are often interpreted in early Christian art as simply praying, but Alexei Lidov notes that in iconographic studies the pose is considered liturgical. He cites John Chrysostom paraphrasing Psalm 140: "My prayer is rising up as incense before You; I am raising my hands as the Evening Sacrifice."⁷² In another example, Eusebius of Caesarea described a dreamlike liturgy for a church dedication in Tyre that included censuring with incense and raising hands at the altar.⁷³

Further confirming the liturgical quality of women's raised hands, the two oldest surviving artifacts that depict people at a church altar include men and women with raised hands. The first is an ivory reliquary box showing the liturgy inside Old Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome (fig. 11).⁷⁴ The second is a limestone chancel screen that portrays the liturgy inside the Great Church in Constantinople, also known as the second Hagia Sophia, which burned during Justinian's reign and was replaced with the third and last Hagia Sophia, still standing today.⁷⁵ Both artists portrayed gender parallelism at the altar, with arms-raised men on the left and arms-raised women on the right.

The ivory reliquary box is likely the older of the two, usually dated from the late 300s to mid-400s. It was unearthed beneath the altar area of a Roman-era church near Pola, Croatia, in 1906, and immediately recognized as having extraordinary value for our understanding of the early Christian liturgy.⁷⁶ Its altar stands beneath a half-hexagon ciborium with spiral columns, possibly designed to mirror the one at Jesus's tomb, thereby linking the sacrality of Jerusalem to Rome, and the sacrality of Jesus to Peter.⁷⁷ Three men are depicted to the left of the altar and three women on the right; the two outermost men and women on each side have their arms raised, and in the center, beneath the half-hexagon ciborium, a man and a woman each appear to be raising something on opposite sides of the altar. There has never been any debate that the three people on the right are women, in part because they are veiled and in part because scenes of men on the left and women on the right in a church environment are on two other sides of the box.⁷⁸

In addition, for several decades there was no debate that the man and the woman in the center were at a church altar.⁷⁹ The six spiral columns of the ciborium, however, look like the six spiral columns that Constantine donated for the ciborium in Old Saint Peter's Basilica, spiral columns preserved today in the wings of the huge modern basilica. When World War II broke out, the ivory reliquary box was taken to Italy for safekeeping. Soon afterward, Vatican excavators began to dig under the modern basilica's high altar, and several layers below they came upon the second-century shrine of Saint Peter.⁸⁰ The size and shape of the eight-foot-square wall of the shrine, its stone table, and the semicircular arch behind it matched the details on the ivory and were determined to be one and the same.⁸¹ Below the stone table the excavators discovered a tomb they thought was Peter's, aligning with a long-held tradition that the altar in Old Saint Peter's had been above Peter's tomb, a tradition originating with two ancient witnesses, Jerome (d. 420) and Gregory of Tours (ca. 538–594).⁸² Gregory of Tours even described pilgrims lowering a cloth below the altar to touch Peter's bones, a practice explaining the two doors carved beneath the altar on the ivory reliquary box.⁸³ The sculptor, however, had depicted a woman at the altar. And the Vatican embarked upon an extraordinary effort to claim that the original altar in Old Saint Peter's must have been a portable table. Recently, however, new research has exposed this decades-old effort to obscure the history of women in the liturgy at Old Saint Peter's Basilica.⁸⁴

