

Il “Salvatore di Argento” di Veroli: ciò che resta di una perduta replica dell’Acheropita del Laterano

Abstract

This article reassesses an enigmatic silver plaque in the Treasury of Veroli Cathedral, depicting the Coronation of the Virgin with Salome, John the Evangelist, James the Greater, and a fourth female saint, possibly Mary Magdalene or Mary of Clopas (*Maria Iacobi*). Recent conservation has shown that its present form results from a substantial reworking carried out in 1746 on the initiative of the canon Bernardo Capobassi.

16th- and 17th-century sources, predating this intervention, consistently describe the work as a “silver Saviour”. Read together with previously neglected documentary evidence, these references suggest that the plaque once belonged to the silver covering of an icon of Christ, modelled on the Acheropita of the Sancta Sanctorum in Rome. In Veroli, this “silver Saviour” was carried in procession each year on 14 August from the cathedral to Santa Maria dei Franconi, a church dedicated to the Assumption and decorated in the third quarter of the 15th century with a mural painting of the Coronation of the Virgin. The evidence thus points to the local adaptation of a Roman liturgical and devotional model, connected with the mid-August celebrations centred on Santa Maria Maggiore and paralleled elsewhere in Lazio.

The material evidence and reconstruction proposed here identify the plaque as the crowning element of the lost icon of the Saviour. Veroli would therefore represent a third documented example – though no longer preserved in its original form – of a medieval image of the Saviour furnished with a precious metal covering, after the Acheropita of the Sancta Sanctorum and the Tivoli triptych. The inclusion of Salome and her sons further suggests that, by the second quarter of the 14th century, the image and its Assumption-eve procession had acquired a marked civic dimension, comparable to the cases of Tivoli and Anagni.