The Sedes Sapientiae: Orthodox Sculptural Images of the Virgin Mary Derived from the Ancient Mother-Goddess Tradition

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Abstract

The Virgin Mary is rarely mentioned in the Bible yet legends about her abound throughout the centuries. Worship of the Virgin is recorded as early as the 3rd century, and soon thereafter visual representations emerged to serve as devotional objects for her patrons. Mary's popularity among the people left the Church with a fundamental problem: they must either sanction her worship and bring the pagans into their fold; or they must diminish her role in salvation, totally rid Christianity of the female divine, and risk losing converts to older-world traditions. This dilemma was settled at the Council of Ephesus in 431 C.E. when the Church proclaimed Mary Theotokos, the Mother of God. Thus in a single decree Mary became the conduit for the resurfacing of the ancient Mother Goddess: the same Goddess that the Christian religion had been trying to eradicate for hundreds of years. But in order to promulgate this dogma to the faithful, as well as to the rest of the world, the Church needed to produce a type of visual representation of the Virgin to support its claim that she is truly the Mother of God. The result of this fusion of theology and art are the Sedes Sapientiae, the Thrones of Wisdom. These small, wooden, portable, free-standing sculptures exemplify Mary as the Goddess in her own right. Traditionally, these images have not been studied by art historians because they were considered idols and left to the realm of theologians. Yet the Sedes Sapientiae is obviously rooted not only in female mythology but in art history as well. The images were created not only to illustrate Church doctrine but to satisfy a deeply internalized need from within the human psyche for a female figure in a male-dominated religion.

The Sedes Sapientiae: Orthodox Sculptural Images of the Virgin Mary Derived from the Ancient Mother-Goddess Tradition

Christians first dedicated themselves to the Virgin Mary because she was the mother of Christ, but her primary role in the faith was as intercessor between humanity and a transcendent Christian God. Through Mary sinful individuals could be pardoned, or saved. The earliest devotion to the cult of the Virgin Mary dates to just centuries after Christ's death and encompasses numerous countries (see Appendix A). The ideas behind her cult lie essentially in a few Christian beliefs that are fused with older pagan practices and deemed 'Christian' by the Church. The Council of Ephesus created the official sanction for the cult of the Virgin Mary in 431 C.E. The popularity of her cult greatly influenced the liturgical calendar since her holy days were the most popular among the people. The geographical areas where her cult had the largest number of followers became important political centers because her devotees would appear in large masses to celebrate feast-days. By the tenth century, the cult of the Virgin Mary had found even more followers due to millenarianism and the belief that Mary would serve as the Mediatrix during the Day of Judgment. Gothic artists created cathedrals dedicated to her, and Romanesque craftspeople gave her center-place in many of their artworks (Grabois, 1980) like the Sedes Sapientiae, or Thrones of Wisdom. It is apparent that the Virgin Mary greatly influenced not only the art but the cultural ideas of Europe as well (Grabois, 1980).

The Sedes Sapientiae are intricately tied not only to the religious but also to the cultural issues of the Occident. Mary, as the Throne of Wisdom, is interwoven into most facets of medieval life. It is hard to imagine that these small, wooden, portable, free-standing sculptures often overlooked by art historians are in part responsible for the rise of

personal devotion, pilgrimages, and chivalry during the Middle Ages. The Sedes Sapientiae are also closely associated with miracles, apparitions, and the relics of the Virgin Mary. These seemingly-simple statues are obviously complex in nature because they inspired many cultural events of the medieval era, and they themselves are comprised of immense symbolism. They embody Mary's attributes as Mother of God, Seat of Wisdom, Mediatrix, and Protectress: roles that were taken from older goddess traditions, ascribed to her by the Church, and then deemed 'Christian.' The creation of these statues was primarily a result of the Church naming Mary Theotokos, Mother of God, in 431 C.E. at the Council of Ephesus. After this proclamation, the Church needed a clear visual image to convey their new dogma to the masses. The result was the creation of the Sedes Sapientiae: an image with a long iconographic history reclaimed from goddesses like Isis, Demeter, Cybele, and Sophia; and an image that satisfied the people's deeply internalized need for a female divinity.

Early Biography, Worship, and Visual Representations of the Virgin Mary

> All that was pure and lovely, all that was high and great, was enlisted in the praise of her glory. She became inaccessible as the walled-in garden, the closed gate or the sealed fountain. She was beautiful as the most splendid object human art could produce: a decorated shrine, a golden urn, a kingly throne, a palace, a temple and a church. She was mighty and strong as a fortress or as a lofty tower of David. But she was at the same time shy as a young girl, affectionate as a bride, proud as a wife, and venerable as a mother (Lucas, 1983, p. 16).

The Bible contains the earliest mention of the Virgin Mary. In the few verses that allude to Mary she is not described as a decorated shrine, a kingly throne, or even a church as she is in the preceding quote. According to the fusion of the two individual stories found in the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke, Mary is a young woman with no husband (although she is engaged); she is found pregnant after she returns from her cousin's house; Joseph, her intended husband, decides to divorce her quietly but God tells him in a dream to go through with the marriage; Joseph and Mary are married; and they travel to Bethlehem where Jesus is born and adored by shepherds and magi. These two books contain some of the most significant insights into the life of Mary, although the information is obviously limited. She is scarcely mentioned in the rest of the New Testament: the writer Paul only notes in the Book of Galatians that Jesus was born from a woman in the conventional manner. The Gospel of John places Mary at two of Christ's major scenes: the wedding at Cana and at the foot of the Cross at his crucifixion. And the Book of Acts recalls a Mary who prays with the disciples after Christ's Ascension. The almost insubstantial biographical material gained from the gospels, as well as the rest of the Bible, make it all too clear that the early church fathers were not interested in recording information about the mother of their Savior.

As mentioned, the Synoptic Gospels detail what little data is known about Mary. The Gospel of Mark notes only that she is the mother of Jesus whereas Matthew and Luke detail the well-known birth stories. But of all the gospel authors only Luke humanizes the Virgin and endears her to the reader by detailing the stories of the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, and Christ Found

Teaching in the Temple (Warner, 1983). It is not strange that Luke's narrative is more personal because according to Eastern tradition Mary related the birth story of her Son to Luke in person. Legend also reveals that Luke was the first person to visually depict the Virgin (although this idea was unknown in the West until right before the first crusade) (Jameson, 1887). Yet, the New Testament provides no real enlightenment about the historical Mary. There is no mention of her age, her physical appearance, or even her birth or death in the Christian canon. The only undisputed fact gained from scripture is that Mary is the mother of Jesus (Warner, 1983).

Strangely, none of the attributes used to describe Mary in the opening quote came from the canonized writings of the Christian faith. So how does she come to be described as a shy girl, an affectionate bride, and a proud wife? Where do these descriptions of Mary originate? And how does she rise to the status of a goddess? It is obvious that the New Testament provided only enough information about Mary to raise questions (Ashe, 1976). So, the common person had to turn to legend in order to discover the historical Mary (Male, 1958/1913).

Much of what is known about the life of Mary comes from apocryphal (secret or hidden) texts excluded from the Christian canon. In the eastern accounts recalled in the apocryphal Book of James (c. 150 C.E.) a definite profile of Mary begins to form that will influence the west as well (Warner, 1983). This book recalls that Mary is a Jewish virgin, dedicated to the Temple by her parents Joachim and Anna. Until the age of twelve she dwells in the Temple weaving the sacred purple cloth and being fed by the angels. She then becomes the intended of an elderly man named Joseph (Kibbler, Zinn, & et al., 1995) who is a widower (see figure 1). This book, unlike any other of its kind, does provide the

background information necessary for the embellishment of Mary's life. The Book of James greatly aids the later flourishing of the cult of the Virgin Mary (Warner, 1983), and according to Geoffrey Ashe, "It also proves that popular legend, however apocryphal, could infiltrate orthodoxy" (Ashe, 1976, p. 130).

Another apocryphal document is also of great importance to those who study the cult of the Virgin Mary. Obsequies of the Holy Virgin (c. 200 C.E.) is an ancient story that originates the notion that Mary was assumed body and soul into paradise. The narrative begins with the disciples standing outside Mary's tomb. Soon Jesus appears with Michael, the archangel, to carry Mary's body to heaven where it will be taken to the Tree of Life. Once reunited with the Tree, Mary's soul and her body become one again (Warner, 1983).

It is obvious that Christians were fascinated with the life and deeds of the Virgin Mary, as the plethora of apocryphal stories attests. Numerous scholars believe the only reason for the production of new Gospels was to create a greater role for the Virgin Mary (van Os, 1994). Many assert that devotees were only interested in Mary to better understand her Son. However, evidence points in a contrary direction because the earliest recorded veneration of Mary is not as the Mother of Christ but as a divinity in her own right. The mass creation of the Sedes Sapientiae will prove that Mary was worshipped for her own unique attributes often without any veneration of her Son. The formation of early beliefs about the Virgin Mary greatly informs the very nature of the Thrones of Wisdom and needs to be examined in depth.

St. Epiphanius (died 403 C.E.) was the first person to record the direct worship of the Virgin Mary (Jameson, 1887). Epiphanius, as a bishop, was known according to St. Jerome as "a last relic of ancient piety." His work is especially pertinent to those who

study the Virgin Mary, because he composed an important document detailing unorthodox practices, entitled the Medicine-Chest (c. 374-377 C.E.). Specifically, he talks about the Collyridians, a group of what he calls "silly, weak and contemptible women" who worship Mary as the Queen of Heaven. "They adorn a chair or a square throne, spread a linen cloth over it, and, at a certain solemn time, place bread on it and offer it in the name of Mary," he notes. Of course this is an ancient ritual that pre-dates Christianity and is most certainly reminiscent of the Goddess (see Appendix B). The title Collyridian itself is an insult, meaning a loaf, or roll, and refers to the offering the clients presented to Mary.

Epiphanius clearly believed that the type of adoration practiced by these women was unduly given. On this subject he notes:

> Let the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be worshipped, but let no one worship Mary. God came down from heaven, the Word clothed himself in flesh from a holy Virgin, not, assuredly, that the Virgin should be adorned, not to make a goddess of her, not that we should offer sacrifice in her name, nor that, now after so many generations, women should once again be appointed priests....[God] gave her no charge to minister baptism or bless disciples, nor did he bid her rule over the earth (Ashe, 1976, pp. 140-150).

Epiphanius records that a Marian religion did indeed exist with its own specific ideology and rituals. And as far as research at this time can prove, the cult of the Virgin Mary originated with the Collyridians. The religion shared a similar foundation with Christianity but was clearly separate and distinct. Epiphanius obviously finds attraction in some of the Collyridians' beliefs but cannot sanction worship outside of his own faith. It is

he who lifts the veil enough to allow insight into a fascinating religion, thereby permitting the ancient feminine divinity to resurface (Ashe, 1976).

It is apparent that women as well as men began worshipping the Virgin Mary a few centuries after the death of her Son: probably as early as 200 C.E. according to written testimony. Soon the convictions of the so-called "heretical sects" (on the fringes of Christianity) made their way into mainstream Christianity. The first invocation to the Virgin Mary is reported by Gregory Nazianzen in his biography of St. Justina (c. 300 C.E.). According to Gregory, St. Justina summons the Virgin Mary to protect her from Cyprian, a seducer and sorcerer. Mary, of course, safeguards Justina who becomes a celebrated virgin martyr (Jameson, 1887) and the patron saint of the city of Padua (Loxton, 1996). This is one of the first written records from within the tradition that attests to the existence of the cult of Mary (Jameson 1887). St. Justina's famed plea to the Virgin could have been similar to the prayer Sub tuum praesidium (c. 200-400 C.E.). Its petition implores, "We seek refuge under the protection of your mercies, oh Mother of God; do not reject our supplication in need but save us from perdition, oh you who alone are blessed" (Warner, 1983). As this documentation attests, Mary was no longer a figure on the outside of the Christian tradition; she was quickly becoming viewed as Protectress of the individual.

In the West the early role of Mary is often varied, hard to decipher, even ambiguous, but in the East she plays a central role in Christianity from its very beginning. The Eastern theologian, Eusebius (d. 340 C.E.), said Mary was a prophetess inspired by the Holy Spirit and called her panagia, or holy one. And even before the Council of Ephesus the Eastern Church celebrated two Marian feasts as early as the fifth century: the

Commemoration of Mary, honoring her virginity the Sunday before Christmas, and the Annunciation on Ember Wednesday during Advent.

The biblical exegete and poet-theologian, Ephrem of Syria (d. 373 C.E.), also records the importance of Mary in the East and lays the groundwork for visual representations of the Virgin. Ephrem is noteworthy because his ideas created the Orthodox justification for the creation and defense of icons as revelatory objects. He encouraged Christians to pursue symbols as a means of glimpsing the divine and to follow the example of Mary, whose 'luminous eye' sees things clearly. Ephrem adhered to the belief that all of God's creations point directly back to the Creator. He believed that worshipping Mary was logical, for as he says, "whatever we say in praise of the Mother touches the Son, and when we honor the Son we detract nothing from the Mother's glory."

Ephrem's notions of the Virgin have many ties with the goddesses of the past. Like Sophia, from the Jewish tradition, Mary was a timeless concept full of Wisdom in Ephrem's paradigm. Even the Eucharist symbolized and praised Mary. According to Ephrem, the bread is from the praised sheaf (Mary) and the wine is the grape of Mary (Cunneen, 1996). The symbology of the Eucharist celebrated in the East is also linked to the goddess traditions of the past. Just as the first worshippers of Mary offered her cakes made of meal and honey in a ritual that originated to praise the Goddess (Jameson, 1887), so too Christians honored Mary when partaking of the bread. But Ephrem goes further than just allowing Mary into the symbolic structure of a Christian ritual. He sees Mary as more than a vessel that contains salvation; she herself *is* Paradise because of her role in salvation. On this subject Ephrem writes, "This day Mary has become for us a heaven

because she bears God, for in her the exalted Godhead has descended and dwelt; in her It has grown small, to make us great" (Cunneen, 1996, p. 129). Like the great goddesses of the past who gave birth in order to assure the rebirth and productivity of the world, Mary too was adored by Eastern Christians because her birth-giving role literally made her heaven and assured the rebirth of devoted Christians.

Specifically, in Eastern countries like Russia, Mary's role as the Mother of God became the central tenet of the faith, far outweighing the emphasis placed on the mere God-child. To the people of Russia, Mary was not merely a conduit for the Lord, she was their Universal Mother. In the early Christianization process of Russia, missionaries hoped to convert the pagans by displaying images of Mary while proclaiming all of her attributes. However, over time the missionaries found that the worship of Mary did not supersede the worship of the Goddess as they had planned. To the people, Mary was definitely not a subservient divinity of the male Christian religion, and in fact the missionaries had only given the people a new Mother Goddess to venerate.

The numerous cathedrals named for the Wise Maidens, Mary and Sophia, provide visual documentation of the place of Mary and thus of the Goddess within the hearts of the people. In the cathedral of Saint Sophia Kievan the altar is adorned with a sixteen-foot Mother of God image (see figure 2), while Christ takes the back seat with a smaller depiction in the cupola. Mary with her arms upward-raised in an orans gesture is a remnant of the pagan goddesses that peasant women used to embroider on their linens. Even Russian liturgical space is intended to feel like an immanent part of the female body; those who enter the cathedral are spiritually and physically reborn because of their contact with the Great Mother. The external lines created by these churches symbolize the great

and powerful Universal Mother of All, Mary, and her union with her male consort/lover, Christ. These consecrated structures represent the union not only of male and female but of mother and child: all within the framework of the female maternal body. The modern writer Tertz says, "To enter a Russian church is rather like creeping under a blanket or throwing a fur coat over one's head...the church is less a building than a cloak of protection" (Hubbs, 1988). The holy space of these female churches allows the individual to be embraced by the Mother of God, the Protectress and Intercessor of the people.

It is clear that the Virgin Mary was a central tenet in the worship of early Christians. But she became more than an object of veneration; she was internalized by the faithful and became an intimate part of their lives. Not only did Christians want to hear tales about the Virgin, they wanted to see her depicted visually. Basil of Caesarea (c. 330-379 C.E.) strongly believed that both writing and painting could be utilized as conduits for God, the only difference between the two being that one enlightened the eye, the other the ear. He is quoted as challenging artists to "Arise now before me, you iconographers of the saints' merits" (Cunneen, 1996, p. 123). And with challenges like this one artists began to place a face on the stories of the Virgin Mary.

During the first three centuries of Christianity Mary was often a visually ambiguous figure that could only be found artistically in a few catacomb paintings (Cunneen, 1996). In these early images she is depicted in a clearly human fashion, but truthfully it is unknown whether these early representations are really her or instead depictions of Hebrew female figures, martyrs, or saints (see figure 3). The oldest extant visual representation of Mary that is undoubtedly her is a fresco in the catacomb of Priscilla from the first-half of the second century. It is a monochromatic scene, obscured

due to age, in which a portly woman holds a nursing child in her arms. The man to her left, usually described as Isaiah, points in the direction of Mary symbolizing the fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy. A star hovers over the child's head (see figure 4). Over one-hundred and fifty years later another image, also believed to be Mary, was created in the same catacomb. In this painting, she is a young, stern-looking woman dressed in traditional Roman apparel, and she is breast-feeding her child. Yet another ancient illustration is a fourth-century fresco portrait from the Caemeterium Majus. This fresco fashions Mary as an Oran with dark complexion and strong eyes (Ashe, 1976). In all these noted examples of early surviving paintings Mary is clearly depicted as merely a human figure; she is not yet the Goddess she will eventually become in the Sedes Sapientiae. The transformation is a slow process that occurs over several hundred years.

The catacombs, however, are not the only place where early observed portraits of the Virgin Mary are to be found. The oldest surviving portrayals of the Virgin Mary created outside the catacombs date to the fourth-century. The figure of Mary can be found carved on Christian sarcophagi, and in the early mosaics and sculptures of St. Maria Maggiore (see figures 5-6). In all of these aged artworks, the figure of Mary is always a part of a larger scene like the Nativity or the Visit of the Magi (see figures 7-11). From existing examples it can be concluded that during the first four centuries of the Christian Church, before the Council of Ephesus, Mary was always depicted as part of a situation and was not portrayed alone with the Christ child. Also, early Christianity ascribed no visual symbols to represent Mary, unlike Christ. It is not until later in the Christian tradition that she becomes associated with symbols like the rose, the enclosed garden, the lily and many others (Jameson, 1887).

The visual representation of the Virgin Mary and Child is not a Christian invention; it is rooted in antiquity. It can be traced directly from the image of Isis enthroned with her son Horus which itself is an older surviving remnant of the Mother Goddess. The enthronement composition, however, made its way into Christianity through Mary and her son Christ (Jameson, 1887). It is important to note that art historians separate the Virgin and Child images into two separate categories: Mary Standing with the Child and Mary Enthroned with the Child. The Sedes Sapientiae fall into the latter category, first created by the Eastern Church as an adaptation of an ancient goddess image. Mary Enthroned with the Child was executed in several media like fresco, mosaic, illuminations, and of course sculpture, however it is most prominent in illuminated manuscripts (see figure 12) and sculpture (Saunders, 1969/1932) like the Sedes Sapientiae. This art-historical depiction of Mary Enthroned with the Child reinforces the idea of Mary as is Mother Church, reigning in wisdom (Hall, 1974) just as goddesses like Cybele sat in wisdom on their lion thrones hundreds of years earlier.

Anna Jameson finds no proof that the three-dimensional representations of Mary Enthroned with the Child created before the fifth-century were ever placed in liturgical settings (Jameson, 1887). Since the early role of Mary within the Church was often ambiguous and not officially sanctioned, patrons often had statues and illuminated manuscripts commissioned for their own personal devotional uses. It is only after the fourth-century that the rise of Mary's popularity began to coincide with the adorning of liturgical space.

The earliest visual representations of Mary Enthroned with the Child can be traced to Alexandria, to Egyptian influences where the cult of Isis and Horus was still

remembered. And as mentioned earlier, Isis and her son Horus are the most likely prototypes for the early Christian depictions of Mary Enthroned with the Child (see figures 13-16). However, there were many other goddesses portrayed as enthroned with a child upon their lap (see figures 17-19), although many of the oldest statues no longer exist. The effigies of Mary Enthroned with the Child were not officially sanctioned as sacred by the Church until the fifth century, soon after the Council of Ephesus. And it was the controversy settled by the Council of Ephesus that gave meaning and significance to the Virgin and the Child Enthroned (Jameson, 1887) as the Throne of Wisdom.

Doctrine of Theotokos and the Virgin Mary

> Hence it is with justice and truth that we call holy Mary Theotokos. For this name embraces the whole mystery of the divine dispensation. For if she who bore him is the Theotokos, assuredly he who was born of her is God and likewise man....The name [Theotokos] in truth signifies the one subsistence and the two natures and the two mode of generation of our Lord Jesus Christ...when we worship her icon, we do not, in pagan fashion, regard her as a goddess, but as the Theotokos. [John of Damascus] (Pelikan, 1996, p. 56-57)

Before proceeding, a schism within the early Church must be noted, as its resolution was greatly responsible for the creation of the Sedes Sapientiae. The outcome influenced the evolution of the image of the Virgin Mary in an immeasurable way, and affirmed the Virgin Mary's significance in the visual tradition of Christianity (Calkins, 1979). The Nestorian Controversy, as it is known, brought about the need for the visible

representation of the Virgin and Child by the Church hierarchy. The resulting fusion of art and theology depicted an enthroned Mary with Christ upon her lap as the Throne of Wisdom; the image, when first presented by the Church, was extremely loved among the laity. As its popularity increased and it gained notoriety it was eventually introduced to the West by the pontificate of Pope Gregory the Great (c. 540-604 C.E.) at the beginning of the seventh century (Jameson, 1887).

It is difficult today to imagine that the early Church of the first two centuries C.E. was not a single solidified unit. Christians were diverse groups of believers scattered throughout diverse locations. At this early point in evolution the Christians did not have one combined ruling body or even a collection of scripture to unite them. Instead, each sect usually had its own patriarch, and they circulated among themselves the gospels and other spiritual texts that reinforced their individual founder's emphasis (Cunneen, 1996). Eventually, the need for unity arose and church councils were held to decide the fate of the faith.

In the first five centuries of Christianity's existence one of the most controversial issues that had to be examined by these Church councils was whether Christ was identical with God the Creator. Mary too became an integral part of this debate, herself being named Theotokos by Church patriarchs at the Council of Ephesus (Pelikan, 1996). In order to fully understand the gravity of the decisions made at the Council of Ephesus regarding the role of the Virgin Mary, it is necessary to examine some of the issues discussed and decreed by earlier councils. At the Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E., Jesus was declared consubstantial with God the Father. Then, at the Council in Constantinople in 381 C.E., the creed that the Holy Spirit was due the same veneration as God the Father

and God the Son became doctrine (Ayo, 1994). This same council also decreed the perpetual virginity of the Virgin Mary during and after her pregnancy (Warner, 1983). The foundation laid made it obvious that Mary had to be named Theotokos. If not, Jesus was merely the son of a human mother and not a god (Ayo, 1994). And if Christ was not truly human, according to the orthodox Church, then there would be no need to commemorate his mother. Mary was then "the guarantee of the true humanity of Jesus Christ" (Pelikan, 1996, p. 60), and naming her Theotokos guaranteed His divinity.

As mentioned previously, each distinct early-Christian sect had its own views on Christian topics. Prior to the Council of Ephesus, Nestorius (d. c. 457), the patriarch of the city of Constantinople, had attempted to propagate the view that the two natures of God remained separate in Christ. Thus as Mary was human she was only the genetrix of the mortal and not the God-nature of Christ (Jameson, 1887). Nestorius became outraged when he heard Proclus present a sermon touting Mary as Theotokos, Mother of God, in 428 C.E. (Warner, 1983). But in reality, most other assemblies of early Christians had been using the term Theotokos for close to a century to describe Mary's role in salvation. Yet the Nestorians believed this term was improper and profane, while the opposing group felt that the Nestorians were attempting to take something away from the mystery of the Incarnation. Those who were at odds with Nestorius were led by Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376-444), who himself adamantly defended the worship of Mary. The Monophysites, as the rival group was known, believed that Christ was truly divine and truly human at the same time. They logically championed the conviction that the Virgin Mary was indeed the Mother of God and thus deserving of the title Theotokos (see Appendix C). This

tumultuous patriarch-against-patriarch struggle, the Nestorian Controversy, would be settled at the Council of Ephesus.

Cyril of Alexandria was adamant that Mary was deserving of the title Theotokos. He requested an audience with Pope Celestine II in 430 C.E. to argue his case for the Virgin Mary, and at this meeting the pope gave sanction to Cyril's viewpoint. Then, in 431 C.E., the Emperor Theodosius II called a council to be held at Ephesus. Nestorius refused to appear at the council and was stripped of his office of patriarch by the other attending bishops. This action still did not end the Nestorian Controversy, however, and according to historical records the opposing parties literally left blood stains in the cathedral due to their physical fighting. The Emperor Theodosius, asserting his role as ruler, attempted to stop this violence by arresting both Cyril and Nestorius. The city settled down and after only a few days Cyril and the Virgin Mary prevailed and Nestorius and his followers were condemned as heretics (Jameson, 1887).

After Mary was proclaimed Theotokos at Ephesus the crowds went wild with joy, leading Cyril and his discipleship to their lodging crying, "Praise be the Theotokos! Long live Cyril!" And it was with these triumphant words that the official cult of the Mother of God originated. Ephesus was a landmark in the history of Church doctrine involving Mary. It was an obvious place to claim Mary's divinity, and according to the Council, "If anyone does not confess that Emmanuel is God in truth, and therefore that the holy virgin is mother of God [Theotokos], let him be anathema." The Church capitalized on the fact that Ephesus had a long tradition associated with the Goddess. Many historians believe that the city's enthusiasm in naming Mary Theotokos was based largely on the fact that Ephesus was once a great worship center for the goddess Diana. Just thirty-one years

prior to the Council of Ephesus, in 400 C.E., the temple consecrated to Diana was destroyed, and, interestingly, the site would soon be the location for a new church dedicated solely to Mary. Obviously, the inhabitants of this town had long yearned to worship the female deity. The Book of Acts notes that the inhabitants of Ephesus also rioted while Paul was attempting to convert them to Christianity, crying "Great is Diana of Ephesus!" (Pelikan, 1996). Ephesus was also rumored to be the last city Mary lived in before her death, also to the advantage of the Church (Cunneen, 1996) as an obvious place to proclaim her divinity. It is apparent this city had a great love of the Goddess and wanted to worship her in any form deemed acceptable by the ruling body of the time.

Nestorius argued that Mary should more accurately be hailed Christotokos, the one who gave birth to Christ. He and his constituents believed that Theotokos denoted the false assumption that she herself gave birth to divine nature. For many who shared Nestorius's convictions this belief was dangerously similar to fertility cults of the past and thus to the goddess. In actuality, the term Theotokos seems to have originated from the city of Athanasius in Alexandria (Pelikan, 1996). Although the exact origin of the term is unknown, many scholars believe it was in use before 400 C.E. Origen (d. c. 254 C.E.), the Alexandrian biblical scholar, may have been one of the first theologians to use the term Theotokos as grounds for claiming Mary's perpetual virginity. But its first recorded use was in 319 C.E. when Alexander referred to the term in his encyclical regarding the heresy of Arius. The term appears to have been widespread and accepted in the city of Alexandria, as well as in the rest of the East. There appears to be no evidence that the word itself is linked to ancient mother-goddess worship and its usage appears to be original to Christianity (Pelikan, 1996).

Theotokos may be translated into Latin by two terms: Dei Genitrix or Deipara, both suggesting that Mary is the one who bears God into the world. "She generated Jesus who is Lord-God in the flesh; she is Dei-Genitrix. She gives birth or parturition; she is Dei-para" (Ayo, 1994). Many contemporary Christian scholars do not believe that Theotokos literally means Mother of God. They suggest that the Council of Ephesus would have selected a title which literally means Mother of God, like Theometeros, if that was their true intention (Ayo, 1994). However, the reaction of the crowd and the record of the Council of Ephesus seem to be enough evidence to support the fact that Mary was truly and forever Theotokos, Mother God, as of 431 C.E.

The Middle Ages and the Rise of the Cult of the Virgin Mary

> The Age [The Middle Ages] was indeed the age of the Virgin. [Otto von Simson] (Pelikan, 1996, p. 125)

Now that Mary was sanctioned as a goddess in her own right her role within the church and secular community became significantly more important. Through a domino-effect Mary rose from a rarely mentioned character in the Bible to a deity in a little over four-hundred years. After she was named Theotokos her role in the liturgy becomes more important, and once she becomes an integral part of the liturgy more festivals in her honor are demanded. Mary took a place in her devotees lives, satisfying an internal need of people to identify with another person (Pelikan, 1996).

As a direct result of being named Theotokos, Mary began to take over some of Christ's roles in feast-days, liturgy, and architecture. Christians began to look to her, not

Christ, for healing and protection (Cunneen, 1996). At this point in Church history most Christian saints had one feast-day, sometimes two, honoring their role in Christianity. Mary's rise in stature and popularity afforded her four feast-days during Medieval times. These festivals celebrated the Virgin's Birth, her Purification, the Annunciation, the Assumption, and the more controversial Immaculate Conception (see Appendix D). They were strategically planned to allow one feast-day for each season of the year. By the fifteenth century three more feast-days had to be added to the liturgical year in order to accommodate the Virgin's popularity among the people (Wunderli, 1992) (see Appendix E). As her role in the liturgy became more prominent and her number of feast- days multiplied artists were inspired to create oral dedications to the Virgin.

Poetry and prayers from the Middle Ages like Ave Maris Stella (7th or 8th century C.E.), Ave Maria (5th or 6th century C.E.), the Salve Regina (c. 1135 C.E.) (Kibbler, Zinn, & et. al., 1995), and the Akathistos (500-600 C.E.) (Cunneen, 1996) (see Appendix F) became staples in church services. The Virgin Mary even had a day of the week reserved for honoring her. Saturday was set aside strictly for the devotion and worship of Mary (Kibbler, Zinn, & et. al., 1995) around the year 975 C.E. (Warner, 1983).