The second artifact that portrays arms-raised people flanking an altar is a carved slab of limestone found



fig. 11 Reliquary box (back) with liturgical scene, late 4th–mid-5th century. Discovered below the altar area of a Roman-era church in Samagher, near Pola, Croatia. Probably Constantinople or Italy. Ivory over wood core, 7½ × 7⅞ × 6¼ in. (19 × 20 × 16 cm). Archaeological Museum, Venice

inside a large underground tomb structure excavated in Istanbul in 1988 (fig. 12). Most likely this limestone carving was originally part of the chancel screen in the Great Church in Constantinople, but it was reused as the oversized front of a sarcophagus.⁸⁵ On the left side of the altar the sculptor portrayed a man with his arms raised and on the right side a woman with her arms raised, a boy next to her. Johannes G. Deckers and Umit Serdaroğlu noted that the column capitals identified the scene as inside the Great Church, which was known to have the same type of capitals, and based on several other factors, such as the style of the bulb clasp on the man's shoulder and the early Christian cross on the altar, they dated it closely, between the years 415 and 434.⁸⁶ Their dating corresponds to the consecration of the Great Church in 415. Sozomen (ca. 400–450) tells that the Augusta, Pulcheria, who was regent for her younger brother, consecrated an altar made of gold and gemstones in the Great Church in front of all the priests and people.⁸⁷ His history cuts off, but the *Letter to Cosmas* continues it, saying that Pulcheria was accustomed to standing in the Holy of Holies with her brother during the Eucharist, a practice consistent with the scene on the limestone chancel screen. In early April of 428, however, the new patriarch, Nestorius, came to Constantinople, and on Easter morning he met Pulcheria at the door to the Holy of Holies and prevented her from entering.⁸⁸ Pulcheria set about having him overthrown, and in 431 the Council of Ephesus exiled him.

Significant evidence indicates that the gender parallelism of the liturgy seen on the ivory reliquary box and the limestone chancel screen most likely originated in similar religious practices of some Second Temple Jews. Tentative evidence of such rituals is in some Dead Sea Scrolls.⁸⁹ The most detailed evidence is from the early first-century writer Philo of Alexandria, who described the gender-parallel ritual of a Jewish community he called the Therapeutae.⁹⁰ According to Philo, Jews in many regions around the Mediterranean were experts in the philosophy of the Therapeutae and would travel to its double monastery of men and women near Alexandria.⁹¹ He described one of their all-night sacred rituals, which took place in a gender-divided room with male and female choirs, and two leaders, a man and a woman, who represented the prophets Moses and Miriam.⁹² At different times during the night the Therapeutae raised their arms.⁹³ Their ritual re-created the Jerusalem Temple, complete with special bread, libation, and an altar table.⁹⁴ Enrico Mazza says, “The Therapeutae had a specifically priestly conception of

their community, and this in turn had a direct impact on their conception of worship: the meal and prayer were assimilated to the sacrifices in the Temple.”⁹⁵ To this Taylor adds, “Both men and women saw themselves not only as attendants or suppliants, but as priests in this Temple.”⁹⁶

Further suggesting that the gender-parallel ritual of the Therapeutae influenced that of the early churches, Eusebius of Caesarea insisted that Christian ritual traditions came from the Therapeutae.⁹⁷ He said the churches of his day still practiced the rituals of the Therapeutae, including their separate places for men and women.⁹⁸ Consistent with Eusebius's claim, only fifteen miles from Caesarea, where he was bishop, the oldest church ruins in Israel, those of the third-century “Megiddo Church,” preserve the stone stump of its table between two mosaics, one of which names only women, while the mosaic on the opposite side of the table names a man.⁹⁹ This arrangement suggests a gender-parallel ritual at the table, which would seem to corroborate Eusebius's claim.

On the ivory reliquary box the men and women with their arms raised have mouths open, as if singing.¹⁰⁰ Thus, the liturgy for the annual all-night commemoration of Peter in Old Saint Peter's Basilica may have resembled the Therapeutae's overnight ritual, not only their gender-divided sanctuary and male and female leaders, but also their choirs, whom Philo said raised their arms when the sun rose.¹⁰¹

