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Cathedra Petri:
The Genesis of a Relic

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*Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou diplomovou práci vypracovala
samostatně a uvedla všechnu použitou literaturu a prameny.*

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Podpis autora práce

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Introduction

Cathedra Petri is an extraordinary piece of art, although it is conserved incompletely. It is hermetically sealed in the Bernini's reliquary, but its life has had a long history and tradition, and it is still very much alive in the Catholic Church. When one found her/himself in the Vatican Basilica on the 22nd of February 2016 s/he had a possibility to witness a Jubilee celebration *Cattedra di San Pietro Apostolo*, the Holy mass celebrated by the Pope, glorifying the Roman curia. When one had knowledge of a celebration of this festivity in a course of the history s/he could recognize the antiphons and the readings from the same chapters as it was established by Innocent III. The entire Bernini's reliquary, containing the relic of *Cathedra Petri*, has been decorated by candles in the same manner since the Bernini's time.

The life of *Cathedra Petri* includes many transformations and fascinating contexts. Tracing *Cathedra* in a long time frame opens a possibility to understand it as a complex phenomenon, which mirrors different treatments of the object itself and of its meaning. Each of the periods somehow recreated the awareness of what *Cathedra Petri* is. Very important presumption for this thesis was that today's *Cathedra Petri* is a result of a sequence of events in the past. A main goal, thus, was to highlight those particular occasions to demonstrate how the meaning of one object is transformed across centuries and that the present understanding of it has been shaped by those events.

This thesis is opened by a brief reflection upon the current status of *Cathedra Petri* based on its presentation to the common public. The following chapter called *Previous Research* does not intend to compound all the references to *Cathedra Petri* from a great many scientific publications. Instead, it makes an attempt to create a compact synthesis focusing on tracing of the main trends in the scientific researches concerning *Cathedra*, highlighting those, which represent the key points in the *Cathedra's* historiography. It will be argued that the previous scholars were interested mostly in the Carolingians' origins of the *Cathedra*.

It is these studies on which the next chapter, *Carolingian throne*, is based on. The chapter takes, as its starting-point, the widely accepted consensus on the dating and provenience without any contribution to this discussion, for the range of this thesis does not allow it. Instead, this chapter aims to reveal the original appearance of the *Cathedra* in the period, in which it used to be the Throne of Charles the Bald. The aim is firstly to show that the object was created for a completely different purpose, to be a throne of the Carolingian ruler and not a Petrine relic, and secondly to open a new discussion, and find a new solution to a question of how the Throne of Charles the Bald appeared in the St. Peter's Basilica.

The chapter *Becoming Relic* deals with an important issue – how is it possible that the Carolingian ruler's throne became an essential relic? The central role in this search is

played by one of the most important medieval popes, Innocent III, and his self-representation. After this question is answered, another one will appear. Why the relic became so closely connected with the Pope's primacy, and when? It will be shown that the throne, which used to be exhibited by altar at first just once and then twice a year, was in a certain moment put on display permanently by dint of its reliquary. Moreover, it was situated to be seen immediately after entering the Basilica and it was also inseparably connected with the grave of St. Peter.

How this change have shaped the *Modern Identity of Cathedra* is investigated in Chapter V. This discusses the way in which the transition influenced the treatment of the object the in succeeding period, because *Cathedra Petri* played a certain role at both Vatican councils of the nineteenth and the twentieth century. The hypothesis that the object represents a strong link between the Pope and his primacy in the Church will appear more clearly after we take a look at the decrees of both Vatican councils with which the Pope's primacy is concerned. The change in the self-understanding of the Church is going to affect a treatment of the relic. The story will be closed with a reflection on the current perception of *Cathedra Petri* according to the decrees of The Second Vatican Council.

CHAPTER 1

Concerning *Cathedra Petri*

Terminology

Using a term *Cathedra Petri* can be sometimes unclear. This term refers to various things; some of them are material, some of them are imaginary and some of them are both. Not to create even greater ambiguity, I would like to begin with a brief explanation of potential meanings and terms, which can be found in bibliography. Since all the types of *Cathedra Petri* appear in this thesis it is necessary to explain certain differences.

Firstly the expression *Cathedra Petri* is used mainly by Catholic scholars when describing the origins of the Pope's primacy.¹ According to those texts *Cathedra Petri* in the Roman Church means the line of bishops who succeeded St. Peter. It gained the significance of Petrine primacy, because St. Peter was the founder of the Church's unity. They say that the concept had been developing since the fourth century and varies in other expressions as *cathedra apostolica*, *sedes Petri*, *sedes apostolica*.² But it seems that *Cathedra Petri* is not the term used by contemporaries in the Late Antiquity or in the Early Medieval time, because the first text where this exact expression is to be found has been dated to the year 1165.³

The second meaning of the term is known from the fourth century. The *Cronografo's* of 354⁴ and 336⁵ mention among anniversaries of *Depositio Martyrum* the *Cathedra Petri's* Feast, celebrated on the 22nd of February. Although the Feast was for the first time mentioned at the period of the construction of St. Peter's Basilica, there was no reference to a location where the celebration had taken place. The determination of particular place is known for period more recent; the Feast of *Cathedra Petri* has been celebrated in St. Peter with certainty since the eleventh century.⁶

Another connotation refers to the relic of *Cathedra Petri*. In English it is used as a synonym to the *wooden Throne of Saint Peter*. This term refers to a throne on which St. Peter is believed to have sat as the bishop of Rome. This object is kept inside the Bernini's reliquary in the apse of St. Peter's Basilica. This baroque reliquary is also called *Cathedra Petri*.

¹ As MACCARONE, M.: *Apostolicità, episcopato e primato*, 1976; MACCARRONE, M.: *La "Cathedra Sancti Petri"*, 1985, pp. 349–447; *Il primato del vescovo*, 1991.

² MACCARRONE, M.: *La storia della Cattedra*. In: *La cattedra lignea*, 1971, p. 6.

³ The biographer of Alexander III wrote: "Dum ... dominus Alexander papa in beati Petri cathedra tamquam Christi vicarius resideret." *Liber pontificalis* II, p. 413, 18–19.

⁴ *Chronographus anni CCCLIII*, p. 73.

⁵ *Le liber pontificalis*/1, 1955, pp. 10–12.

⁶ BLAAW, S.: *Cultus et decor*, 1994, p. 499, p. 719; RAVELLI, D.: *La solennità della Cattedra*, 2012, pp. 176–182.

To make it even more complicated, the title *Throne of Charles the Bald* is related as well. This term started being used when it was discovered that the relic kept in the Bernini's reliquary is in reality a Carolingian throne of the ninth century. The term *Throne of Charles the Bald* is used when talking about the object's origins.

The attention, however, will be drawn to the relic of *Cathedra Petri*, the *wooden Throne of Saint Peter*, thus to the material throne kept in the Bernini's reliquary. I have decided to use this precise term because, according to me, it best describes the actual object's status.

Description

Speaking about description in the case of the *wooden Throne of Saint Peter* (Fig.1) can be problematic, for it can be examined only from photos, descriptions and the replica in a Museum (Fig. 2). Generally it can be described as a wooden throne decorated with ivory. The Throne mainly consists of a wooden corpus.⁷ On its lower part and also on a backrest⁸ there is a motive of 4 arcades. Armrests are missing. The original relic is surrounded by an additional wood into which 4 metal rings are embedded.⁹ The entire throne is 136 cm height, 85.5 cm wide and 65cm deep.¹⁰

The wooden corpus is decorated with delicately engraved ivory strips. In closer view it is possible to recognize variety of ornaments, such as acanthus flowers combined with fauna, animal shapes, and human figures. (Fig. 3a, b, c) All of these motives are entangled together creating a delicate decoration that cannot be seen from a distance. In the center of a strip under the tympanum there is a bust of a man with a mustache and crown on his head (Fig. 4). The man is dressed in a cloak pinned on one shoulder. He holds an orb and a scepter. Two angles surround him and each of them carries a crown in a gesture of offering.

The last part is composed of an ivory panel located in front lower section (Fig. 5). The panel consists of twelve pieces of ivory measuring in total 40×70 cm. The area of these twelve plates is divided into 18 scenes in square frames separated by simple decorative ornaments. The two upper strips narrate the story of twelve Hercules' labors, while the bottom part carries a depiction of six creatures.

The widely accepted consensus settles that the man in the middle of the tympanum is the Frankish ruler Charles the Bald. This hypothesis was firstly suggested by Raffaele Garrucci in 1880, but with a conviction that the ivory was attached to the old throne which

⁷ This corpus contains 3 types of wood – oak, chestnut and ash wood – typical for a region of today western Germany. According to dendrochronology these trees were felled between years 870–880. This research was published in a great compendium of 1971: GIORDANO, G: *Relazione circa l'identificazione*. In: *La cattedra lignea*, 1971, pp. 159–164; and CORONA, E.: *Indagine dendrochronologica*. In: *La cattedra lignea*, 1971, pp. 165–172.

⁸ The backrest is removable, but made of the same wood as the rest of the throne. (FERUA, A: *Esame strutturale ed archeologico*. In: *La cattedra lignea*, 1971, pp. 93–94.)

⁹ This part is surely a later addition serving for manipulation during transportation and presumed processions.

¹⁰ A more detailed description can be found in: Volbach: *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike*, 1976, p. 147.

used to serve St. Peter.¹¹ The identification of the bust as Charles the Bald was confirmed again by P. E. Schramm.¹²

Visibility, copy and state of preservation

The relic of *Cathedra Petri* is not on display. Since the year 1666 it has been kept in the reliquary with only a few exceptions of short exhibitions. The museum of *Tesoro di San Pietro* located in the sacristy of St. Peter's Basilica keeps its faithful copy.¹³ The museum was recently reconstructed¹⁴ and in the course of this research the copy was not exhibited.

The condition in which the Throne has been conserved to present days (or at least to those days when it was out of the reliquary for the last time) is far from its original appearance. What would be seen now if the throne was exposed is in fact a torso, which has lost a large amount of its decoration. This issue will be elaborated upon further in the Chapter 3, now I would like to mention only some fundamental points to explain the main probable differences between the original throne and the throne which is known today.

Primarily, the wooden skeleton can be divided into two parts. There is an older, original one¹⁵ and then a second, additional one.¹⁶ This additional wooden skeleton lends support to the original skeleton to keep its structure solid after the primitive wood has become too fragile. At the period before the additional skeleton was added, the metal parts were lost and none of them survived to these days. Not only the metal paneling but also golden layers of Hercules' figures on the anterior part are missing.¹⁷ Similarly the unique technique of Hercules plaques' decoration has been lost. Only small residues of wax indicate that the Hercules plaques' decorative motives were incrustated with colored wax.¹⁸ It is possible to assume precious decorations at the tympanum as well, but only three empty holes remained to these days.

In general, the today throne consists of wood and ivory, but it was not always like this. If we want to think about the original Carolingian throne, we have to bear in mind that its appearance was very different. In such a particular case, to any reflection upon a function or meaning of the throne at least a brief consideration of its original form has to precede. Without this proceeding the role of the throne and its intended function can be barely explained.

¹¹ GARRUCCI, R.: *Storia dell'Arte Cristiana*/VI, 1880, pp. 11–12.

¹² SCHRAMM, P.E.: *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik*/III, 1956.

¹³ The copy was made in 1705 of the will of Pope Clement XI, in: *La Custodia lignea*, 2003, p. 2.

¹⁴ In winter 2015/2016.

¹⁵ According to the dendrochronology, it was made at the end of the ninth century: CORONA, E.: *Indagine dendrocronologica*. In: *La cattedra lignea*, 1971, pp. 165–172.