An enormous building campaign during the Middle Ages was also a result of Mary being proclaimed Theotokos. No longer were liturgical spaces dedicated to God the Father or even God the Son. Instead, cathedrals of the Middle Ages were literally the seat of Our Lady (Deuchler, 1989/1931). These gothic cathedrals were usually all organized in a similar fashion. Most often the entrance to the west depicted some aspect of The Last Judgment. The artwork adorning the two side entrances was intertwined, with one side illustrating the Old Testament and the other the New Testament. The north portal (the

sunless area of the cathedral) usually contained prophets, sibyls, and patriarchs grouped around the Virgin Mary who, as the Mother of God, became the bridge between the two covenants, old and new. The southern portal with its sun light often illustrated Christ Enthroned as King of Heaven (Hofstatter, 1968).

The exact origin of the cult as previously mentioned is unknown. It is known that many things were omitted about Mary during the first four centuries of Christianity. Her cult flourished after the Council of Ephesus and reached its peak during the eleventh through thirteenth centuries. The evidence for the popularity of the cult comes not only in the visual form of the Thrones of Wisdom but also in recorded Marian miracles, the popularity of her relics, the abundance of cathedrals and churches dedicated to her, the literature such as poems and liturgical texts, and the theological treatises and debates of the Church (Kibbler, Zinn, & et. al., 1995). As the cult of the Virgin Mary flourished it affected the production, functional uses, and symbology of the Sedes Sapientiae.

The earliest recorded miracles of the Virgin associated with her cult occurred during the twelfth century, but they are not related to any specific church, city, or shrine. The early apparitions occurred all over Europe from Germany to Spain to Mont-Saint-Michel. Interestingly, none of the early stories seems to be associated with relics of the Virgin. In the East there is a long history of pilgrimages associated with Mary, but in the West there is no documentation of such until the tenth century when a monk named Bobbio noticed that Mary frequently worked miracles for those who came to the abbey of St. Columban. Bodily relics of the Virgin were non-existent because it was believed she ascended body and soul into heaven. As the popularity of the cult of the Virgin grew during the twelfth century, so did the number of relics associated with her. Laon Cathedral

in France and another site in Spain were believed to have fragments of her hair. Shreds of clothing were the most commonly-claimed relics held by most churches, the most famous of which is the Virgin's tunic in Chartres Cathedral, believed to ease the pain of pregnancy. Chartres, however, was not the only liturgical site that claimed to have her tunic; numerous others were venerated throughout Europe. Sta. Maria Maggiore in Rome claimed to have relics from the Nativity including the original crib and some of the Virgin's hair, milk, and clothing.

The rise of the cult of the Virgin Mary resulted in many new localized shrines dedicated in her honor. Pilgrimages did not replace other forms of Mary worship, but they were the way in which most of the uneducated gave their honor to Mary. The people accepted the plurality of the Virgin Mary in her many shrines. This belief is evident in a statement once overheard by Thomas More: "'of all Our Ladies, I love Our Lady of Walsingham'; and 'I', saith the other, 'Our Lady of Ipswich'" (Sumption, 1975, p. 51). The appeal of pilgrimages was to wash away sins through a ritual act. And the early shrines were most often visited by ordinary people, not the elite. In the late Middle Ages, nobles did travel to Mary shrines but the shrines never lost their popular character.

In 1194 C.E. Chartres had to be rebuilt after a fire destroyed most of the cathedral. According to record the entire population from the town of Pithiviers (in the Loire Valley) made a collective pilgrimage to Chartres dragging a wagon of corn as their offering (Sumption, 1975). From this story, it is apparent that Chartres Cathedral was one of the most popular Mary shrines during the Middle Ages. Other important shrines were located in Rocamadour, Mont-Saint-Michel, Laon, Soissons, Ipswich, and Walsingham (Power,

1975). And some of the most noted pilgrimage cities were Jerusalem, Rome, and Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain (tomb of James the Apostle) (Souchal, 1968).

The cult of the Virgin Mary became common knowledge among most people of Europe, but the question of how all of the hymns, poems, miracles, and apparitions traveled throughout the continent remains. Early in the development of the cult of the Virgin Mary, during the fourth and fifth centuries, asceticism was gaining in popularity while at the same time Mary's immaculateness was gaining prominence in theology. Those who wanted to turn away from this world chose Mary as their guide, or ideal, because she was not contaminated physically or spiritually during her lifetime on earth (Lucas, 1983). As the number of ascetics increased to astronomical proportions during the Middle Ages, so did the legends about the Virgin. During the twelfth and thirteenth century the Franciscans and Dominicans, who considered themselves the true knights of the Virgin, spread her cult among the people (Male, 1958/1913). The Cistercians, founded and led by Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153 C.E.), also promoted the cult during these centuries (Sauerlander, 1972). Mary was the logical choice as Protectress of the friars because she, unlike all the other saints, transcended territorial boundaries and social classes (Wunderli, 1992), allowing her cult to thrive among the rich and the poor. Although many official church hymns, poems, feasts, and liturics were created during the Middle Ages, the heart of Mary's cult is not found in doctrine or theological debates, it is encountered in her image as an icon (Hubbs, 1988) in the symbolism of the Sedes Sapientiae.

The Virgin Mary as the Sedes Sapientiae

> The heaven is the throne for His glory, yet He sits on Mary's knees. -Ephrem of Syria (Cunneen, 1996, p. 173)

Mary had come into her own and was now truly the Great Goddess reincarnated. All those like Nestorius and his disciples opposed to naming Mary Theotokos were deemed heretics after the Council of Ephesus. Overnight, visual representations of the Mother and Child became an expression of the orthodox Church. This symbol, Mary Enthroned with the Child, was chosen in order to embody and formalize a creed of the Christian faith. Once introduced, the clergy and the laity alike took a stance against the skeptics and began displaying Mary and the Child in their homes in the form of icons, embroidered garments, detailing on furniture, and even on personal adornment items like jewelry. The original Mother and Child images were not meant to be biographical representations but rather theological symbols visually adapted by the sanctioned Church to depict the new decree that Mary was the Mother of God (Jameson, 1887). Thus fusion between religious dogma and art was fulfilled by the creation of the Sedes Sapientiae (see figures 20-22).

The propagation of the image of the Mother and Child was a result of a threefold strategy by the Church. Its obvious function lies in its symbology. Christ seated on Mary's knees visually reinforced the new decree that Mary was Theotokos, and this in turn proved that Christ was truly human and truly divine. As noted, the symbology also condemned doubters who did not embrace this dogma and served as a visual reminder of the power of the Orthodox Church (Jameson, 1887). And most importantly to the people,

Mary with her Son upon her lap was a church-sanctioned substitute for the worship of ancient pagan deities (Pelikan, 1996).

The Sedes Sapientiae are an international phenomenon: found in all areas of France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Scandinavia, England, Spain, Italy, Poland, and Hungary. It is thus impossible to study every single Throne of Wisdom statue. Therefore, an attempt will be made to show the common characteristics, construction methods, origin, functions, and of course iconography among the statues as a group. The Sedes Sapientiae were created as early as 725 C.E., but most extant examples date to the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. Most surviving examples included here are of French origin because of the large number of statues created in that region and the extensive prior research done on Sedes Sapientiae here. Also, many of the included examples are copies of earlier Thrones of Wisdom that no longer exist, and this will be noted when the information is available. (Forsyth, 1972).

These free-standing wooden sculptures of Virgin and Child were extremely popular during the medieval period. Scholars have noted they were particularly attractive to the people of France where close to one-hundred surviving statues have been discovered. They are all very Romanesque in nature and design despite their date of origin. These statues are usually small, less than life-size, and create an intimate relationship with the viewer. Nevertheless the petite sculptures are monumental in portraying the complex iconography of the Sedes Sapientiae. In these figures Mary is enthroned in majesty, or maiestas, and reasoned to be both the Theotokos and the cathedra, or seat of Logos. She is depicted as the physical support for her Son indicating that her lap is the throne for the

manifestation of Divine Wisdom (Gold, 1985). Again, this idea of mounting the lap of a goddess is not new to the art of the Middle Ages.

The title Sedes Sapientiae given to these statues of the Virgin Mary and the Child Enthroned literally means Seat of Wisdom. The word seat implies that Mary is a dwelling place; she literally represents the cathedra, or seat of Logos incarnate, which is Christ. Although either the term seat or throne is a correct translation, traditionally the term throne has been used because it is associated with the ideas of sovereignty and dignity in which Mary reigns in these statues. The Sedes Sapientiae is a descriptive title which adequately defines the complex nature of these statues where Mary is enthroned with the Child in majesty.

Sedes Sapientiae is a label which comes from art historians and is not indicative of the actual time in which the statues were created. This factor complicates their study. The term maiestas has also been used to describe these Christian religious images. However, maiestas may refer to either a two or three-dimensional image, and it may or may not depict the Virgin Mary. Maiestas was really a term used to denote honor in the sacred as well as the secular realm. Although maiestas does not exclusively denote these sculptures and should not be used as their title, it is still an appropriate term to help describe the Sedes Sapientiae.

There are also several other terms that are useful in classifying, studying, and describing the Sedes Sapientiae. The word statua is often found in medieval documents when describing three-dimensional works of art. Statua was used to describe the Reliquary Statue of St. Foy (mid-10th century C.E. Silver, gild and jewels. Abbey of Conques,

Aveyron, France) by Bernard of Angers (see figures 23-25) . However, he also used the terms maiestas and imago to characterize the statue of St. Foy, with imago being the most commonly used word to denote a statue. The term icon is also encountered during the Middle Ages; referring to either a two or three-dimensional pictorial representation. Truthfully, no single word can be found in medieval documentation that differentiates the exceptional qualities of the Sedes Sapientiae, which is true sculpture-in-the-round, from relief-sculpture. If the word imago is used in medieval writings it is of no use to the scholar of the Sedes Sapientiae because it is ambiguous: it could be referring to a relief-sculpture instead of a Throne of Wisdom. When a medieval source mentions that an icon contained a relic it can be deduced that the icon was three-dimensional and therefore falls into the category of the Sedes Sapientiae (Forsyth, 1972). Since no single word existed during the Middle Ages exclusively to describe the Sedes Sapientiae it makes study of literary material regarding them almost impossible. It is then the actual visual documentation that is most heavily relied upon when investigating the Thrones of Wisdom (Forsyth, 1972).

Actually looking to visual art is the most appropriate way to see how the image of Mary changes during the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries. The Church during this period established a type of visual canon that directly affected the production and persona of the Virgin and Child depictions. Although officially never recorded, the Church's set of guidelines assured that dogmas were represented hundreds of times over so the viewer was able to read the artwork as if it were a story (Gold, 1985). The Church left no guesswork for the average person during the Middle Ages. For example, the Sedes Sapientiae were intended to illustrate Mary's role as Theotokos and legitimate the idea

that Christ was both human and divine. Whenever the Church wanted to relay a new message regarding the Virgin Mary they simply changed the visual canon. In the late medieval period, the Church believed Mary had become too closely associated with the Great Mother Goddess and had assumed too many of her powers. In order to rectify the situation they replaced the Sedes Sapientiae with the more human Mary Standing with the Child (see figure 26). Consequently, new ideas that surfaced about Mary are easily recognizable in the art because they are different from those images of the past (Gold, 1985).

Mary, as the Sedes Sapientiae, is not the only image used as a propagation tool by the Church during the Dark Ages. Other images like Mary Enthroned with Christ in Heaven, Mary Standing with the Child, and the Pieta (see Appendix G) are instrumental in spreading Church ideology and are worth noting (Kibbler, Zinn, et. al., 1995). However, only Mary Enthroned with Christ, specifically as the Sedes Sapientiae, visually depicts the proclamation that she is Mother of God.

Artists had now placed a face with the story, and Mary could be viewed everywhere during the Middle Ages. In the thirteenth century she was alive in sculpture, retelling her story on all the porches of the cathedrals. Many structures like Reims, Amiens, Chartres, Laon, and Senlis were designed, built, and dedicated to Mary exclusively. She almost always had a porch reserved only for her worship, even in churches dedicated to other saints. According to Male, "One may infer that she also had a place of honour in men's [and women's] hearts" which helps explain the elevation of the status of the Virgin during the Middle Ages (Male, 1958/1913, p. 232).

The very early sculptural images of Mary as the Sedes Sapientiae are more like idols than portraits, meaning they were specifically created to be worshipped. It can be said that she is still locked in stone in these early statues perchance because of fear on the part of the Church of depicting the female body and the power associated with its fertility. They were apprehensive that the woman might become an object of adoration like the ancient goddesses. For that reason, women had to cover their faces, remain unseen, keep their powers in check, and prevent men from going wild because of their sexuality (Guitton, 1963). The Sedes Sapientiae became an authorized invitation for artists to reproduce Mary's torso, gaze, and feminine details. Nevertheless, while the Thrones of Wisdom were intended to be the Christian way of removing the pagan connotation from the worshipped body of the female (Guitton, 1963), they were as well only a Christianized version of the Mother Goddess of yesterday. The Sedes Sapientiae presence is powerful, being both personal and aloof at the same time. Their essence is abstract; they evoke a sense of otherworldliness which invites the viewer to worship. The Thrones of Wisdom are in no way reflective of the real lives of medieval women. For this reason, they are also not associated with the real nature of mother-child relationships; that role will later be filled by the Virgin Standing with the Child. The Sedes Sapientiae are truly idols that were created to express Mary's uniqueness among all other women (Gold, 1985).

All of the Sedes Sapientiae share a family resemblance and thus are easily distinguishable as a group. The image represents God incarnate through Mary's role as Theotokos, and therefore the positioning of the figures was predetermined by iconography. This allowed for little to no variation in their arrangement. The result was a formal symmetrical composition with frontal alignment. The majestic nature of this image

resulted in the rather hieratic expressions of both figures (Forsyth, 1972). In all the Sedes Sapientiae Mary rests upon a simple throne while holding her Child upon her lap; her queenly pose on the throne visually denotes she is the Mother of God. The stiffness and erect posture of their bodies as well as the way Mary stares as if into another world are reminiscent of votive statues from the past. Mary also presents her Child to the observer, a child who resembles his mother exactly, leaving no doubt he is her Son (Cunneen, 1996).

The Sedes Sapientiae all hold characteristics in common. Their most obvious shared trait is simply the figures that are needed to comprise a Throne of Wisdom statue: Mary, Christ, and the throne. All the Sedes Sapientiae also have the same iconography due to Mary's part in the Incarnation and the Church's assertion that she is Theotokos. The statues all inspire veneration because of their crude idol-like execution. And lastly, the core of the sculptures is constructed of wood that can be (but is not necessarily) covered with thin sheets of precious metals embellished with precious jewels.

The appearance of the Sedes Sapientiae varies little from one statue to the next (see figures 27-29). However, in the hands of individual artists the Thrones of Wisdom become distinct works of art that happen to share a list of commonalities. They can be sophisticated and ornately adorned with precious metals and gems, or they may be more primitive in nature and carved simply of wood. They are all invariably comprised of a simple double-enthronement composition which portrays Mary as a mature, regal figure who is clearly a woman, not a young girl (Forsyth, 1972). Mary is always clothed in simple attire; she usually wears a tunic under a draped and pleated overgarment in the form of a paenula, and this may or may not be fashioned around her head to serve as a mantle (see figures 30-32). In some of the statues, a pallium may cover the paenula.

Thrones of Wisdom hailing from northern France commonly depict Mary with a separate veil, or cope, and a crown upon her head (see figures 33-34). Mary's body acts as the sole support, or throne, for the Child. And unlike her Son she herself usually holds no attributes in her hands (again see Appendix H).

Christ is no child in these statues, instead He is depicted more like a small man-child. Although rendered smaller in size than his mother, He is still an extremely mature-looking figure (see figure 35). In fact, the only indicator alerting the viewer that the miniature-male figure on Mary's lap is indeed Christ is his positioning. Since these images indicate majesty logistically it is important for the observer to believe that Christ is not the infant often depicted suckling from his mother's breast. Christ must be a man at the age of reckoning in order to ascend the throne in these statues and fulfill His role as Sovereign. The Sedes Sapientiae almost always features Christ in the center of the main axis, because it is this arrangement which allows for the so-called perfect balance with His mother (see figure 36). This positioning then allows the figure of Mary to be a frame of reference for the Child (Forsyth, 1979), just as Isis had been for the pharaoh hundreds of years earlier. Christ, like Mary, has a stiff and rigid pose; He too is attired in simple fashion. The gaze upon Christ's face recalls the look upon the face of the Emperor Constantine when he marched victoriously into the city of Rome: "and looking straight before him as though he had his neck in a vice he turned his eyes neither to the right nor to the left, as if he had been a statue" (Forsyth, 1972, p. 23). The hands of the Child are often utilized to display symbolic objects like the book or the orb, with the unoccupied hand often making the sign of peace. (see Appendix H) (Cunneen, 1996). Some Sedes Sapientiae include a Christ who holds a book in one hand while making the sign of the benediction with the other. This

image illustrates His priestly nature which is perfectly balanced by Mary as the Church (see figure 37) (Forsyth, 1972).

The throne is the essential element giving the Thrones of Wisdom their descriptive name. The throne that Mary is seated upon is similar in fashion to carved Gothic chairs found in both secular and sacred settings (see figures 38-39). The throne is another attribute transferred from the Great Goddess to the Virgin Mary. A woman's power of creation exists not only in her womb but also in her lap where her newly born child would reside. When the goddess, and later Mary, took the child upon her lap it was a symbolic gesture that signaled the adoption of the child, and on a much deeper level it represented the adoption of humanity by the Great Feminine (Neumann, 1974). Whenever the throne is present it represents a heavenly throne, whether it is depicted ornately or simply. "It [the throne] is not of the earth, nor on the earth; and at first it was alone and unapproachable" (Jameson, 1887, p. 175). The idea of the throne is linked with the goddesses of the past, especially Isis whose name literally means seat or throne (Neumann, 1974). The Sedes Sapientiae obviously took advantage of an archetypal symbology and incorporated this image here in regard to Mary.

For functional purposes, the sculptures had to be free-standing and portable, therefore they were carved out of wood in a mass that was life-sized or smaller. Evidence also suggests some of these sculptures were made of stucco because of its light weight and affordability, although none of this type of Sedes Sapientiae survives today. The oldest surviving Sedes Sapientiae statues are carved wooden cores painstakingly covered with priceless metals, beaten into sheets as thin as tissue, like gold, silver, tin, lead, or copper (see figures 40-44). Often, too, gems like intaglios and cameos were embedded on the

surface to enhance the metals. It is unclear whether the medium of the Thrones of Wisdom informed the function or vice versa, but it is clear that the portability of their nature allowed for their flexible function. Their role was almost limitless; they could be utilized outdoors for feast-days, be transported through the streets or fields ritualistically, and raise of the morale of an entire city simply because they were portable.

The Romanesque Thrones of Wisdom are visually odd. They are the only Christian artwork, as a group, that have the look of an idol. Art historians seem to observe and note quite often that they are buddha-like. They can easily be described as transcendent or otherworldly. The austerity of the Sedes Sapientiae is still related to primal abstract religious ideals, unlike the almost sickeningly sweet image of Mary standing with the Child resting on her hip that will replace the Sedes Sapientiae in the late Gothic era. The Virgin enthroned in majesty was the cult-image of the Middle Ages because it proclaimed Mary Theotokos in a three-dimensional form and won a place in the hearts of the people.

The Thrones of Wisdom definitely have their own unique charm. Whether they are simply carved from wood or overlaid with rare metals that demand reverence, their idol-like nature begs to be worshipped and adored. Their three-dimensionality make them seem life-like; for a average medieval devotee, standing in front of a Sedes Sapientiae statue was just like standing in front of the real Theotokos. For that reason it is not surprising that worshippers believed the statues often moved and performed extraordinary deeds. Devout Marianists also believed these icons could work miracles. Yet the Sedes Sapientiae are really no different from other artwork of the era; they were constructed of similar materials through the same processes employed by the other craftspeople of the day. There is nothing innately special about the materials used to comprise the Sedes

Sapientiae, but the artists who constructed them did create two innovative methods for solving the structural problems created by the materials and function of these sculptures. The size, choice of materials, and execution of the Sedes Sapientiae will be explored next.

As mentioned previously the Sedes Sapientiae are all small in stature, measuring less than life-size. The finished proportions of the Thrones of Wisdom seem only to be determined by regional preference and the availability of materials and not by any set church or artistic canon. The smallest extant example measures thirty-five centimeters and hails from Cazarilh-Laspenes (late 12th-13th century C.E.? Wood, traces of polychromy. Cazarilh-Laspenes, Haute-Garonne) (see figure 45). The larger statues measure up to one-hundred and forty-two centimeters, like the statue from St.-Denis (c. 1130 C.E. Oak, gilded and polychromed, St.-Denis.) (again see figures 30-31).

Sometimes the Thrones of Wisdom were covered with metals considered priceless by medieval standards; most often the choices included gold, copper, lead, or tin. These metals were arduously beaten into sheets as thin as tissue paper by goldsmiths and then applied over the carved wooden core of the Sedes Sapientiae (see figures 46-50). Imagine the effect produced when the light was cast back by their highly reflective surfaces. In the early Middle Ages precious materials were a mainstay of most art. This in turn elevated the status of the goldsmith to an almost superhuman position. Sadly, it seems in some of the artwork of this period the weight of the costly metals and gems was more important than the artistic merit of the sculpture. Despite this fact the Golden Madonna of Essen (Before 1000 C.E. Gold gild. Essen, Minster) is an excellent example of artistic achievement (again see figures 37-41). This goldsmith managed to create a noteworthy statue that is surprisingly warm and delicate though it is covered with gold, a material that

often lends the opposite feeling. The metal even successfully creates the illusion that it is instead fine silk draped over the Virgin's body. Gold had long been the symbol of secular wealth and power, and so it is only logical that the church utilized it to convey the realm beyond time and space, or heaven. The physical nature and symbology of those Sedes Sapientiae protected by a metal sheath can accurately be described as follows:

> ...the golden surface suggests an extension beyond the object itself. The contours of the metal seem changing and fluid. Tiny ridges and pockets of sensitively-worked foil collect the light and reflect it in a swiftly shifting display of shadow and brightness. The result is an intensification of intrinsic properties of the material. In a dimly-lit interior the luminosity suggests an intangible, mystical presence (Forsyth, 1972, pp. 11-12).

In the twelfth century, in his book entitled The Various Arts, Theophilus devoted an entire chapter to describing the art of metalworking. The techniques described by him directly relate to the production of the coated Sedes Sapientiae. He instructs the reader in the art of repousse, noting that it is imperative for the metal to be of uniform thinness. He says, "Then, to begin with, you gently rub the head, which should be in the highest relief, with a rounded, well-polished [chasing] tool, and, turning the plate on the right side, you rub around the head with the smooth, polished tool so the ground sinks and the head stands out." He also notes the artist had to turn the metal constantly during this process in order to assure uniform adhesion of the metal, to utilize several differently-sized hammers to insure the metal would be properly beaten onto the wooden-core of the sculpture. The fine details of the drapery folds and the features of the face were added later with an instrument called a tracer. In the next step of this craft the concave spaces on the statue

were coated with a red wax. Theophilus says, "When these gold and silver plates have been brought to full relief and burnished and you want to attach them, take some wax...and mix it finely with ground tile, or sand....With this fill all the figures, or whatever relief work there is....When it is cold, attach it where you wish." Therefore the beaten gold is coated with wax on its back side, allowing it to be nailed easily to the wooden-core of the artwork. Artists carving these statues only laid in the major details; it was the goldsmith who added the fine details during the repousse process. The manner in which these statues were covered suggests a continuation of the tradition from the Ottonian period to the Romanesque. Since many of the metal-coated Sedes Sapientiae no longer exist, the statues from Essen, Hildesheim (12th century C.E.? Gold over wood. Hildesheim, Cathedral Treasury), Orcival (About 1170 C.E. Walnut covered with gilded silver and copper plate; hands and face are polychromed. Orcival, Puy-de-Dome), and Beaulieu (second half of 12th century C.E. Wood covered with silver repousse leaves. Beaulieu, Correze) are wonderful examples of the medieval fusion of the minor arts and free-standing monumental sculpture. They are also examples obviously executed through a procedure similar to the one detailed by Theophilus (again see figures 37-41, 46-50; see also figures 51-57) (Forsyth, 1972, pp. 12-13).

Most gilded extant statues date to the twelfth century, but from literary evidence it is apparent they were also created earlier in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Most scholars agree this fact indicates that the majority of the statues were originally covered with some type of metal that was later stripped for various reasons. The very monetary value of these overlaid Sedes Sapientiae led to their destruction. For this reason, only six created during the twelfth century or earlier remain in an undiminished state: Essen,

Hildesheim, Orcival, Beaulieu, Walcourt (Date unknown. Wood with gild. Walcourt, Saint-Materne), and Paderborn (11th century. Wood. Paderborn, Westphalia) with the last being stripped of its gold shell in 1962 C.E. (again see figures 37-41, 46-50, 51-59; see also 58-62).

The good news is that not all Throne of Wisdom statues were coated with precious metals; if this were the case there would probably be few today left to study. While most of the surviving statues that were coated date to the twelfth century, the wooden Sedes Sapientiae far outnumber those coated ones by the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. It seems that once their iconography was firmly established as a sculptural form the precious metals were no longer a fundamental requirement. And once expense was out of the way this type of statue began to appear everywhere (Forsyth, 1972), because even small village churches could afford at least one wooden-cult image of the Virgin Mary (Evans, 1969/1948). Although the wooden statues were not as grand as those adorned with precious metals and gold they were similar in size and nature of assembly. Variation in size and treatment of the wooden Sedes Sapientiae is a regional occurrence rather than one that coincides with time or evolution.

The type of wood used to create these statues was also based on regional preference and availability. In the south of France statues were generally created from walnut (again see figures 20-22, 34, 51-55) while in the north oak (again see figures 30-31) and birch (see figures 63-64) were used more often. In Germany and Switzerland linden wood (again see figures 46-50, 60-62) was the wood of choice. These findings correspond to the research done by Jacqueline Marette who finds similar trends in medieval wood panels in her Connaissance des primitifs par l'etude du bois, Paris, 1961.

Wood is often problematic as a medium, warping and splitting due to moisture content. Consequently, the artist usually did not select wood from the inner core of the tree but instead utilized the wood from the outer perimeter of the tree. Many of these statues were hollowed out in the back which allowed the removal of the center of the tree. However, this technique was problematic for statues that were supposed to be free-standing sculptures-in-the-round.

Ingenious artists created two solutions for the problematic nature of their chosen material. In the first method, craftspeople simulated a solid piece of wood very much as they did in panel paintings. This technique involved alternating the grain of the wood by laying separate boards side by side and joining them. By alternating the grain, artists allowed the wood to expand and contract without splitting. Fine examples of this approach can be found applied in the Morgan Madonna (second half of 12th century C.E. Walnut, polychromed. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art) and Notre-Dame de Montvianeix (second half of 12th century C.E. Wood, polychromed. Moussages, Cantal) (again see figures 20-22; see also figures 65-67). At first glance they both appear to be comprised of one solid piece of wood, but upon closer inspection this joining technique is apparent. This process also allowed small, manageable pieces of wood to be carved by the artist in order to create the intricate details, while larger blocks could be fashioned into the greater details of the statue. Wooden dowels were then used to join the individual carvings to the main sculpture. Obviously, this method was also economic because it allowed even the tiniest scraps from the perimeter of the tree to be formed into complex details. The size of the Sedes Sapientiae statues was also greatly determined by this process because the bulk of the statue was limited by the size of the solid perimeter wood

that could be located by the artist. As a result, when artists wanted to create larger Sedes Sapientiae they had to find another approach in order to solve their dilemma.

This second method artists contrived involved carving the entire figure of Mary from one single block and then hollowing out the reverse from her shoulders to the base. The aim of this technique was to create a thin shell: the thinner the wood the less likely it was to warp or crack. A separate panel of wood would then be carved and attached with dowel rods to seal the opening in Mary's back. The resulting sculpture was so seamless that the technique was not noticeable to the viewer. Good examples of this method can be seen in the Thrones of Wisdom from Autun (second quarter of 12th century C.E. Birch, originally polychromed. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art) (figures 63-64) and Hildesheim (again see figures 46-48). In some statues instead of creating a separate plate to conceal the hole in Mary's back, she was simply placed upon a high-backed throne to hide her hollow back. (see figures 68-69). The child was executed as a separate carving and was then simply secured with dowel rods to Mary's lap in this process.

The first technique of joinery was employed chiefly in the Auvergne region of France in the medium of walnut. The later-developed method of hollowing was utilized more often in northern France by sculptors working with oak. The origin, development, and use of these two different formulas seem actually to be linked to the characteristics of the wood. The uniform attributes of walnut make it less likely to spilt when compared to the nature of oak. The very properties of walnut help explain the number of remarkably preserved Sedes Sapientiae from the Auvergne region. Most of the examples of Sedes Sapientiae found outside France were created by the latter method of hollowing regardless of the type of wood utilized to create them. It is obvious by the late Middle Ages that the

second technique had become the standard method used to produce Sedes Sapientiae (Forsyth, 1972).

The Sedes Sapientiae, like most other wooden sculptures of the era, were originally painted bright colors if they were not covered with precious metals or jewels (see figures 70-71) (Price, 1962). The approach is quite elementary yet clever: after the statue had been carved and joined together, artisans covered it with a thin layer of linen. Then a layer of gesso was added to the linen binder and allowed to dry. Then the artist simply painted the prepared surface as if it were a canvas.

The original colors of the polychromy are often hard to ascertain in most of the Sedes Sapientiae. Many have been stripped down to their wooden cores, and still others have been painted and repainted so many times that it is impossible to ascertain their true original colors. From personal observation Forsyth finds the following patterns in polychromy of these particular statues: the hands and face are usually a flesh tone; Mary's tunic is most often red and covered by a blue mantel, cope, or paenula which may sometimes be trimmed with gilded borders and ruby linings; in some regions a separate white veil is depicted on Mary; Christ's tunic is either blue, blue-green, or red, and could have gilded borders like Mary's in the same color combination; and many times the book was also gilded (see figure 72). Interestingly, some of the metal Thrones of Wisdom contained some polychromy usually in the form of a painted face (Forsyth, 1972).