It seems likely that some synagogues continued to practice Second Temple rituals. Bernadette J. Brootten documented first- through fifth-century Jewish epigraphs of women remembered with titles corresponding to those of male synagogue leaders, like “mother of the synagogue,” “head of the synagogue,” “priestess,” and “presbutera.”¹⁰² “Presbutera” could signify an “elder” in Greek, but during this time its masculine form, “presbuteros,” was used interchangeably with “bishop” and “priest.”¹⁰³ Presbutera, thus, may have been closer in meaning to “head of the synagogue” or “priestess.” These synagogue titles for Jewish women were geographically widespread, found in Palestine, Egypt, ancient Greece, and Rome, as well as other areas.¹⁰⁴

This material evidence is crucial for reconstructing the roles of women in the early Jewish and Christian liturgy, especially since there is an almost complete loss of corresponding manuscripts until the eighth century.¹⁰⁵ When they appear, these eighth-century liturgical manuscripts “have a specious similarity . . . written in similar scripts and on similar writing materials.”¹⁰⁶ The iconographic artifacts, preserved underground for

fig. 12 Silivrikapi tomb. Chancel screen, second Hagia Sophia, ca. 430. Limestone relief, 43 × 78 in. (110 × 200 cm). Istanbul Archaeological Museums



centuries, evince nearly lost liturgical traditions and the roles of women, which, when combined, suggest a long “parting of the ways” between some streams of early Christianity and Judaism.¹⁰⁷

The MMA pyxis, the ivory reliquary box, and the limestone chancel screen are the three oldest iconographic artifacts to portray people at a church altar. For example, Melchizedek at an altar, such as in the wall mosaic in San Vitale in Ravenna (ca. 550), is excluded not only because of its late date, but also because while the mosaic was installed inside a church, it represents an altar from Hebrew scripture, not a church altar.¹⁰⁸ Another exclusion is a fragmentary fourth-century mosaic in Agios Georgios in Thessaloniki that depicts a celestial scene of a square object with legs beneath a ciborium with two arms-raised male saints flanking it. In 1963, Hjalmar Torp identified it as an altar¹⁰⁹—which St. Clair mentioned in her 1979 article about the MMA pyxis¹¹⁰—but Torp, writing with Bente Kiilerich in 2017, subsequently identified it as a “finely adorned chair,” aligning with other art historians.¹¹¹ Also excluded is the lost fifth-century mosaic in the apse of the Ravenna church of San Giovanni Evangelista. Its description, which includes a pair of unnamed individuals at the altar, plus two imperial couples flanking them, has been variously interpreted¹¹²—and it probably deserves yet one more interpretation given the similar composition on the ivory reliquary box. The final exclusions are two large, nearly identical silver platters, or patens, for serving Eucharistic bread, both firmly dated with tax stamps between 574 and 578.¹¹³ They were manufactured much later than the ivory reliquary box and the limestone

chancel screen, and most likely later than the MMA pyxis dated to the sixth century, as early as about 500.¹¹⁴ However, the platters are further excluded because of their innovative iconography, called the Communion of the Apostles. Both depict two Jesuses standing almost joined at the hip behind a cloth-covered table beneath a ciborium—one serving bread and the other serving wine. The scene is a fictive re-creation of the Last Supper as if it had taken place five hundred years later in a Byzantine church. The strange double-Jesus was perhaps intended as visual propaganda to undermine the older tradition of both a man and a woman at the altar.

Thus, the MMA pyxis, the ivory reliquary box, and the limestone chancel screen preserve the very oldest artistic representations of people at a church altar. The MMA pyxis itself is the oldest to portray only one gender at a church altar, and also the oldest to depict anyone with a censer at a church altar.¹¹⁵ Finally, the three artifacts portray arms-raised women at or near the altar, demonstrating that for both women and men it was a liturgical pose.