¹⁶ Added later, probably at the end of the thirteenth century: FERRUA, A.: *Esame strutturale*. In: *La cattedra lignea*, 1971, p. 146.

¹⁷ FERRUA, A.: *Esame strutturale e archeologico*. In: *La Cattedra Lignea*, pp. 113–119.

¹⁸ More on the technique and the conservation in: WEITZMANN, K.: *The Heracles Plaques*, 1974, pp. 23–25.

CHAPTER 2

Previous Researches

In this chapter I would like to discuss previous researches on *Cathedra Petri*. Since the object exists as an important item in many contexts it is hard to study it monographically. For that reason usually just one particular aspect was studied. From an art historian perspective it is, of course, the most natural to study the material throne itself in its Carolingian origins. The other approaches are more historical – such as the description of the second life of the object, or The Feast of *Cathedra Petri*, or using of the throne during liturgy.

A turning point in the *Cathedra Petri*'s historiography represents an event that took place after the Second Vatican Council. The exploration of the relic by scholars resulted in 1971 in the publication of book *La Cattedra Ligne di San Pietro in Vaticano*, which by now stands the greatest research and the most comprehensive publication.

Of course there were other discussions on *Cathedra* before. As it always has been an important object in the history of the Catholic Church, the first discussions date back to the half of the seventeenth century. This prime interest was developed partially by the Protestants who argued against the authenticity of *Cathedra*. Just to mention some examples in 1665 Fioravante Martinelli refused that the relic could be authentic.¹⁹ On the other hand the Catholics tried to defend the authenticity.²⁰ Nevertheless, the object has been preserved in the Bernini's reliquary since 1666, and has been known just from descriptions and drafts.

In the year 1867, in commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Paul and St. Peter, *Cathedra* was exhibited for 9 days. During these days numerous believers had visited St. Peter's Basilica and saw the relic. By this time *Cathedra* was examined briefly by two highly respected experts, archaeologists Giovanni Battista de Rossi and Raffaele Garrucci, both specialized in Christian art. Giovanni Battista de Rossi, in his article from 1867,²¹ followed the apologetic trend of his predecessors, and made effort to construct the *Cathedra*'s history back to antiquity. However at the same time he pointed out, that the ivory decorations were attached to a throne already existing, probably by Charlemagne or his successors in the Carolingian period.

¹⁹ MARTINELLI, F.: *Della cathedra chiamata di San Pietro*, 1665. Widely described in MACCARONE, M.: *La storia della Cattedra*. In: *La cattedra ligne*, 1971, pp. 48–57.

²⁰ For instance FEBEL, F.: *De identitate Cathedrae*, 1666.

²¹ De ROSSI, G.B.: *La Cattedra di S. Pietro*. *Bullettino di archeologia Cristiana* V, 1867, pp. 33–47.

More than 10 years later Raffaele Garrucci described his observation on *Cathedra* in his famous work *Storia dell' Arte Cristiana*.²² The very first thing he noticed on the object was a bust with a crown, huge mustache, and a royal insignia, carved in the ivory strips. Then he specified de Rossi's previous hypothesis by an identification of the bust, for he recognized it as a portrait of Charles the Bald.

After this short exhibition *Cathedra* was immediately concealed again in the reliquary for ensuing one hundred years. The succeeding period was mainly occupied with a tendency to precise the origins of the ivory decorations, more or less in the same direction based on Garrucci and de Rossi. For instance Fernand Cabrol described the ivory strips as later Carolingian adaptation, and the Hercules ivory considered as forgery, which used to decorate another older object.²³

Further contribution was brought by Percy Ernst Schramm in the year 1956.²⁴ On the basis of Garrucci and de Rossi's description and two blurry photos he introduced a new argument to recognize the bust directly as Charles the Bald. He provided a comparison to the Bible preserved now in the church of *San Paolo fuori le mura* in Rome. Schramm associated a throne illustrated in the Bible with *Cathedra* on the basis of visual similarity, and suggested that *Cathedra* was donated together with the Bible to Pope John VIII in 875 as a royal gift at the occasion of emperor's coronation in Rome. Unfortunately this hypothesis has no real support in written sources, even though it was accepted as fact by many succeeding scholars.

Broadly speaking, this period was focused on the ivory itself, on its style and origins. The main question discussed was relation between the wooden throne, in the Catholic circles believed to be the original relic, and the ivory attributed to Charlemagne or the period of Charles the Bald.

A considerable change came in the year 1968 with Pope Paul VI. Out of his authority the Pope decided to liberate *Cathedra* from the reliquary and to give a possibility to a scientific research. This event had an extreme importance on the *Cathedra Petri's* historiography. By this time the relic's authenticity was, for variety of reasons, unsustainable. Thus a commission for a project and presentation of *Cathedra* was convened and *Cathedra* was pulled out on the day-light in the evening of the 26th of November 1968. This was the beginning of a large project, which resulted in a comprehensive book published in 1971 called *La cattedra lignea di san Pietro in Vaticano*.²⁵ Carefully chosen scholars of different disciplines were invited to cooperate on this book. The art historians and archeologist, who participated on this project, were for sure the greatest in their fields – an archeologist Pietro Romanelli, who carried out the excavations for instance at Ostia Antica and Palatine Hill at the Forum Romanum;²⁶ one of the most influential scholars in the Late Antique and

²² GARRUCCI, R: *Storia dell'Arte Cristiana*/VI, 1880, pp. 11–12.

²³ CABROL, F.: *Chaire de Saint Pierre à Rome*. In: *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne*/III, 1, 1913, pp. 76–90. Similar opinion expressed BALBONI, D.: *Appunti sulla Cattedra*, 1954.

²⁴ SCHRAMM, P.E.: *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik*/III, 1956.

²⁵ *La cattedra lignea di san Pietro in Vaticano*, 1971.

²⁶ COLINI, A.: *Pietro Romanelli*. In: *Studi romani*/30, 1982, pp. 358–365.

Byzantine miniatures Kurt Weitzmann;²⁷ the specialist in Carolingian manuscripts Florentine Mütterich;²⁸ or historian Percy Ernst Schramm.²⁹

The main intention of the project was to compile a book containing as much information as possible of many points of view about *Cathedra*. In general, the scholars came more or less to a consensus. The whole *Cathedra* was made for King Charles the Bald, who is carved in the tympanum's ivory strip, as a reflection and representation of his imperial power. Then the throne was donated as a gift to the Pope together with the *San Paolo's* Bible.

At the same moment a long chapter was dedicated to the history of *Cathedra*. This part was written by Michele Maccarrone in that time a member of the Pontifical Committee of Historical Sciences. He described *Cathedra* as an idea, which expressed the Episcopalian power and evidently existed in the first half of the third century. He considered the idea of *cathedra* and the idea of episcopate as equals on which the Petrine primacy is based. Simultaneously he understood it as a symbolic office, which was lately connected with a material throne. Maccarrone mentioned Innocent III and his restoration works at St. Peter's Basilica, during which the role of Peter's seat was emphasized. He believed Innocent III referred there to a symbolic *cathedra*. But this stress on the seat turned the attention of a clergy and believers to the real, material cathedra preserved in the Basilica. And this interest slowly gave rise to an interconnection between the ideal-cathedra and the material-cathedra, which was no intention of popes. Maccarrone discussed this idea again in the year 1985.³⁰

A lot of space in the book was dedicated to a technical research. The throne was dismantled to individual parts and described in minute details. Scientific analyses, such as radiographic method, were made on both wooden and ivory parts. These examinations lead more or less to a consensus with the art historians' opinions.³¹

It is clear that the ambitions and funds were no small. This book featured a complex which should explain all questions about *Cathedra* and left no uncertainties. But at the end it has just opened a space for further discussions and examination. But it still remains an important volume which has to be considered by all scholars dealing with *Cathedra*, and also partly established future interest and questions of forthcoming researches.³²

²⁷ SAUSER, E.: Weitzmann, Kurt. In: *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*/13, 1998, pp. 705–706.

²⁸ SAUERLÄNDER, Willibald: *Vorwort*. In: *Studien zur mittelalterlichen Kunst 800-1250*, 1985, pp. 9–10.

²⁹ Schramm's work was focused on medieval political symbolism and ritual, particularly the ideology of the medieval state, including the ways in which the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire in the Middle Ages represented their authority through images and rituals, as well as the transmission of ideas about the Roman Empire in medieval political and religious thought. More in: SCHALLER, H. M.: *Schramm, Percy Ernst*. In: *NDB*/23, 2007, pp. 515–517.

³⁰ MACCARONE, M.: *La "cathedra sancti Petri" nel Medioevo*, 1985, pp. 349–447.

³¹ GIORDANA, G.: *Relazione circa l'identificazione*, pp. 159–164; CORONA, E.: *Indagine dendrocronologica*, pp. 165–172; ALESSIO, M.: *Datazione con il metodo di carbonio-14*, pp. 173–185; FEDERICI, V.: *Esami chimici*, pp. 185–190; all in *La cathedra lignea*, 1971.

³² Few years later some points to this study were added: GABRIELLI, N., MACCARRONE, M., BISCHOFF, B.: *Nuove ricerche sulla cathedra*, 1975. This volume is focused mainly on technical research and on dating.

The period after the book of *La cattedra lignea* can be widely divided into two main topics of interest. As the first one almost immediately appeared a discussion lasting mainly during 70s and was provoked by a study of Margherita Guarducci,³³ who submitted a hypothesis that the whole *Cathedra* was not a Carolingian work. She suggested the ivory with Hercules' Labors as an object made at the end of the third or the beginning of the following century as a part of emperor Maximian Hercules' throne. According to her, the throne was kept by the family until Constantine gave it to Pope Sylvester I, who finally placed the throne to the Lateran Basilica, to his new residence. The decorations were lately attached to the Carolingian throne. M. Guarducci based her theory on comparison with Roman mosaic of the empty throne on the triumphal arch of Santa Maria Maggiore, which according to her, had to have an important model.

Even though this hypothesis did not find support among other scholars M. Guarducci repeated her conclusions in other studies.³⁴ In response Kurt Weitzmann added some points to his previous study in *La Cattedra lignea* in two articles published in *Art Bulletin*.³⁵ He argued that all the parts of the Throne (he uses the term "Throne" instead of "*Cathedra*" referring to a king's seat) were made on the court of Charles the Bald in the same period about years 870–875. He based his arguments on a careful style analysis and iconography. In his study he found similarities as well as differences with a classical tradition, and he concluded that the artist (or workshop) had to be familiar with the classical cycle of the twelve Hercules' labors but the iconographical deviations demonstrates that they either intentionally or by accident changed the classical motives when imitating them.

Weitzman's theory was accepted by the majority of scholars interested in this topic.³⁶ His hypotheses were also supported by the work of Florentine Mutherich, whose arguments are based mainly on a comparison with the Carolingian manuscripts.³⁷

Second topic provoked by the book *La Cathedra Lignea* is a question of the Throne's iconography. In 1975 N. Gussone and N. Staubach³⁸ tried to point out a problem that there exist no parallel between Hercules and Christian ruler in the Christian sources and none of the early Christian writer compares Hercules or any pagan God to a Christian ruler.³⁹ The answer was raised by historian Chiara Frugoni.⁴⁰ She explained the Throne as a royal

³³ GUARDUCCI, M.: *Gli avori erculei della Cattedra*, 1972, pp. 263–350.