When the issue of polychromy is discussed regarding the Sedes Sapientiae, it is hard to overlook the fact that many of these statues depict the skin of Mary and the Child as black. The so-called Black Madonnas, and in this case Black Sedes Sapientiae, seem to be an issue surrounded by mystery leading to many unanswered questions (Cunneen,

1996). Scholars like Forsyth attempt to use Rohault de Fleury's theory, wrongly it might be added, to explain the Black Thrones of Wisdom as nothing more than victims of time, smoke, dirt, and grime. Forsyth also asserts that surely none of the Black Sedes Sapientiae were ever intended to be black, although she admits that several do look black today upon personal inspection (see figures 73-75) (Forsyth, 1972). As Sally Cunneen points out it is hard not to notice the striking difference between the black face and hands of the Virgin of Marsat (2nd half of 12th century C.E.? Walnut, painted and gilded. Marsat, Puy-De-Dome) in comparison to her vividly painted clothing; time and nature would have surely blackened the entire statue, not just the skin.

Recent anthropological evidence does attest that while some of the Black Madonnas could have been made black by accident, at least thirty have been black since their creation. The Sedes Sapientiae from the cities of Montserrat, Marseilles, Chartres, and Enna (Sicily) (see figures 76-78) are just a few of the statues that are believed to have always been black. Interestingly, in the West the Thrones that were black in origin all hail from sites once occupied by Roman legions, and Romans had once worshipped Cybele in the form of a sacred black stone. And in the East Mary's depiction as black only increased her holiness.

Whether the Sedes Sapientiae were originally depicted as black is really not the central issue of importance. However, in the West it is clear that white statues were often deliberately painted black because the devotees preferred them that way. An excellent example of this passion for Black Madonna is exemplified by the Sedes Sapientiae from Einsiedeln (Date unknown. Wood. Switzerland, The Hermitage of Einsiedeln) (see figure 79). The statue was moved to Austria in 1798 C.E. in order to escape Napoleon's

advancing troops and once there it was painted white and put on display; the outrage of the people forced it to be restored to its original color of black (Cunneen, 1996).

The origins of the Sedes Sapientiae are just as complex as the issue of the Black Virgins. Although many probably believe that this image appeared in Early Christian art out of a vacuum, this is truly not the case. This image had an ancient iconography of its own long before it was adapted by the Christian faith to fit Mary. Nevertheless, the Sedes Sapientiae are not derived from one single image; they are a result of the amalgamation of several ideas like the cult of relics, Carolingian metalwork, sovereigns and effigies of rulers, and pagan mother-goddess figures.

Carolingian thrones were often associated with the Biblical Solomon's throne or any sacred or secular authoritative figure enthroned. And it was the Carolingian culture that made way for Mary as the Sedes Sapientiae: they assigned Mary the attributes of an empress and explored these ideas in their literature. She, like their secular ruler, was bestowed the royal insignia which included not only the throne but the orb as well (again see figures 35-36). She became for them regina nostri orbis, the Queen of Heaven. Of course this idea was later greatly enhanced by its depiction in three-dimensional form as the Sedes Sapientiae. The emperor Charlemagne also greatly aided the development of the Throne of Wisdom by allowing artists to revive the depiction of Mary Enthroned with the Child in plastic form. Charlemagne's artistic renaissance in conjunction with the Second Nicene Council (which adopted the dogma that any devotion given to an image is passed from that image to the one whom it represents) created the atmosphere necessary for the production of the Sedes Sapientiae. As the fear of worshipping idols evaporated from the court of Charlemagne religious images began to replace the role of secular ones. Homage

given to secular icons was never considered idolatrous because they acted as representatives for the absent royalty, and this idea soon became synonymous with religious representations, too. These sculptural mediators were the only way to communicate between the two realms of heaven and earth according to Carolingian thought. And it is out of this climate that the Sedes Sapientiae arose. The Carolingian culture had the technology to create these statues, and by the mid-tenth century the earliest well-documented Throne of Wisdom exists, dated circa 946 C.E.

The origin of the Sedes Sapientiae is not a result of a simple linear evolution from a single sculptural predecessor. As mentioned its emergence is linked in the eleventh century to a renaissance of the plastic arts: stone sculpture, metalwork, and wood and metal reliquaries. A religious zeal for the relics of saints which greatly helped shape the origin of the Sedes Sapientiae had begun earlier in the ninth and tenth centuries (see Appendix I). Accordingly patrons wanted a new image that could function not only as a reliquary statue but as mediatrix between themselves and the spiritual realm. Artists then had a new goal to fulfill: the result being the Thrones of Wisdom (see figure 80) (Forsyth, 1972).

Another probable influential predecessor of the Sedes Sapientiae are ruler effigies. One such example is the statue of Duke Solomon of Brittany. Solomon had sworn to make a pilgrimage to Rome but was unable to fulfill his promise because Norman raids occupied his time. For that reason he had a statue made in his likeness, and he had it transported to Rome in his place. It was probably very similar to a Throne of Wisdom in nature, being life-sized and covered with gold and jewels. It is also highly probable that its core was made of wood since it was small and light enough to transport over the Alps.

This statue is not an isolated case; many statues like St. Foy were effigies that held the relics of those they were intended to epitomize (again see figures 42-44).

Female fertility images of Venus, Cybele, Artemis, Isis, and Demeter as well as countless others were common before Christianity. The popularity of the statues alone suggests that they must have been a major influence on the creation of the Sedes Sapientiae. According to medieval legends many of the Thrones of Wisdom were attributed to older goddesses in order to ascribe "venerable, even pre-apostolic, antiquity to local churches" (Forsyth, 1972, p. 62). Scholars like Emile Male note the people of the Middle Ages must have often thought Gallo-Roman sculptures to be depictions of the Virgin and Child since most were so similar in nature. In the minds of the common populace the older pagan traditions were not simply replaced with the advancement of Christianity for they continued to worship Mary as if she was a continuation of the Feminine. Exemplifying this notion, ancient statues of the Great Goddess were regularly confused with Christian imagery as the text Libri Carolini illustrates. In one passage the author asks, "How are we to know that an unidentified representation of a beautiful woman with a child in her lap is an image of the Virgin and Child rather than Sarah and Isaac or Venus and Aeneas or Alcmene and Hercules?" (Forsyth, 1972, pp. 62-63).

One of the main commonalties that links the goddesses of the past like Isis, Demeter, Cybele and Sophia with the Sedes Sapientiae of the Middle Ages is the color black. Although not all of the Sedes Sapientiae were painted black, they still had the same functionalities as the polychrome wooden statues and those covered with gold. It seems that once the ideas incorporated from the ancient goddesses into Mary as the Sedes Sapientiae were formulated, her outward appearance was not as important as the ideas she

symbolized to her worshippers. However, it must be remembered that the black statues of Mary, like those of her predecessors, were always more closely associated with miracles, healing, and fertility. The similarities between the Black Sedes Sapientiae and the black goddesses of the past are striking: often Black Sedes Sapientiae venerated during the medieval period were actually ancient statues of the Goddess with a child upon her lap who was usually female not male. An example of this mistaken identity occurred in the town of Enna. Pope Pius IX had removed from the church an enthroned statue of Demeter and her daughter Kore, which had been utilized until the nineteenth century in their Nativity. The sites across Europe that possessed a Black Sedes Sapientiae continued to be great pilgrimage spots (as they continue to be today) even after the cult of the Virgin began waning.

It was a common conviction during the Middle Ages that statues of the Black Virgin had existed since the beginning of time: hidden in a cave, near a river or tree (see Appendix J). The common person believed these images contained all the powers of nature and therefore could not have been made by the hands of human craftspeople. Most were found by peasants as they went about their daily routines of tilling the soil, collecting water, and tending the herd. When an ancient statue of the Goddess resurfaced the community came into intimate contact with its divine and ancestral history.

The Sedes Sapientiae were not discovered accidentally by just anyone; according to fable, the statues had the power to choose who discovered them. They had a particular fondness for those on the fringes of society who were close to nature like shepherds, children, and the humble. Legend holds that once a statue was discovered it was often removed from its place of origin, only for it to escape back to that locale. So finally,

people gave up trying to transport them to another area and built a shrine to the statues on the very place they had been unearthed.

It is apparent that the customary convention of portraying the Virgin Mary as black is deeply embedded in a common European collective memory of a prehistoric millennium. To the ancients, blackness stood for the life-giving, regenerative energy of the goddess while white, on the other hand, symbolized death (Cunneen, 1996). The Sedes Sapientiae, be them black, painted, or adorned with riches, are directly descended from the great female fertility cults of the past; however, the Church made sure to limit their power. Thus controlled, the Great Mother Goddess was overshadowed by the Father. Saint Anselm (1033-1109 C.E.) explained this usurpation by exclaiming, "So you, Lord-God, are the Great Mother!" (Hubbs, 1988, p. 100).

The most important factor is that the Sedes Sapientiae could take on functions once ascribed to ancient goddesses and still be considered 'Christian' devotional statues (Cunneen, 1996). In order understand how much influence they truly had upon the physical execution and iconography of Mary as the Sedes Sapientiae, the major goddesses which informed these statues must be examined: Isis, Demeter, and Sophia. However, this is not to say that other goddesses did not serve as predecessors to the Sedes Sapientiae, but in all likelihood these three goddesses were most remembered in the lives of the people and had the greatest contact with the early religion of Christianity.

The Goddess Isis is encountered in the oldest funerary texts of Egypt, but she was probably most popular during the Hellenistic period after Alexander the Great conquered Egypt. The Ptolemys edited the cult of Isis: conforming it with Hellenistic views and then

spreading it throughout the West. Yet Isis is ancient, the daughter of Nut. She had a sister called Nephthys and two brothers Osiris and Set. According to myth, Osiris and Isis became lovers while still in their mother's womb and from their union the child Horus is born. The oldest visual representations of Isis depict her wearing a special crown which represents a throne. Thus she is the throne from which the pharaohs reign. In Egyptian symbology the pharaoh literally becomes Horus, her son, and his authority is derived from this relationship with his Mother (Engelsman, 1979).

The connection between Isis and the Sedes Sapientiae is obvious. Mary like Isis becomes the legitimizing throne on which her Son rests; it is she who reveals the true identity of the Child. Mary is also a champion of women's issues and will inherit the role of the patron of childbirth once held by Isis. Isis was worshipped not only through ritual initiations but also at daily services held at her temples, and she had her own celibate priests dedicated to her and her service as Mary does in the Middle Ages. Both the statues of Isis and the Thrones of Wisdom were carried through the streets during festivals. Isis is connected with Maat, who is not a goddess but is the principle of truth, justice, and right order in society. She is similar to Demeter as the Law-Giver and the Jewish concept of Hokhmah, or Wisdom (Engelsman, 1979). These ideas will later resurface in the iconography of the Sedes Sapientiae.

Apuleius, in The Golden Ass (2nd century C.E.), paints a picture of a goddess with compassion who takes pity on Lucius. "Behold, Lucius, I have come, moved by thy prayers....I have come in pity for thy woes, I have come propitious and ready to aid....For thee, by my providence, the day of salvation is dawning" (Engelsman, 1979, p. 63). When Apuleius wrote this story the cults of Isis, Demeter, and Cybele were extremely popular in

Europe. It is evident that the Great Goddess was always there for her devotees though under the guise of numerous names. On this subject Isis describes herself in the following passage:

> I am Nature, the universal Mother, mistress of all the elements, primordial child of time, sovereign of all things spiritual, queen of the dead, queen of the immortals, the single manifestation of all the gods and goddesses that are. My nod governs the shining heights of Heaven, the wholesome sea-breezes, the lamentable silences of the world below. Though I am worshipped in many aspects, known by countless names, and propitiated with all manner of different rites, yet the whole round earth venerates me....Call me by my true name, Queen Isis. I have come in pity of your plight, I have come to favor and aid you (Cunneen, 1996, p. 67).

It is clear that the average person yearned to worship the Great Feminine no matter what she was called. Mary as the Sedes Sapientiae satisfied this necessity during the Middle Ages.

Demeter was worshipped by the Greeks but her prototype was originally venerated in Mycenaean-Minoan culture. Her attributes are connected with the earth, the seasons, and agriculture. However, she is best known as the grain or corn goddess. The Eleusinian mysteries which reenact Demeter's lament and frantic search for her daughter are celebrated as early as the sixth century B.C.E. (See Appendix K) (Engelsman, 1979). Mary's grief over the loss of her Child will later be immortalized as the Pieta. Demeter's daughter, Persephone, is known as the Corn Maiden and is associated with the seed (Baring and Cashford, 1993/1991). Interestingly, Mary's child too is compared with the

seed. Christ was the seed that created the sprouting of an entire new religion, and he also frequently utilized its symbology in his parables.

Demeter guided society from nomadic to agrarian. Consequently, she set down their laws and earned the title of Law-Giver. Mary's relationship with the law is a little different than Demeter's earlier role. The Virgin performs miracles outside humanity's laws and delivers those that practice true devotion to her (Cunneen, 1996). Demeter and Persephone's connection to the unchanging agrarian traditions made them favorites among the common people. Every spring and autumn, festivals symbolizing the changing seasons and hence the dying and rebirth of the earth were celebrated in their honor (Baring and Cashford, 1993/1991). Mary too represents death and rebirth. She herself is the reemerged image of the so-called womb and tomb of the ancient goddess. It is obvious that a woman's creation of life is certainly a death sentence, because nothing of this earth lives eternally. Hence, the birth of Mary's Son is also the foreshadowing of His death. As mentioned previously, Mary as the Goddess reincarnated is the way to heaven according to the Christian paradigm, and thus she is responsible for rebirth after death.

Mary as the Sedes Sapientiae is closely associated with the earth as was Demeter. As late as the twelfth century there is evidence that indicates that peasants still carried the goddess over their fields in the spring to ensure a fertile crop. It will never be known whether these statues were authentic Sedes Sapientiae or simply older goddess statues. This is the case because the peasants meshed together images of the goddess, whose sacrifice was necessary for the crops to grow, with those of the Virgin Mary. Try as they might, the Church could not stamp out all the prayers associated with agriculture because it was the oldest and most unchanging occupation in the world. Incantations to Mother

Earth were a part of rural daily life during the Middle Ages. The following prayer is indicative of those voiced to Demeter herself: "Earth, Earth, Earth! O Earth, our mother! May the All-Wielder, Ever-Lord grant thee, Acres a-waxing, upwards a-growing, Pregnant with corn and plenteous in strength" (Cunneen, 1996 p. 169).

Mary is most closely linked with the goddess Demeter when she performs the grain miracle. The story recalls that during the flight to Egypt, Mary, Joseph, and the Child pass a farmer's field as he is in the act planting his grain. They beseech the man to tell the soldiers following them that they passed while he was planting his crop. As they proceed past his field the grain miraculously grows to full size. Soon the troops approach and the man tells them honestly that Mary and Joseph passed by while he was planting his grain.

Hokhmah, or Sophia, is the concept of wisdom that emerged from Judaism and became incorporated in the Throne of Wisdom statues of the medieval era. Sophia is modeled after the Egyptian concept of Maat and revealed via Wisdom literature like Proverbs, Ben Sirach, Ecclesiasticus, and The Wisdom of Solomon. Unlike the great goddesses of the past, Sophia has no cult of her own. She is part of the Jewish tradition that during the Hellenistic period reemerged as a hypostasis, or personification of God. As an archetypal figure, Sophia has traits in common with the goddess. Hypostasis are common within the Judaic community but Sophia is unique, speaking on her own behalf. And by the first century B.C.E. Sophia virtually functions as a goddess within Hellenistic Judaism with some restrictions (Engelsman, 1979).

Sophia evolved because Yahweh had become too transcendent for the Jewish nation. The Book of Job wonderfully illustrates how the Jewish nation felt about their God this point in history. Job is a righteous man and follows God's commands, yet he suffers.

He asks, "Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?" As a result, Sophia is born to act as a mediatrix between God and the Israelites (Ashe, 1976). Sophia is not distant like her male-counterpart. She, like Mary, is immanent, which enables her to aid her earthly children (Hubbs, 1988). Sophia, Isis, and Demeter also share traits in common. They all wander the earth, are sources of justice, are the first of creation, and have dual natures (Engelsman, 1979). Mary and Sophia are both loving, protective, and merciful. Sophia too is associated with the blackness of the earth. The Song of Songs relates that Sophia is black, but beautiful: "...do not stare at me because the sun has burned me" (Cunneen, 1996).

Philo, an Alexandrian Jew under the heavy influence of Plato, rid the world altogether of the feminine Sophia. He changed her sex; she became the Logos, or Word. All her attributes became His. Although Judaism never embraced Philo's ideas, Christianity used them to help explain the nature of Jesus, and a connection between Christ and the Logos began to be formed between 70 and 90 C.E. The author of the Gospel of John clearly adapts Philo's Logos. "In the beginning was the Word....The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Ashe, 1976, p. 140). When the Wisdom is replaced by the Word in the New Testament, Christianity successfully eliminates any female attributes of the divine (Engelsman, 1979).

The Sedes Sapientiae might resemble other sculptures of their day, but they clearly do not operate as such. It is their function that necessitates their medium, dimensions, and simple nature. It seems that permanence was not essential to the purpose of these statues, otherwise they might have been created out of stone and on a much larger scale. Economy was also not the only factor that determined their medium. This is evidenced by the lack of

any free-standing stone Sedes Sapientiae in churches that could have afforded to commission one. The survival of hundreds of statues created out of an extremely perishable medium attests that they filled roles important enough to warrant their preservation (Forsyth, 1972). As a group, the Sedes Sapientiae share eight functional purposes in common. First and foremost, all idols intended to visually represent Mary as Theotokos are Sedes Sapientiae. In keeping with this function, individuals often utilized them as either a votive statue or as personal devotional objects. The Church, on the other hand, employed them as safe-havens for relics, as actresses in liturgical dramas, as focal points of processions, and as a means of financial security. And lastly, even though the Thrones of Wisdom were religious sculptures they were also intricately linked to secular practices.

The Sedes Sapientiae have long been considered Christian idols and thus usually left to the study of religious scholars. It has long been a difficult task for art historians to find aesthetic interest and value in sculptures that are believed to move, weep, speak, or sometimes fly. Extraordinary statues with the power to protect and act as intercessors have been damaged in fervent attempts by eager believers to repaint, recarve, and restore, and this fact also deters art-historical attraction. Nevertheless, these so-called idols are worthy of artistic examination (Forsyth, 1972).

The Sedes Sapientiae exemplify and visually illustrate Mary's role as Theotokos, the Mother of God. These statues are truly idols because they act as intercessors on behalf of the people, and as such serve as evidence that people could become divine while living in this world (Pelikan, 1996). It is also essential to note that the icons of Mary have always been associated with miracles while those of her Son have rarely been analogous with any

miracles (See Appendix L) (Hubbs, 1988). According to Forsyth, "They were often objects of excessive religious zeal." (1972, p. 48) One such example involves the Vezelay Madonna (Late 11th-early 12th century C.E., no longer exists). According to twelfth-century documents, during special feast-days the Sedes Sapientiae were frequently placed on special altars in the church. On one such occasion so many devotees showed up in a attempt to touch or even glimpse the statue that the clergy were afraid the crowds might riot if they returned it to its original location. This same Throne of Wisdom was honored with a silk phylactery that was hung around Christ's neck, and it escaped any harm when the church in which it resided burned to the ground. Another example which reflects the type of extreme devotion given to these statues is the legend involving marriage to a statue. Monks were the special champions of the idol of Mary. They recited their vows in front of her statue and swore an oath of allegiance often by wearing her wedding band (Forsyth, 1972). Practices like that of laying jewels at the feet of the Thrones of Wisdom also began in the Middle Ages. Two wonderful examples of this custom include the necklace placed around the neck of the Madonna in Coventry (C. Before 1000 C.E., no longer exists) by the Countess of Malmesbury, and the adornment with a golden crown and bracelets of the Sedes Sapientiae at Avallon (Before 1000 C.E., no longer exists) around 1078 C.E. All of these instances indicate a strong cult attention that could easily be used to define these images as idols.

The idea that Sedes Sapientiae functioned as idols is intertwined with the belief that statues of Mary and the Child were more than a mere commemoration. Because the statues were often accepted to be a direct continuation of the ancient goddess tradition, the public automatically assumed they had special powers and were actual agents of the

divinity. Pilgrimage routes were established as the immediate effect of the idol-like nature of the Sedes Sapientiae; fervent pilgrims traveled hundreds of miles to catch a glimpse of a statue (see Appendix M). Three-dimensional representations were still a novelty in the early Middle Ages, and this fact would have only fueled the belief in the tangibility of the representations. For this reason, each statue seemed to develop its own divine personality (Forsyth, 1972).

Once the idea of Sedes Sapientiae as idols was firmly established in the church theology and among the community, Mary was asked to be a votary for her patrons. The idea of the Sedes Sapientiae as a votive-image is reflected in an excerpt from Athanasius (d. 373 C.E.) in his Letters to the Virgin: "...She [Mary] prayed to God, alone to alone, intent on two things: not to let a bad thought take root in her heart and to grow neither bold nor hard of heart" (Cunneen, 1996, p. 99). Mary was different from all the other saints, being free from sex, painful delivery, age, death, and all sin. She was then the ideal candidate to pray for the earthly sinner and act as a Mediatrix between humanity and God (Gold, 1985). Devotees adhered to the notion that Mary continued to pray on behalf of the sinner even when they were not in her physical presence, just like the ancient votive statues. For this reason, many Sedes Sapientiae were created in order to allow the patron to continue their daily chores and duties, and leave the praying to the Virgin Mary.

As can be gathered from the previous mentioned information, not all the Sedes Sapientiae were created exclusively for the Church (Jameson, 1887). During the Middle Ages a movement aimed at personal salvation was on the rise (Souchal, 1968) which resulted in the increased production of portable personal devotional items. Mysticism and mystics like Master Eckhart (1260?-1327? C.E.) played a significant role in the emphasis

on personal communication with God. At this point in history, the Church preached that the only way to God was through the sacraments, and thus they condemned Eckhart's views as heretical. However, Eckhart was not alone in his view that individuals could commune with God without the Church acting as an intercessor. This belief, accompanied by the growing economic wealth of the era, afforded the opportunity for many to purchase their own personal devotional objects (Calkins, 1979). Christians began to utilize not only the Sedes Sapientiae but images of crucifixes and the Pieta. All devotional sculptures were small-scale and intended to be used exclusively by the devotee (Hofstatter, 1968). The increase of personal devotion during medieval times also resulted in the rising importance of the private rural chapel (Williams, 1994). As a result the Sedes Sapientiae could be set up in the home or chapel as a household deity and daily mass could take place around it (Hofstatter, 1968).

In 1924 C.E. Louis Brehier discovered a previously unpublished text of Gregory of Tours which described a reliquary statue created for Stephen II, Bishop of Ferrand (937-984 C.E.) around 946 C.E. This sculpture no longer exists but from its description it was likely similar to St. Foy of Conques (again see figures 42-44). The text relates that Stephen did not want to place his relics of the Virgin in the conventional gold or silver box. Thus Brehier concludes that the reliquary statue commissioned by Stephen was truly an innovation, and the oldest known example of this type of statue (Forsyth, 1972). Stephen's reliquary statue was a prototype that greatly informed the production of similar statues including the Sedes Sapientiae (see figure 81).

It is obvious from the evidence discovered by Brehier that it may have actually been the relics that produced a need for true sculpture-in-the-round and hence the Sedes

Sapientiae. Many medieval churches possessed relics of the Virgin Mary, with the most common being clothing, milk, and separable body parts like teeth or hair. Charles the Bald donated the most famous of Mary's relics, her tunic, in 876 C.E. to Chartres Cathedral. Statues like the one at Chartres that contained relics were most often associated with miracles. For example, although fire damaged much of Chartres Cathedral in 1194 C.E. the tunic, amazingly, was found unharmed. And in the city of Soissons, Mary's slipper became the center of a healing cult in the mid-twelfth century (Kibbler, Zinn, et al., 1995). However, it should be noted that not all the Thrones of Wisdom statues contained relics of the Virgin Mary. Many churches and monasteries that possessed both a Sedes Sapientiae statue and relics of the Virgin kept them separated from one another. When not kept in a Sedes Sapientiae the Virgin's relics were usually housed in traditional reliquary chests.

The Vezelay Madonna is an example of a Sedes Sapientiae that contained hair and clothing of the Virgin. These relics were kept in a hidden compartment between Mary's shoulders (again see figure 55). Oddly, the relics within this statue had long been forgotten until a fire caused the pieces of paper authenticating the relics to resurface. Clearly it was not essential for a Throne of Wisdom to contain relics; they were more of an accessory to the statue than its entire reason for existence. The Virgin at Le Puy, like the Virgin at Vezelay, was discovered to contain overlooked relics. She was destroyed by a soldier who burned her in public on June 8, 1794 C.E. Eyewitnesses recalled seeing a door on her back before she was totally consumed by flames. As this example illustrates relics were probably placed in numerous Sedes Sapientiae, but during the process of adding linen and gesso to prepare the surfaces for painting doors were covered and memories were lost by parishioners and clergy.

Of the one-hundred and ten Sedes Sapientiae Forsyth includes in her illustrations, seventy-nine show no evidence of ever having a compartment that could serve as a container for relics. According to literary sources, the relic compartment seems to have been a standard feature of the early statues dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but by the twelfth century it had become only an accessory feature of the Sedes Sapientiae. Inevitably some of the Sedes Sapientiae functioned as reliquaries while others served strictly as sculptures.

The liturgical drama of the Middle Ages employed the Sedes Sapientiae in one of its greatest roles. Mystery and Miracle plays of the day were extremely popular forms of entertainment that brought Biblical stories and characters to life. An example which featured the Sedes Sapientiae was the Officium Stellae, which reenacted the Adoration of the Magi during the season of Epiphany. A play like this one would have been perfectly suited for a Throne of Wisdom statue to receive homage from clerics dressed as Wise Men (see figures 82-85) (see Appendix N). The stage directions detail who shall play the roles of the Magi, midwives, and other characters but it suspiciously makes no mention of who shall reenact the part of Mary and the Child. Since it is most unlikely that clergy would perform the role of Mary or Christ it is easy to assume that a Sedes Sapientiae statue could fill this part. And there is written evidence that attests to this theory: according to an eleventh-century text Mary and Christ are impersonated by an image in a similar drama. This documentation illustrates that for particular roles, images were often preferred to people.

The crowd must have imagined that they were in the very presence of Mary and the Child during the clerics' reenactment of these dramas (Forsyth, 1972). They are called

Mystery or Miracle plays because both those observing and those participating transcended the ordinary and glimpsed the heavenly realm for a few moments. "By combining the sculptured Majesty [Sedes Sapientiae] with human impersonators in the epiphany drama, the idea is given experiential immediacy. A more moving revelation could hardly be imagined" (Forsyth, 1972, p. 59).

A contemporary ritual observed in Auvergne, France involves the carrying of a Sedes Sapientiae through the streets: a custom which has been observed since the Middle Ages (Forsyth, 1972). These processions have an ancient origin; they are reminiscent of the ancient goddess whose statue was pulled through the streets in order that her devotees might have the opportunity to touch it and receive a blessing (Cunneen, 1996). These parades were a form of public devotion and civic pride exercised by most towns which owned a Sedes Sapientiae. The processions attracted pilgrims from other cities and nations, and they served as a money-making opportunity for each church. In times of trouble like plague or famine they were taken into the community to serve as morale-builders. It is known that cult-images of the Virgin Mary were carried in processions to the church of Sta. Maria Maggiore during the Feast of Purification according to the Ordo Romanus XI (prior to 1143 C.E.) and the Ordo Romanus XII (late 12th century C.E.). These writings do not specify that the images were Sedes Sapientiae, but other liturgical instructions for feasts do allude to the idea that the Virgin Mary may have been the image depicted and marched through the town. Still other accounts from the ninth and tenth centuries attest that statues of the Virgin Mary were carried in processions related to her feast-days.

Another example of the Sedes Sapientiae as processional object comes from Bernard of Angers, who noted that the golden statues of the Virgin Mary of Rodez Cathedral, St. Foy of Conques, St. Amandus of Rodez, and others were carried and placed in tents at Saint-Felix, outside the city in the eleventh century. The carrying of the Throne of Wisdom statue in a procession was so common at Notre-Dame-sous-Terre by the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries that pilgrims wore badges that depicted the statue being borne on a litter (see figure 86). These pilgrim badges represent a long and unbroken liturgical tradition. Processions involving the statue of the Virgin Mary are documented at Notre-Dame du Puy from 1254 C.E., but they probably have been taking place even longer.

As noted, processions were an integral part of life. At Essen and Rellingtions nuns carried reliquary shrines through the streets, including among them the golden Madonna at Essen. "It [Madonna at Essen] was carried vested, then disrobed and crowned at the height of the ceremony" during the Festival of Purification (Forsyth, 1979, p. 43). This event however is not the only occasion on which Sedes Sapientiae were utilized as processional statues. During the Feast of the Assumption and the Feast of the Ascension it is recorded that the gold statue of Mary was placed on the altar of the church while the silver sculpture was paraded through the streets. Other Sedes Sapientiae functioned in a similar fashion, and many of these traditions continue to present day.

The Sedes Sapientiae were very much like the Athena Parthenos: literal treasures. They served as a means of security for the monasteries because they could be stripped of their gold and used to finance any endeavor. Those covered with precious metals and jewels were often stolen by the greedy or given to invaders to save their communities.

Sometimes they were even sold (often little by little, snipping off gold and taking jewels one by one) in order to meet the daily needs of existence. "The statues were thus equipped with a formidable array of powers. Should the aesthetic and symbolic impact of the work begin to seem hollow, the image lose its credibility as an intercessor, or the relics within prove ineffectual, there was always something of practical value left in hand" (Forsyth, 1972, p. 15).

These small statues not only influenced the sacred realm but the secular as well. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the aristocracy created the cult of the Lady, which was the romantic counterpart of the cult of the Virgin. Chivalry and devotion of the knight to his Lady were identical in function to devotion to the cult of Mary, the only thing separating the two being that the cult of the Virgin Mary spread to more geographical locations and was observed by more people (Power, 1975). The height of secular devotion to Mary was reached in 1095 C.E. when Pope Urban II called for the First Crusade to be led under the sign of the Virgin Mary (Forsyth, 1972). The idea of Mary as a Protectress was capitalized on by the Church in order to recruit soldiers to regain the Holy Land and thus secure the reign of the Church.