A final detail on the MMA pyxis indicates that its sculptor carved all five of the women as clergy in the Eucharistic liturgy, and that is the doubled strip of cloth hanging below their girdles. The doubled white cloth was called the *enchiron* (later the epigonation) in the East and the *mappula* (later the maniple) in the West.¹¹⁶ Lidov refers to the “Eucharistic handkerchief.”¹¹⁷ Clergy used this cloth to wipe the rim of the chalice and collect crumbs, and its inclusion in the Eucharistic liturgy appears to have become common by the sixth century, at least as witnessed in art.¹¹⁸ For example, three women

fig. 13 Section of mosaic on right side of the altar in San Vitale, Ravenna, ca. 550



are illustrated with the cloth in one of the two gender-parallel wall mosaics flanking the altar in San Vitale in Ravenna, installed about 550.¹¹⁹ The mosaic on the right of the altar depicts Augusta Theodora lifting a large gold chalice to her right and three women with the doubled cloth, two with it hanging below their girdles and the third holding it in her hand (fig. 13). Lidov points out an eleventh-century wall painting in Old Saint Clement Basilica in Rome that depicts Clement performing the Eucharist while raising the doubled cloth in one hand the same way that the woman holds it in the San Vitale mosaic.¹²⁰ Lidov says, “let me remind those who are convinced of the lay provenance of the handkerchief that Theodora with her retinue, as well as Justinian, are presented in San Vitale in a liturgical procession in the sanctuary, both holding liturgical vessels—the Chalice and the Paten.”¹²¹ Most likely there was an early tradition of both men and women using the cloth.¹²²

The three arms-raised women sculpted on the MMA pyxis may have represented women deacons, whom the *Typikon* mentions. Considering, however, that the *Typikon*'s manuscript was penned six centuries after the pyxis was sculpted and that scribes during this period redacted descriptions of women using censers, it seems possible that originally women performed more of the ecclesial roles in the Easter liturgy at the Anastasis than is preserved in the *Typikon*. In any case,

the carving on the MMA ivory pyxis indicates that five centuries earlier, women were more dominant in the liturgy.

The MMA pyxis, the ivory reliquary box, and the limestone chancel screen depict women at the altars of some of the most important churches in the Roman Empire. The churches, in Jerusalem, Rome, and Constantinople, modeled the liturgy for lesser churches around the Mediterranean, so we may reasonably conclude that their liturgies were recorded in now lost manuscripts. The MMA ivory pyxis is a treasure from that early time. It is the very oldest iconographic artifact to depict just one sex at an altar, and in addition, more than any other surviving artifact or piece of art, it preserves the shape, color, and details of the Constantinian monument known as Jesus's tomb. Given the historical context, iconographic evidence, archaeological evidence, and artistic choices, we can conclude that the sculptor of the MMA pyxis carved women clergy in the liturgy at Jesus's tomb. Instead of “The Women at Jesus's Tomb,” which suggests solely the Gospel stories, this ivory pyxis more informatively can be titled “The Women at the Altar of Jesus's Tomb in the Anastasis.”