³⁴ GUARDUCCI, M.: *Gli avori erculei della Cattedra*, 1977; GUARDUCCI, M.: *La cattedra di San Pietro*, 1982; GUARDUCCI, M.: *La Domus Faustae in Laterano*, 1986, pp. 249–263. GUARDUCCI, M.: *Il trono di Massimino*, 1988, pp. 1–12. Or the other arguments for presence of an important empty throne in Rome: GUARDUCCI M.: *La capsella eburnea*, 1978.

³⁵ WEITZMANN, K.: *The Heracles Plaques*, 1973, pp. 1–37; and WEITZMANN, K.: *An Addendum to 'The Heracles Plaques'*, 1974, pp. 248–252.

³⁶ For instance: GABORIT-CHOPIN, D.: *Review of La cathedra lignea*, 1973, pp. 286–291.; LADNER, G. B.: *La cattedra lignea di S. Pietro*, 1975, pp. 197–206.; VOLBACH, W.F.: *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike*, 1976, pp. 147.

³⁷ For example Koehler, W., MÜTHERICH F.: *Die Hofschule Karls des Kahlen*, 1982.

³⁸ GUSSONE, N., STAUBACH N.: *Zu Motivkreis und Sinngehalt*, 1975, pp. 334–358.

³⁹ Such a problem that monsters as on the *Cathedra* are not found in ancient and medieval art led some scholars to articulate hypothesis claiming that the monsters and the related Hercules panels are seventeenth-century works of art (see: DENNY, D.: *The Date of the Hercules*, 1984, pp. 52–58).

⁴⁰ FRUGONI, Ch.: *L'ideologia del potere imperiale*, 1976–77, pp. 65–181.

apotheosis in a context of the rulers' imperial ideology, who is depicted as *cosmocrator*. Gianfranco Fiaccadori understood the throne in rhetoric of Charles the Bald as a conscious *imitatio Constantini* – in other words the Charles the Bald's throne should appear the same as a throne of Constantine.⁴¹

Some studies of Lawrence Nees are dedicated to the Throne of Charles the Bald.⁴² He based his arguments on a reception of the Roman tradition on the Carolingian court and he found parallels between Theodulf's poem *Versus contra iudices* and the labors of Hercules on the Throne. In his solution Hercules should demonstrate a negative view of non-Christian tradition, and should contain also pre-Christian Rome. That means Hercules was perceived as a negative example used by archbishop Hincmar, who let the Throne be made as a gift to the ruler as a reminder how should not a king behave. Nees placed the date of the throne's constructions around the year 867.

Nees also published one of the rare studies on the reception of the *Cathedra*.⁴³ He asked question how was the throne associated with St. Peter and how it was transformed? He understands Maccarrone hypothesis, formulated in 1971, that the decisive moment in the transformation to the Petrine throne was a pope election in 1130 – there was the Pope Innocent II enthroned at the Lateran, and in the same time, his rival Anacletus II was "incathedrated" at St. Peter's "*in sacratissima eius (sc. beati Petri apostolici) cathedra*." This term Maccarrone considers implying to the wooden throne with ivory decoration.⁴⁴ Nees wondered that after the election in 1130 there is lack of any written or artistic reference to Petrine throne. He suggest that the Hercules iconography might be the problem, but in the same time calls for a further explanation. The rest of the article is dealing with the closure to the Bernini's reliquary provoked maybe by those who questioned the authenticity.

A generous consensus summarized in *Enciclopedia dell'arte medievale* says that *Cathedra* used to be the Throne of Charles the Bald, who gave it to Pope John VIII in 875 at the occasion of his imperial coronation in Rome. This gesture should be an echo of Constantine act described in Donation of Constantine, who let the Pope an insignia, a throne, as a symbolic submission of power in the western realm.

What still remains unsolved is a questions about the Hercules labor's ivory parts that are considered by some scholars to be older than Carolingian throne itself. It is assumed that during the thirteenth century the Throne became the relic of *Cathedra* on which St. Peter used to sit. This iconography of empty throne was very common in Rome and bore a symbolic meaning of commemoration of person whom it used to belong to.⁴⁵

Most recent contribution to the research on *Cathedra Petri* represents a book of Diego Giovanni Ravelli, *La solennità della Cattedra*⁴⁶ containing precisely elaborated information

⁴¹ FIACCADORI, G.: *Carlo il Calvo e Costantino*, 1979, pp. 167-184.

⁴² NEES, L.: *Unknown Carolingian Drawings*, 1988, pp. 37-54. And NEES, L.: *A tainted mantle*, 1991.

⁴³ NEES, L.: *Audiences and reception*, 1993, pp. 57-72.

⁴⁴ In fact, Maccarrone assume already an existence of such as venerated throne, and the election seems only as a fist mention (Maccarrone, M.: *La storia della Cattedra*. In: *La cattedra lignea* 1971, pp. 19-20).

⁴⁵ GANDOLFO, F.: *Cattedra*. In: *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Medievale/IV*, 1993, pp. 497-505.

⁴⁶ RAVELLI, G.: *La solennità della Cattedra*, 2012.

on the Cathedra Petri's Feast, including also mentions references of material cathedra used during this celebration. However; this book is not treating concerned with the non-verbal language of this celebration and with the meaning of the object. The book complements precedent research of Dante Balboni on the interconnection between the Throne and the Feast.⁴⁷

It seems to be clear that the 1971's book *La cattedra lignea* determinates the direction in which the research was going. For this book was published as a consequence of the Second Vatican council, out of the will of Pope, the conclusions go along with the spirit of the Council's decisions and with redefinition of the Catholic Church's self-image. I am going to discuss this issue with proper argumentation in the last chapter, while now I would like to mention the research of Michele Maccarrone once again. It was already indicated that his chapter about history of *Cathedra* in book *La cattedra lignea* was never properly reviewed. The most recent book of Giovanni Ravelli is in many cases based on Maccarrone's opinions. One of these cases is an explanation of the way how the Throne of Charles the Bald became the relic of *Cathedra Petri*. Maccarrone proposed that the creation of *Cathedra Petri's* relic was rather a result of spontaneous popular devotion with a little contribution of the Vatican curia than intention of popes. However, the study of M. Maccarrone represents a valuable source of materials concerning *Cathedra Petri*, because it was elaborated carefully and thoroughly with an access to various archives and libraries.

⁴⁷ BALBONI, D.: *La Cattedra di San Pietro*, 1967.

CHAPTER 3

Carolingian Throne

The previous chapter indicates that a lot of research has been made and many questions have been opened on themes related to the origins of the wooden throne. The goal of this chapter is not to comprehend all of them. I have decided to accept the dating already established based on style analysis of the ivory,⁴⁸ the portrait of the ruler on the tympanum's ivory strip,⁴⁹ dendrochronology,⁵⁰ and radiocarbon method.⁵¹ I also presume that the ivory parts were made exactly for this wooden throne in the same period of time.⁵² That constitutes a dating from about 867-875 and Charles the Bald, the ruler depicted in the ivory strip, as the owner (Fig. 4).

Instead, I intend to reflect upon a possible way how the throne found its way into St. Peter's Basilica, because this is crucial for the following chapters concerning the Vatican's period. Since the conservation's state of the wooden throne has represented only a fragment of its original splendor,⁵³ I will try to reconstruct mentally its original appearance. For this I will use mainly a comparison with other Carolingian art made about the same period – especially in the province of Metz, because it is highly probable that the throne was constructed there.⁵⁴

The reason for the reconstruction of its possible original appearance stems from the conviction that the intended function and meaning cannot be understood properly without taking it into consideration.

The throne is now addressed to as a wooden one. The wood used for the throne's construction is both a kind of hardwood (durmast, which is kind of oak, and chestnut) and flexible wood (ash).⁵⁵ Such a combination of wood can form a construction suitable for using as a real chair, and not only as a symbolic one. Nevertheless, the wood was only

⁴⁸ WEITZMAN, K.: *The Heracles Plaques*, 1973.

⁴⁹ SCHRAMM, P. E.: *Kaiser Karl der Kahle*. In: *La cattedra lignea*, 1971, pp. 277-293.

⁵⁰ CORONA, E.: *Indagine dendrochronologica*. In: *La cattedra lignea*, 1971, pp. 165-172.

⁵¹ ALESSIO, M., BELLA, F., CORTESI, C., FORNASERI, M., TURI, B.: *Datazione con il metodo del carbonio-14*. In: *La cattedra*, 1971, pp. 165-172.

⁵² WEITZMAN, K.: *The Heracles Plaques*, 1973, pp. 33-34; MACCARRONE, M.: *Nuove ricerche sulla cattedra*, 1975; CHRIST, Alice T.: *Ancora sulla "Cattedra di Pietro"*, 1985, pp. 518-524; NEES, L.: *Unknown Carolingian drawings*, 1988, pp. 37-54.

⁵³ WEITZMANN, K.: *The Heracles Plaques*, pp. 23-25.

⁵⁴ MELZAK, R.: *The Carolingian Ivory Carvings*, 1983, pp. 95-104 and 218; MÜTHERICH: *Der Elfenbeinschmuck des Trones*. In: *La cattedra lignea*, 1971, pp. 256-260.

⁵⁵ GIORDANO, G.: *Relazione circa l'identificazione*. In: *La cattedra lignea*, 1971, pp. 159-164.

a frame carrying a metal paneling.⁵⁶ If we tried to make a comparison with other Carolingian thrones covered with metal, we would fail. The only Carolingian throne preserved is the famous throne of Charlemagne in the Aachen Cathedral (Fig. 6), which is made entirely of marble. There are many depictions of thrones in Carolingian manuscripts, but it is impossible to identify with certainty the material used on them. However, there is another possibility to reveal the original paneling – a consideration of other famous known thrones, even those mythical ones.

Thus first of all, Charles the Bald's interest in famous mythical rulers has to be mentioned, even though a common consensus says that Charles the Bald followed in tradition of the Carolingian rulers started up by Charlemagne. This presumption is based on an idea of dynastic continuity and on the acceptance of Charlemagne as a good ruler and restorer of the Empire, whose rhetoric was taken up by succeeding Carolingians rulers.⁵⁷ Regarding objects of art, this opinion assumes that items, which were created for representation of following rulers, are similar to those used by Charlemagne to visually demonstrate the succession.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, the idea seems to be more like a later mythization of Charlemagne figure than a ninth century Carolingian reality.⁵⁹ Charles the Bald and his contemporaries were more interested in much distant examples of rulers than in the King's ancestry. Traditionally, the attention was turning back to mythical kings as David or Salomon;⁶⁰ for example in the *"Mirrors of princes"* Salomon and David are widely used as models of sovereigns.⁶¹ There exists yet another evidence from the period of Charles the Bald's reign – Hincmar (806–882), the archbishop of Rheims, used references to King David and Solomon as models for a good human with divine morality.⁶²

According to this briefly sketched context it is possible to discover an example of an ivory throne among notable kings of the past. The most famous case is the Throne of Solomon.⁶³ As it is written in the First Book of Kings, Chapter 10:18: *"The king also made a great ivory throne and overlaid it with the finest gold."* It is emphasized again, in the ensuing part, that the throne is made of gold, because silver is not sufficient for a king.

In my opinion, this text can be considered as a first step on a way to the original appearance of Charles the Bald's throne, which could be entirely covered with gold overlaid; more likely with gilded material or with a golden foil. Not many examples of completely gold object survived to these days, because gold was always a good material to steal.

⁵⁶ FERRUA, A.: *Esame strutturale e archeologico*. In: *La Cattedra Ligne*, pp. 113 – 119.

⁵⁷ For example part of Charles the Bald as the new Charlemagne in ALBERTONI, G.: *L'Italia Carolingia*, 1997, pp. 54–56. or: DIEBOLD, W.: *Nos quique morem*, 1993, pp. 271–300.