Many Medieval people joined secular brotherhoods, or orders, that vowed to represent Mary through acts of charity. They gave Mary the distinguished title of "Our Lady," wore colors that symbolized her very essence, and invented the rosary (Jameson, 1887). It is recorded that before the sixteenth century, knights swore feudal oaths not only to their Lady, but to Sedes Sapientiae also. And it is known that oaths at Hildesheim were made in the presence of the golden statue of the Virgin and Child. In the political realm Sedes Sapientiae often presided over ceremonies of newly elected bishops, accepting

tributes and oaths of the clergy (Forsyth, 1972). Also in the secular realm the Sedes Sapientiae are literally credited with creating cities. For example, Notre-Dame-de-Liesse was built in 1134 C.E. to house a wooden cult-image. A town grew up around the church where she was housed because so many people came to venerate the statue (Evans, 1969/1948). These statues also made their way into popular folklore and were the topic of numerous stories during the Middle Ages (see Appendix O).

The iconography of the Sedes Sapientiae is just as diverse as its function. The Thrones of Wisdom visually depict, reinforce, and propagate the Church's proclamation that the Virgin Mary is the Mother of God. They also depict a relationship between Mary and God in the form of Christ. This shared kinship is codependent; she illustrates His role and sustains Him and He acts as her Savior. Of the two figures Mary is always larger, illustrating her role as God-bearer. There is no sentimental emotion felt between mother and Son, and the often large hands of these sculptures are a pictorial way of denoting the importance of the smaller figure (again see figures 20-22). In all of the Sedes Sapientiae the Child is being presented to the viewer (Gold, 1985), although Mary was clearly the central focal point to those who worshipped these statues. The relationship between Mary the Child is a paradox because as one author describes it, "You [Mary] feed the One [Christ] who created you" (Guitton, 1963, p. 73). Mary is able to see God as governed by the law of human condition: growing from an infant to a man. Christ is the transcendental divinity who greatly resembles His earthly mother, yet it is she who had to provide the basic necessities of food, shelter, and clothing for the divinity (Guitton, 1963).

Mary as the Sedes Sapientiae also represents the "...world which is the creative spirit of God." Her body is literally a temple, or throne of God. Just like the great

Goddess, Mary is mater, simultaneously creating, living , and exiting (Ayo, 1994, p. 85). Mary is involved in the sacred creation of the world through her role as Theotokos as was the Goddess thousands of years ago (Hubbs, 1988).

Reemergence of the Goddess as the Virgin Mary

> In all ages and in all places men [and women] have conceived of a Great Mother....These Great Mothers whose worship has dominated the religious thoughts of people far removed from each other in time, space, and culture, have essential similarity which but cannot amaze us (Harding, 1972, p.96).

Since the beginning of time people have worshipped the Goddess, the Ewig-Weibliche, or the Eternal-Womanly as Goethe puts it. Archeological evidence supports this theory since no proven images of a male deity have ever been discovered dating from the Early Stone Age. From pre-history hail wonderful images of the female with enlarged breasts and bellies, "exaggerated tokens of motherhood." (Ashe, 1976) The timelessness of this ancient art is overwhelming; images were made by hunting tribes in Siberia and Europe before ten thousand B.C.E. to act as cult-objects. This theme spread to the Indus Valley and Middle East where they constructed Her of ivory or terra-cotta.

> The primitive sculptors leave no message, and the precise meaning of their work is open to challenge. But as the theme undergoes its long-drawn transitions, it flowers without dispute into the imagery of a Goddess-centered religion. When we pass from prehistory to the oldest recoverable rituals and myths, the divine features come ever more clearly into view. However fragmented she may be before, the

> Eternal Womanly is One at her apogee-not always through conscious intercommunion of cults, but psychologically One, under many names and aspects (Ashe, 1976, p. 10).

By the second millennium B.C.E., war, conquest, and kingship brought about the worship of male deities. Roles once reserved for the Goddess were claimed by these new male gods. Once the world had been patterned by the moon and hence the Goddess. Times were changing and it was easier to order the world by the sun. The male seemed at this point to be coming into his own; with the advent of the modern calendar time was forever changed and henceforth based on male achievement. However, the Great Goddess was not lost; she was split up into numerous demi-goddesses in order to contain her powers (Ashe, 1976).

The worship of Mary, specifically in the form of the Sedes Sapientiae, was much deeper than the observance of mere doctrine; she found a place once reserved for the Great Mother in the hearts of people. In every culture the idea of the Mother Goddess was already an intimate part of a collective history. The worship of the Virgin Mary was foreshadowed across every nation for the Egyptians knew her as Isis, the Greeks knew her as Demeter, the Ephesians as Diana, and the Assyrians as Astarte. It is interesting to observe how the cult of the Virgin Mary grew and gained popularity because it did so by gathering remnants of ancient religions and amalgamating the new and old into the early artistic depictions of the Virgin Mary (Jameson, 1887). Today it is easy to speak of the paganization and the rise of polytheism through the worship of Mary. Consequently, the Christian faith transformed Mary into its own Goddess, like Isis or Cybele of the past. The hierarchy of the Church did not absentmindedly create a Goddess; there has to be some

underlying factor innate to the human psyche that is stronger than the inner voices that speak out against Her (Ashe, 1976).

Erich Neumann in his research explains this underlying factor that allowed a Goddess to rise in the ranks of a male-dominated religion. According to Neumann's theory the archetype of the Great Mother is not an image that exists in time or space, instead it is a part of the human psyche. This fundamental belief is manifested in humanity's legends and artwork. The archetype of the Great Mother can be followed like a map throughout history. It is evident in the creation of rites, myths, and symbols, as well as in the dreams, fantasies, and creative endeavors of humanity. The archetype is part of every individual: an energetic process that lies somewhere between the conscious and the unconscious (1974) waiting to surface.

Initially, the Church had not allotted a position for Marian dogma in its liturgy. (A religion based on love and nonviolence was bound to fail without a feminine image.) The early Church was extremely hypocritical in regard to the Virgin Mary and her relationship with the Great Mother. For example, they appropriated the idea of divine love from the cult of Isis while simultaneously dismissing the same religion. Clement of Alexandria (d. 215 C.E.) even went so far as to utilize Christ as an anti-goddess spokesman when he used His statement, "I have come to destroy the work of the female." Unfortunately for church patriarchs they had to accommodate the very so-called pagan fertility religions that they denounced in order to draw new converts to their faith (Hubbs, 1988, p. 99). Undoubtedly, Christianity had successfully repressed the feminine aspects of the divine for the first three centuries of its existence; now all was ready for its reemergence. According to Freud, this reemergence occurs when that which has been repressed, in this case the

feminine, reemerges in disguise (Engelsman, 1979). This is exactly what happens in 431 C.E. when Mary is hailed Theotokos, an act which in turn fosters the visual proclamation as well: the Sedes Sapientiae.

The archetype of the Great Feminine did resurface in Christianity but not without resistance. Christians had rejected paganism for over three hundred years. They had suffered and died for their religion at the hands of non-Christian power. Nevertheless, Mary was admitted into the religion as a Goddess. No one from within the tradition would have identified Mary with older figures like Isis because those goddesses, like any pre-Christian deities were demonic, fallen angels opposed to God. Once Mary's canonization had taken place she could assume some of Isis's attributes, only in disguise of course. As Neumann theorizes, the origins of the deification of the Virgin Mary are rooted in an outgrowth that was not against the grain of the Christian religion. In regard to Mary, all the boundaries between Christianity and the ancient goddesses deteriorated from within and outside the tradition. Those within the tradition who upheld Marian thoughts and ideas increased pressure until Christianity was altered. This process began abruptly and was complete within a lifetime. Mary was finally a Goddess in her own right, enthroned eternally in heaven (Ashe, 1976) and a part of both the conscious and unconscious lives of Christians.

Christianity fathomed an often far-removed and judgmental God, and Mary was needed to be an immanent figure for this religion. Therefore she gained the role of Mediatrix of law and of grace. As the Mother of God, Mary was the means by which Christ came into the world and as such she is the way by which believers ascend back to God. As the literal 'Gate of Paradise' she provides the conduit for believers to travel to

heaven after death (Pelikan, 1996). In the Church, Mary, as the Sedes Sapientiae, was needed to fill what in the nineteenth century Cardinal Newman explains as "that new sphere...in the realms of light, to which the church had not yet assigned its inhabitant...a throne...far above all created powers, mediatorial, intercessory" (Cunneen, 1996, p.131).

Mary imaged as the Sedes Sapientiae plays a central role in God's plan for humanity. In this scheme God's will is to be human in order to communicate with someone different than Oneself. Accordingly, the Supreme Being wants humanity to be realized absolutely by becoming God. Mary is the medium utilized by God to implement the project; thus she is the key to God's strategy and without her it would fail. According to Christianity she is the means for the salvation of the world. Therefore if a Christian does not fully accept Mary's role in the Incarnation, then they cannot accept God incarnate (Boff, 1987/1979). The original intent of venerating Mary was, of course, intended to proclaim the divinity and humanity of Christ. Despite its lofty goals, this honoring of the mother yielded an unexpected result: Mary came forth as a Goddess, a figure with her own power and with attributes that had previously been analogous with the Hellenistic goddesses like Isis, Cybele, Demeter, and even Sophia.

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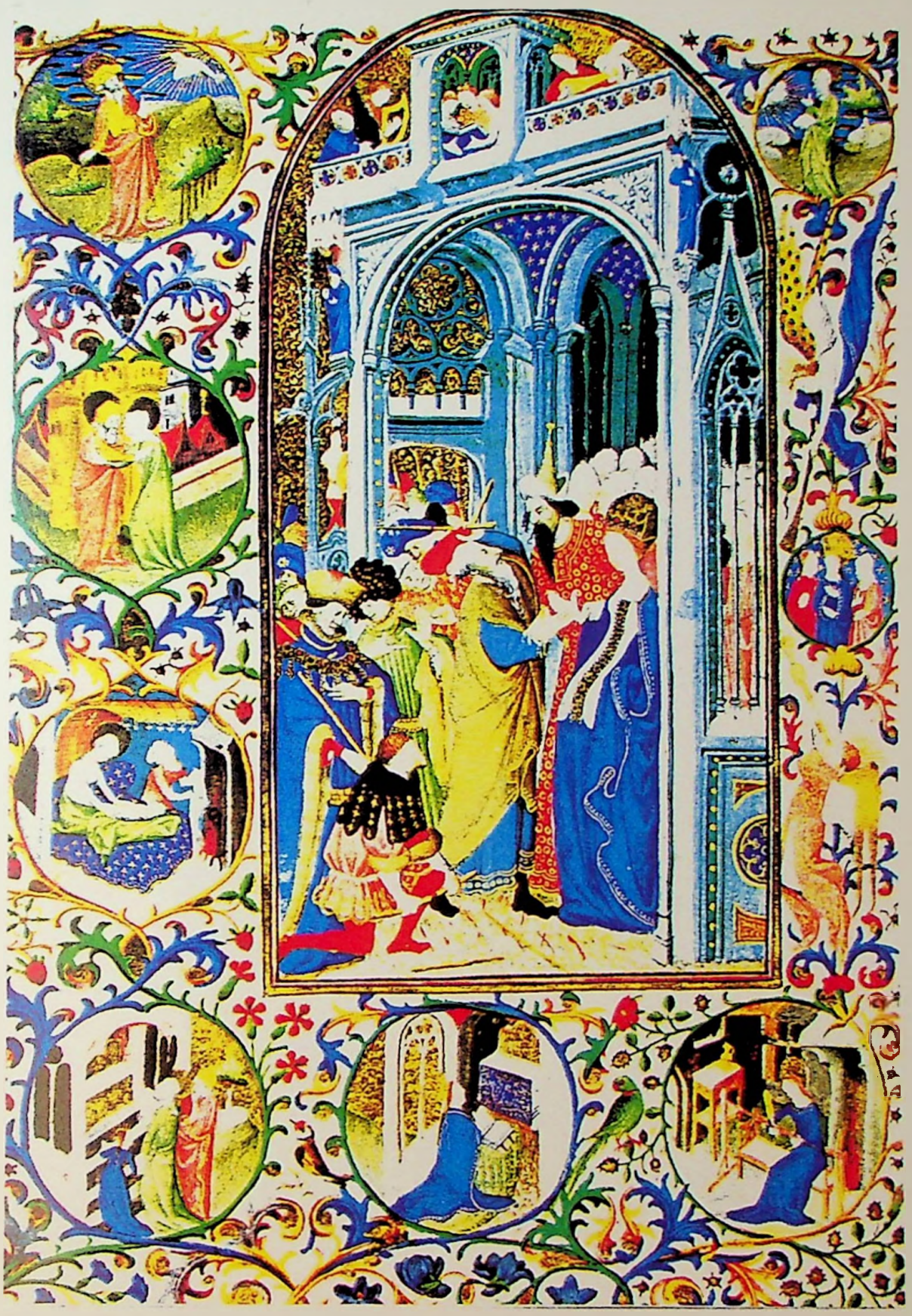

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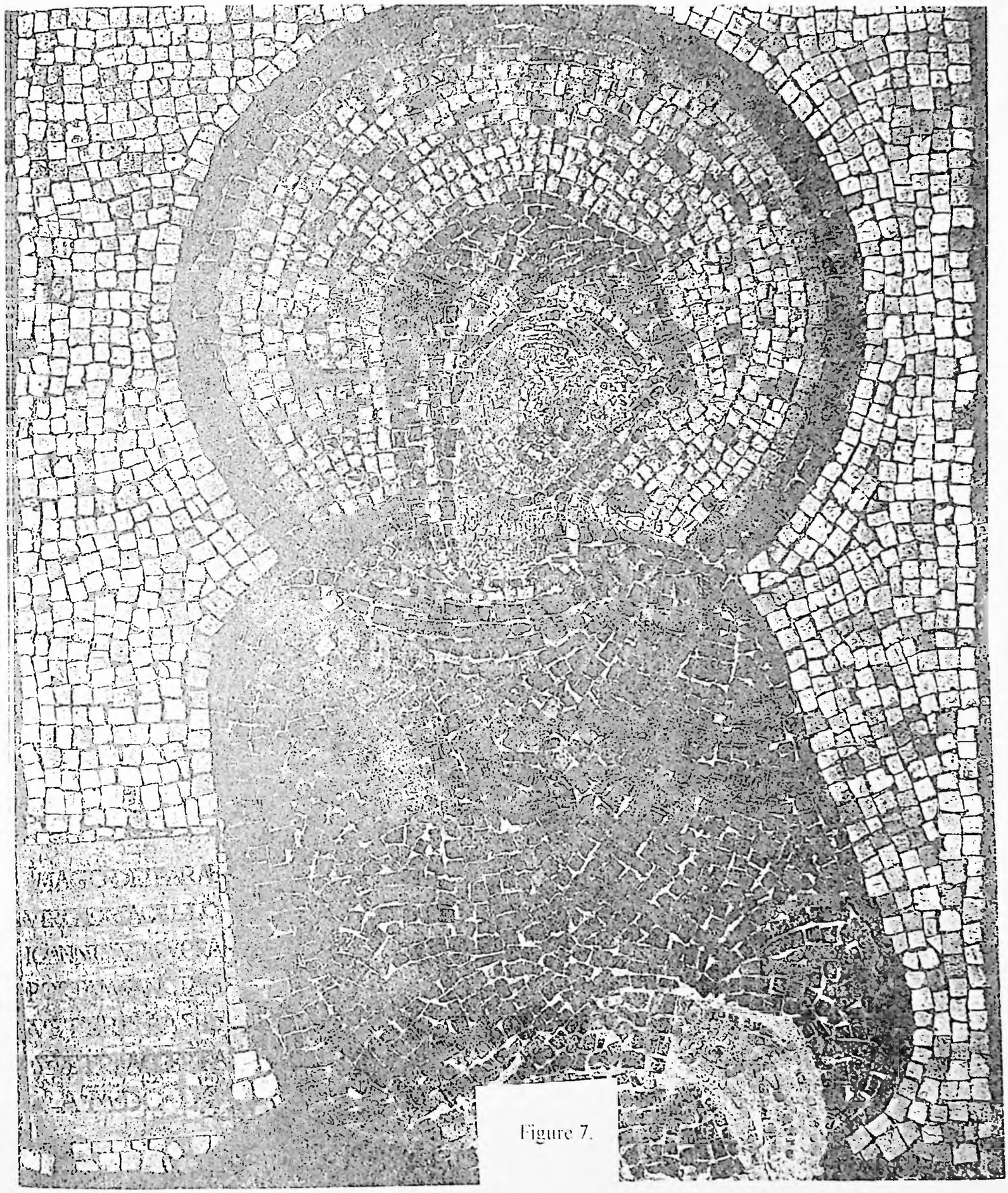

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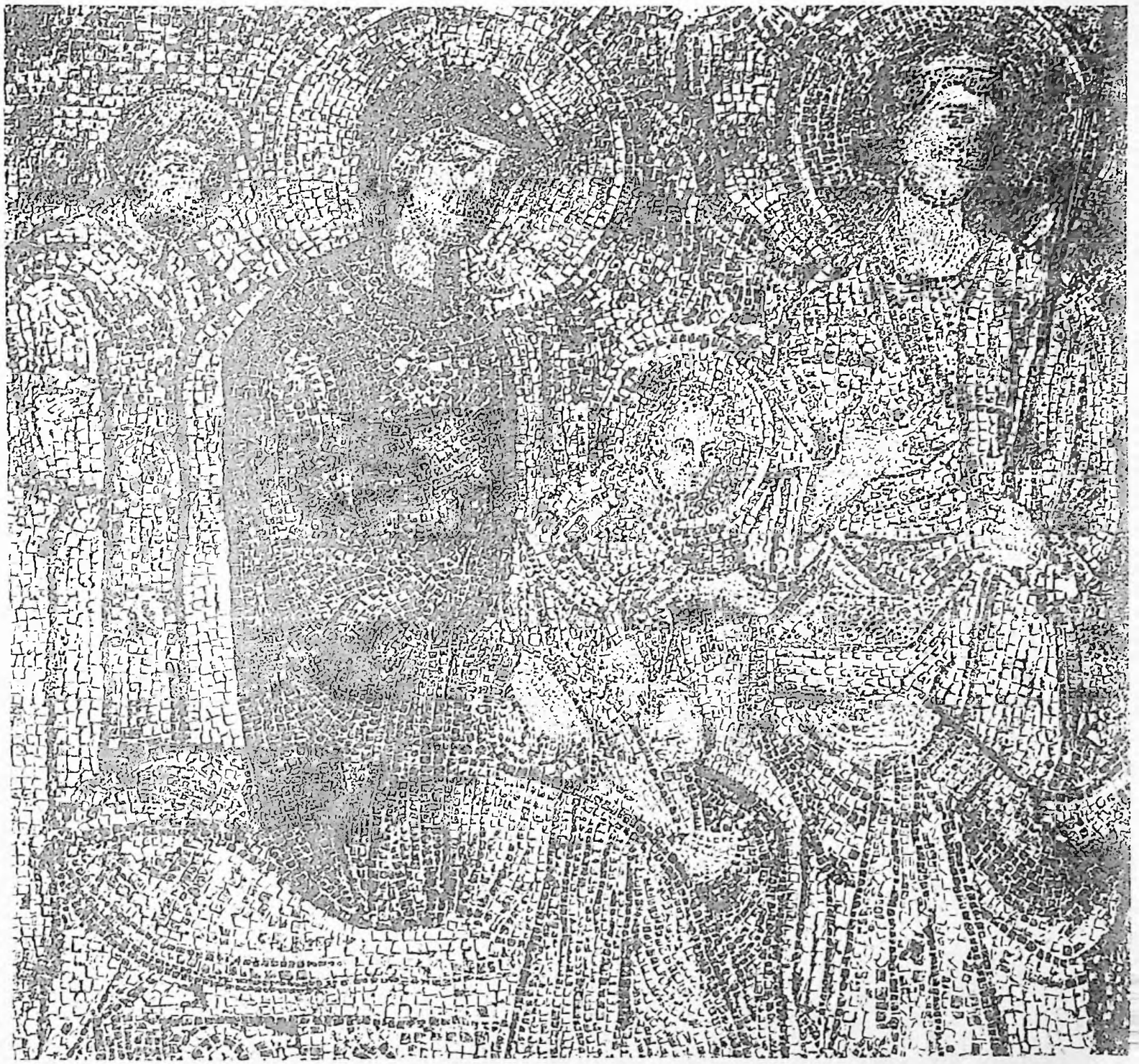

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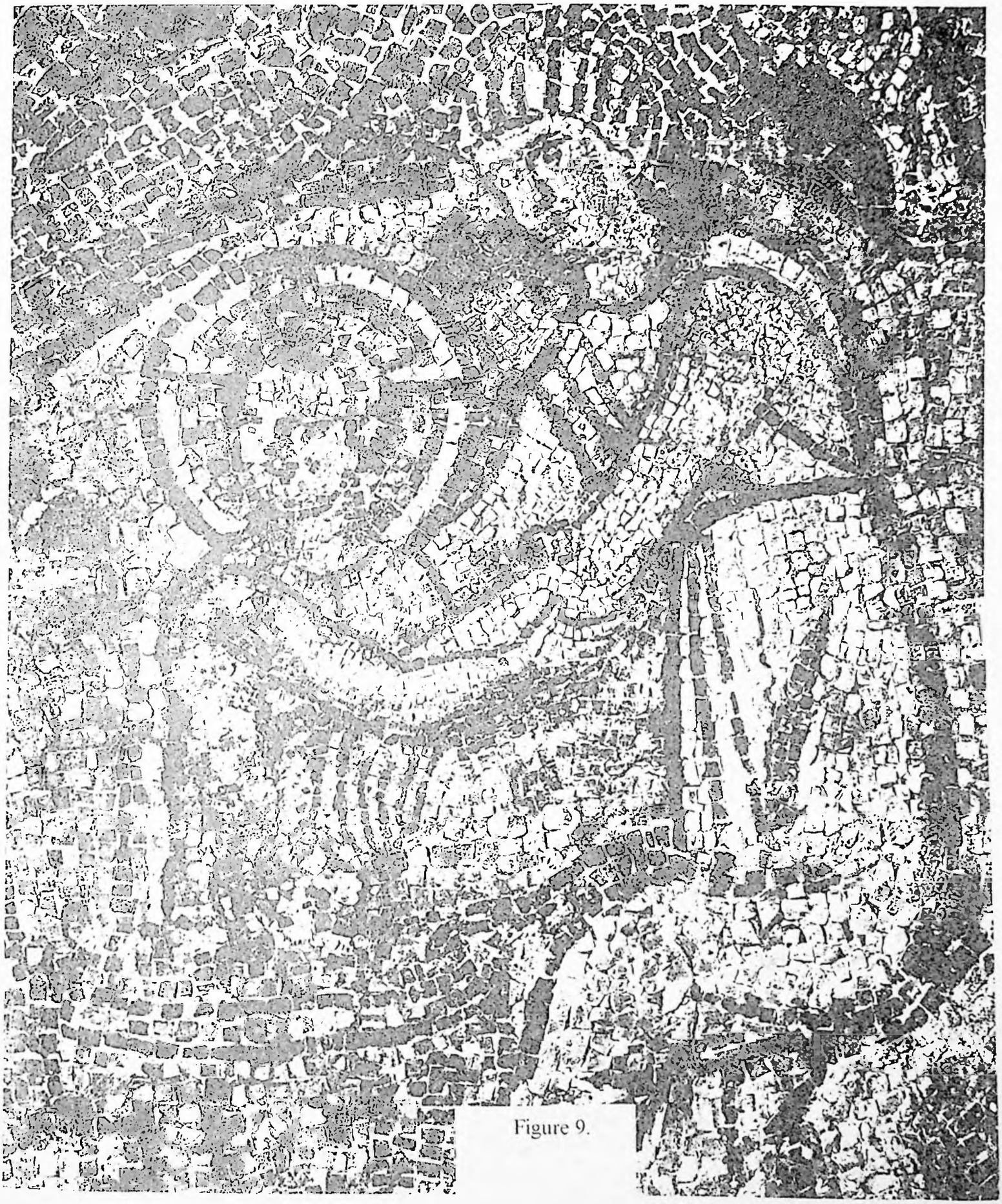

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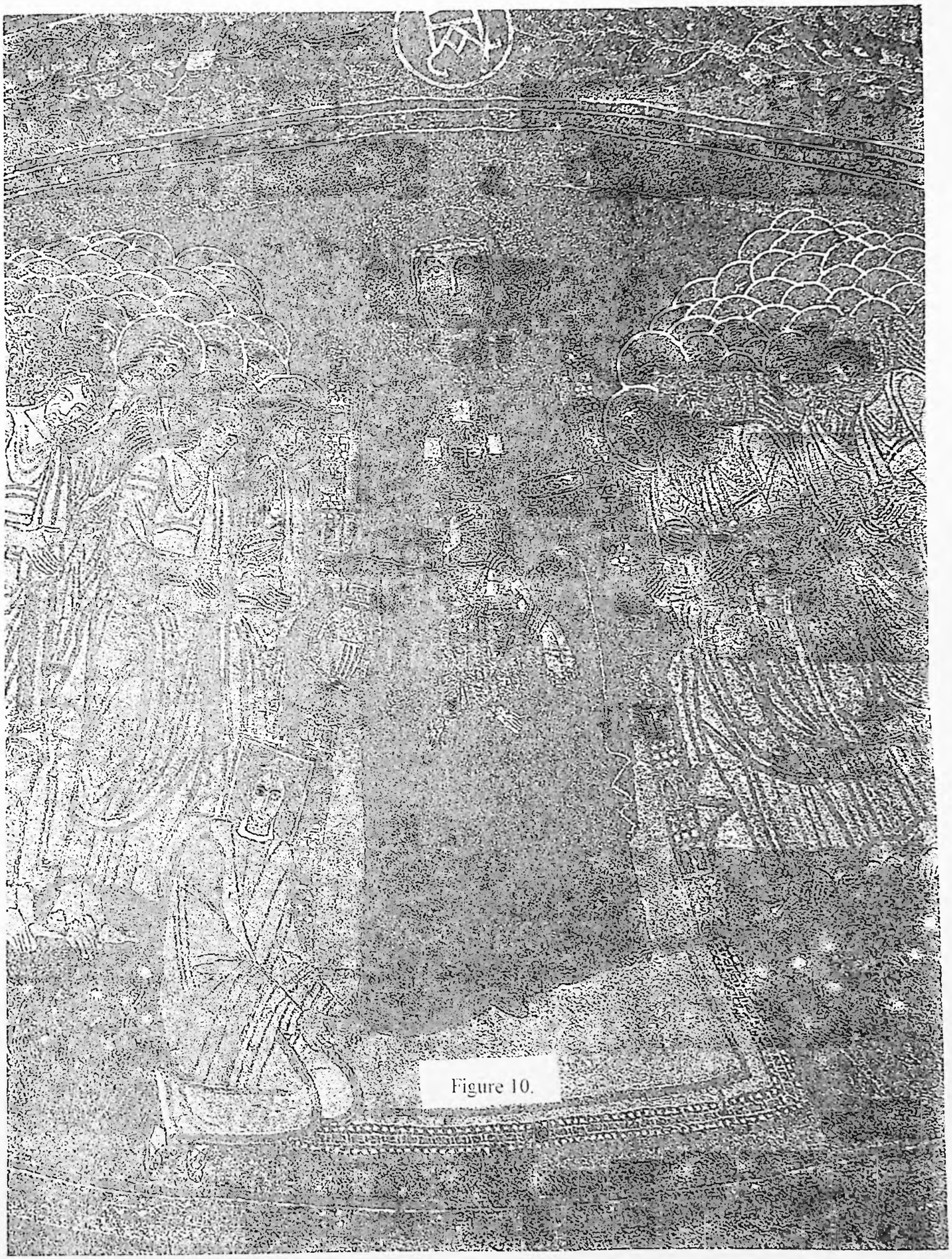

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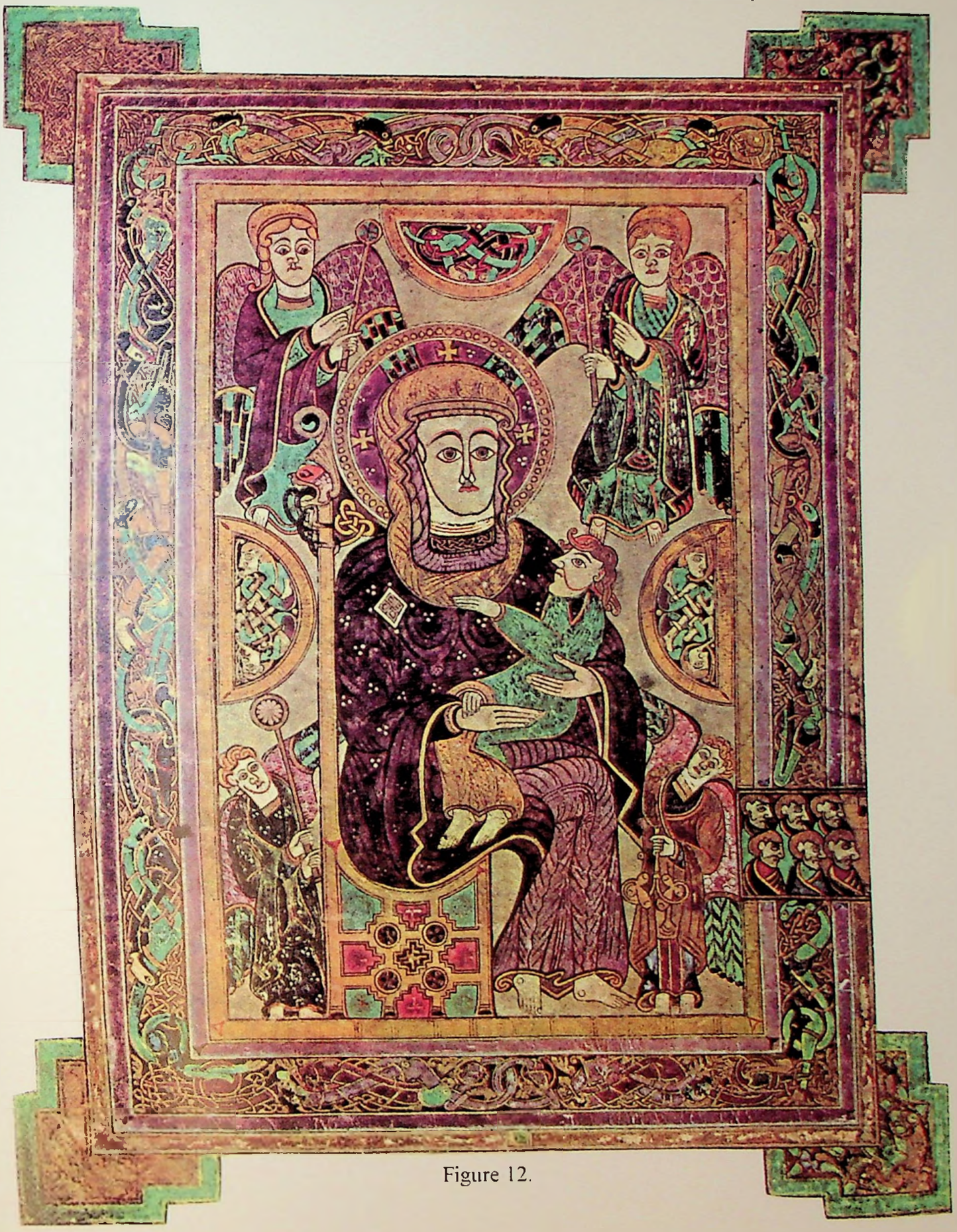