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NOTES

- 1 See the following sections of the Bible: Mt 27:55–28:10; Mk 15:40–16:10; Lk 23:49–24:10; Jn 19:25–20:18.
- 2 St. Clair 1979, 132.
- 3 Mütterich 1959, 204.
- 4 “La pièce semble bien avoir été trouvée en Espagne et avoir fait partie, dès une époque très reculée, du mobilier religieux d’une église espagnole;” Schevitch sale 1906, 16.
- 5 Frazer 1979, 581; Teteriatnikov 2016, 169; Bhalla 2018, 214.
- 6 For the Gospel women, see Mt 28:1–10; Mk 16:1–10; Lk 24:1–11; Jn 20:1–18.
- 7 Egeria, *Itin.* 24.10; Kelley 2019, 181 [Lat. and Eng.].
- 8 For the Greek edition, see Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1894, 1–261.
- 9 *Ibid.*, iii. For details about the dating, see Ernst 2009, 153n18.
- 10 Ernst 2009, 153–54.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 154; Karras 2005, 112.
- 12 Karras 2005, 112.
- 13 Ernst 2009, 154 [Eng.]; Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1894, 191 [Gk.].
- 14 Ernst 2009, 154–55 [Eng.]; Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1894, 199 [Gk.].
- 15 Ernst 2009, 155.
- 16 Karras 2004; Karras 2005 (censing).
- 17 Martimort 1986, 35–58; Eisen 2000, 158–62; Madigan and Osiek 2005, 25–132; Bäßler and Fantalkin 2023, 107.
- 18 For photographs of the large collections of ampoules in the Museo e Tesoro del Duomo di Monza and the Museo della città di Bobbio, which are representative of those in smaller collections, see Grabar 1958.
- 19 For the metalwork barrier, see Gibson and Taylor 1994, 77.
- 20 Egeria, *Itin.* 24.2 (twice), 24.3 (twice), 24.4, 24.5, 24.8, 24.10, 25.3 (twice), 34.1 (twice), 38.2, 47.1; for the Latin of Egeria’s travels and English translation, see Kelley 2019, 180–85. Justin Kelley usually translates *cancellus* as “screen”; McGowan and Bradshaw 2018 as “enclosure”; and Wilkinson 2006 as “railed area.”
- 21 Glare 1985, 264.
- 22 Grabar 1958, Monza ampoules nos. 2, 6, 8, 11, Bobbio no. 18.
- 23 *Ibid.*, Monza ampoules nos. 5, 14, 15, Bobbio nos. 6, 15.
- 24 *Ibid.*, Monza ampoules nos. 3, 5, 6, 8–15, Bobbio nos. 3, 4, 6, 15, 18. See also Garrucci 1880, pls. 433–35.
- 25 Grabar 1958, Monza ampoules nos. 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, Bobbio none (due to poor condition). See also Garrucci 1880, pls. 433–35.
- 26 Mt 26:7; Mk 14:3; Lk 7:37.
- 27 A far less detailed but similar wide curved roof is suggested above the shrine on a small number of ampoules. See Grabar 1958, Bobbio ampoule no. 15, and Biddle 1999, 23, fig. 18 (Dumbarton Oaks, 48.18).
- 28 Gibson and Taylor 1994, 77.
- 29 Lewis 1902, x. *Six Books* specialists generally support Lewis’s fifth-century dating; Kateusz 2019, 26.
- 30 Lewis 1902, 20; for the passage charted against the same passage in two later manuscripts, see Kateusz 2020, fig. 14.3.
- 31 For Shoemaker’s conservative dating of the *Six Books*, see Shoemaker 2023, 8; other scholars have dated it earlier.
- 32 Egeria, *Itin.* 24.10; Kelley 2019, 181 [Lat. and Eng.].
- 33 Wilkinson 2006, 1; and Anne McGowan and Paul Bradshaw (2018, 3) remark that the beginning and ending of Egeria’s diary are missing. John Wilkinson (2006, 3–4) cites medieval writers who noted excerpts from Egeria’s diary that are missing from Aretinus 405. Wilkinson (2006, 144, 146) notes the text as “INCOMPLETE” where individual folios are missing at 24.7 and 25.6, as does McGowan and Bradshaw 2018, 156n6 at 25.6, which includes part of Egeria’s description of the usual Sunday services in Jerusalem churches.