⁵⁸ GIRARDIN, N.: *Charles le Chauve*. In: *Charlemagne et les objets*, 2012, pp. 115–134.

⁵⁹ *The Legend of Charlemagne in the Middle Ages*, 2008.

⁶⁰ More about these examples in: GIRARDIN, N.: *Charles le Chauve*. In: *Charlemagne et les objets*, 2012, pp. 115–134, exp. 128–132.

⁶¹ ANTON. H.: *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos in der Karolingerzeit*. Bonner Historische Forschungen 32. Bonn 1968, pp. 357–362.

⁶² *De Regis persona et regio ministerio ad Carolum Calvum regem*. PL 125, 1879, col. 833–856.

⁶³ DESHMAN, R.: *Antiquity and empire*, 1995, pp. 131–141.

However, there are still three examples I can offer. The first of them is the *Arnulf Ciborium*, (Fig. 7) the only original Carolingian portable altar. It was made around 870⁶⁴ and it is covered with gold foil.⁶⁵ Some of the ideas applied to the ciborium may have originated in the same workshop of Charles the Bald's Palace School, where the Charles the Bald's throne was created.⁶⁶ The dimension of the object, however, is rather small (59 × 31 × 24 cm)⁶⁷ compared with the Throne.

The second one, demonstrating that it is possible to cover such a huge object with a gold overlaid, is a gold altar in Basilica of St. Ambrose in Milan (Fig. 8), commissioned by bishop Angilbert II and made between years 842–859.⁶⁸ These two objects, the ciborium and the golden altar, are examples of the usage of a gold foil encrusted with gems.

The third example⁶⁹ is known only from a written source. Einhard, in his description of Charlemagne's life, wrote about a mensa made of silver and gold.⁷⁰ This object was kept in Charlemagne's treasury and in his testament it was donated to St. Peter's.⁷¹

When the attention is turned back to Carolingian manuscripts in *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram* (around 870) (Fig.9) one folio with a depiction of enthroned Charles the Bald can be found. The throne, on which he sat, seems to be made of gold with colorful precious stones and gems. The depiction there might show this technique described above.

Thus, the gem encrusted gold foil was covered the whole throne and was accompanied by ivory parts. The lower central part was occupied by an ivory panel made of 12 plates carrying 18 scenes. The first 12 parts show the labors of Hercules (Fig. 5).⁷² The six following have a less clear meaning. It was suggested that they could be constellations,⁷³ or a combination of a zodiac, constellations and elements,⁷⁴ or hybrids inspired by an illustrated bestiary *Physiologus*, translated in Latin around the year 700 and widely spread.⁷⁵ All of these depictions are known from the Carolingian period. Regarding personifications of zodiac they are present in the decorative vocabulary of Charles the Bald's period. The initial D to St. Jerome's prologue to the Pentateuch in the Vivian Bible (Fig. 10) presented by the clergy of Tours to Charles the Bald in 846, can be used as an example.⁷⁶

For this front ivory panel an unusual technique of metal inlay on ivory was used.⁷⁷ Unfortunately there are no other examples of this technique in the Carolingian period. Each figure of Hercules was modeled by using golden parts creating a low-relief. These

⁶⁴ SCHUTZ, H.: *The Carolingians in Central Europe*, 2004, p. 313.

⁶⁵ Today in Munich, Schatzkammer der Residenz, Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Gärten und Seen.

⁶⁶ SCHUTZ, H.: *The Carolingians in Central Europe*, 2004, p. 313, no. 28.

⁶⁷ Ibidem.

⁶⁸ The last synthesis on the topic: *L'altare d'Oro di Sant'Ambrogio*, Milan 1996.

⁶⁹ In fact, there are more examples of lost golden altars with engraved gems, such as Hincmar altar with crucifixion gem (Appendix. *Lost and Misattributed Works*. In: KORNBLUTH, G.: *Engraved Gems*, 1995, pp.121-131).

⁷⁰ Einhardi Vita Karoli Magni, c. 27. In: *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*/25, p. 41.

⁷¹ D'ONOFRIO, C.: *Castel Sant'Angelo*, 1978, pp. 107-110.

⁷² WEITZMANN, K.: *The Heracles Plaques*, 1973, p. 4.

⁷³ ROMANELLI, P.: *La cattedra lignea*, p. 212.

⁷⁴ BALBONI, D.: *La Cattedra di San Pietro*, 1967.

⁷⁵ WEITZMANN, K.: *The Heracles Plaques*, 1973, pp. 17-18.

⁷⁶ HEDERSON, G.: *Carolingian art*, 1994, p. 263.

⁷⁷ WEITZMANN, K.: *The Heracles Plaques*, 1973, pp. 23-25.

golden parts carried the whole figures' modulation—similar modulation in gold can be seen at the Milan Altar (Fig. 8b). The process of construction was based on creation of thin grooves in which the golden parts were attached with the support of additional pinholes in figures' centers.⁷⁸ Creatures and decoration parts were made with wax incrustation of various colors, primary red and green.⁷⁹

The next part, which has nearly nothing in common with the original Throne's appearance, is the tympanum. Nothing more than three empty holes remained to this day (Fig. 11). It was already noticed by previous scholars that the Christian iconography is completely missing anywhere on the throne's decoration. The only possible part, where it could have been, is the empty space of the tympanum. It was also proposed that in the center it is possible to imagine Christ between angles or apostles.⁸⁰ The holes are supposed to be filled with another ivory or precious stones carrying the depiction.⁸¹ I would like to suggest, that the option of precious stones or, even better, engraved crystals seems more plausible, not only for light effects caused by these stones.

Engraved gems, and moreover crystals, belonged to the most precious articles and gems of all kinds were highly prized by the Carolingian aristocracy and indicated luxury objects.⁸² Many engraved crystals with a depiction of Christ—mainly with the iconography of the crucifixion survived from the Carolingian period.⁸³ These crystals, preserved as individual stones, have probably always been attached to liturgical objects.⁸⁴ By the ninth century, a transparent stone was often used in the center of triumphal crosses and in Gospels' decorations. Crystals were located there to create light effects and benefited from the transparency and movement of the object.⁸⁵ But there are also examples of using gems and crystals on the stable object, as the Milan altar. This relatively widespread use of engraved crystals on the most valuable objects allows us to presume its utilization also at Charles the Bald's throne. For instance, the gem with the crucifixion (846–869), made in rock crystal probably in Metz (Fig. 12),⁸⁶ corresponds to my idea of the stones used to fill the empty holes (at least the central one) of the tympanum.

The engraved crystals were often attached to objects containing relics – on one hand for its value, on the other hand because a correctly engraved rock crystal could provide an enlargement of the relic imposed behind it as a magnifying glass.⁸⁷ This fact is forcing us to consider a possible presence of a relic in the Charles the Bald throne. This possibility suggests itself when the already mentioned Charlemagne's throne is taken into account, because this throne has the compartments for the insertion of relics.

⁷⁸ WEITZMANN, K.: *The Heracles Plaques*, 1973, pp. 23-25.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁰ DESHMAN, R.: *Antiquity and empire*, 1995, pp. 131-141.

⁸¹ DESHMAN, R.: *Antiquity and empire*, 1995, pp. 131-141.

⁸² REUTER, T.: *Plunder and Tribute*, 1985, pp. 75-94.

⁸³ The catalogue of these object see in: KORNBLUTH, G.: *Engraved Gems of the Carolingian Empire*, 1995.

⁸⁴ KORNBLUTH, G.: *Engraved Gems of the Carolingian Empire*, , pp. 19-20.

⁸⁵ KORNBLUTH, G.: *Active Optics*, 2014, pp. 1-36 (esp. pp. 20-31).

⁸⁶ British Museum, London, Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities. In: KORNBLUTH, G.: *Carolingian Engraved Gems*, 1997, pp. 89-94, no. 14.

⁸⁷ KORNBLUTH, G.: *Active Optics*, 2014, p. 15.

The particularity of inserting relics into throne is in the Carolingian period probably based on the permeation of two traditions coexistent in the Franks realm; Germanic and Christian. In the German tradition the oaths on various objects were taken, among others on chairs of leaders. In 803, however, Charlemagne made normative a practice of swearing on a relic, which had been long established among ecclesiastical practices.⁸⁸ This rule has brought inserting relics into objects such as thrones.

Nevertheless, this kind of practice is more widely spread. We are aware of others throne-reliquary known in the West during the Carolingian period. The throne of St. Mark (*Sedia si San Marco*), (Fig. 13) today in the Treasury of San Marco in Venice,⁸⁹ has holes, definitely originals ones, probably for boxes with relics.⁹⁰ According to scholar consensus this throne-reliquary enclosed a fragment of the True Cross.⁹¹ There is another throne-reliquary, surviving only in the written source: the throne of St. Mark taken from Alexandria to Constantinople and offered to the Patriarch of Grado by the emperor Herclius in 630 (and this one throne cannot be identified with the *Sedia di San Marco*, since it was covered with ivory plaques—attested by the fifteenth-century chronicle of Giovanni Candido).⁹² These two thrones were located probably in the Church of Grado, one of them was then lost, one of them taken to Venice. Both of them could have been a throne-reliquary enclosing a fragment of the True Cross.⁹³

This hypothesis now opened cannot be elaborated further here, because it would exceed a format of this thesis. I consider, however, this proposition as an eventual proposal for additional research. Such a study might support or disprove a potential existence of a relic attached to the Charles the Bald's throne, imposed behind an engraved crystal, and also reflect upon a possibility of containing the relic of the True Cross. Subsequently, a probable research proving a presence of a relic would contribute to the discussion concerning the role of relics in the Carolingian period not only in a frame of rulers' representation.

Hypothetically, if we imagine an engraved crystal with Christ—maybe crucified—in the center of the tympanum and the bust of Charles the Bald in the center of the decoration ivory strip below, we see an interesting parallel between Christ (above) and the ruler (below). It was suggested⁹⁴ that this kind of parallel has a clear message; Charles the Bald gain his authority from Christ himself.

Now, in its entirety, there would be a golden throne sparkling with colorful stones, the golden figures on the central panel contrasting with ivory white panel with green and

⁸⁸ On the problematics concerning the Germanic and Christian oath tradition in Carolingian era see: Geary, Patrick J.: *Furta Sacra. Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*. Princeton 1978, pp. 43–44.

⁸⁹ This throne is said to be only an object of a cult and throne for an exposure of open Gospel and it was never used as a real throne due to its proportions. In reality, the proportions 147cm x 55 cm x 53 cm are only slightly less than proportion of Charles the Bald's throne.

⁹⁰ GABORIT-CHOPIN, D.: *Throne-reliquary*. In: *The Treasury of San Marco*, 1984, pp. 98–105.

⁹¹ VALENZANO, G.: *Dalla cattedra di San Marco*. In: *Sotto la superficie visibile*, 2013, pp. 491–499, esp. 495.

⁹² GABORIT-CHOPIN, D.: *Throne-reliquary*. In: *The Treasury of San Marco*, 1984, p. 105.

⁹³ TAVANO, Sergio: *Le cattedre di Grado*, 1977, pp. 445–489.

⁹⁴ DESHMAN, R: *Antiquity and empire*, 1995, 131–141.

red color accents.⁹⁵ There are precisely made ivory strips, unreadable from the distance, decorating the whole object. The golden tympanum with precious stones is occupied with an engraved crystal and probably with colorful gems. Perhaps it is not possible to see what it is on these gems, but the spectators' eye is used to the fact that in the center of the important objects (as processional crosses) there is a relic, the most holy part of the whole object.