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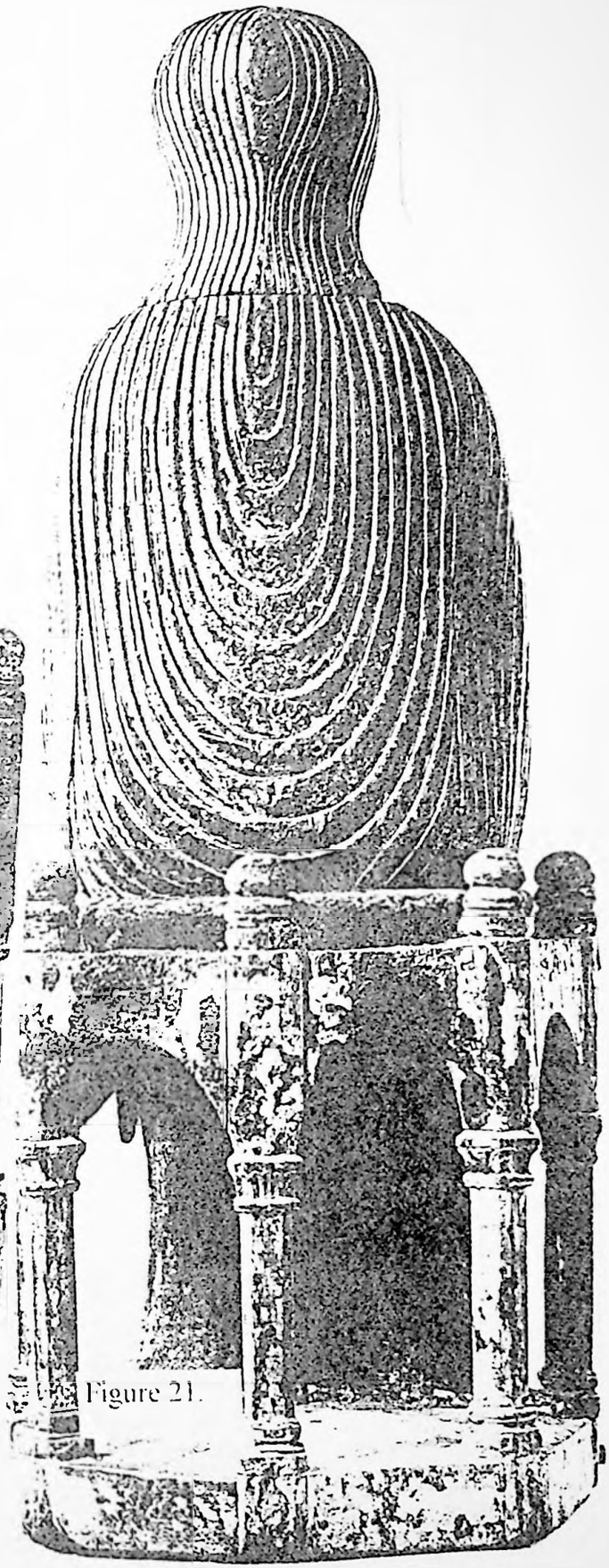

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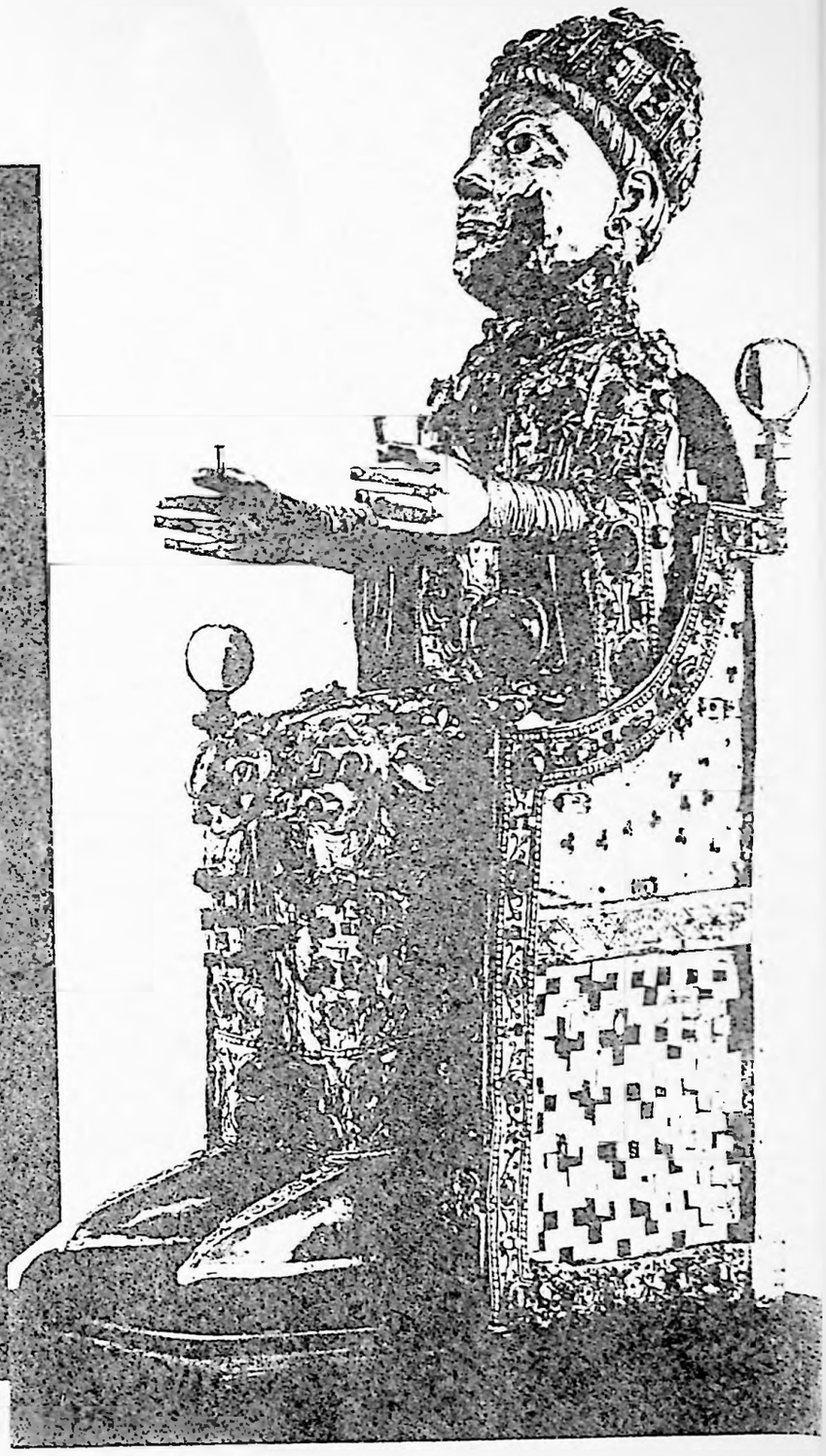

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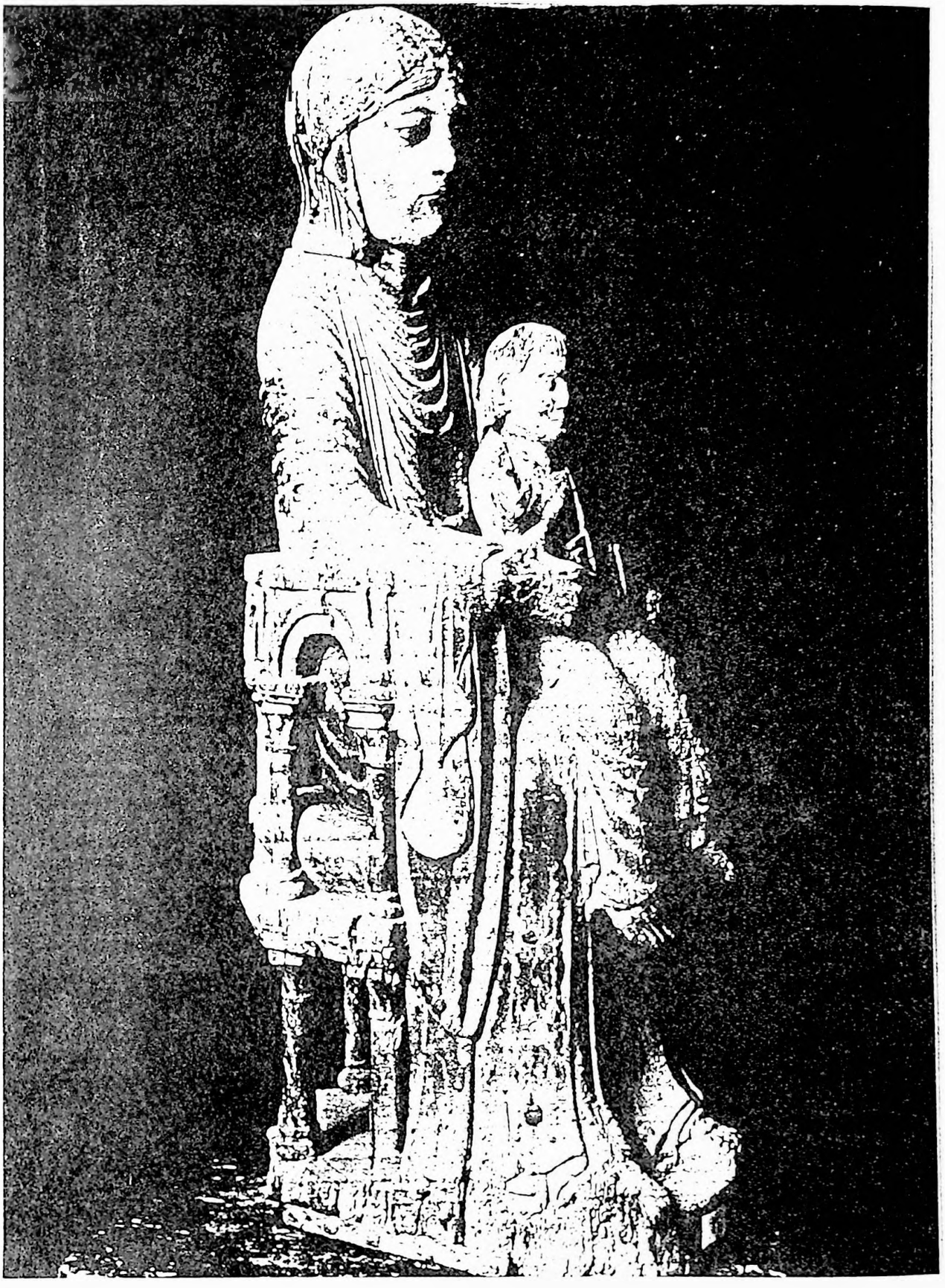

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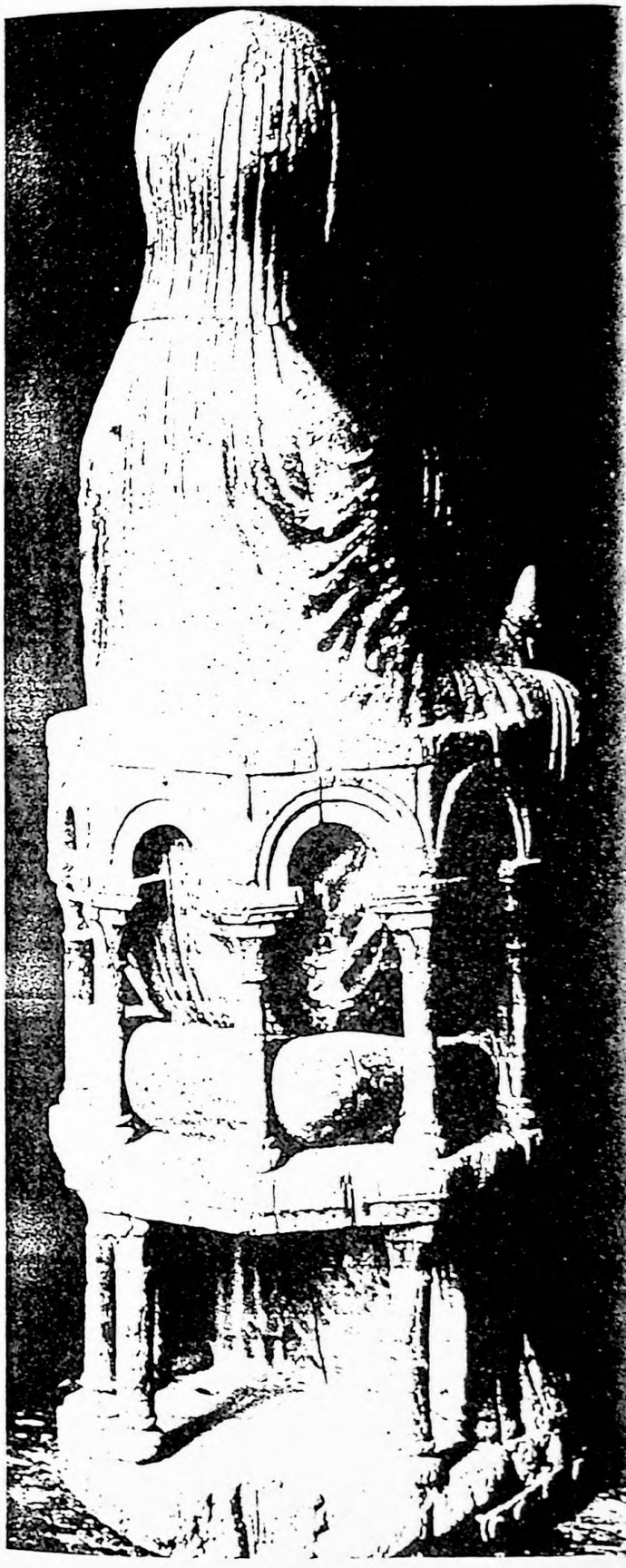

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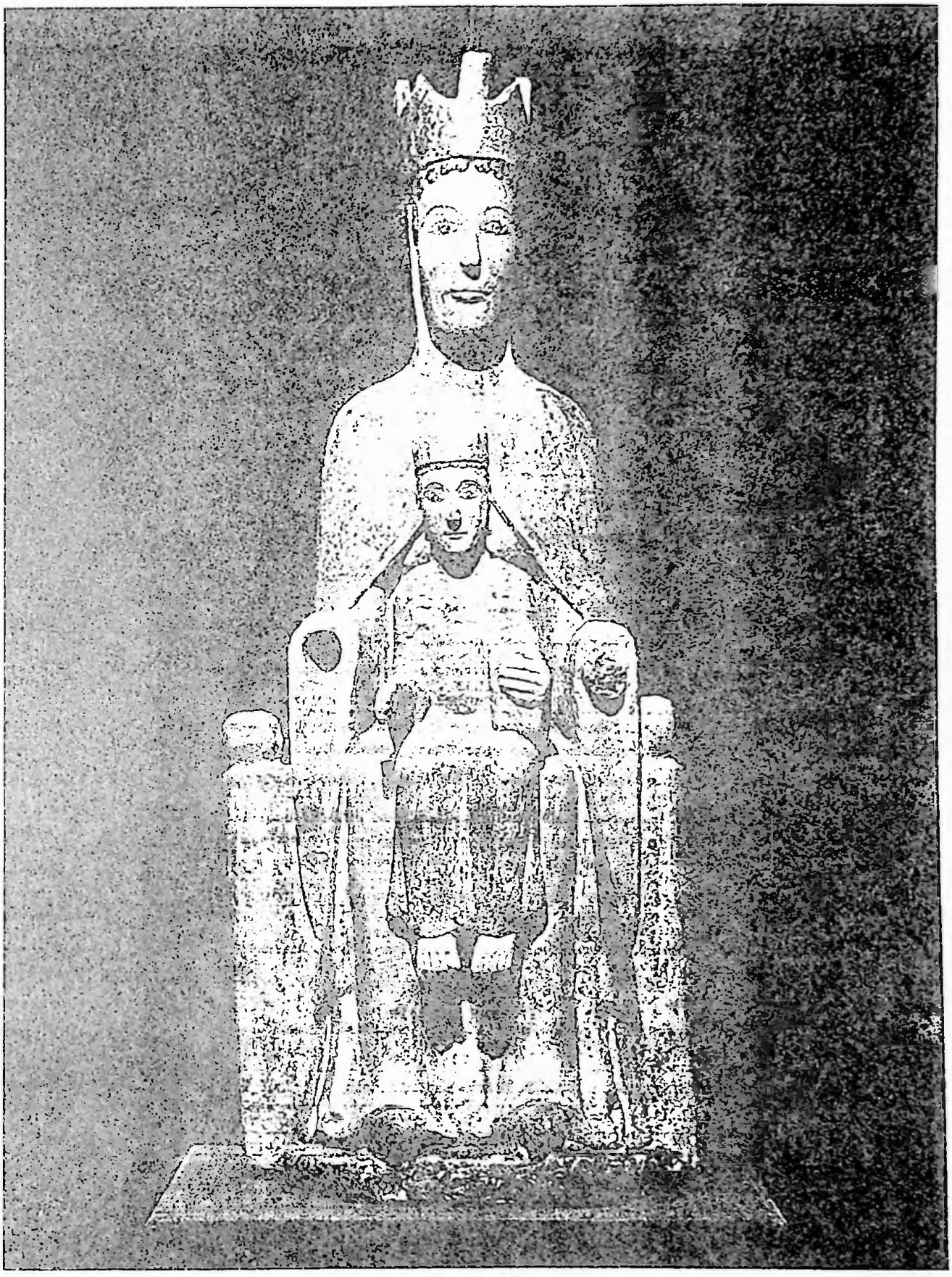

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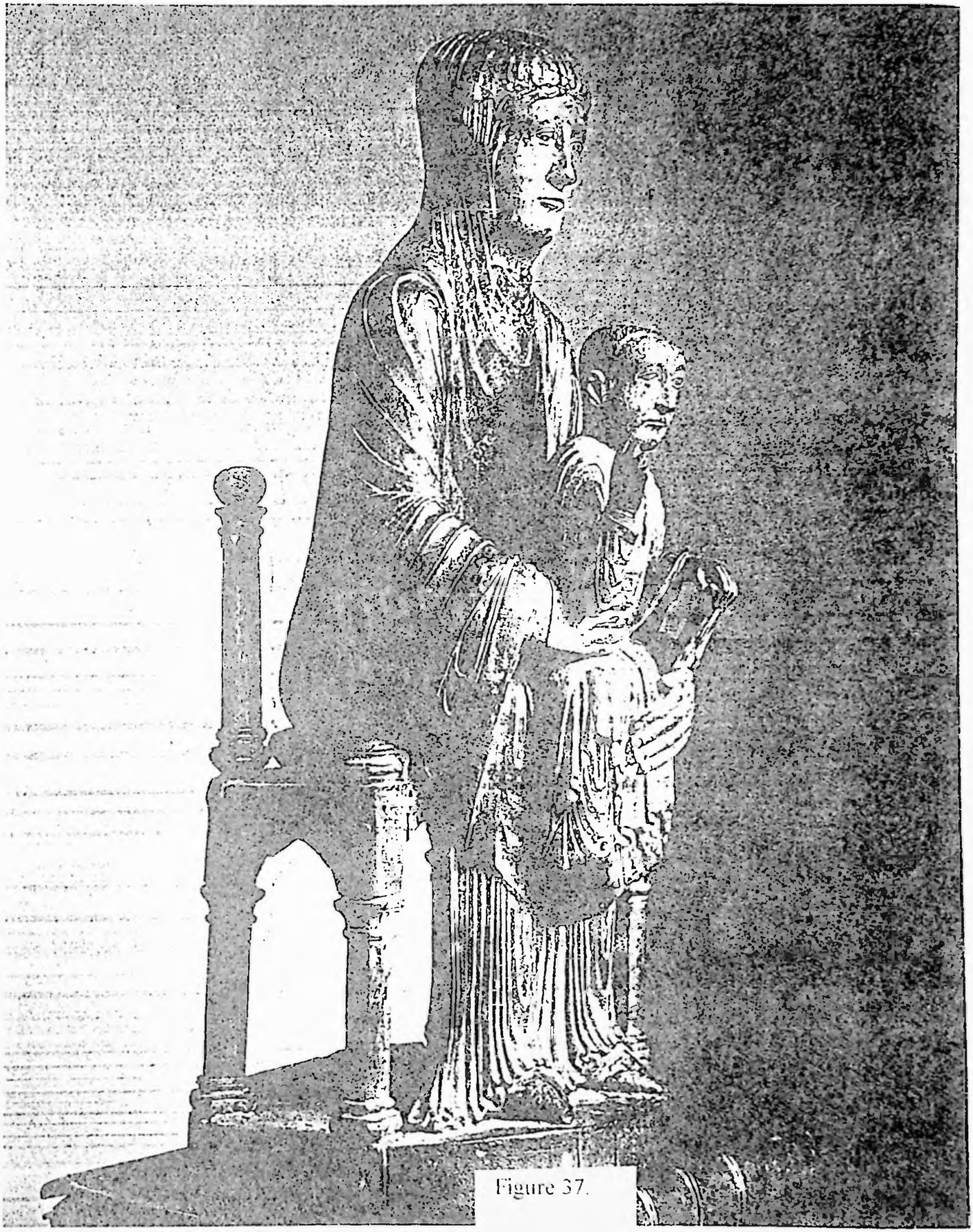

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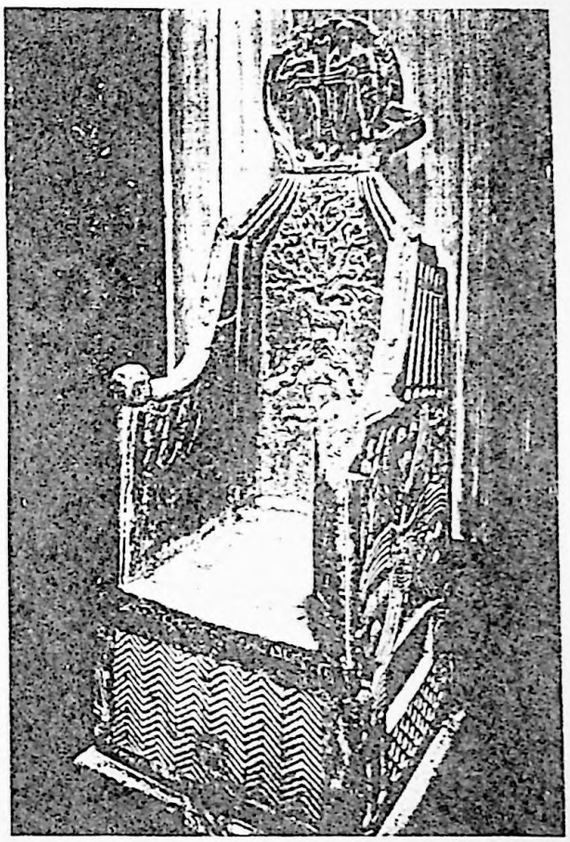

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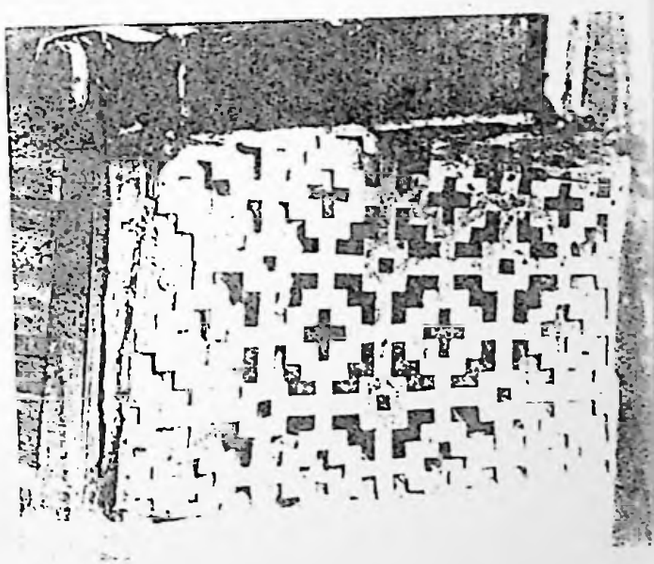

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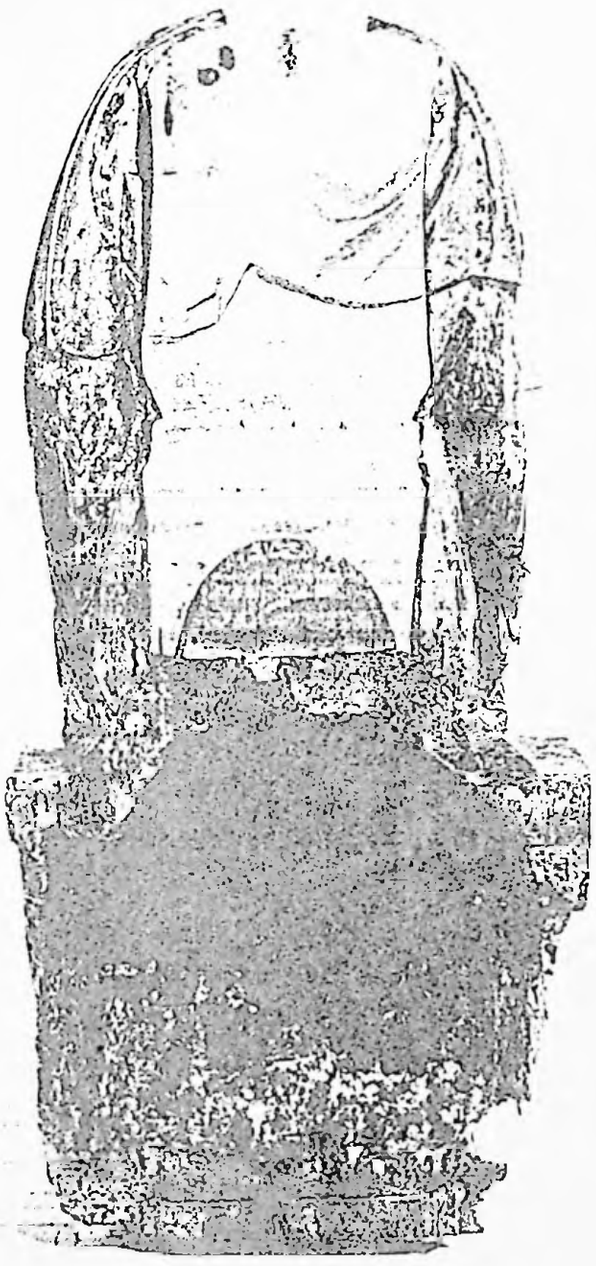

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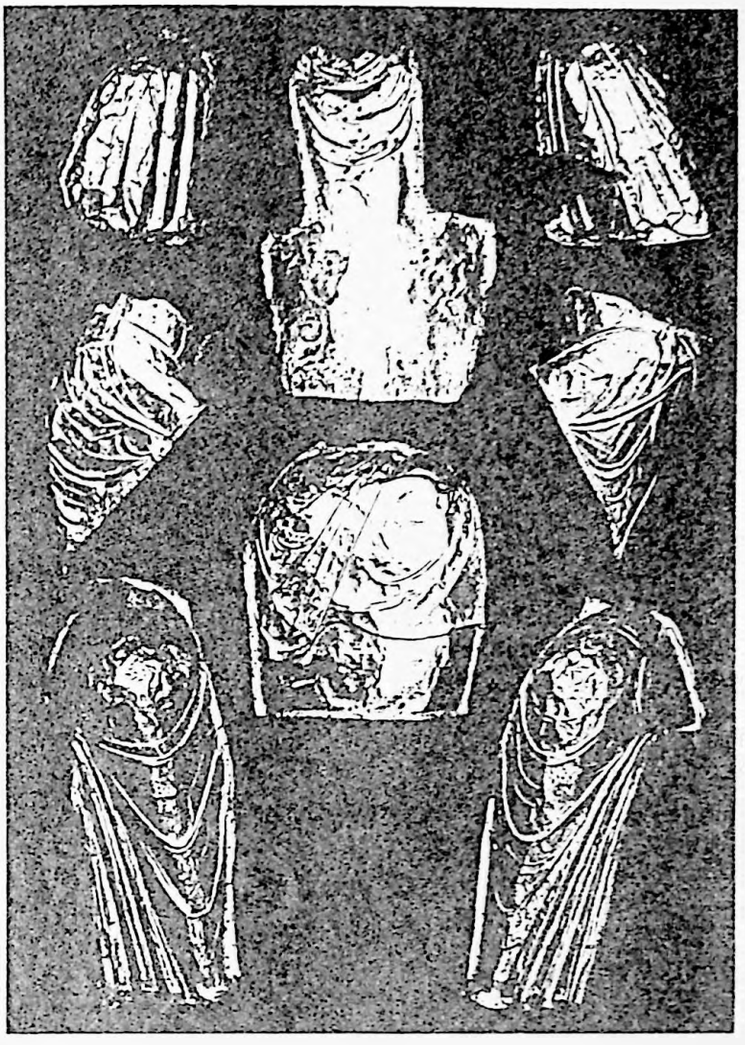