- 34 Several examples of later copyists redacting scenes where Mary and other women are described with censers are charted in Kateusz 2020, 190–94, figs. 14.3 and 14.4; note that figs. 14.1 and 14.2 in *ibid.*, 185–90, demonstrate that over time in iconography as well, censers were removed from women and given to men.
- 35 Shoemaker 2023, 181.
- 36 Kateusz 2020, 190–94, fig. 14.3.
- 37 The MMA pyxis has heretofore been overlooked in this effort. For example, it is not considered in Wilkinson 1972 or Biddle 1999.
- 38 Gibson and Taylor 1994, 77.
- 39 Egeria, *Itin.* 25.8. Kelley 2019 does not include this passage. Egeria’s description was for the celebrations during Epiphany, but at 39.1 and 49.3, Egeria said that the Anastasis was decorated the same way during Easter week.
- 40 *Testament of Our Lord* 19; St. Clair 1979, 130.
- 41 Bernard Monachus, *Itin.*; Kelley 2019, 202 [Lat., Eng.].
- 42 A review of the many images of ancient ciboria, or canopies, in Bogdanović 2017 demonstrates how common square ciboria were over altars, and the rarity of half-hexagon ones.
- 43 St. Clair 1979, 130; Schevitch sale 1906, 122.
- 44 Egeria, *Itin.* 46.5; Kelley 2019, 184 [Lat.], 185 [Eng.]. Egeria, however, may have alluded to the altar in the Anastasis when she paralleled the consecration of the Anastasis to Solomon’s consecration of the Temple, after which, she said, “Solomon also . . . stood before the altar of God and prayed”; see Egeria, *Itin.* 48; McGowan and Bradshaw 2018, 193–94. (Kelley does not include this passage.)
- 45 *Breviarium de Hierosolyma*; Kelley 2019, 187 [Lat., Eng.].
- 46 Antoninus Martyr, *Locorum sanctorum* 18; Kelley 2019, 188 [Lat.], 189 [Eng.].
- 47 *Pilgrimage of Arculfus* 1.3.1. For the English translation see MacPherson 1895, 8–9. Kelley (2019, 196 [Lat., Eng.]) seems to have conflated the rotunda with “the round domed structure” of the shrine (1.2.6–7), most likely because he did not translate (or overlooked) Arculf’s *tegorii/tegorium*. For the stone in the Gospels, see Mt 27:60, 28:2; Mk 15:46, 16:3–4; Lk 24:2; Jn 20:1.
- 48 Bede, *De locis sanctis*; Kelley 2019, 199 [Lat.], 200 [Eng.]. Bernard Monachus, *Itin.*; Kelley 2019, 202 [Lat., Eng.].
- 49 Geyer 1898, xxxix; for Biddle’s copy of the floor plan, see Biddle 1999, pl. 25, and for two more copies, see Wikipedia, “Church of the Holy Sepulchre,” accessed September 26, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_the_Holy_Sepulchre.
- 50 *Pilgrimage of Arculfus* 1.2.6–7; Kelley 2019, 192 [Lat.], 193–94 [Eng.].
- 51 *Pilgrimage of Arculfus* 1.3.1; Kelley 2019, 196 [Lat. and Eng.]. On Kelley’s translation, see note 47 above. Bede, *De locis sanctis*; Kelley 2019, 199 [Lat.], 200 [Eng.].
- 52 St. Clair 1979, 130.
- 53 Mütterich 1959, 204.
- 54 St. Clair 1979, 132. While both ciboria have four columns and three arches, the canopy on the Cleveland pyxis has only one section while the MMA has three, suggesting that the sculptor of the Cleveland pyxis either represented only the large center canopy section or elided the three.
- 55 For illustrations of the stands and the different ways that incense was burned upon them, see the plates at the back of Wigand 1912, esp. some of the images on plates III and IV. A good photograph is in Miner and Ross 1947, 67, no. 271, pl. XLIII.