Such an object was highly representative and luxury one and in the same time an expensive one. Important is the bust of Charles the Bald indicating a royal commission of the object. The combination of pagan and Christian motives is quite common in this period. There are many examples of combination of such motives in codex of so called Metz group, the court school of Charles the Bald.⁹⁶

The only question left is: how did the throne get into St. Peter's Basilica? It is known for sure that Charles the Bald visited Rome in 875 and was crowned in St. Peter's as the emperor on the 25th of December 875.⁹⁷ Charles the Bald supposedly donated some gifts to Pope John VIII on this occasion. This presumption is based on two comparisons. Firstly, on the act of Charlemagne, described in *Vita Karoli Magni*; because the king was deeply religious, he gave some wonderful gifts to the pontiff, when he was crowned as an emperor.⁹⁸ Secondly, it could be an echo of the Constantine act described in the Constantine's donation – he left to the Pope an insignia, a throne, as a symbolic submission of power in the western realm.⁹⁹

There is no such a written evidence for Charles the Bald but the comparison with his ancestor.¹⁰⁰ Based on these examples, two objects are said to be the Charles the Bald's gift to the Pope at his coronation: Bible *San Paolo fuori le mura*¹⁰¹ and the throne.

The king's throne, however, seems as a little bit odd a gift to the Pope when compared with other Carolingian royal gifts. There are two evidences of royal's gifts to the Popes treasury: Charlemagne gifted a silver and gold mensa,¹⁰² and a mensa was also a gift of Pipin the Short.¹⁰³ Because there is no certain evidence of any Charles the Bald's gift, these two objects with his portrait were attributed to this act. Anyway, if we leave this "gift" rhetoric out, we can ask a new question: why and for what reason would Charles the Bald take his (very expensive) throne to Rome?

Of course, the occasion of coronation would be an appropriated event. It does not exist, however, no direct evidence of using any throne during the rulers' coronation in the Carolingian era.¹⁰⁴ Conversely, it is known that these kinds of rituals (as praxis of pope's

⁹⁵ The Hercules' plaques ivory was in decoration motives incrustated with green and red wax (More on the technique: WEITZMANN, K.: *The Heracles Plaques*, 1974, pp. 23–25).

⁹⁶ *The Grove encyclopedia of medieval art and architecture*/2, 2012, pp. 343–344.

⁹⁷ ALBERTONI, G.: *L'Italia Carolingia*, 1997, p. 56.

⁹⁸ *Einhardi Vita Karoli Magni*, In: *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*/25, p. 31.

⁹⁹ GANDOLFO, F.: *Cattedra*. In: *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Medievale*/IV, 1993, pp. 497–505

¹⁰⁰ MACCARRONE, M.: *La "Cathedra Sancti Petri"*, 1985, pp. 349–447.

¹⁰¹ *The Bible San Paolo fuori le mura*. In: *The Grove encyclopedia*, 2012, s. 343–344.

¹⁰² *Einhardi Vita Karoli Magni*, In: *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*/25, p. 41.

¹⁰³ ANGENENDT, A.: *Mensa Pipini Regis*. In: *Hundert Jahre Deutsche Priesterkolleg*, 1977, pp. 52–58.

¹⁰⁴ BLAAW, S.: *Cultus et Decor*, 1994, p. 611–616.

“intronizatio”¹⁰⁵) required some seat. Vatican Basilica did not offer a throne for a king or emperor; it had only the Pope marble seat in the apse. Thus a new seat for a king had to be brought. In addition, we have an example of a coexistence of two thrones in a church in the Carolingian period: the marble throne of Charlemagne and the bishop seat in the same church in Aachen. And also another widely known example existed in the Constantinople. For those reasons it seems to me plausible that for an imperial presence, in a sacred space, two chairs were necessary. The appearance of a portable throne is in this sense a good solution.

After the coronation ritual, when the emperor left Rome, the throne stayed there as a sort of a substitutional presence, and, in the same time, waiting for the return of the emperor. If the throne was left in the basilica, the most probable place to be located was a chapel of Santa Petronilla. This hypothesis was formulated because the chapel, at the end of the Basilica's transept, created by transformation of an imperial mausoleum near St. Peter's by Pope Stefano II (752–757), was considered the Frank's sanctuary in Rome. The chapel was indeed dedicated to Santa Petronilla, a supposed daughter of St. Peter and the patron of Franks.¹⁰⁶ The iconographic decoration, made in the middle of the eighth century, showed Petronilla as a patron of Franks, and then referred to Constantine as predecessor of the new Frankish rulers. The main intention of the decoration was to legitimize an alliance between Carolingians and Roman pontiffs.¹⁰⁷ Thus, it is possible to imagine that the throne located there could serve as a commemoration of king's coronation but mainly as a commemoration of the King himself, the ruler of Roman Empire, in his absence.

The loss of the throne function came relatively soon. The alliance between papacy and Carolingian realm finished when the dynasty ended after the death of Louis V of France in 987. In that period the throne lost not only its function but probably also its precious decoration, including the gold and precious stones, and was re-located into the Basilica's treasury.

To conclude, in this chapter I have raised the presumption that without the proper understanding of an original appearance of Charles the Bald's throne its potential purpose in the Vatican Basilica can be barely described. I consider the hypothesis of the throne as a royal gift less probable, instead I suggested that the throne was after the King's coronation in 875 installed in the chapel of Santa Petronilla as a commemoration of the King in his absence.

I have also suggested the throne was covered with gold and ivory to remind mythical thrones, as the Salomon's one, and also gems were attached there. In the very center of the tympanum I suspect an engraved crystal with depiction of Christ crucifixion and with a relic of the True Cross hidden behind it. The verification or rejection of this hypothesis, however, I left for a possible future research.

¹⁰⁵ On the papal *intronizatio* and *incathedratio* more for example in: MACCARRONE, M.: *La storia della Cattedra*. In: *La cattedra lignea*, 1971, p. 13–15.

¹⁰⁶ MALE, E.: *Etudes sur les églises romaines*, 1983, p. 351.

¹⁰⁷ VALENTI, D.: *L' iconografia del potere imperiale*, 2012, pp. 115–138, esp. 116.

CHAPTER 4

Becoming the Relic

This chapter discusses the way in which an object had become a relic. We already know this object quite well from the previous chapter, however, now the context is absolutely different. The throne was after the Charles' coronation situated in the Basilica and there it certainly changed its original meaning and underwent a process ending with the status of a relic. I am going to consider questions *how*, *why*, and *when* this status emerged. I will try to verify my presumption that *Cathedra Petri's* relic was commissioned by Pope Innocent III at the very end of the twelfth or at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

The very first record very likely referring to the wooden throne decorated with ivory held in Vatican Basilica comes from the 40's of the twelfth century.¹⁰⁸ The *Ordo of Benedictus* (written between the years 1140 and 1143)¹⁰⁹ describes the celebration of the *Cathedra Petri's* Feast,¹¹⁰ one of the oldest feasts connected with St. Peter.¹¹¹ Among other particularities of this pontifical feast there is also stated that '*Domus papa debet sedere in cathedra ad missam*',¹¹² *The Pope must sit on a cathedra*. Many scholars have pointed out this particularity,¹¹³ which can indicate usage of a special cathedra, different from the one in the apse, at this Feast. The apse's cathedra was the regular Pope seat and its usage was ordinary—thus there would be no need to signalize it in the *Ordo* of the Feast. That means there had to be a different seat which was used only at this Feast and represented a rarity of this celebration.

This presumption opens a possibility to suppose that the original throne of Charles the Bald, stored in the Basilica, changed its function and started to serve as a liturgical item during celebrations of the old *Cathedra Petri's* Feast.¹¹⁴ Therefore, this liturgical object

¹⁰⁸ Michele Maccarrone's opinion varies to this. He considers as a first sure mention a pope election in 1130. The Pope Innocent II was enthroned at the Lateran, and in the same time, his rival Anacletus II was "incathedrated" at St. Peter's '*in sacratissima eius (sc. beati Petri apostolici) cathedra*.' Maccarrone considers this term to imply the wooden throne with ivory decorations. He refuses the hypothesis that by this throne could be meant the marble throne in the apse and assumes an existence of a '*sacratissima cathedra*' already venerated in the Basilica. (MACCARRONE, M.: *La storia della cattedra*. In: *La cattedra lignea*, pp. 19–20).

¹⁰⁹ Benedictus Canonicus: *Le liber politicus*, 1905, p. 149.

¹¹⁰ This old antic feast was held on 22th February. The first mentions dates back to the 4th century. Celebrations have been taking place in Vatican for sure since 11th century but till 12th century's *Ordo* without any mention of using particular liturgical object such as throne. The newest study on this topic with further bibliography: Ravelli, G.: *La solennità della cattedra*, 2012, pp. 57–171.

¹¹¹ JOUNEL, P.: *Le culte des saints*, 1977, p. 225–226.

¹¹² Benedictus Canonicus: *Le liber politicus*, 1905, p. 149.

¹¹³ For example: MACCARRONE, M.: *La storia della cattedra*. In: *La cattedra lignea*, p. 17.; Schimmelpfennig, B.: *Die in St. Peter verehrte Cathedra Petri*, 1973, pp. 385–394, esp. 391.; de Blaauw, S.: *Cultus et decor*, 1994, p. 719.

¹¹⁴ BLAAUW, S.: *Cultus et decor*, 1994, p. 719.

was used as the throne on which the Pope used to sit down in a certain moment during this particular mass on the 22nd of February.

Simultaneously it is possible almost certainly to assume that by this time the throne was not considered a relic. In a writing of Pietro Mallio *Descriptio Basilicae Vaticanae* dedicated to Pope Alexander III (1159–1181), and even in the second redaction of this work in 1192, written by so called canonical Romano, Cathedra is not mentioned as a relic despite detailed descriptions of all more or less important relics in the Basilica. Moreover the wooden throne is not mentioned at all.¹¹⁵ Only a poem *Contra Lateranenses*, ordered in the cod. Vat. lat. 6757 after the text of the canonical Romano, is in the first line mentioned: “*Hic cathedram Petri populi venerentur ...*” – this codex was composed during the pontificate of Innocent III.¹¹⁶

The liturgical aspect established by the *Ordo of Benedictus* was repeated in all followings *Ordo's* until the time of Pope Innocent III.¹¹⁷ The liturgical protocol of the feast was changed during his pontificate. The feast, as “*Petrus ad Cathedram*” on the 22nd of February, was added among most important celebrations with an over-night liturgy.¹¹⁸ This prolongation of the celebration brought along new liturgical readings and antiphons. The main topic of the new protocol was Apostle Peter and his position as the highest one among the other apostles (the Matthew's chapter 16:18–19 was often repeated). This Petrine primacy was interleaved by a commemoration and celebration of the papacy.¹¹⁹

In the course of Innocent's pontificate, another essential event took place on the 22nd of February. Coincidentally or possibly on purpose, Innocent's official consecration as the Pope had taken place on the 22nd of February 1198. The important source mentioning this event is a writing called *Gesta Inocentii III* composed in years from about 1204 to 1209 concerning the first eleven years of the Pope's pontificate in a rather idealized garb.¹²⁰

The author of *Gesta* recorded some interesting information about the Innocent's consecration. He considered it important to explain reasons for a postponement of Innocent's consecration as bishop of Rome. The delay of 6 weeks since his election¹²¹ was in contrary to the tradition.¹²² According to *Gesta* the postponement was caused by a necessity of additional consecrations before his ordination to the priesthood.¹²³ At the 22nd of February, at the *Cathedra Petri's* Feast, Innocent was at St. Peter's “... established on the throne of the same apostle.”¹²⁴ This celebration definitely took place at St. Peter's because after the

¹¹⁵ MALLIO, P.: *Descriptio Basilicae Vaticanae*, pp. 375–442.