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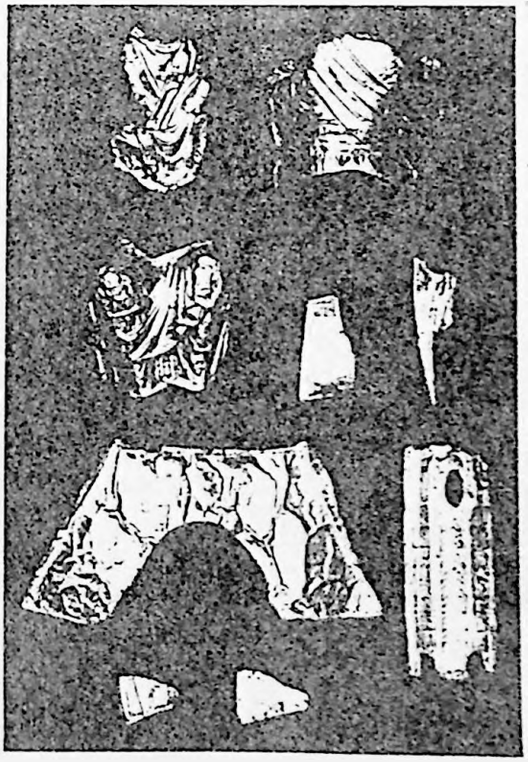

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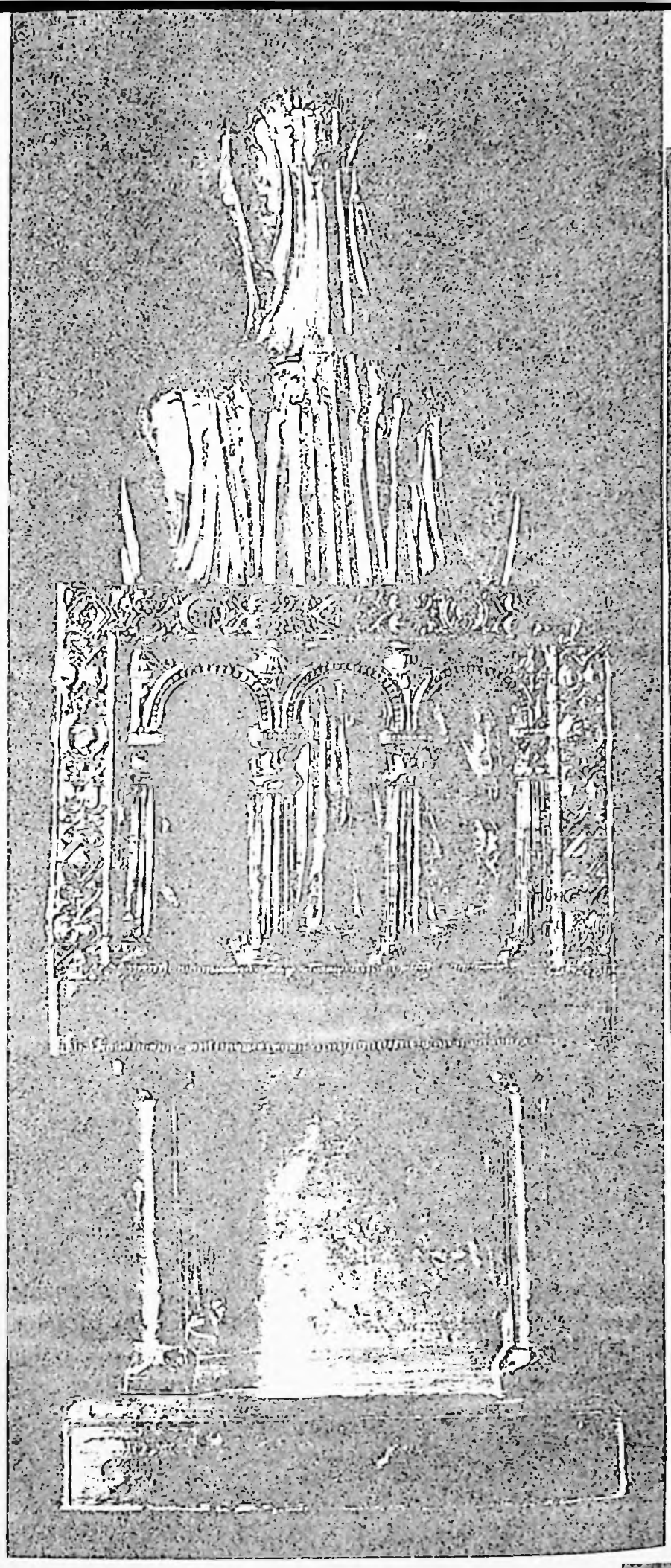

Figure 51.

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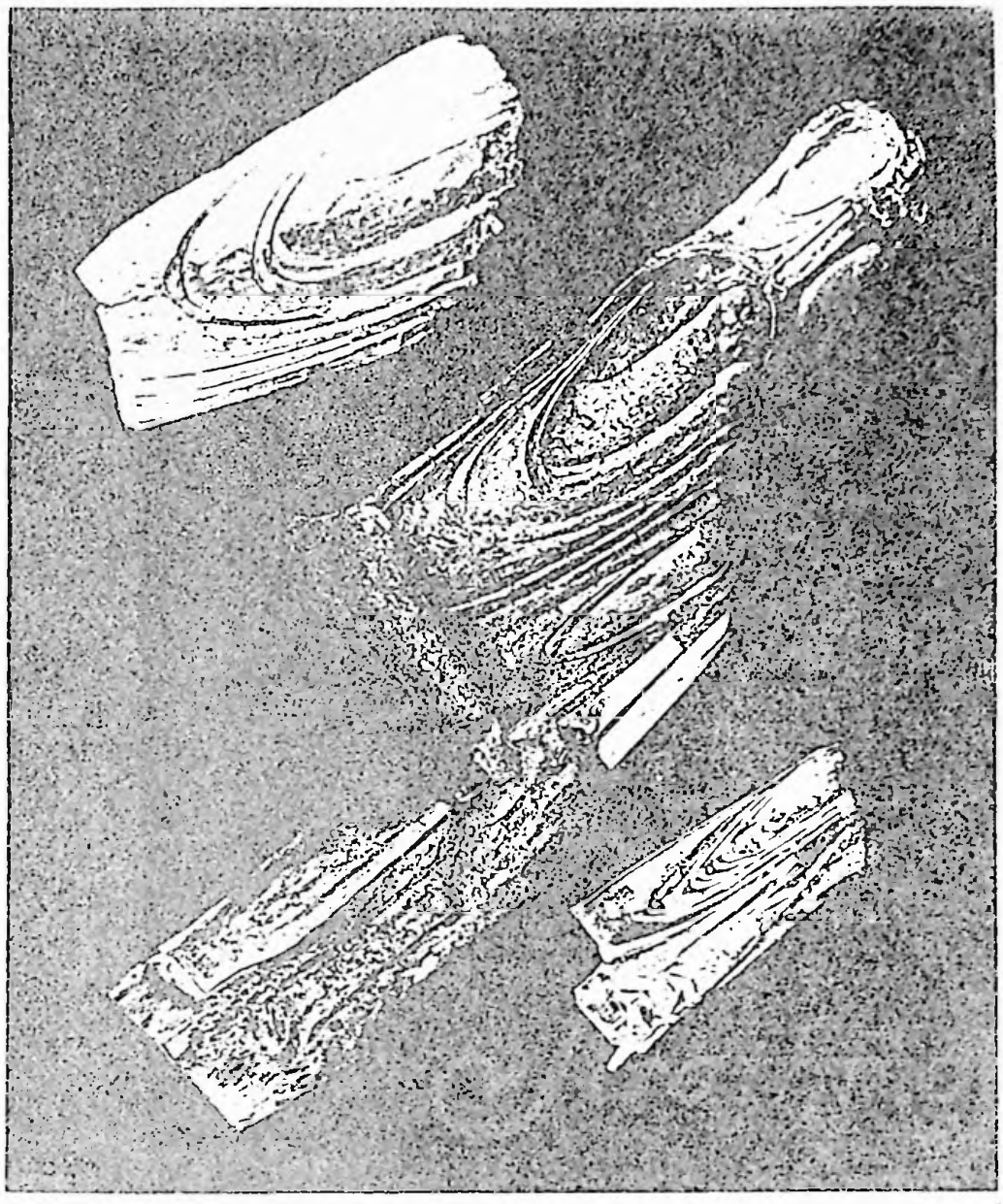

Figure 54.

Figure 55.

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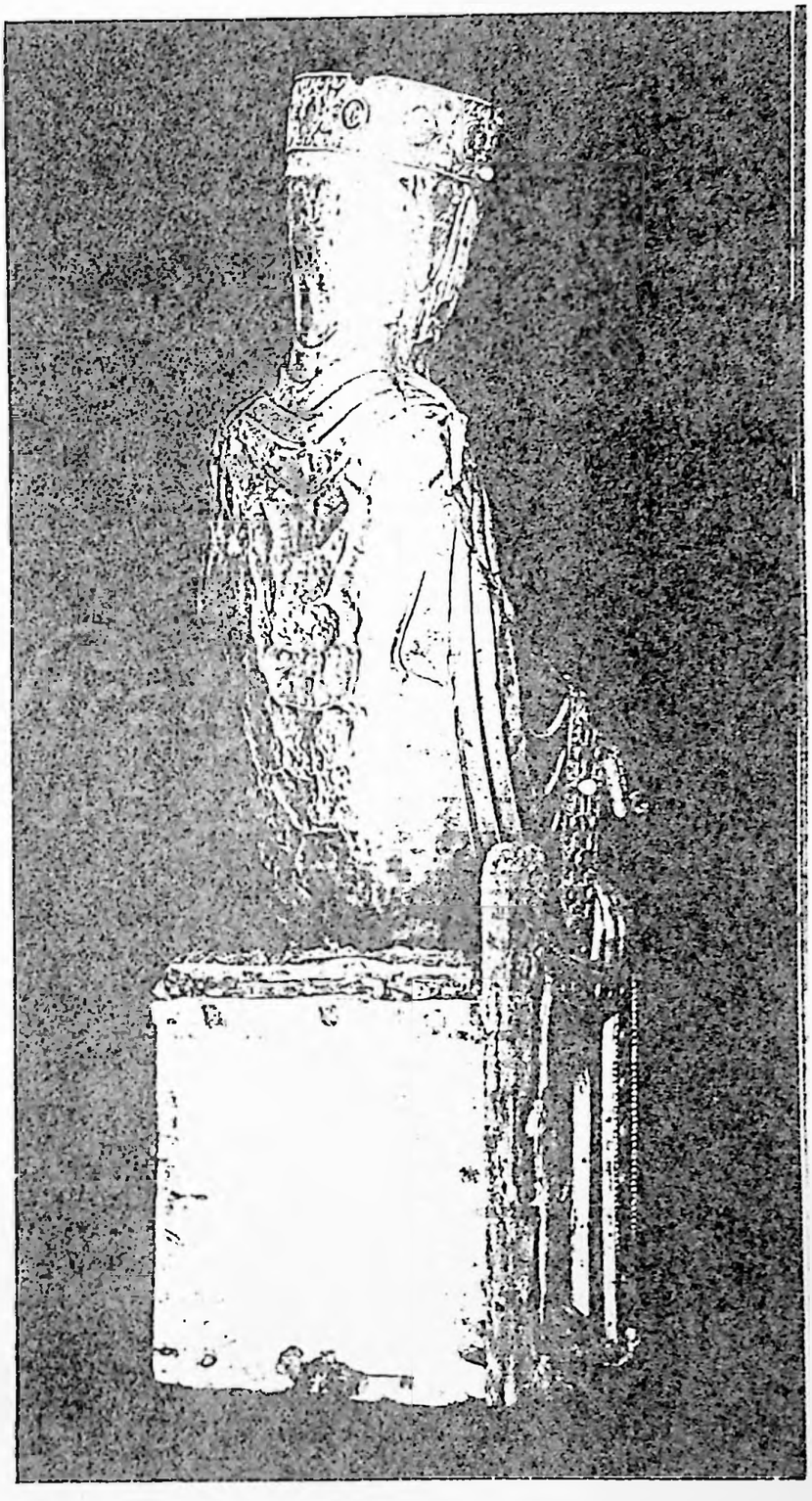
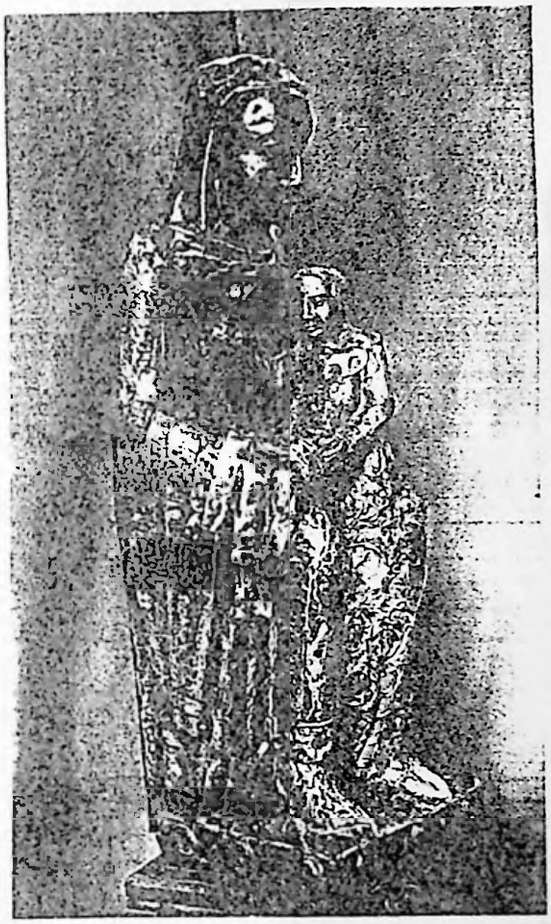


Figure 57.

Figure 58.



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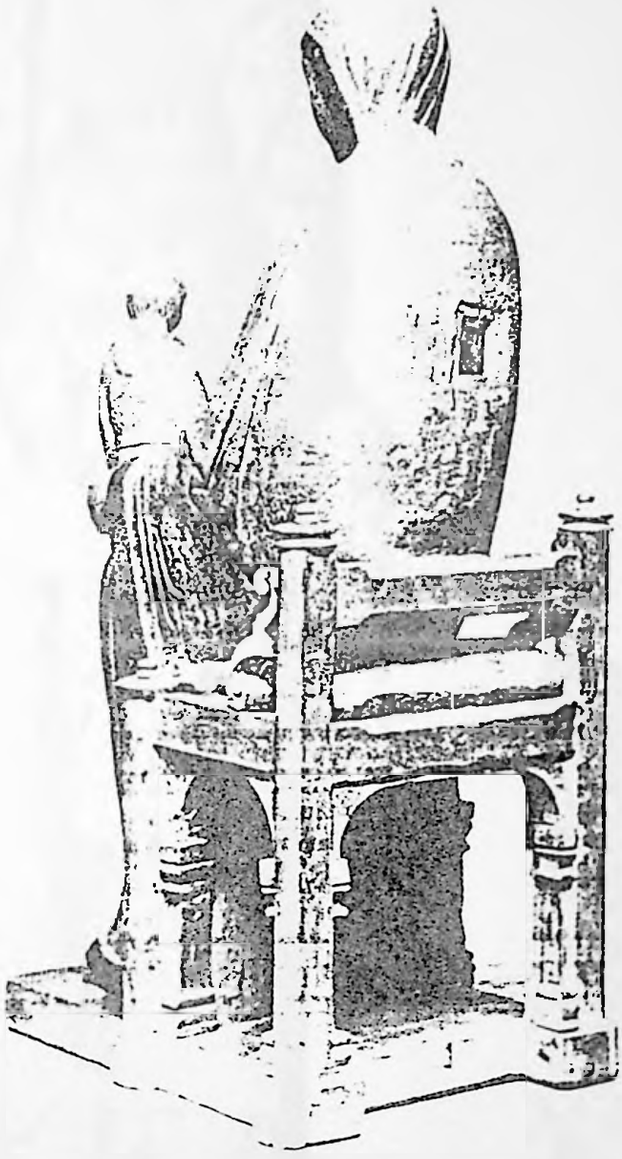

Figure 62.

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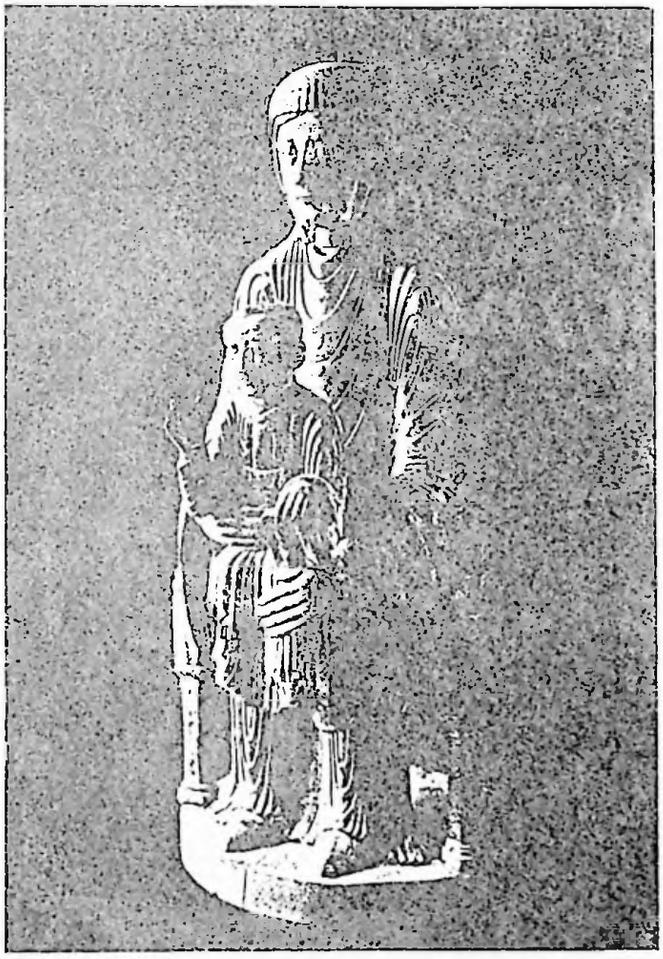

Figure 66.

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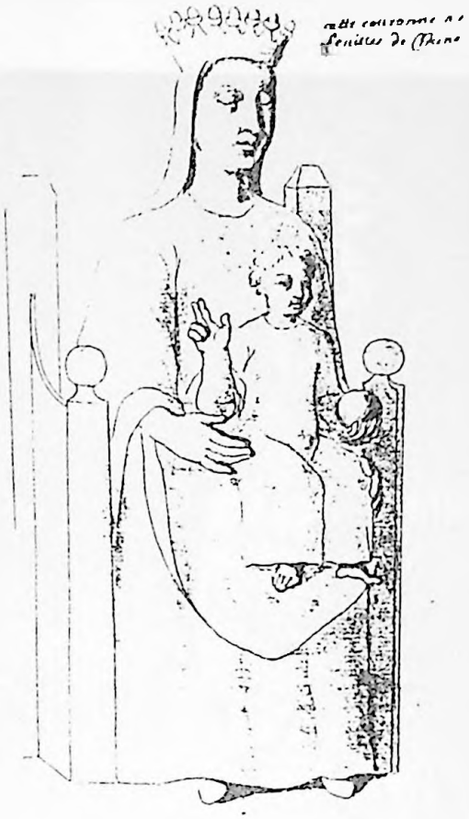

Figure 77.

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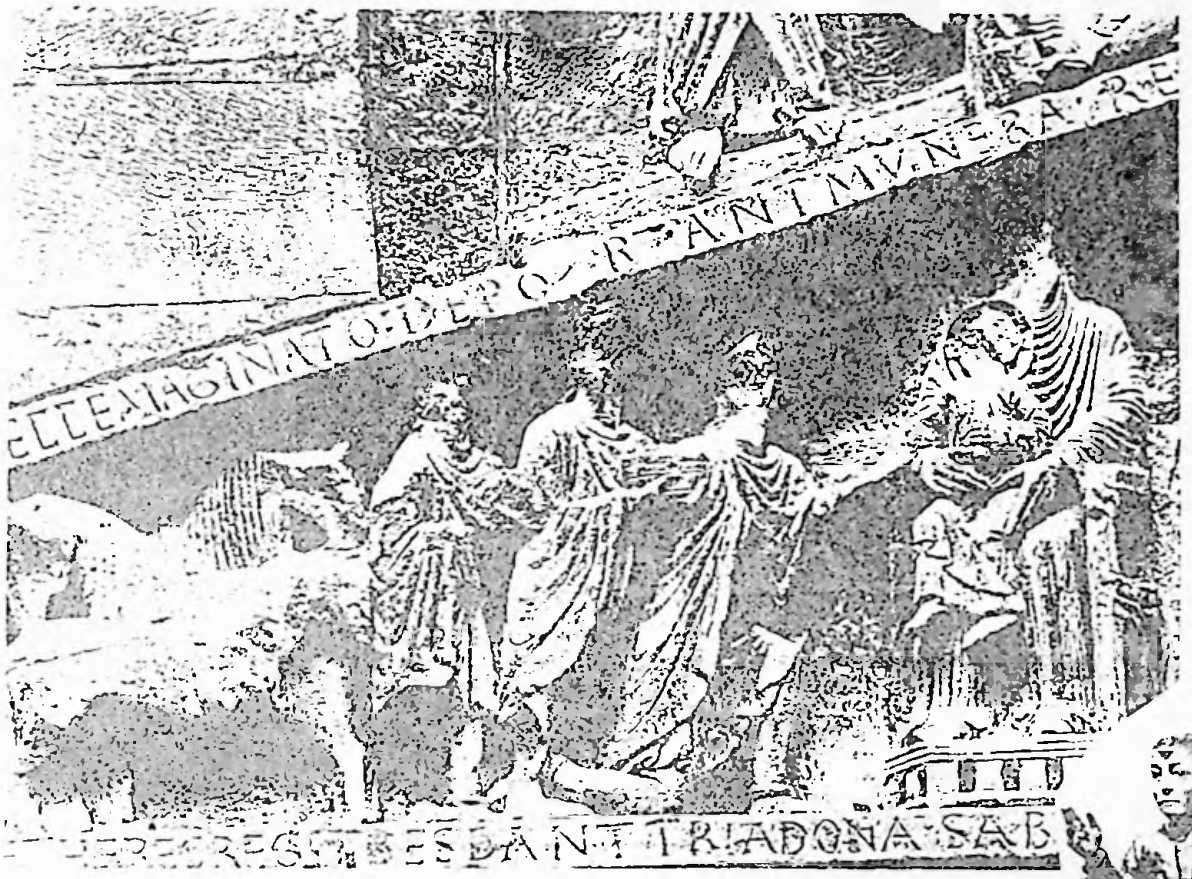

Figure 82.

Figure 83.

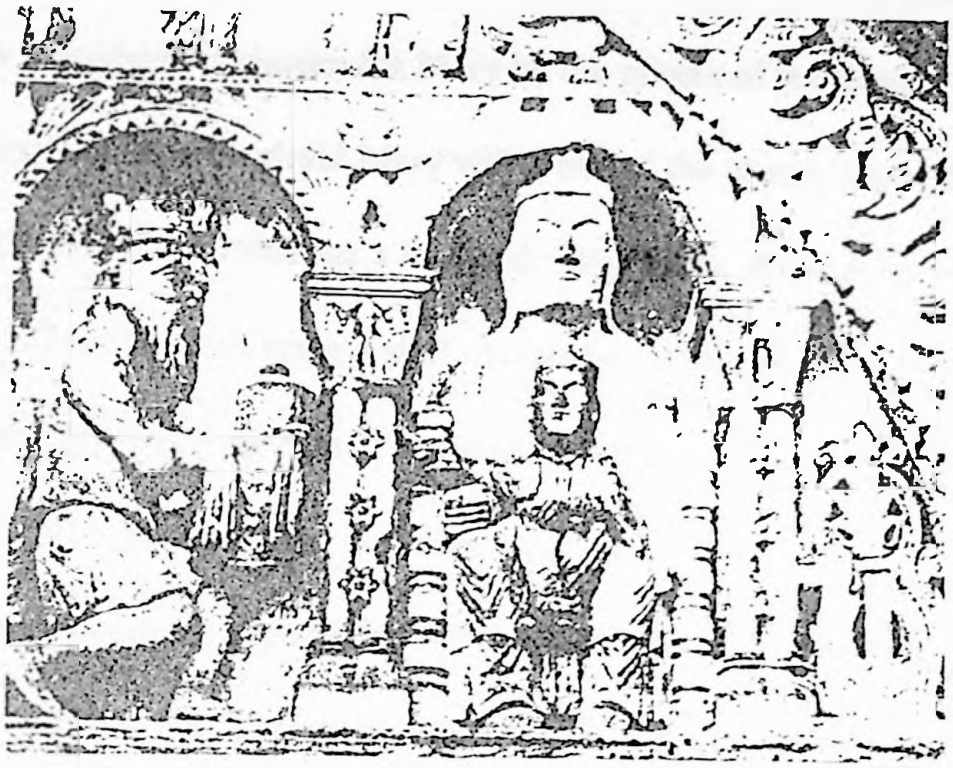

Figure 84.

Figure 85.

Figure 86.

Illustration Captions

Figure 1. This is an image from a medieval illumination that attests to the popularity of apocryphal stories about the Virgin Mary. The central image depicts the story of how a husband is chosen for Mary by the priests of the temple. At the age of thirteen the priests become afraid Mary will 'pollute' the temple since she is reaching puberty; so they decide to find her a husband. They invite all the widowers of Israel to the temple and instruct them to bring a staff. According to the story Joseph's rod flowered when left in the ground overnight. The priests interpret this as a sign from God and Joseph is chosen as Mary's husband and guardian.

As Mary becomes a loved and revered Goddess naturally her patrons want to know more about her life. This illumination also beautifully illustrates the need of her devotees to travel further and further into not only Mary's past but her parents past as well. It stands to reason if Mary is divine then the divinity of her parents must also be established, and some of the stories that were created to fill this need are visually illustrated in this illumination. In the left-hand corner of this illumination Joachim, Mary's father, is depicted in the wilderness where he has traveled because the High Priest of the temple has scolded him. The High Priest had told him that God is displeased with him since he and his wife, Anna, have no children. He then fleas to the wilderness to do penance for forty days. Meanwhile, his wife Anna is at home grieving because he has gone to the desert and because she is barren. She puts on her bridal gown and walks into her garden where she cries when she sees a nest full of baby sparrows. Miraculously, an angel appears and tells her she and Joachim will have a child. Simultaneously, an angel has also announced the good news to Joachim. The next illustration depicts Joachim and Anna

running to meet one another at the gate of Jerusalem where they embrace. Mary is born in the next caption. The last three scenes depict the dedication of Mary to the temple where she excels in her studies, and weaves the sacred purple cloth for the priests vestments (Warner 1983).

Figure 2. Mary, depicted as the Mother of God, was an essential element of Eastern churches of this time-period and still is today. Mary's prominence in the East was apparent from the size and placement of her rendering within the sanctuary. She, not her Son, is the main focus of this liturgical space.

Figure 3. This is a typical depiction of a woman from a wall-painting in the catacombs of Rome. She could be a martyr, prophetess, patron, or a biblical character like the Virgin Mary although this image is most likely not Mary. The numerous females depicted in the catacombs adds to the confusion of trying to identify the oldest surviving visual image of the Virgin Mary.

Figure 4. This is the earliest documented extant image of the Virgin Mary. The image is greatly deteriorated but scholars have surmised that the man on Mary's right is the prophet Isaiah. He gestures in the direction of Mary and the nursing child in order to signify that the Hebrew prophecy has been fulfilled. Note he is also pointing in the direction above Mary's head toward what is believed to be the sign of Christ's birth, the star.

Figures 5-9. All of these mosaics depict early visual representations of the Virgin Mary. It is important to note that before the Council of Ephesus in 431 C.E. Mary is pictured sitting with Christ upon her lap, but she is always illustrated as part of a larger scene and never with Christ and she alone. These mosaics represent her role in the

Presentation, the Epiphany, and the Nativity; the same feast-days that will later utilize the Sedes Sapientiae as a major acting figure in their liturgical dramas.

Figures 10-11. These two later mosaics are a bridge between two very different ways of visually depicting the Virgin and two very different ways of thinking about Mary. The earliest representations of Mary denote a single character within a larger event. These two new images illustrate Mary as central figure with the Child upon her lap. In figure 10 she is being venerated by the pope and a multitude of angels. And in figure 11 she is flanked by virgins who are holding lamps. Her divinity and place within the Christian religion is growing. These images are prototypes of the Sedes Sapientiae, and will soon declare Mary Theotokos.

Figure 12. This Virgin and Child image is one of the illustrations found within The Book of Kells, and is also a forerunner of the Sedes Sapientiae. Here Mary is obviously a queen, but her playful red-headed child is not yet a the Panocrator. The illustration and beautiful lettering is Irish and Anglo-Saxon, but the prose is derived from Byzantine books sent to Ireland by Pope Gregory I at the end of the 6th century (Cunneen, 1996).

It is one if not the most important representations of Mary Enthroned with the Child. It is significant because it is the first one illustrated in a Western manuscript where the role of the Virgin Mary had often been ambiguous. This image originated in the East where the cultures intimately remembered the goddesses of the past and used Mary to fill their roles.

Figure 13. In this ancient Egyptian statue Isis holds her dead husband, Osiris, who has been cruelly killed by his brother Seth. The early Christians were very aware of the

cult of Isis and many still practiced and observed its rites. Notice that this statuette is not only an early model for the Throne of Wisdom but for the Pieta as well.

Figures 14-15. In figure 13 Isis is breast-feeding her son, Horus, and she is making a gesture with her right hand which communicates to the viewer that the Child is truly divine. Later this same gesture will be utilized artistically to visually legitimate the pharaoh's rule by Isis. Notice the Coptic lactating Madonna, figure 14, is similar in gesture, appearance, and theme to Isis Suckling Horus. Mary like Isis is breast-feeding and points to her Child. They both also have features near their heads that denote other-worldliness: Isis with the sun and horns of the moon and Mary with a halo. Goddesses have been depicted suckling their children since the beginning of time and it is only logical that Christians adopt this pagan image as their own (Warner 1986).