- St. Clair (1979, 131) also deems these as thymiateria on the Cleveland pyxis.
- 56 Trolle and Pentz 1983, 97; Biddle 1999, 25.
- 57 Trolle and Pentz 1983, fig. 1; Biddle 1999, 25, fig. 23.
- 58 Steffen Trolle and Peter Pentz (1983, 112) consider these to be a torch, but given the similarity of the bases to those on the Cleveland pyxis, it seems reasonable to conclude that they refer to the same type of object.
- 59 Biddle 1999, 69, and, for a photograph of it, 21, fig. 16. For a drawing of three views of the Narbonne fragment, see Wilkinson 1972, 95, fig. 13.
- 60 See reconstructions of the Narbonne model with nine columns, four in front, in the diagrams in Biddle 1999, figs. 64A and B, and fig. 66A; and Wilkinson 2006, fig. 34.
- 61 The so-called Anonymous Jerusalem Pilgrim reported a decorative gold and silver structure over the tomb, which Kelley translates as “cornice”; *Breviarium de Hierosolyma*; Kelley 2019, 187 [Lat., Eng.]. Per Kelley, the Latin word is *transvolatile*, which is not found in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, but if separated into *trans volatile*, translates as *flying across*, suggesting a rather delicate, ornate structure. Arculf described the shrine as a “the round domed structure” (1.2.6–7), but he saw the shrine after it was sacked in 614.
- 62 Goldschmidt 1923, 32.
- 63 St. Clair 1979, 130; Frazer 1979, 581.
- 64 St. Clair 1979, 130; Frazer 1979, 581.
- 65 St. Clair 1979, 130.
- 66 Wilkinson 1972, 96, fig. 14. Wilkinson’s most recent reconstruction is in Wilkinson 2006, fig. 34.
- 67 Bovini 1961, 5–29, pl. 37.
- 68 St. Clair 1979, 131 (cites several church fathers using this metaphor); Frazer 1979, 581. An excellent early example is Theodore of Mopsuestia, who wrote in the late third and early fourth century, quoted in Taft 1975, 35–36. The tomb of Christ was not the only metaphor for the altar; for example, Germanus of Constantinople also wrote, “The holy table is also the throne of God,” in *Ecclesiastical History* 4; see Meyendorff 1984, 59.
- 69 St. Clair 1979, 131; Frazer 1979, 581.
- 70 For the Sitten pyxis, see St. Clair 1979, 127–29, fig. 1. Its sculptor carved an angel sitting upon a sarcophagus beneath a ciborium-like arch, two women with censers approaching. For the mosaic in Sant’Apollinare Nuovo that also depicts a sarcophagus beneath the ciborium structure, see Bovini 1961, pl. 37.
- 71 St. Clair 1979, 132.
- 72 Lidov 2017, 10.
- 73 Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 10.4.68.
- 74 Kateusz and Confalonieri 2021, 233–41, fig. 12.4.
- 75 *Ibid.*, 241–46, fig. 12.7.
- 76 Gnirs 1908, 5–6, 32–33.
- 77 Kateusz 2019, 169.
- 78 For the two other scenes on the ivory reliquary box, see Longhi 2006, pls. XIII, XV. There have been infrequent incidental misidentifications, but never any debate about the representation of the figures as women.
- 79 For details, see Kateusz and Confalonieri 2021, 234–41. The Vatican published its report of the excavations in Apollonj Ghetti et al. 1951.
- 80 For an account of the excavations, see Kirschbaum 1959, 15–164.
- 81 *Ibid.*, 60.
- 82 Jerome, *Vigil*. 1.8; Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs* 27.
- 83 Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs* 27.
- 84 Kateusz 2017, 56–63; Kateusz 2019, 164–72; Kateusz and Confalonieri 2021, 237–41.
- 85 Petrova 2020, 216–20.
- 86 Deckers and Serdaroğlu 1993, 160–63.
- 87 Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* 9.1.
- 88 *Letter to Cosmas* 6; Nau 1916, 275–86, esp. 278–79. For more detail, see Kateusz 2019, 242–45, and Kateusz and Confalonieri 2021, 243.
- 89 Bernstein 2004, 204–9.
- 90 Philo of Alexandria, *De vita contemplativa*.
- 91 *Ibid.* 21; for discussion, see Taylor and Hay 2021, 165–69.
- 92 Philo of Alexandria, *De vita contemplativa* 81–89; for discussion, see Taylor and Hay 2021, 324–48. At 87, Philo unusually titled Miriam a “prophetess”; for discussion, see Taylor and Hay 2021, 341–43.
- 93 For example, Lv 9:22; 1 Chr; Sir 50:20–21. Philo of Alexandria, *De vita contemplativa* 66, 89.
- 94 Philo of Alexandria, *De vita contemplativa* 81–83, *De Agricultura* 80.
- 95 Mazza 1999, 43.
- 96 Taylor 2003, 343.
- 97 Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 2.17.
- 98 *Ibid.* For discussion, see Taylor 2021, 290–95.
- 99 Taylor 2021, 295–301, figs. 14.2–14.5.
- 100 Kateusz 2019, 166, fig. 7.4.
- 101 Philo of Alexandria, *De vita contemplativa* 89; Kateusz 2019, 166; Kateusz and Confalonieri 2021, 236.
- 102 Brooten 1982, 1–99.
- 103 Lampe 1961, 1129–31 (πρεσβύτερος).
- 104 Brooten 1982, 1–99; Piovaneli 2022, especially the chart on 331 that is nearly complete except for lael; for lael, see Ilan 2004. Gender parallel titles are also found for Christian women during this time; Eisen 2000, 47–222; Ramelli 2021.
- 105 Bradshaw 2002, 3–4.
- 106 Cross 1965, 63–64, as quoted in Bradshaw 2002, 4.
- 107 For the slow parting of the ways, see Boyarin 2004.
- 108 Simson 1987, 31–32, pl. 15.
- 109 Torp 1963, 27.
- 110 St. Clair 1979, 130.
- 111 Kiilerich and Torp 2017, 27. André Grabar (1967) made a sustained argument, with many examples, that it represented a stool; see also Bakirtzis and Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou 2012, 100, where it is called a stool.
- 112 Zangara 2000, 289–92; Deliyannis 2010, 68–69, 329n163.
- 113 Mango 1986, 159–70, figs. 34.3, 35.3.
- 114 Natalia Teteriatnikov (2016, 169) dates it about 500. In my opinion, given the dating of the ivory reliquary box and the limestone chancel screen, there seems to be no reason not to date the MMA pyxis to the fifth century. The style of cross seen on its lock plate is present in fifth-century art.
- 115 The earliest representation of a man with a censer in a liturgical setting, but that does not include an altar, is the depiction in the monumental mosaic on the left side of the altar area in San Vitale in Ravenna, installed ca. 550; see Kateusz 2019, 175–77, figs. 7.7, 7.8.
- 116 Lidov 2017, 17–22; Kateusz and Confalonieri 2021, 245–48, 254–57.
- 117 Lidov 2017, 17.
- 118 This is also when the episcopal pallium is first seen in art, with the oldest examples dated about 550. Male bishops with it are