¹¹⁶ The second redaction of the Mallio's writing, composed in 1192, is preserved only in a later copy, cod. Vat. lat. 6757, from the beginning of the thirteen century (see editors' introduction in: MALLIO, P.: *Descriptio Basilicae Vaticanae*, pp. 375–381).

¹¹⁷ BLAAUW, S.: *Cultus et decor*, 1994, pp. 720.

¹¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 691.

¹¹⁹ *Ordinarium Innocentii III*, 1997, pp. 376–378.

¹²⁰ The *Gesta Inocentii III* as it appears in the *Patrologia Latina* was translated into English: *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III*, 2004.

¹²¹ *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III*, 2004, p. 6.

¹²² The pope was usually inaugurated at the first Sunday after election (ANDRIEU, M.: *Le pontifical romain*, 1939, pp. 264–265.)

¹²³ *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III*, 2004, p. 6.

¹²⁴ “... et in eiusdem apostoli cathedra constitutus ...” *Gesta Innocentii PP. III.*, PL 214, col. 20.

participants marched in a procession from the Basilica of St. Peter to the Lateran Palace.¹²⁵ As it was already mentioned above, the wooden throne was used as the specific object on which the Pope was supposed to sit on during the Feast of the 22nd of February. For this clash of these two events at one time it is possible to imagine some blend between them, thus understand the sentence of *Gesta* literally as well; so that the Pope was *established on the throne of the same apostle*.

The proposal that the wooden throne changed its significance and became the relic of St. Peter during the first third of the thirteenth century can be supported by one source written in winter 1230/31 by Anthony of Padua. One of his sermons called *In cathedra sancti Petri* is a commemoration of his experience of the *Cathedra Petri's* Feast in Rome. This sermon is based on the text of Matthew's chapter 16. Anthony is then occupied with the Roman liturgy and with an object used during this mass, the material cathedra, and he says: "*Peter was unlearned at earth, but the wisest in the heaven, of which he has received the keys. And he sat down on the Cathedra that is binding and loosing judicial power. He sat down at material Cathedra of Antioch and Rome, where is his cathedra demonstrated to people.*"¹²⁶ The most important evidence of this text is the Latin word "*demonstratur*". This term was used by medieval theologians when describing exhibitions of relics.¹²⁷

As clue to better understanding of the moment of becoming the relic could be a closer view on Pope Innocent III's visual representation. I have already expressed his interest in the Feast of *Cathedra Petri*. Now I would like to articulate his attention to St. Peter's Basilica, particularly to the apse mosaic. Pope Innocent III was daring enough to reconstruct the main apse of the Basilica and inset his own portrait there. The reconstruction had taken place in the years from about 1205 to 1210. Although the decoration is now lost we can still reconstruct its idea from Grimaldi's descriptions and Tasseli's drawings (Fig. 14).¹²⁸ The Innocent's mosaic replaced a Late Antique one, about which informs us objects as the box of Samagher.¹²⁹ Such objects keep in their decoration aspects of the original apse and their existence makes possible the comparison between different periods of the apse mosaics.¹³⁰

In general it is possible to say that the Innocent's mosaic is quite conservative. The old schema was used on it, only transformed in particular moments.¹³¹ Christ was now sitting with one hand blessing and with another holding a book, instead of standing with a scroll. Besides him the figure of Peter was changed. He was holding a scroll (as well as

¹²⁵ *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III*, 2004, p. 6.

¹²⁶ "*Petrus erat idiota terrae, sed sapientissimus coeli, cuius hodie claves suscepit ed in cathedra, id est iudiciaria potestate ligandi atque solvendi sedit. Sedit etiam in cathedra materiali Antiochiae et Romae, in qua eius cathedra populo demonstratur.*" (*Sermo in cathedra Sancti Petri*. In: Antonii Patavini: *Sermones dominicales et festivi*/III, 1979, pp. 119–138).

¹²⁷ MACCARRONE, M.: *La "Cathedra Sancti Petri"*, 1985, p. 437.

¹²⁸ QUEIJO, K.: *Il mosaico absidale di San Pietro*, 2012, pp. 62–66.

¹²⁹ On the iconography of these object in: FOLETTI, I., QUADRI, I.: *L'immagine e la sua memoria*, 2013, pp. 475–492.

¹³⁰ MORETTI, F.: *L'apside perdute Vaticane*, 2006, p. 87–90.

¹³¹ Andaloro, M., Romano, S.: *L'immagine nell'abside*. In: *Arte e iconografia a Roma*, 2000, 93–132, esp. 114–115.

Christ and Paul on Christ's right hand) with a text: *TU ES CHRISTUS FILIUS DEI VIVI*.¹³² This sentence is crucial. It was said by Peter during a conversation between Christ and his disciples as it is known from Matthew's chapter 16. To this Peter's sentence Jesus replied: 17) "... Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18) And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19) I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."¹³³ This addition to the mosaic is a strong emphasis on Peter's primacy and on the role given by Christ to him.

In the strip under the main scene the Pope had depicted himself. He was standing on the left, while on the right there was a female figure entitled *Ecclesia Romana*. The Pope's dress followed a pattern of pope's dresses described in the Donation of Constantine, with a tiara and a crimson robe.¹³⁴ *Ecclesia Romana* who is dressed in a white was holding a banner. When reading Innocent text *De sacro altaris mysterio* one can come across a part describing the symbolism of colors used in liturgy. In this text the crimson robe was dedicated to grooms, whereas the white one is devoted to brides.¹³⁵ Thus what can be seen in this scene is so called *mystical marriage*.¹³⁶ This scene was important to Innocent's rhetoric. According to his discourse, all of the bishops were in the mystical marriage with their church (*ecclesia*) and only God could annul this engagement; but because the Pope traditionally makes such a decision, he acts not as a man but as God.¹³⁷ To conclude a short part in one Innocent's letter can be used: "*Although I am the successor of the Prince of the Apostles I am not his vicar or vicar of any apostle, but I am only the Vicar of Christ himself.*"¹³⁸ Through such a manifestation of the mystical marriage Innocent represents himself as Vicar of Christ.¹³⁹

Nevertheless what interests me the most about this mosaic is an object between these two people—an empty throne with a cross, and in front of it there is a lamb standing upon a hill. Then there are two lines of lambs going from Jerusalem and Bethlehem. This iconography has its origins in the early Christians mosaics and it is again used consciously as *spolia*.¹⁴⁰ The empty throne, however, was usually in Rome placed in the middle of triumphal arches. Its original meaning, as a throne prepared for *Parousia*, was quickly connected with a representation of a bishop's authority whose seat was situated in the

¹³² Queijo, K.: *Il mosaico absidale di San Pietro*, 2012, pp. 62–66.

¹³³ For translation was used English standard version, 2007. In latin: 17) "... beatus es Simon Bar Iona quia caro et sanguis non revelavit tibi sed Pater meus qui in caelis est 18) et ego dico tibi quia tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam et portae inferi non praevallebunt adversum eam 19) et tibi dabo claves regni caelorum et quodcumque ligaveris super terram erit ligatum in caelis et quodcumque solveris super terram erit solutum in caelis."

¹³⁴ *Das Constitutum Constantini*. In: MGH, pp. 73, 91–92.

¹³⁵ PL 217, col. 811.

¹³⁶ IACOBINI, A.: *Est Haec Sacra Principis Aedes*. In: *St. Peter's in the Vatican*, 2005, pp. 48–63, esp. 51.

¹³⁷ DORAN, J.: *Pope Innocent III*. In: *Pope, church and city*, 2004, pp. 101–114, esp. 103–104.

¹³⁸ "Nos, quamvis simus Apostolorum principis successores, non tamen eius aut alicuius Apostoli vel hominis, sed ipsum vicarii Jesu Christi." In: *Regesta Innocentii III*. I, no. 326, 473 (cit. in: MACCARRONE, M.: *Vicarius Christi*, 1952, pp. 101–124).

¹³⁹ Innocent was the first pope who appropriated this title for himself. Previous Popes were referring to themselves as *Vicarius Petri* (MACCARRONE, M.: *Vicarius Christi*, 1952).

¹⁴⁰ ANDALORO, M., ROMANO, S.: *L'immagine nell'abside*. In: *Arte e iconografia a Roma*, 2000, p. 115.

center of an apse creating a visual parallel.¹⁴¹ In this register this throne was used as a parallel to the marble throne in the apse of St. Peter's and also to the other throne donated by Innocent to *confessio* of St. Peter's tomb.¹⁴²

Nevertheless, I would like to suggest that while the Innocent's mosaic was still keeping its original connotations its meaning was probably even more extended. The image of the throne could be read as a commemoration of the Feast of *Cathedra Petri* and refer to the object used on this celebration.¹⁴³ This object of the liturgical throne is in the Innocent's case linked with his own consecration, during which Innocent was *established on the throne of the same apostle*¹⁴⁴ as I have already mentioned. Thus the liturgical throne gains the connotation of the object which used to belong to St. Peter—a relic. Besides, if we return back to the marble throne in the apse, reconstructed by Innocent, to which the throne of the mosaic is also associated, we can recognize a certain similarity between shapes of this marble throne and *Cathedra Petri*.¹⁴⁵ (Fig. 15)

To sum up Innocent's period, it should be repeated again that a few years before Innocent's pontificate *Cathedra* was not considered a relic. Several years after, however, the throne was "*demonstratur*" to believers on the day of its Feast. Innocent III was enthusiastic about St. Peter's Basilica and the Feast of *Cathedra Petri*. Not only he decided to be consecrated on the day when *Cathedra* was used as the liturgical object, and seated himself on it in a certain moment during the act of consecration, but later he also added the Feast among the important ones. Innocent inserted the image of the throne into the new St. Peter's mosaic; partly because it had the bishop's authority connotations, but now it commemorated also the object which used to belong to St. Peter. Such an image was located under the upper part where Peter was depicted as the chosen one by Christ. Down again, there was Pope Innocent engaged to *Ecclesia* in the mystical marriage. The purpose of this mystical marriage is in the context of Innocent rhetoric the affair of making him *Vicarius Christi*. Thus Innocent is the chosen one of Christ, and the relic is a commemoration to the connection between pontiff and his saint predecessor – but not in the way of representing him, but in a way equal to him.

Notwithstanding the throne became the relic of Innocent purpose, he did not intend to construct a relic for direct veneration by believers. In his mind he desired to have an object through which it was possible to theologially argue the Pope's position as *Vicarius Christi*.

Within a short period after Innocent life some references to the relic *Cathedra Petri* can be traced. One of them was already mentioned above—the Anthony of Padua's sermon written in 1230/31. Another remarkable source, called "*il Miracolo della Cattedra*," is a forgery, compiled between years 1254–1256, which attempted to date itself to the end the of

¹⁴¹ FOLETTI, I.: *Sicut in caelo et in terra*. In: *Iconographica* 10/11, 2011/12, pp. 33–46.

¹⁴² ANDALORO, M., ROMANO, S.: *L'immagine nell'abside*. In: *Arte e iconografia a Roma*, 2000, p. 115.

¹⁴³ KESSLER, H.: *La decorazione della Basilica*. In: *Rome a Giubilei*, 1999, p. 264.

¹⁴⁴ *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III*, 2004, p. 6.

¹⁴⁵ IACOBINI, A.: *Est Haec Sacra Principis Aedes*. In: *St. Peter's in the Vatican*, 2005, p. 53.

twelfth century.¹⁴⁶ It is not without an interest that this document efforts to certificate existence of the relic precisely at the end of the twelfth century, when, for example, the second redaction of the writing of Pietro Mallio was produced (1192), which does not mention such a relic at all.