Figure 16. Isis, in this image, is legitimizing the reign of the pharaohs. The pharaoh ascends the throne, which is the lap of Isis, and assumes the role once held by her own son Horus. He thus becomes a god himself because of his enthronement upon the knees of the Great Goddess. His rule of Egypt then cannot be questioned because it is sanctioned from a spiritual power. Of no coincidence Mary, as the Sedes Sapientiae, plays the same role as Isis in this relief sculpture; it is she who is used as the Theotokos by the Church to legitimize Christ's role on earth.

Figure 17. This is another representation from the ancient world that illustrates the prevalence of the concept of the enthronement of a child upon the lap of a female. In this seal a worshipper is offering a libation to the Goddess and her child. Later in history devotees will leave personal items for the Sedes Sapientiae to insure Mary will pray for them.

Figure 18. This statue represents Demeter, the Greek goddess of the harvest, and her daughter Persephone, the corn maiden. (Sometimes Persephone is called Kore, which literally means maiden.) Sculptures like this one are definitely a model for the Sedes Sapientiae created by the Church. Frequently the Thrones of Wisdom were set-up on sites that were previously dedicated to Demeter and her daughter since there were so many similarities between her and Mary. Often too there was great confusion among the Sedes Sapientiae and the statues depicting Demeter and Persephone. According to legend statues of Demeter and Persephone were often worshipped as if they were Thrones of Wisdom (Mary and Christ). And interestingly, many of the Black Sedes Sapientiae are said to be either Demeter or inspired by her because they are black like the soil and she was the goddess of the harvest.

Figure 19. This Etruscan goddess is probably Cybele, the Roman goddess of fertility and wildlife, guardian of the dead, and the inventor of agriculture. In this statue, she is enthroned with her child and flanked by lions who guard the mysteries of the Goddess. Each year Romans would place an image of Cybele upon a cart and pull her through the streets to insure a good harvest. This ritual would also be transferred to statues of the Virgin Mary for she would be taken out into the fields to bless the crops. Also noteworthy, the Roman temple of Cybele (stood until 5th century B.C.E.) housed a sacred black stone which embodied the Goddess's essence, and as mentioned previously many of the Sedes Sapientiae were black for this very reason (Baring and Cashford, 1993).

Figures 20-22. The Morgan Madonna is a typical Sedes Sapientiae that visually illustrates the Church dogma that Mary is the Theotokos, Mother of God. She is

constructed of twenty-two separate pieces of walnut that have been joined in a special joinery technique. She looks likes she has been carved from one solid piece of wood but close inspection illustrates this inventive joinery method.

Figures 23-25. This is a typical reliquary statue from the 10th century which depicts St. Foy. Her arms are outstretched and she once held a miniature iron bed which symbolized her death by roasting on a metal grill. She was ritualistically carried through the streets accompanied by clashing cymbals whenever the abbey's land was threatened (Sumption, 1975). These effigy statues of saints were very common during the Middle Ages and probably greatly informed the production of the Sedes Sapientiae since they are so similar in composition and often in function.

Figure 26. This is a typical statue depicting Mary Standing with the Child from the late Middle Ages. The Church had needed the Sedes Sapientiae to visually proclaim their dogma that Mary was the Theotokos. Over time she had grown too similar to the ancient goddesses of the past and they were unable to keep her power restrained. Consequently, the Church claimed that the Sedes Sapientiae statues had become too far removed from humankind so they created this syrupy sweet image of the Virgin and Child to stress her humanly attribute of motherhood.

Figures 27-29. These three Sedes Sapientiae are so similar that they are almost indistinguishable from one another. There are also many other extant Sedes Sapientiae that would fit in this group stylistically. During the Middle Ages, a statue would be commissioned, created, and then set up in a shrine. The pilgrimage routes increased exposure of these statues because people traveled from all across the East and West to visit Marian shrines. When they saw a particular type of Sedes Sapientiae that they loved it

only stands to reason when they returned to their homeland they had one created similar in fashion. This explains why certain groups of Sedes Sapientiae vary little from one another yet they are all Sedes Sapientiae.

Figures 30-32. This Sedes Sapientiae illustrates exceptional carving but particularly take note of the rhythmic nature of the drapery. This image typifies the attire of Mary in the Sedes Sapientiae statues. In this example Mary wears a tunic under her finely pleated overgarment which is pulled up on top of her head to form a mantle.

Figures 33-34. Mary is wearing a pallium which covers her shoulders in this Sedes Sapientiae. Notice too the northern French love of depicting her with a crown which makes sense since she is a figure enthroned in Wisdom. This statue also represents the definite individuality among the Sedes Sapientiae as a group. Here the artist has chosen to abandon the asymmetrical composition; Christ is positioned in an odd, sideways, almost human-like pose. This statue is also the largest French Sedes Sapientiae measuring 142 cm.

Figure 35. This statue beautifully illustrates Christ as the Man-child. He is depicted smaller than Mary, and he is clearly intended to be Christ as a Child. However, this is no Child. This Christ has a full head of hair, the ability to sit completely upright with no assistance from his mother, and enough coordination to make the sign of the peace. His face is fashioned as if he was a grown man. The family resemblance between the two figures is apparent. It is stylistically related to the d'Orcival, Saint-Flour, Chalus-Lembron, and the Morgan Sedes Sapientiae.

The statue was refurbish in 1860 C.E., receiving a new coat of paint and gilding. During the process it was discovered to contain relics. Thus it was decreed by the Bishop

of Autun that it should only be taken outside to use in procession on rare, but special occasions. Also, after the French Revolution the tradition of presenting children to the statue seems to have originated (Forsyth, 1972).

Figure 36. This image of Mary and Christ epitomizes the symmetrical composition of the Sedes Sapientiae. If a line were drawn vertically through Mary and one horizontally through the center of the Child the result would be a plus sign, or cross. This is the same type of perfect balance utilized in Egyptian sculptures of Isis and the pharaoh to denote that he is the king. Here too in these statues Mary is the frame of reference that defines the identity of the Child.

This statue also has a long tradition associated with the past. It is believed to be brought from Syria to the West during the Crusades. Before its recent restoration it was encrusted with numerous layers of paint, proving these statues were repainted frequently (Forsyth, 1972).

Figure 37. Christ makes the sign of the peace with his right hand while holding the book in His left. The book is specifically meant to symbolize the New Testament and hence represent the notion that Christ is the new covenant that fulfills the prophecies of the Hebrew scriptures.

Of special interest, this statue was carried to a mountain chapel each summer where it was venerated for the entire season before its return to local parish church. The ritual continues today with a copy of this Sedes Sapientiae (Forsyth, 1972).

Figures 38-39. These two examples illustrate typical secular thrones that were obviously influential upon the sacred throne depicted in the Sedes Sapientiae.

Figures 40-44. This is a remarkable example of a gilded Sedes Sapientiae. The Essen Madonna is one of the only surviving Sedes Sapientiae of the sixteen known from literature to pre-date 1000 C.E.

Figure 45. This is one of the smallest, if not the smallest, extant example of a Sedes Sapientiae.

Figures 46-48. These three figures show the Hildesheim Sedes Sapientiae with its layer of metal removed, exposing its wooden inner core. Note especially in figure 48 how the back of the statue has been hollowed out to insure that statue does not warp or crack. This procedure is the second invented by medieval artists to solve media problems and will eventually become the preferred or accepted way of executing Sedes Sapientiae by the late Middle Ages.

Figures 49-50. This is the gild layer removed from the Hildesheim Sedes Sapientiae. It illustrates the thin tissue-like layers created of metals that were then applied over the wooden-core of the statue.

Figures 51-55. The 1959 C.E. restoration of the Notre-Dame d'Orcival revealed that the statue consists of a core of walnut wood covered with plates of silver, partly gilded, and decorated with repousse work and engraving. The face still has its original paint. The right hand is 17th century C.E., the left hand is of a later date. The silver lace of the right wits bears the hallmark of Francois Cellier, an 17th century C.E., Clermont goldsmith (1745-1785 C.E.). In 1896 C.E., holes were drilled in the heads of the figures in order to restore the crowns, which have now permanently been removed from the statue. The restoration also revealed a small compartment in the back of the Virgin which was made inaccessible by the original metal plating: it may have been intended in the first place

as a reliquary (figure 55). However the function of the statue today is purely symbolic. Its probable prototype was Clermont-Ferrand Madonna and is in the same family as the Tournus, Lyon, Marsat, and Chalus-Lembron Sedes Sapientiae. It is credited with countless miracles like protecting its city from destruction by fire in 1641 C.E. A replica of the statue is carried annually in a procession on August 15th (Forsyth, 1972).

Figures 56-57. The Beaulieu Madonna is yet another excellent example of a repousse Sedes Sapientiae. Interestingly, Mary's tunic and mantle are adorned with intaglios which formerly represent male deities like Mars and Jupiter.

Figures 58-62. These two sculptures, the Walcourt Madonna and the Imad Madonna represent two of only six remaining gilded Sedes Sapientiae created before or during the 12th century C.E. The Imad Madonna was stripped of her golden shell in 1962 C.E. and it has not since been replaced.

Figures 63-64. The Sedes Sapientiae from Autun offers an example of a statue carved from single block of birch, thus illustrating the second technique invented by artists to solve the problem of splitting and warping wood.

Figures 65-67. Notre-Dame de Montvianeix is an example of a Sedes Sapientiae made by carving the individual parts of the statue from one single piece of wood created from a joinery technique. Although she looks like she has been constructed from one solid piece of wood in reality she is made up of eighteen separate pieces that have been carefully joined together with dowel rods.

The black paint that once covered her face and hands was removed in 1931 C.E. during restoration (Forsyth, 1972). Beneath the layer of black paint there was a flesh tone

color that proves even Sedes Sapientiae that were not originally painted black were often painted black out of popular preference.

Figures 68-69. Both these statues represent a group of Sedes Sapientiae in which the artist was not concerned with carving a plate to cover the hole in Mary's back.The artist solves this dilemma by simply placing Mary on a high back throne which hides the hole and still leaves her as a true sculpture in the round.

Figures 70-71. These two color images wonderfully represent the brilliant hues that originally polychromed most of the Sedes Sapientiae.

Figure 72. This Sedes Sapientiae illustrates the typical color patterns associated with the Sedes Sapientiae. Typically Mary wore a red undergarment covered by a blue mantle and in this image her Son's clothing follows the same color combination as hers in reverse. They are both depicted with flesh tones on their face and hands, but this is not to say that this is the only way they were ever rendered. As will become apparent they were often painted as black.

Figure 73. The Madonna of Dorres is a Black Sedes Sapientiae which visually attests to the long tradition of portraying Mary as black like the ancient goddesses associated with the earth. This particular image is greatly venerated in her community.

Figures 74-75. It is not known whether the Madonna of Marsat is the original 12th century sculpture or an excellent copy. She does however illustrate yet another Black Sedes Sapientiae. According to Forsyth, she was not painted black until around the year 1830 C.E. (1972) However, this is of little consequence because the fact that she was painted black indicates again a long history associated with the agrarian goddesses of the past.

This sculpture also splendidly represents the device of overemphasizing Mary's hands. Some scholars believe this design to indicate the statue is of peasant origin. Proportionately large hands would have been standard in a class of people who toiled daily with their hands. Mary's large hands also act as a means to draw the viewer's eye to Christ, who is suppose to be the most important figure in the sculpture (Cunneen, 1996).

Figure 76. It is theorized that the Madonna of Montserrat has always been depicted as black. According to legend, Luke actually sculpted this statue from life which lends much tradition to this image.

Figures 77-78. These two artworks from the 17th century illustrate how the Sedes Sapientiae of Notre-Dame de Chartres originally looked. During the Middle Ages many churches dedicated to the Virgin Mary were built on former sites of temples of ancient goddess. Chartres, for example is constructed on an ancient Druid holy place. The black virgin honored at Chartres as la Virgo paritura, was probably Belisima, the goddess of fecundity worshipped by local Carnutes. This particular statue attracted women who prayed to her for safe delivery during childbirth. In 1020 C.E. Bishop Fulbert of Chartres consecrated an altar with martyrs' relics to the Virgin Mary and placed an image of the Virgin Mary with her Child on her lap on the altar, thus Belisima was dethroned (Cunneen, 1996) and the statue at Chartres became known as Notre-Dame-sous-Terre. On this black statue Vincent Sablon notes in 1671 C.E.:

> The first and principle chapel is the one to the Virgin, consecrated by St. Potentianus at the alter where the Druids' idol used to be. This chapel, which until recently had a simplicity recalling that of our elders, is now the richest and most ornate in the world....It is at this alter, which is called Notre-Dame-sous-Terre,

> that the people of Chartres and the pilgrims pay their greatest devotion. It would not be out of place here to describe the Virgin which our ancient Druids put up on this altar. She is seated on a throne holding her Son in her arms. She is black or Moorish in color as are nearly all the images of the Virgin in Chartres and the Druids are thought to have given her this color because she came from a country more exposed to the sun than ours. The real color of her skin is not known, but one can imagine it from what Solomon, in a prophetic spirit, said-that she was dark but not lacking in beauty. Nicephoras, however, says he saw several paintings made from nature by Luke, in which the color of her skin was the color of wheat-which is probably to say that when it is ripe it tends to be brownish or a chestnut color. (Forsyth, 1972, pp.107-108)

Figure 79. The Black Virgin of Einsiedeln is a perfect example of a Sedes Sapientiae that was painted black in order to satisfy the preference of its devotees.

Figure 80. This is a handsome example of a Sedes Sapientiae that also functioned as a reliquary statue. The head is moveable and their is an opening near the breast of the statue that acts as a compartment to store relics.

Figure 81. This drawing illustrates the earliest known reliquary statue. It will serve as a prototype of the Sedes Sapientiae.

Figures 82-85. Figures 82 and 84 are both relief-sculptures depicting the Adoration of the Magi from church architecture. There has long been an association between the visual representation of the Sedes Sapientiae and the way in which the Adoration of the Magi is portrayed. Both of the images of the Virgin and Child in figures 82 and 84 could be Sedes Sapientiae if they were executed fully three-dimensional without

the Wise Men. Notice the similarities between the Sedes Sapientiae and the Virgin and Child of figures 82 and 83; and 84 and 85. With this visual evidence, it stands to reason that the Sedes Sapientiae also stood in for the real Mary and Christ during the dramas depicting the Adoration of the Magi.

Figure 86. This is an etching that reconstructs a badge once worn by pilgrims who journeyed to Chartres cathedral to venerate Notre-Dame-sous-Terre. It illustrates that this statue was carried upon a litter in some type of processional activity.

Illustrations

Figure 1. Master of the Duke of Bedford. Joseph is Chosen as the Virgin's Husband and Guardian, from the Book of Hours. 15th century C.E. Illumination. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Source: Warner, Marina. (1983). Alone of All of Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary. New York: Vintage Books.

Figure 2. The Mother of God Orans. 1043-1046 C.E. Wall-painting. Cathedral of Saint Sophia, Kiev. Source: Hubbs, Joanna. (1988). Mother Russia: The Feminine Myth in Russian Culture. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Figure 3. Oran. c. 300-350 C.E. Wall-painting. From the catacomb of the Vigna Massima, Rome. Source: Bazin, Germain. (1962). The Loom of Art. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Figure 4. Virgin Mary. c. 100-199 C.E. Wall-painting. From the Catacomb of S. Priscilla, Rome. Source: Warner, Marina. (1983). Alone of All of Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary. New York: Vintage Books.

Figure 5. Head of the Virgin, detail from Presentation Scene. c. 435 C.E. Mosaic. From the triumphal arch, Sta. Maria Maggiore. Source: Oakeshott, Walter. (1967). The Mosaics of Rome: From the Third to Fourteenth Centuries. Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society Ltd.

Figure 6. Mary and the Disciples, detail from the Epiphany Scene. c. 435 C.E. Mosaic. From the triumphal arch, Sta. Maria Maggiore. Source: Oakeshott, Walter.

(1967). The Mosaics of Rome: From the Third to Fourteenth Centuries. Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society Ltd.

Figure 7. The Virgin, detail from a panel representing the Nativity. c. 705 C.E. Mosaic. From the oratory of John VII in the old basilica of St. Peter's, now in the cathedral of Orte. Source: Oakeshott, Walter. (1967). The Mosaics of Rome: From the Third to Fourteenth Centuries. Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society Ltd.

Figure 8. Virgin and Child, detail from a panel representing the Adoration of the Magi. c. 700-725 C.E. Mosaic. From the Oratory of John VII in the old basilica of St. Peter's, now in Sta. Maria in Cosmedin. Source: Oakeshott, Walter. (1967). The Mosaics of Rome: From the Third to Fourteenth Centuries. Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society Ltd.

Figure 9. Virgin and Child, detail from a panel representing the Nativity. c. 700-725 C.E. Mosaic. From the Oratory of John VII in the old basilica of St. Peter's, now in the Vatican Grottoes. . Source: Oakeshott, Walter. (1967). The Mosaics of Rome: From the Third to Fourteenth Centuries. Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society Ltd.

Figure 10. The Virgin and Child Worshipped by Pope Paschal. c. 818 C.E. Mosaic. From the apse of Sta. Maria Domnica. Source: Oakeshott, Walter. (1967). The Mosaics of Rome: From the Third to Fourteenth Centuries. Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society Ltd.

Figure 11. The Virgin and Child with Virgins. c. 1190 C.E. Mosaic. From the west facade, Sta. Maria Trastevere. Source: Oakeshott, Walter. (1967). The Mosaics of

Rome: From the Third to Fourteenth Centuries. Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society Ltd.

Figure 12. Virgin and Child, from The Book of Kells c. 800 C.E. Illumination. Celtic. Trinity College, Dublin. Source: Cirker, Blanche (Ed.). (1982). The Book of Kells: Selected Plates in Full Color. New York: Dover Publications.

Figure 13. Isis Holds Osiris on Her Lap. Date unknown; Egyptian, ancient. Statuette. Location unknown. Source: Warner, Marina. (1983). Alone of All of Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary. New York: Vintage Books.

Figure 14. Isis Suckles Horus. Date unknown; Egyptian, ancient. Bronze. Location unknown. Source: Warner, Marina. (1983). Alone of All of Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary. New York: Vintage Books.

Figure 15. Isaac. The Virgin Mary nurses the Christ-Child. 893 C.E. Illumination. Coptic. From the manuscript Fayum, Egypt, now in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Source: Warner, Marina. (1983). Alone of All of Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary. New York: Vintage Books.

Figure 16. Isis With the King. XIX Dynasty; 14th-13th century B.C.E. Relief-sculpture. Egyptian. Temple of Seti I, Abydos, Egypt. Source: Neumann, Erich. (1974). The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype (2nd ed.) (Ralph Manheim Trans.). From the Bollingen Series (Vol. 47). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Figure 17. Mother Goddess With Son. Middle of 3rd millennium B.C.E. Basalt seal. Akkadian. Location unknown. Source: Neumann, Erich. (1974). The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype (2nd ed.) (Ralph Manheim Trans.). From the Bollingen Series (Vol. 47). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Figure 18. Demeter and Kore. Date unknown. Stone. Thebes, Boeotia. Location unknown. Source: Neumann, Erich. (1974). The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype (2nd ed.) (Ralph Manheim Trans.). From the Bollingen Series (Vol. 47). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Figure 19. Mother Goddess. 5th century B.C.E. Stone. Etruscan. Location unknown. Source: Munro, Eleanor C. (1961). The Golden Encyclopedia of Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, and Ornament, from Prehistoric Times to the Twentieth Century. New York: Golden Press.

Figures 20-22. The Morgan Madonna and details. 2nd half of 12th century C.E. Walnut, polychromed. Height: 78.7 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 23. Reliquary Statue of St. Foy, detail. Mid-10th century. Silver, gild, and jewels. Height: 20 in. Abbey of Conques, Aveyron, France. Source: Unknown.

Figure 24. Reliquary Statue of St. Foy. Mid-10th century. Silver, gild, and jewels. Height: 20 in. Abbey of Conques, Aveyron, France. Source: Sumption, Jonathan. (1975). Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion. Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield.

Figure 25. Reliquary Statue of St. Foy. Mid-10th century. Silver, gild, and jewels. Height: 20 in. Abbey of Conques, Aveyron, France. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 26. Virgin Standing with the Child from the Sainte Chapelle of Paris. Early 14th century C.E. Ivory. Paris, Louvre. Source: Evans, Joan. (1969). Art in Mediaeval France, 987-1498: A Study in Patronage. Oxford: Clarendon Press. (Original work published 1948)

Figure 27. Sedes Sapientiae. 2nd half of 12th century C.E.? Walnut, polychromed. Height: 67 cm. Zurich, Buhrle Collection. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 28. Sedes Sapientiae. 2nd half of 12th century C.E.? Wood, traces of polychromy. Height: 72.1 cm. Durham, North Carolina; Duke University. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 29. Sedes Sapientiae. 2nd half of 12th century C.E.? Wood, traces of polychromy. Height: 74 cm. Raleigh, North Carolina; The North Carolina Museum of Art. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figures 30-32. Sedes Sapientiae and details. 2nd half of 12th century C.E. Wood, polychromed. Height: 84 cm. Paris, Louvre. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figures 33-34. St.-Denis Sedes Sapientiae formally known as Notre-Dame de la Carole from Abbey of Saint-Martin-des-Champs, Paris. c. 1130 C.E. Oak, gilded and polychromed. Height: 142 cm. Now in St.-Denis. Sources: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The

Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Evans, Joan. (1969). Art in Mediaeval France, 987-1498: A Study in Patronage. Oxford: Clarendon Press. (Original work published 1948)

Figure 35. Notre-Dame-la Brune from Saint-Pourcain-sur-Sioule (Allier). Second half of 12th century. Wood, guided and polychromed. Height: 73 cm. Now Tournus (Saone-et-Loire), Saint-Philibert.

Figure 36. Sedes Sapientiae. Late 12th century C.E. Wood, traces of gild and polychromy Height: 82.5 cm. Saint-Savin (Hautes-Pyreness). Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 37. Notre-Dame de Montvianeix, from the chapel of Saint-Victor-Montvianeix (Puy-de-Dome). 2nd half of 12th century. Walnut, traces of polychromy. Height: 68 cm. Private collection. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 38. Throne of Charlemagne. Date unknown. Medium unknown. Aachen, Palace Chapel. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 39. Throne. Date unknown. Medium unknown. Venice, San Marco.

Figures 40-44. Golden Madonna and details. Before 1000 C.E. Gold gild. Essen, Minster. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 45. Sedes Sapientiae. Late 12th-13th century C.E.? Wood, traces of polychromy. Height: 35 cm. Cazarilh-Laspenes, (Haute-Garonne). Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 46-47. Golden Madonna with gold sheath removed. 12th century B.C.E.?. Gold gild over wood. Hildesheim, Cathedral Treasury. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 48. Golden Madonna with gold sheath removed; back view illustrates removable panel. 12th century B.C.E.?. Gold gild over wood. Hildesheim, Cathedral Treasury. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figures 49-50. Golden Madonna, fragments of the gold sheath removed from the statue. 12th century B.C.E.?. Gold gild over wood. Hildesheim, Cathedral Treasury. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figures 51-53 Notre-Dame d'Orcival and detail. About 1170 C.E. Walnut covered with gilded silver and copper plate; the hands and faces are polychromed. Height: 74 cm. Orcival (Puy-de-Dome). Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom:

Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 54. Notre-Dame d'Orcival, fragments of metal sheath removed from the statue. About 1170 C.E. Walnut covered with gilded silver and copper plate; the hands and faces are polychromed. Height: 74 cm. Orcival (Puy-de-Dome). Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 55. Notre-Dame d'Orcival, detail with metal sheath removed illustrating a hidden compartment. About 1170 C.E. Walnut covered with gilded silver and copper plate; the hands and faces are polychromed. Height: 74 cm. Orcival (Puy-de-Dome). Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figures 56-57. Sedes Sapientiae. 2nd half of 12th century C.E. Wood covered with silver and vermeil repousse leaves. Height: 60 cm. Beaulieu (Correze). Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figures 58-59. Notre-Dame de Walcourt. Date unknown. Wood and gild. Walcourt, Saint-Materne. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figures 60-62. Imad Madonna. 1051-1076 C.E. Wood, stripped of its original gilding. Paderborn, Diozesan Museum. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of

Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figures 63-64. Autun Sedes Sapientiae. 2nd quarter of 12th century C.E. Birch, originally polychromed. Height: 101.5 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figures 65-67. Notre-Dame de Montvianeix and details, from the chapel of Saint-Victor-Montvianeix (Puy-de-Dome). 2nd half of 12th century. Walnut, traces of polychromy. Height: 68 cm. Private collection. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 68. La Diege from a chapel in Villetain. c. 1170s C.E. Wood, polychromed. Height: 140 cm. Jouy-en-Josas (Yvelines, formerly Seine-et-Oise). Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 69. Limay Sedes Sapientiae from the hermitage of Saint-Sauveur, Limay. 1170s-1180s C.E. Wood, traces of polychromy. Height: 94 cm. Limay (Yvelines, formerly Seine-et-Oise). Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 70. Sedes Sapientiae. Late Middle Ages. Spanish. Wood, polychromed. Museo de Bellas. Source: Unknown.

Figure 71. The Madonna of Mosjo. 2nd half of 12th century. Swedish. Limewood with original polychromy. Height: 28 in. Stockholm, Staten Historiska Museum. Source: Unknown.

Figure 72. Sedes Sapientiae. Late Middle Ages? Wood, polychromed. Location unknown. Source: Unknown.

Figure 73. Black Sedes Sapientiae. 13th century C.E.? Wood. Height: 86 cm. Dorres (Pyrenees-Orientales). Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figures 74-75. Madonna of Marsat. 2nd half of 12th century C.E.? Walnut, painted and gilded. Height: 80 cm. Marsat (Puy-De-Dome). Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Source: Cunneen, Sally, (1996). In Search of Mary: The Woman and the Symbol. New York: Ballantine Books.

Figure 76. Black Madonna of Montserrat. 12th century C.E. Wood. Montserrat (Barcelona) Monasterio. Source: Warner, Marina. (1983). Alone of All of Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary. New York: Vintage Books.

Figure 77. Chanoine Etienne. Notre-Dame de Chartres. 1682 C.E. Drawing. Location unknown. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 78. Leroux. Notre-Dame de Chartres. 17th century C.E. Engraving. Location unknown. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood

Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 79. Our Lady of Einsiedeln. Date unknown. Wood. Switzerland, The Hermitage of Einsiedeln. Source: Unknown.

Figure 80. Reliquary Sedes Sapientiae. 12th century. Wood. Height: 33 in. Auvergne. Source: Huyghe, Rene. (1951). Art Treasures of the Louvre (Milton S. Fox, Ed.). New York City: Harry N. Abrams.

Figure 81. Golden Majesty of Clermont-Ferrand. Between 937-984 C.E. Sketch from Biblical Municipale MS 145, fol. 13OV. Clermont-Ferrand (Puy-de-Dome). Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 82. Adoration of the Magi, Notre-Dame du Port, south portal, lintel. Date unknown. Clermont-Ferrand (Puy-de-Dome). Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 83. Notre Dame la Brune from Saint-Pourcain-sur-Sioule (Allier). Second half of 12th century. Wood, guided and polychromed. Height: 73 cm. Now Tournus (Saone-et-Loire), Saint-Philibert. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 84. Adoration of the Magi, tympanum. Date unknown. Pompierre (Vosges). Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 85. Sedes Sapientiae. 3rd quarter of 12th century. Oak, polychromed. Height: 99 cm. Mont-devant-Sassey (Meuse). Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Figure 86. Pilgrim's Badge, illustrating Notre-Dame de Chartres being carried on a litter. Date unknown. Engraving. Source: Forsyth, Ilene H. (1972). The Thrones of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Appendix A

The Development of the Cult of the Virgin Mary

	Written Evidence	Visual Evidence	Church Evidence
CE			
	70-100-Synoptic Gospels and John written		
100		100-400-Virgin is always a figure depicted as part of a larger scene like the Adoration of the Magi	
	c.150-Apocryphal Book of James written	before 200-First visual representations believed to be Mary painted in catacombs, Rome	
200	c. 200?-Obsequires of the Virgin written		
		217-Most ancient church dedicated to Mary according to legend at modern day site of S. Maria in Trastevere, Rome	
	between 200-400-Prayer sub tuum praesidium composed	between 200-850-early mosaics depicting Virgin and Child were created in Cathedral of Capua; S. Maria-della-Navicella, Rome; Santa Maria-Nova, Rome; S. Maria-in-Trastevere, Rome, San Zeno, Rome	
	c. 250-Origen used term Theotokos in relation to Mary's perpetual virginity		

300		300-400-Oldest surviving portraits of the Virgin created outside the catacombs	300-500-asceticsim gaining popularity, later affects the rise and spread of the cult of the Virgin
	319-Alexander refers to term Theotokos in his encyclical regarding the heresy of Arius		
			325-Council of Nicaea declared Jesus consubstantial with God the Father
	350-St. Justina makes first recorded invocation to the Virgin Mary	352-366-Legendary founding of S. Maria Maggiore under Pope Liberius I	
	374-377-St. Epiphanius writes the Medicine-Chest, detailing 1st recorded worship of Mary by Collyridians		370-Earliest liturgy of Virgin composed in Syria
			381-Council of Constantinople declares Holy Spirit was due the same veneration as God the Father and God the Son; Mary's perpetual Virginity during and after pregnancy decreed
	390-Gregory of Nazianzus uses term Theotokos to describe Mary		
400	c. 400-Earliest version of Transitus of Virgin written	400-Temple of Diana destroyed in city of Ephesus (later it will be dedicated to Virgin Mary)	
	400-600-The Ave Maria was written	400-500 Temple of Isis at Soissons dedicated to Virgin Mary	400-500-Eastern Church implements the Feast of Annunciation; all of Europe celebrates the Commemoration of the Virgin
		400-present-Mary Enthroned with Child becomes visual representation of Mary as Theotokos	430-Pope Celestine II

			sanctioned Cyril of Alexandria's use of Theotokos to describe Virgin Mary
			431-Council of Ephesus proclaims Virgin Mary Theotokos
			451-Church proclaims Mary 'Ever-Virgin'
500	500-600-The Akathistos, the most important hymn of the Orthodox Church composed	500-600-Parthenon dedicated to Virgin Mary, S. Maria Antiqua, in Rome dedicated	
		c. 550-First church mosaic where Virgin and Child, not Christ as the Panocrator, appear in conch at Euphrasian Basilica, Porec	
600	600-800-The hymn Ave Maris Stella composed		600-700-Eastern monks fleeing Moslem invasion bring Marian feast days to the West
			c. 600-Feast of the Dormition of Mary (later celebrated as the Assumption in the West) celebrated in the East
			649-Church made Perpetual Virginity of the Virgin Mary dogma
			650-Feast of the Nativity and the Presentation in The Temple (later celebrated in the West as the Purification of our Lady) celebrated in the East
700			701-Pope Sergius I declares Candlemas to

			be celebrated on Feb. 2nd (coincided with ancient Festival of Lights)
		725-Believed to be earliest creation date of a Sedes Sapientiae	
800		One of the earliest depictions in the West of Mary Enthroned with the Child is executed in the Book of Kells	
			between 858-867-Pope Nicholas I decrees Assumption carried same magnitude as the holidays of Christmas and Easter
900	Bobbio records pilgrimage of patrons to abbey of St. Columban where Mary works miracles	946-Earliest well documented Sedes Sapientiae created	c. 975-Saturdays set aside for the devotion of the Virgin Mary
1000	1000-1300-Numerous writings document the peak of the cult of the Virgin c.1135-The hymn Salve Regina written		1000-1300-cult of the Virgin Mary reached its peak
1100		1100-1200-Most extant examples of the Sedes Sapientiae created 1100-1300-Image of Mary Enthroned with Christ in Heaven found in monumental sculpture and panel painting	1100-1200-Domican, Franciscan, and Cistercian monks spread the cult of the Virgin throughout Europe
	1194-Entire population of town of Pithiviers made a collective pilgrimage to Chartres Cathedral, dragging a wagon of corn as their offering		
1200		1200-1300-Mary Standing with the Child created	

because Mary as the Sedes Sapientiae had become too idol-like

1200-1300-The Pieta became popular image illustrating Mary's lament over her son's death

1300

1400

1400-1500-Three more Marian feast days were added to the liturgical calendar (The Engagement, The Visitation, and the Presentation in the Temple)

1500

1600

1700

1800

1854-Immaculent Conception of Mary declared dogma

1900

1950-Assumption of Mary declared dogma

Sources: (Ayo, 1996)
(Jameson,1887)
(Kibbler, Zinn, & et. al., 1995)
(Loxton, 1996)
(Pelikan, 1996)
(Warner, 1983)

Appendix B

The Ritual Performed in Honor of the Queen of Heaven

1. The children were sent to gather wood.
2. The fathers lit the fire.
3. The women kneaded dough and made cakes.
4. The cakes were baked over fire.
5. The women, assisted by the men, burnt incense, and
6. Poured out libations.
7. They poured libations to other gods as well.
8. In return for this veneration the Queen of Heaven was believed to provide the people with plenty of food and to secure their well-being in general.
9. It can be assumed that the Kings of Judah led the ritual in Jerusalem, and the princes in other cities.
10. The burning of incense, the offering up of cakes, and the pouring of libations presuppose altars, which, in turn, may have stood either in sanctuaries in the cities or on "high places" in the countryside.