depicted in San Vitale, while Mary (twice) and Elizabeth are shown with it hanging below their cloaks in the Euphrasian Basilica in Parenzo, Croatia, as seen in Kateusz 2019, 81–89, figs. 4.9 and 4.10. For details on the unexpectedly feminine history of the episcopal pallium, see Kateusz and Confalonieri 2021, 257–58.

119 Kateusz and Confalonieri 2021, 244–45, figs. 12.8, 12.9.

120 Lidov 2017, 17, fig. 19.

121 *Ibid.*, 17. Lidov mentions the small local Council of Auxerre (ca. 578), which had only four bishops among the attendees (Shahan 1907). Its rule 36 read, “Women must not accept the Holy Host on a bare hand,” and rule 46 read, “All women should have a *domincale* to go for communion,” and while *domincale* is often assumed to mean a cloth to cover the bare hand, Rule 46 does not say so, and *domincale* most clearly translates to a veil for covering the head. Lidov (2017, 17) suggests that the practice of covering bare hands when handling the Host applied to both men and women, and concludes, “Probably, the handkerchief was perceived as a sign of one’s participation in the liturgy, and as a link with the highest sacraments.”

122 Lidov 2017, 17; Kateusz and Confalonieri 2021, 246.

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Itin. *Itinerarium*

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