Nevertheless the relic was not a really successful one, because in pilgrims' itinerary for Jubilee 1300, 1350 and 1375, when Rome was filled with pilgrims, there are no mentions about *Cathedra*. That situation changed during the pontificate of Pope Nicholas V. On the Jubilee 1450 he ordered to relocate the *Cathedra* on the altar of Hadrian.¹⁴⁷ Soon after (around 1480) Pope Sixtus IV commissioned a precious ornate for *Cathedra*, on which St. Peter on the Throne is depicted (Fig. 16). Since this period *Cathedra* is mentioned in all following pilgrims' itinerary as the relic of St. Peter.¹⁴⁸

We followed the traces of becoming the relic of *Cathedra Petri*. I have tried to bring forward arguments for Innocent III to be the first one who used *Cathedra* as the Throne of St. Peter. I have also mentioned that the process was not instantaneous. After the Innocent time the relic was shortly venerated, then this cult is basically extinguished and the throne has not been venerated as a relic until the middle of the fifteen century. Since this period the veneration had been slowly increasing. Under the pontificate of Paul IV (1555–1559), the second Feast of *Cathedra*, was established, on the 18th of January.¹⁴⁹ From this time *Cathedra* had been exhibited to the public twice a year on the 18th of January and the 22nd of February, before it has been closed to the Bernini's reliquary.

In the following chapter I would like to show that the Bernini's reliquary had add a new meaning to the relic of *Cathedra*. It has brought it to the center of all events.

¹⁴⁶ MACCARRONE, M: *La storia della Cattedra*. In: *La cattedra lignea*, 1971, p. 29.

¹⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 31.

¹⁴⁸ De CAMPOS, R.: *La copertura quattrocentesca della cattedra*. In: *La cattedra lignea*, 1971, pp. 155–158.

¹⁴⁹ This problematic precisely described in RAVELLI, D.: *La solennità della Cattedra*, 2012, pp. 116–117.

CHAPTER 5

Modern Identity

New Identity: the Bernini's Reliquary

Usually the term *Cathedra Petri* is connected rather with the Bernini's famous reliquary (Fig. 17) than with the wooden throne itself. The meaning the object gained by the fact that it was hidden into the reliquary is predominant even today. This concept given to the wooden chair by Bernini was completely new and reflected topics and necessities that played an important role at that time. These innovations contributed to a construction of a new meaning that the relic has obtained in the modern period.

This new situation was shaped by nativity and spread of Protestantism which entailed the need of manifestation of the confessions also from the side of believers. One of the ways used by the Catholics when trying to differentiate themselves from Protestantism was to declared belonging to the papacy. Therefore the Popes primacy started to be seen as an element of confessional identity. This question was of course highly controversial, even so much that the Council of Trent did not include the questions of Pope's primacy into its confirmations.¹⁵⁰ The subsequent period is defined as an association between the Church's reform and the papacy, through which the reform was spreading. This extension of the reform brought along a rise in the importance of the papacy.¹⁵¹ To demonstrate this idea, a part of famous "*Mirabilia*" can be used, which is a Roman guide from year 1650, explaining the relationship between antic Pagan Rome and Christian Rome. This guide proclaims that the Roman Empire returns but now it is signified by the true faith spreading into the world via papacy.¹⁵²

The reconstruction of Rome, which started at the beginning of the seventeenth century, reflected a prestige of the city desiring to be seen as the capital of all Catholics. This idea was omnipresent; the new infrastructure, including routes and squares with obelisks, fountains, churches, palaces, and many others was a clear message to pilgrims incoming to the city.¹⁵³ The language of art proclaimed two main thoughts. First of them, according to the trident theology, was to give to pilgrims an assurance that devotional practices and religious behavior, such as the pilgrimage, provide access to the salvation. The second was trying to express the idea of divine grace concentrating in Rome.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ SCHATZ, K.: *Dějiny papežského primátu*, 2002, pp. 132–146.

¹⁵¹ Ibidem.

¹⁵² Di NOLA, A.: *Percorsi reali e percorsi simbolici*. In: *Luoghi sacri e spazi della sanità*, 1990, pp. 483–506.

¹⁵³ DOMPNIER, B.: *Continuità della riforma*. In: *Storia del Cristianesimo*/9, 2003, pp. 217–222.

¹⁵⁴ Ibidem.

This rebuilding of the city included the main shrine of Christianity, the St. Peter's Basilica, as well. The long reconstruction started during the pontificate of Julius II who ordered to demolish the ancient Basilica in 1505 and substituted it with a new monumental structure. It has been completed by interventions of Gian Lorenzo Bernini during a long period between 1620s and 1660s. The inner decoration of the Basilica was focused on the construction of so called *Teatro Sacro*. The effort for creation the unity is based on an idea of theatrical scenery in which a performance is enacted; in that case a liturgy and devotional practices. The Bernini's interventions started in 1623 with the baldachin over the main altar, under which lies the St. Peter's tomb. This famous piece of art has represented, then as well as now, the epicenter of the Basilica.¹⁵⁵ The topic of "*the world as a theater*" was highly popular in Rome at that time, and was fulfilled first of all by Pope Alexander VII so well that Krautheimer called it as *theater of theaters*.¹⁵⁶ Pope Alexander VII in cooperation with Bernini created in the main apse of the Basilica a massive bronze sculpture to contain the relic of the wooden throne believed to be St. Peter's.

Before emplacement into the Bernini's reliquary (since the middle of the sixteenth century) the throne was held in the St. Peter's sacristy, exhibited to the public twice a year on the 18th of January and the 22nd of February. During these events *Cathedra* was transported on a portable altar and set up in front of the *confessio*, where it was accessible to believers. Certainly, at the begging of the seventeenth century the throne was abundantly touched by people, for *Cathedra* was believed to have miraculous power of healing.¹⁵⁷ The first indication of changes appeared in 1630 when Urban VIII decided to remove the *Cathedra* from sacristy and to accommodate it in the baptismal chapel near to the entrance of the church. For that reason Luigi Bernini constructed a wooden reliquary (Fig. 18). This rather small, sober reliquary is hardly a foretaste of the incoming Bernini's opulent masterpiece.¹⁵⁸

A new apse of St. Peter's Basilica was constructed in the years 1657–1666 and together with the square in front of the shrine it formed one unit. Bernini's son Domenico described the work subsequently: "*The two works (the square and baldachin), and the porch and Cathedra were, so to say, the beginning. At the end of the magnificence of the great Basilica, remains the eye not less than stunning, in the entrance to the porch, and finishing to Cathedra.*"¹⁵⁹ When explaining Bernini's words, it is important not to underestimate the element of theatrical movement. The visitor is leaving the city and entering the Basilica via square's embrace, and immediately inside the entrance his eye is led towards a frame made of

¹⁵⁵ The last synthesis on the topic of Bernini's interventions with further bibliography: BRANDENBURG, H.: *San Pietro. Storia di un monumento*, 2015, pp. 286–299, or FAGIOLO, M.: *Roma barocca*, 2013, pp. 97–103.

¹⁵⁶ KRAUTHEIMER, R.: *The Rome of Alexander VII*, 1985.

¹⁵⁷ Antonio Ricciuli, Archbishop of Cosenza (1582–1643, archbishop since 1641) expressed widely held belief when he wrote: "*ut si sola Petri umbra proderat ad infirmos sanandos, utique multo magis Sedes illa, quae Cathedra fuit Apostolicae praedicationis.*" (Cited in RICE, L.: *The altars and altarpieces*, 1997, pp. 111–112.)

¹⁵⁸ RICE, L.: *The altars and altarpieces*, 1997, p. 189–192.

¹⁵⁹ "*Le due Opere e del Portico, e della Cathedra furono per così dire il principio, al fine della magnificenza di quella gran Basilica, rimanendo non men attonito l'occhio nell'ingresso per il Portico, che nel termine per la Cathedra.*" In: BERNINI, D.: *Vita del cavalier Gio. Lorenzo Bernino*, 1713, p. 111. (Cited in: LAVIN, I: *Bernini at St. Peter*. In: *St. Peter's in the Vatican*, 2005, p. 156.)

columns and baldachin above the main altar. This frame indicates the Peter's tomb – therefore the place above which the Church was constructed. And exactly through this frame the Cathedra is seen, thereby becoming inseparably visually connected with the very center of the Catholic world (Fig. 19).

When it was closed into the reliquary, the wooden throne was exposed to the public no more – with only two exceptions soon after. An idea of a relic which is too appreciated to be visible is not new over the period after the Trident Council. In those particular cases a piece of art can substitute the relic itself and take over its qualities.¹⁶⁰ Moreover the St. Peter's transept plays role of an enormous reliquary.¹⁶¹ This meaning given to *Cathedra* by Bernini's work is different from the one before. Although in the seventeenth century *Cathedra*, stored at first in sacristy and then in the reliquary in the baptismal chapel, was venerated as the true relic of the Apostle, it was shown just twice a year. Conversely, the visual connection created by Bernini between the tomb and the baldachin in the very center of Basilica and the apse with reliquary that contains the *Cathedra*, formed a possibility of seeing the relic every day-immediately when entering the Basilica. Instead of lateral spaces *Cathedra* was now located in much more important place, even in the most important. This position has created clear visualization between Peter (represented by his tomb) and the Vicar of Christ's chair (confirmed by the true relic kept inside) – thus Vicar of Christ is at the same time Peter as well as the Pope.

Resurrection of the Relic: Pope Pius IX

Bernini's theatrical concept of the seventeenth century lifted the wooden cathedra up to the center of the greatest glory, and assigned to it an essential importance for Pope's primacy but soon it had started losing its purport. By closing the relic into the bronze reliquary, by immaterializing it, by disabling the access to the relic itself, devotion of the people decreased quickly and its sense was disappearing.¹⁶² The relic of *Cathedra* remained in the reliquary for long two hundred years; and then, seemingly suddenly, was exposed.

The occasion of celebration of the seventeenth centenary's of the martyrdom of Saints Peter and Paul, which should attract plenty of pilgrims to Rome, fallen on the second half of June 1867. Pope Pius IX commanded to expose the relic of *Cathedra Petri* during this event (Fig. 20). The relic was exhibited on the vigils of Saints Peter and Paul's feast and during all its octaves, and then the exhibition was prolonged to the 9th of July. The Cathedra was presented in a place suitable for procession of believers; over the altar of *Madonna del Soccorso* (the Gregorian Chapel), at the end of the northern nave. From the written records it appears, that huge number of pilgrims were arriving to see the relic.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ SANGER, A. E.: Sensuality, Sacred Remains. In: Sense and the senses, 2012, pp. 199–215.

¹⁶¹ LAVIN, I.: *Bernini and the Crossing*, 1968, pp. 28–37.

¹⁶² RAVELLI, D. G.: *La solennità della cattedra*, 2012, p. 208.

¹⁶³ Ibidem.