The Queen of Heaven honored in this ritual is Asherah who is also sometimes known as Elath, or Ashtoreth, because she was worshipped at many locations under many different identities (Patai, 1990). Yet, this rite, or variations of it, had been performed for hundreds of years: recognizing the Great Mother Goddesses under the guise of various goddess names. It is clearly similar in structure to the one celebrated by the Collyridians in honor of the Virgin Mary. The recording of the worship practices of the Collyridians by St. Epiphanius in the Medicine-Chest greatly aids the connection between the veneration of Mary and the Great Goddess.

Appendix C

Homily XI, Encomium on Holy Mary Theotokos by Cyril of Alexandria (Direct Translation by Geoffrey Ayo)

Our word shines forth and is filled with grace because of this illustrious gathering of holy Fathers. Indeed troubled with vehement sorrow on account of the impious blasphemy of Nestorius, I have raised my voice in this resonant, beautiful, angelic, and celestial auditorium. These are the teachers of piety, pillars and summits of faith, unbroken fortifications of it, joyful harbors, faithful and prudent stewards, wise architects, living celestial navigation and angelic life on earth, comrades of the prophets, colleagues of the apostles, presiders over holy Churches, punishers of wicked blasphemy, wise defenders of our poverty and especially of our name. These [are the ones] who occupy the beautiful and deiform throne of the high priesthood, who distill mellifluous liquids, who are spiritual heralds of divine intelligence, who travel the four-cornered world with tireless journeys, whom neither heat, nor tempests of the sea, nor the indomitable fury of the raging waves, nor violent seasurges keep back, but bounding with fruitful steps they rejoice in this, having rejected all idleness due to desire, or rather due to fear before the Lord, and taking up the cross, gather here as wise vindicators of Mary Theotokos. On account of which, confirmed in their holy prayers, we give some small thanks to this city. Therefore I will turn my oration to the praise of the Theotokos. Hail, city of Ephesians, in view of the sea, and especially [hail] because in place of earthly harbor, angelic and celestial harbors have

come to you. Hail, beauty of the Asian prefecture, built up on all sides with temples of the saints, [which are] precious pearls. Now worn smooth also by the footsteps of the many holy Fathers and patriarchs, you are thus consecrated.

Indeed your very gates and streets, and harbors are blessed by the revered arrival of the holy Fathers. For where many pastors are gathered, a great congregation of holiness comes about through them: especially these religious, faithful, equals of the angels, [who] drive out all satanic force, and the gentile idol-mania of the Porphyrians, the Sabellians, the Phrygians, the Apollinarists, and the Photians, et alteri, and simply all nefarious heresy is confounded and the glory of the orthodox faith is celebrated. Hail also, thrice blessed John the apostle and evangelist, beauty of virginity, teacher of modesty, exterminator of diabolical fraud, overthrower of the temple of Diana, harbor and bulwark of the city of Ephesus, nourisher of the poor, refuge of the afflicted, rest and refreshment of neighbors and travelers. Hail, most pure vessel full of temperance. For to you, Our Lord Jesus Christ, when he was borne up on the cross, handed over the Theotokos, always a virgin, to you a virgin.

Hail also to you Mary Theotokos, Virgin mother, Light-bearer, incorrupt vessel. Hail, Virgin Mary, mother and servant: Virgin indeed, on account of him who is born from you a Virgin; truly mother, on account of him whom you carried in your arms and nourished with your milk; servant, on account of him who first took the form of a servant. For the King has come into your city, or rather into your womb, and again has gone out as he himself wished to do, and your doorway was sealed. You conceived without seed, and you bore in godly fashion. Hail, Mary, dwelling-temple, temple especially holy, such as the prophet David cried out about saying: "Holy is your temple, wonderful in fairness" [Ps

64:6]. Hail, Mary, most precious thing in all the world; hail, Mary stainless dove; hail, Mary inextinguishable lamp; from you is born the Sun of justice. Hail, Mary, the place of him who is captured by no place, [you] who had room for the only begotten Word of God, who made sprout the unfading ear of corn without plough and seed. Hail, Mary Theotokos, on account of whom the prophets cry out, and because of whom pastors sing praises to God [in] that tremendous hymn with the angels, saying: "Glory in the highest to God, and peace on earth, to men good will" [Lk 2:14]. Hail, Mary Theotokos, on account of whom the angels dance, archangels exult giving forth tremendous songs. Hail, Mary Theotokos, on account of whom the Magi, led forth by an illustrious star, adore. Hail, Mary Theotokos, on account of whom the election of the twelve apostles is more adorned. Hail, Mary Theotokos, on account of whom, John, though still in the womb of his mother, jumped up, and adored the lamp with perennial light [Lk 2:41]. Hail, Mary Theotokos, through whom ineffable grace issued, about which the Apostle said: "The saving grace of God appeared to all humankind" [Ti 2:11]. Hail, Mary Theotokos, through whom the true light emerged, our Lord Jesus Christ, who says in the Gospels: "I am the light of the world" [Jn 8:12]. Hail, Mary Theotokos, through whom a light shone for those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. "For a people who sat in darkness have seen a great light" [Is 9:2]. But what light, unless our Lord Jesus Christ, that true light which illuminates everyone coming into this world?" [Jn 1:29] Hail, Mary Theotokos, on account of whom in the Gospels it is proclaimed: "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord" [Mt 21:9]: on whose account in cities, in villages and island, Churches of the Orthodox are founded. Hail, Mary Theotokos, through whom emerged the victor of death and exterminator of hell. Hail, Mary Theotokos, through whom issued the fashioner

of living matter and the straightener of is prevarication, the leader of the heavenly kingdom. Hail, Mary Theotokos, through whom John and the Jordan were sanctified and the devil rejected. Hail, Mary Theotokos, through whom every faithful spirit is saved. Hail, Mary Theotokos, through you the waves of the sea are placated and calmed and carry us fellow servants and fellow ministers with elation and smoothness. Land formerly occupied by thieves is turned to peace with the coming of the holy Fathers. For it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those evangelizing peace!" [Is 52:7]. What peace? Our Lord Jesus Christ, herald of peace, who in the holy Gospels said: "My peace I give to you" [Jn 14:27]. What peace? That peace which blasphemous Nestorius would not accept saying, our Lord Jesus Christ is not born Son and Word from Virgin Mary, nor acknowledging the inviolable birth in virginity, nor believing in the voice of he archangel saying: "Hail, Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with you" [Lk 1:28]. Having taken to himself a thoroughly dry leadership, this man, trying to rob the only begotten Son of God of divinity, fashioned the ruin of many and the blasphemy of souls (Ayo, 1976).

Appendix D

Marian Feast-Days Recognized by the Medieval Church and their Significance in Relation to the Ancient Goddess Tradition

February 2 - Purification of our Lady (c. 650 C. E.)

The Purification of our Lady was first celebrated on November 21 as the feast of the Presentation in the Temple in the East. The celebration is based on the Book of James, and it found its way to Rome through monks who were fleeing Moslem invasion of the Holy Land. Once introduced to the West, it was renamed the Purification and moved to February 2nd a date that coincided with the ancient pagan feast of lights. People paraded through the night streets with torches attempting to thwart natural disasters like plagues and earthquakes during the feast of lights (Warner, 1983). Ceremonially during this day women would simulate Demeter's search for her daughter Persephone (who was captured by Hades and taken underground thus causing the death of vegetation on earth) by carrying torches through the fields. And throughout the past, the month of February was always associated with the idea of Purification. It was the month in which fields were consecrated before planting began and until the last century it was the purification time for women who had given birth the previous year. Women would come to the church to receive a post-childbirth blessing and take a sanctified candle home as a symbol (Berger, 1985).

In 701 C.E. Pope Sergius I claimed this ancient symbol and declared it Christian. Even to this present day on February 2nd young Catholic girls veiled in white carry candles through the darkness to prove Mary's power over darkness in a ritual known as Candlemas (Warner, 1983).

March 25 - Annunciation of our Lady (c. 400-500 C.E.)

The Annunciation of our Lady was first kept on Ember Wednesday during Advent in the East. It was later moved to vernal equinox, March 25th, when it was brought to the West in the 7th century by monks (Warner, 1983). It was also renamed once established in the West. The Council of Toledo in 656 C.E. would call the holiday the Festival of the Mother of God, or Lady Day. This day has a long connection to the Goddess too. March 25th is rumored the exact moment when the Virgin Juno conceived her son Mars by eating the magic lily. Interestingly, in France the people continued to call this day Notre-Dame de Mars, or Our Lady of Mars. Cybele too was honored on this day; her statue, whose head was carved from the sacred black stone, was ritually bathed in the Almo River (Jackson, June/July 1996).

August 15 - Assumption of our Lady (c. 600 C.E.)

The Assumption of our Lady was first celebrated as the Dormition, or Falling Asleep of the Virgin on August 15th in the East, and it also was introduced to the West in the 7th century (Warner, 1983). Mary, according to tradition did not die, but was assumed body and soul into heaven, and this idea was officially proclaimed by the Emperor Maurice. The Goddess tradition holds reverence for Artemis/Diana on this date. The assumption was not declared dogma by the Church until 1950 C.E. although it was depicted frequently artistically and celebrated yearly (Jackson, June/July 1996). The

Assumption helped elevate the status of the Virgin Mary when Pope Nicholas I (858-67) decreed that the Assumption carried the same magnitude as the holidays of Christmas and Easter (Warner, 1983).

September 8 - Nativity of the Lady (declared c. 650 C.E.)

The Nativity of the Lady was also first celebrated in the East and brought westward by monks fleeing Moslem persecution. The celebration of the birth of the Virgin is based on the apocryphal Book of James.

December 8 - Immaculate Conception of our Lady

The Immaculate Conception of our Lady was still a controversial holy day during the Middle Ages. Bernard of Clairvaux, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, and the Dominicans all rejected the idea that Mary was conceived without Original Sin. However, the general public and Duns Scotus (a Franciscan monk) supported its celebration (Kibbler, Zinn, & et al., 1995). The idea that Mary was immaculately conceived was not declared dogma until 1854 C.E. This holiday once again reinforces Mary's perpetual virginity and elevates her to a position of a goddess. Historically, this day is also the feast-day of St. Bridget of Sweden, a 12th century mystic, who wrote about Mary. December 8th is also the festival that commemorates three penitent whores by the names of Margaret, Pelagia, and Thais (Jackson, June/July 1996).

Appendix E

Marian Feast Days Added to Church Calendar by the 15th Century

The Engagement of Our Lady - January 23

The Visitation of Our Lady - July 2

The Presentation in the Temple of Our Lady - November 21 (Wunderli, 1992)

Appendix F

Prayers and Poems from the Middle Ages Dedicated the Virgin Mary

Ave Maris Stella (7th or 8th century C.E.) was a popular hymn which called Mary the "Star of the Sea," virgin mother, Gate of Heaven, and helper of humans who delivered them from disaster, illness, and oppression through her motherly influence over Jesus (Kibbler, Zinn, & et al., 1995). It was written for the feast of Annunciation (Warner, 1983).

Ave Maria (5th or 6th century) is based on combining Luke 1:28 with 1:42. It first appeared in the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin and gained general use by the 12th century. It reads

> Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of they womb, because thou didst conceived the redeemer of our souls.

Later the end would be shortened to read 'blessed is the fruit of they womb, Jesus', and the following petition was added

> Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

(Ashe, 1976)

Salve Regina (c. 1135 C.E.) was a hymn often used by the Cistercian and Dominican monks and first used in liturgy at the monastery of Cluny (Kibbler, Zinn, & et. al, 1995). This hymn beseeches Mary for help because the entire world is in exile from

God. It was often sung by the crusaders during the Middle Ages and it is still the best-loved Catholic hymn (Warner, 1983). It says

> Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy; Hail our life, our sweetness, and our hope! To thee we cry, poor' banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping from this valley of tears. Turn then, o most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us, and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of they womb, Jesus: clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. (Ashe, 1976)

Akathistos (6^{th} century C.E.) was the most important Marian hymn of the Orthodox church. It was composed probably by the Syrian poet Romanus to celebrate the deliverance of the city of Constantinople from the barbarians. In this hymn, Mary is described as "Throne of the King," heavenly ladder, wood of leafy branches whereby many are sheltered, and thou who makest things that differ to agree." (Cunneen, 1996, pp. 139-140)

Appendix G

Types of Visual Images of the Virgin Mary Influential during the Middle Ages

Mary Enthroned with the Child

Mary Enthroned with the Child will become the visual representation of Mary as the Theotokos, Mother of God, from the 5th century forward. Mary's role as the "birth-giver" of the Incarnation will dominated this visual representation. They mostly take the form of numerous wooden cult-statues, or Sedes Sapientiae. These statues are most prominently found in France but they were created throughout Europe.

Mary Enthroned with Christ in Heaven

Mary Enthroned with Christ in Heaven is also often called the Triumph and Crowning of the Virgin. The image is found most often in monumental sculpture of the late 12th and 13th centuries and also in the late Middle Ages in panel painting and ivory carvings. This image emphasizes not only the maternity of Mary but her regal and triumphant power in a cosmic framework. The idea that Mary is the Bride of Christ and Christ is the Bridegroom was a notion derived from the Song of Songs and is also illustrated in these compositions.

Mary Standing with the Child

Mary Standing with the Child captures a merciful Mary as she plays with her child, and they symbolize her human tenderness. This image is also connected with devotional piety and represents her love for all humanity (Kibbler, Zinn, et. al., 1995). The church felt by the 13th century that Mary had become too majestic and too far removed from

humanity (Male, 1958/1913). She had too much power that was related to older goddesses traditions. In an attempt to limit her power there is a major shift in representing her artistically, and this image is a direct reaction against the cult-like Sedes Sapientiae. Now is pictured holding the child on her hip while looking into his eyes in a playful manner. She is now radiant because she is more like a mother. By the middle of the14th century Mary and the child had lost all solemnity which was depicted in earlier art, and had become merely human and intimate. "The theological ideas for which the Virgin stood had become more and more inaccessible to the artists. It was to no purpose that they still heard it recited in the Office of the Virgin that 'the infinite God willed to united Himself [Herself] to a virgin, who bore in her womb Him whom the whole world could not contain,' for they no longer know how to create the superhuman figure of the past and were satisfied representing a mother who smiles at her child." (Male, 1958/1913) In short, the new Gothic image of the Virgin and child, lost the power and breadth of the earlier Romanesque Thrones of Wisdom (Saunders, 1969/1932).

The Pieta

The Pieta is the other most popular image of the Virgin Mary found in art during the Middle Ages. Mary lamenting over the dead body of her son is a new found piety which focused on Christ's suffering during the 13th century. Mary's sorrow evoked the viewer to share Christ's suffering for themselves. The Franciscans and Dominicans were special developers of this image of Mary (Kibbler, Zinn, et. al., 1995).

Appendix H

The Sedes Sapientiae: The Attributes and Accessories Held By Mary and the Child

In the Sedes Sapientiae the only attribute held by Mary is the globe, or orb. According to most art historians the globe symbolizes Mary's triumph over a fallen world and thus our Redemption. When the orb is placed in the hand of the child it is interpreted as sovereignty. In some of the Sedes Sapientiae Christ grasps a book in one of his hands which it is clearly to be understood as the Gospel in a very general sense, but specifically it is the Book of Wisdom (Jameson, 1887). Since these statues were not examined in person and were studied vies-a-vie book replications, it is impossible to know if any of the statues depict a child holding an open book. From close inspection of the plates it seems a few of the Christ figures do hold one. If this is the case the symbolism is then more deeply associated with wisdom and the goddess tradition. In the context of the Sedes Sapientiae when Christ is turning over a page it is again considered the Book of Wisdom and is always suppose be open to the seventh chapter (Jameson, 1887).

Appendix I

The Relics of Saints

"The relic was a physical bridge between the dead saint and the worshipper." (Forsyth, 1972, p. 80). Almost anything thought to have once belonged to a saint was considered a relic like shoes, scraps of fabric from clothing, etc. Even actual body parts like hair, fingernails, skin, or fragments of bone served as relics. During the Middle Ages churches that housed relics of famous saints became huge pilgrimage centers. Relics were usually placed in the east wing of the church in chests or in crypts specially designed for this exact purpose. In many churches special double aisles were constructed within the church to accommodate the masses of pilgrims that would visit the shrine of the saint during special church feast-days. The power of the saint was truly made present when the clergy began housing their remains in effigy statues similar to the Sedes Sapientiae (Sumption, 1975).

Appendix J

Six Hundred Years Buried in a Cave (Guadalupe, Spain, 1326)
(Direct translation from Michael S. Durham)

Our Lady of Guadalupe is a richly decorated statue made of dark wood, a so-called black virgin. It was given in the year 580 C.E. by Pope Gregory the Great to Bishop Leander of Seville in Spain. During the Moorish invasion of 711 C.E., when the priests of Seville fled north, they took the statue with them. A fifteenth-century account says that when they came to the mountains near the Guadalupe River, "the saintly priests dug a cave that was like a tomb, surrounded the cave with large boulder, and placed inside it the image of our lady Saint Mary."

The statue was lost and forgotten during the long struggle by Christian forces to take back Spain from the Moors. The expulsion of the Moors was largely complete when, in 1326, a cowherd named Gil Cordero found one of his cows lying dead near a spring. As he started to butcher it, opening its breast in the traditional way with a cut in the form of a cross, the cow, to the herdsman's astonishment and fear, stood up very much alive. Then the Virgin Mary appeared and said to him; "Have no fear, for I am the mother of God by whom the human race achieved redemption. Take you cow and go…to your home and tell the clergy and other people to come to this place where I appear to you and to dig here, and they will find a statue of me."

The herdsman did as he was told, and when others mocked him, he convinced them he was telling the truth by pointing to the cow and saying, "Friends, do no dismiss

these things; if you will not believe me, then believe the mark the cow bears on her breast." And he told the clergy where to dig to find the statue, adding that the Virgin also told him that "she would have many people come to her house from many regions because of the many miracles she would work on sea as well as land." So the clergy and other went there and found the statue of Mary just where it had been buried some six hundred years before.

The clergy immediately began building a crude chapel to house the Madonna; later the King of Spain ordered that a chapel but built on the site, which soon became a shrine. Over the centuries, members of the ruling class donated elaborate garments for the statue, including a headdress containing thirty thousand jewels. It is believed that Christopher Columbus prayed here before making his first voyage to the New World, where he name a West Indian island Guadeloupe in honor of the Virgin (Durham, 1995).

Appendix K

Demeter, Persephone, and the Eleusinian Mysteries

The Eleusinian mysteries recalls the inseparability of two great goddesses, Demeter and her daughter Persephone. The daughter is playing in a field when she is kidnapped by Aidoneus and taken to Hades. She is then informed that her father (Zeus) has sanctioned her marriage to Aidoneus. In protest she mourns and does not eat. Eventually, Zeus gives in and allows Persephone to return to her mother. The only catch is that she ate a pomegranate seed while in Hades so she must return there for one-third of each calendar year.

Meanwhile, while Persephone is missing her mother, Demeter, searches everywhere in vain for her. Demeter arrives in Eleusis, where she becomes a nurse to the child Domophoon in the house of Celeus. She intends to make Domophoon immortal, but his mother doubts her power. So, Demeter commands the people of Eleusis to build her a temple to which she retires. In her anger at Zeus for not returning Persephone, she takes the fertility of the earth away. This action requires Zeus to relent and return Persephone to Demeter. Demeter is still mad about the kidnapping of her daughter and she snubs the other gods and goddesses. Finally, Zeus and Rhea persuade Demeter to return to Mount Olympia. In the end she does return.

Demeter and Persephone had many shrines dedicated to them (most were located in caves or crevices) but only in Eleusis did people celebrate her mysteries. These mysteries which honored Demeter and Persephone grew out of an older rite called the

Thesmophoria which only allowed the participation of consecrated women. These purified women reenacted Persephone's descent into Hades by crawling into crevices and then reemerging. This ritual was performed specifically to honor Demeter Thesmophoros, Demeter the Law Carrier, or Law-Giver. The laws that Demeter had given to the people pertained to changing the Greek society from nomadic to agrarian. Thus, "with Demeter, it is said, came agriculture, settled life, marriage and the beginnings of civilized law." (Engelsman, 1979, p.51-52)

Appendix L

The Miracles Associated with the Sedes Sapientiae

During the twelfth century the reporting of miracles began to increase around churches that contained a Throne of Wisdom statue. Mary's legends grew and flourished with similarities among all congregations but always retained local differences. Some of the miracles she worked in Coptic legend are as follows: She provided cures from blindness and leprosy, arranged marriages, regained stolen property, punished thieves, and even delivered souls from hell. Once it is reported a Sedes Sapientiae even moved an entire monastery of monks to a new location by a river. Non-Christians were also helped; an example is the healing a Jewish man's broken back by Mary. Dishonest Christians, however, were not aided by Mary, and it is rumored she punished a deceitful clergyman.

At Rocamadour the Sedes Sapientiae helped not only the poor but the rich as well. A legend entitled the Juggler of Our Lady depicts a juggler who has no other way than juggling to illustrate his honor for the Virgin Mary. So he juggles in front of the statue, and she rewards him by appearing to him. She also aided the guilty of humanity like thieves and murderers. She often promised deliverance but she never promised material wealth to those who prayed to her (Cunneen, 1996).

One tale from the thirteenth century describes as a Sedes Sapientiae a very active sculpture during mass. During the reading of the Gospel, the Christ child of this statue stood up, placed Mary's crown on his own head; he then returned it to Mary's head and resumed his position on her lap. Another miracle involves a statue which literally boxed

the ears of a sinful woman. In other medieval tale a woman rudely address a Sedes Sapientiae as old trash, and Mary punished the woman for her skepticism. Thrones of Wisdom also frequently saved entire towns from natural disasters like floods, plagues and even wars (Forsyth, 1972).

The last and most interesting fact is the greatest number of recorded miracle-working statues were black (Cunneen, 1996)

Appendix M

Pilgrimages and the Sedes Sapientiae

Pilgrimage is an extremely interesting occurrence where a past miracle could reoccur and be witnessed by others. Pilgrimage spots were holy places where a sort of portal was opened to the spiritual world here on earth (Wunderli, 1992). A miracle did not even have to occur to create a pilgrimage spot. For example, in 1330 C.E. a Flemish priest built a small protective covering for a Sedes Sapientiae and lit a candle in front of it, and pilgrims began to immediately arrive. Often these images were intentionally placed in order to start a cult. An example being the vicar of Kernetby who in 1310 C.E. reported to church hierarchy that they suddenly had an increase in offerings honoring a new Sedes Sapientiae (Sumption, 1975). In fact, bishops often took the statues on their own pilgrimages to other churches in the hopes of obtaining money for their building campaigns (Cunneen, 1996)

Often roadside appearance of statues drew crowds. For example, in an alcove in the wall of a Franciscan convent near Trier there was a statue that was allegedly cried tears, and for four months the street was impassable from the crowds of pilgrims. In 1442 C.E., pilgrims began to flock to a site in Heilbronn where a street statue had spoken, and they continued to come for six years.

A few pilgrimage sites remained as great sanctuaries of Europe like Aachen, Walsingham, and Boulogne but most were short-lived. The truth was most peasants and artisans could not afford to go on long distance pilgrimages, so they honored the saint at

the shrine nearest to their home (Sumption, 1975). For those who could afford to travel, just a rumor of a miracle or apparition and they could escape there and be freed from their worldly bonds. The pilgrims called one another "brother" or "sister" and lived in a very communal way: sharing supplies and leaving their social status behind (Wunderli, 1992). During pilgrimages, the monasteries served as the pilgrims main supplier of food and shelter (Souchal, 1968).

Appendix N

Association between the Sedes Sapientiae and the Adoration of the Magi

From a very early date there was a connection between the Sedes Sapientiae and the Adoration of the Magi iconography. The golden Majesty of Clermont-Ferrand is a perfect example of this. The text that accompanies this drawing is from the late tenth or early eleventh century. According to Brehier this image was an illustration of the actual Throne of Wisdom that was the typical statue of gold, with wooden core, Mary with Christ upon lap, served as a reliquary, and decorated with precious jewels. In this composition Mary in enthroned in a frontal position and this enables her to turn to greet the Magi who appear at one side.

The relationship between the Throne of Wisdom statues and the Adoration of the Magi is evident when comparing wood and stone sculptures. Notre-Dame-du-Port in Clermont-Ferrand contains a portal that in relief depicts the Adoration of the Magi. The Virgin Mary in this relief-sculpture is almost indistinguishable from the wooden Notre-Dame-la-Brune at Tournus. They both are adorned in similar clothing and have the same frontal position of Christ. They honestly look as if a Sedes Sapientiae statue has been substituted for Mary and the child in the Adoration scenes. It is thus deductive thinking to assume that Sedes Sapientiae filled the role of Mary and Christ during Magi liturgical plays. Both their mobility and cult-like nature would have perfectly suited this role.

Appendix O

The Sedes Sapientiae and Popular Folklore

The scholar Paull Franklin Baum has collected many variants of a story describing a man who is wed to a statue. During the Middle Ages stories involving marriage to a Sedes Sapientiae were popular. Baum notes that this story is derived from the classical era and the medieval Christian writers thus replace the character of Venus with Mary. The following version was composed by Gauthier de Coincy a Benedictine monk and is typical of the Marriage of Mary group of stories that existed around 1200 C.E.

> In front of a ruined church there was an image before which sinners left their offerings. One day a group of young men were playing ball nearby, among them one who had a ring that his amie had given to him. In order to avoid all risk of injuring this ring he wen to the church seeking some safe place to deposit it. When he saw the statue there so fresh and beautiful, he knelt down and saluted it, and was so moved that "Lady," he cried, "I will serve you all my life. You are the fairest lady I have ever seen, a thousand times more beautiful than she who gave me this ring. I will forsake her, love, and its joys, and give you this ring par fine amor." He then put the ring on her finger, and immediately she bent her finger so that none could withdraw this ring. He was frightened by this, and told the bystanders what had happened. They all advised him: l'est le siecle serve God all thy life and Our Lady Saint Mary. But the days came and went, and soon he forgot Our Lady, so powerful were the eyes of his amie; so that finally he was married

> with a great ceremony. But as soon as he approached the bridal bed he forgot his desire and at once fell asleep. Our Lady lay between him and his wife, proving her right by the ring, and upbraiding him for his disloyalty. The clerk awoke in terror, but finding no trace of the image near, he supposed he had been deceived by a dream. Still he could not arise. Then Our Lady reappeared and again angrily chided him. In despair he implored the Holy Spirit to aid him; he forsook the world, and became a monk and a hermit and a servant of God and a Ma Dame Sainte Marie.

It is not known if this story refers directly to a Throne of Wisdom statue of Mary, but it is interesting to note how human actions and emotions are ascribed by the medieval world to images of Mary. It would seem that a promise made to an image of Mary was no different than a promise made to Mary herself. These stories prove that it was possible for people to believe that a mere statue could be a representation of the Virgin Mary here on earth. It also stress the idea of mystical marriage held by many of the religious orders of the time (Forsyth, 1972).