To understand the Pope's intention of exhibiting the relic in this exact time, further context of Pope's view on himself and his relationship to the City has to be explained. During a long pontificate of Pius IX, Rome was significantly modernized. To mention only some of it, at a field of urbanism new streets, important gates (as the one on *Piazza del Popolo*) and squares were built. The most famous is the square *Piazza di Spagna* where a Marian column was erected on the occasion of the proclamation of the Immaculate Conception (1854). This event necessitated heavy interventions into the city center that the Pope was not avoiding. Besides infrastructure he interfered in Roman churches with restoration and reconstruction interventions.¹⁶⁴ During his pontificate at least 48 roman churches were reconstructed. As an example can be named Basilica *San Paolo fuori le mura*, finished in 1854,¹⁶⁵ which has regained the appearance of an early Christian church.¹⁶⁶ To finish this brief list there can be named also two huge sculptures of Peter and Paul placed on Vatican square where they complete the face of the most celebrated Christian place.¹⁶⁷

One of the goals of this *renovatio urbis* was to create out of Rome a city comparable to other Italian and European rapidly developing centers. The papacy also faced the quickly spreading Italian Risorgimento. This movement brought the papacy into a new situation of defending itself, even in the battlefield, as in 1860 in the battle of Castelfidardo. As a commemoration to soldiers, who died in this battle, the Pope dedicated two monuments. One of them is cenotaph in the Basilica of *San Giovanni in Laterano*¹⁶⁸ and the other one is a memorial in the Verano cemetery.¹⁶⁹ A couple of years later in journal *Civiltà cattolica* a novel by G. G. Franco "*I crociati di San Pietro: scene storiche del 1867*" was published, where a description of this monument can be found—it was thought by Pius IX, that on the Verano cemetery, on the holy land over the catacombs of the first martyrs, the memory of the Crusaders of the nineteenth century arose.¹⁷⁰ There was born a reference to those, who were defending Rome, as martyrs; and it gives an account of the role, which the Roman Church had chosen for itself: conscious martyr of modern times.¹⁷¹

Another papal reaction to Risorgimento can be traced at the Great Exhibition in Paris (1867). For this occasion the Papal State decided to present to the world a very precise and large replica of the Catacombs, designed by Giovanni Battista de Rossi.¹⁷² The Papal State used Catacombs to evoke martyrdom of the original Church, and to remind the long continuity from the early to the contemporary Church; and of course to create a parallel

¹⁶⁴ On the topic of Pio IX's interventions in city: Di GIOIA, V.: *La Roma di Pio*, pp. 247–258, and STURM, S.: *La "geografia del potere"*, pp. 53–64.

¹⁶⁵ PALLOTTINO, E.: *La ricostruzione della basilica*, pp. 681–701.

¹⁶⁶ RUSCONI, R.: *Santo Padre*, 2010, pp. 346–348.

¹⁶⁷ JATTA, B.: *L'area vaticana*, pp. 391–400.

¹⁶⁸ Pietro Tenerani, Tommaso Cardelli, Giovanni Anderlini, Cenothap to the fallen soldiers of the Papal State at the Battle of Castelfidario, 1868–1872, Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano, Rome. For further bibliography: GRANDESSO, S.: *Pietro Tenerani*, 2003, pp. 277, 229, note 97.

¹⁶⁹ Virginio Vespignani, Vincenzo Luccardi, *Memorial to the fallen soldiers of the Papal State at the Battle of Mentana*, 1868–1870, Verano cemetery, Pincetto, Roma. (BARUCCI, C.: *Virginio Vespignani*, 2006, p. 117, note 122.)

¹⁷⁰ Concerning the cemetery and its construction for example: Del BUFALO, A.: *Il Verano*, 1992.

¹⁷¹ CAPITELLI, G.: *Arte di Controrisorgimento*. In: *Arte e politica*, 2013, pp. 149–152.

¹⁷² Giovanni Battista de ROSSI (1882–1894), the most influential archeologist on the field of rediscovering early Christian catacombs. In this context is important to mention his work released in three volumes, *Roma sotterranea cristiana* (1864–1877) that is dedicated to pope Pius IX.

between each other. Yet another point, which should not be avoided, is utilization of the reminder of the early Christian period in contrast with presentation of the new state of Italy, with the then capital Florence. The Italian state presented itself by the prestige of the Florentine Renaissance, which became connected with principles of the Risorgimento.¹⁷³

By a brief reminder of the tough situation and reactions of the papacy was pointed out, that the early Christian period was taken as an element of identity, supported by allusion to martyrdom. With these thoughts we can turn now back to the events of summer 1867. The painting of Alexander-Maximilian Seitz, made in 1867 and called *XVII Centenario del Martirio di San Pietro*,¹⁷⁴ is an important source for this occasion (Fig. 21). The painting shows elements of Papal pontificates' interrupted continuity in its history. It strives to restore by that time an obsolete concept presented in the purist language of values of the Church.¹⁷⁵ When focusing on the middle part, there can be seen the allegorical representation of the papacy. Saint Peter sits on a throne in the middle surrounded by his attributes, a key, an inverted cross, chains, and a crown of martyrdom. He is situated in a *mandorla* with the dove of the Holy Spirit above his head. What is important to notice is that this painting applied traditional schemas generally known in Rome, only transforming them. The dove of the Holy Spirit on the upper part is used in the same way as at the Bernini's *Cathedra Petri*, and it sends down its will on Peter. The Saint is located in a *mandorla* which is usually saved for Christ. He sits on a throne very similar to the relic stored in Bernini's reliquary. The Pope kneels at Peter's left side in a position occupied by Peter when Christ is in the center. This rather unusual composition demonstrates the same thoughts as comments in Jesuit journal *La Civiltà Cattolica* on the course of the anniversary.¹⁷⁶ The jubilee of Peter and Paul appears to be an opportunity to attract the attention on the Papal pontificate, whose authority is based on the succession of St. Peter. The stress was given to the status of the first pontiff and the founder of the Church.¹⁷⁷

In the light of these events the restoration of St. Peter's cult and its importance appears to be the most important goal. The celebration of anniversary seemed to be a good opportunity for demonstrating a cult crucial for the Pope's primacy and the exhibition of relic looked like a suitable occasion to do so. This intention also corresponds with other ways of papal self-representation, which can be broadly described as an Early Christian revival. Some of them were named above: the restoration of early Christian churches, as *San Paolo fuori le mura*, the presentation of the Catacombs, and the allusion to martyrdom.

¹⁷³ CAPITELLI, G.: *L'archeologia cristiana al servizio di Pio IX*. In: *Martiri, santi, patroni*, 2012, pp. 555–566.

¹⁷⁴ Oil on canvas, is owned by Vatican City, stored in Museo Storico Vaticano (Palazzo Apostolico Lateranense). More on this painting with further bibliography: CAPITELLI, G.: *Alexander-Maximilian Seitz*. In: *Maestà di Roma*, 2003, p. 255; and FORTI, M.: *La politica culturale*. In: *La Sala dell'Immacolata*, 2010, pp. 17–51, esp. 40–41.

¹⁷⁵ CAPITELLI, G.: *Mecenatismo pontificio e borbonico*, 2011, pp. 88–89. This concept was also described by Giovanni Battista de Rossi (in: AMATO, P.: *Alexander-Maximilian Seitz*. In: *Pierre et Rome*, 1997, pp. 106–107.)

¹⁷⁶ *La Civiltà Cattolica* 18, 1867, s. VI, X (the 1st June 1867), cit. in: RUSCONI, R.: *Santo Padre*, 2010, p. 349 (footnote 87).

¹⁷⁷ RUSCONI, R. *Santo Padre*, 2010, pp. 348–351.

CHAPTER 6

Vatican Councils

In previous chapters the rare manipulation with *Cathedra Petri*'s relic and its constant preservation in the reliquary were mentioned several times. The *Cathedra* has been removed from the reliquary since the beginning of the eighteenth century only twice – right before the First Vatican Council and then soon after the Second Vatican Council. That allows me to ask questions concerning a reason for such a treatment. It is apparently not a coincidence that on both Councils a question of the Pope Primacy in the Church and his position among other bishops was discussed. The discussions resulted in dogmatic constitutions and the messages of these constitutions differ strongly from each other. I would like to verify my hypothesis that the change in the rhetoric of Pope Primacy caused the change in the treatment of *Cathedra Petri* and I would like to show how and in what manner.

During the events of the summer 1867, accompanied with an exposition of *Cathedra Petri*, the Pope Pius IX announced the official convocation of an ecumenical council.¹⁷⁸ This council, which is known as the First Vatican Council, is most famous for defining a doctrine of papal infallibility in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Pastor aeternus*.¹⁷⁹ This doctrine deals with a question of Peter's primacy among the apostles and with the primacy of the Roman pontiff. The doctrine of infallibility relies on the dogma of papal supremacy as Vicar of Christ according to his Petrine succession. This doctrine quickly became highly controversial and was denied by many Catholics.¹⁸⁰

As it was outlined in the previous chapter, the relic of San Peter's throne was used by Pius IX as a manifest of the Pope Primacy and this caused the connection between the Throne and the events of the First Vatican Council. Or at least, what I think is even more important, the church representatives of the Second Vatican Council's generation understood it that way. To confirm this statement it is enough to point out what was written about the First Vatican Council by M. Maccarrone. In short, he says that on the First Vatican Council the *Cathedra Petri* is treated as a "symbol of Pope's authority" which is reflected in the dogma of *Pastor aeternus*.¹⁸¹ The *Pastor aeternus*'s dogma defies the Pope's status in four doctrines of the Catholic faith as: (1) infallible, (2) important and powerful in his

¹⁷⁸ *Dizionario dei Concili*/VI, 1968, p. 49.

¹⁷⁹ *Pastor aeternus*. In: *Thesaurus Doctrinae Catholicae*, 1936, p. 313.

¹⁸⁰ *Storia del Cristianesimo*/XI, pp. 550-555.

¹⁸¹ MACCARRONE, M.: *La storia della Cattedra*. In: *La cattedra lignea*, 1971, p. 70.

primacy, in which is maintained (3) the continuity of Peter's apostolic primacy, which (4) was given to Peter by Christ.¹⁸²

For such a highly authoritative discourse of this doctrine, which provoked the negative reactions, the generation of the Second Vatican Council desired to adapt the definition of the Pope primacy in a substantially more moderate and suitable mode.¹⁸³

It is obvious that practically in the course of one century, which was filled, moreover, with two world wars that changed dramatically the face of the world, the positions and questions discussed by all Churches have changed. It is not possible to describe the entire situation of Churches in the first half of the twentieth century but what is necessary to point out is the evolving ecumenical movement, rising up to open new dialogs.¹⁸⁴ The Second Vatican Council represents, in a certain direction, a reaction to those changes.¹⁸⁵

It may seem that such a major happenings have nothing in common with the relic of *Cathedra Petri*. But I would like to reflect on ways in which the redefinition of the Catholic Church's self-understanding influences methods of scientific research of one, particular object.

The Dogmatic Constitution of Vatican II on the Church, *Lumen gentium* (Light of the Nations), promulgated by Pope Paul VI on the 21st of November 1964, brought a new definition of the Church.¹⁸⁶ This dogmatic constitution also clarifies the position of the Pope among other bishops. In Chapter 3, line 18, it says:

*"This Sacred Council, following closely in the footsteps of the First Vatican Council, with that Council teaches and declares that Jesus Christ, the eternal Shepherd, established His holy Church, having sent forth the apostles as He Himself had been sent by the Father, and He willed that their successors, namely the bishops, should be shepherds in His Church even to the consummation of the world. And in order that the episcopate itself might be one and undivided, He placed Blessed Peter over the other apostles, and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and communion. And all this teaching about the institution, the perpetuity, the meaning and reason for the sacred primacy of the Roman Pontiff and of his infallible magisterium, this Sacred Council again proposes to be firmly believed by all the faithful. Continuing in that same undertaking, this Council is resolved to declare and proclaim before all men the doctrine concerning bishops, the successors of the apostles, who together with the successor of Peter, the Vicar of Christ, the visible Head of the whole Church, govern the house of the living God."*¹⁸⁷

In other words, the Vatican II, of course, follows the establishment of precedent Council, but in reality reaffirmed a position of the Pope in a hierarchical structure of the Church. It established the doctrine concerning bishops, who participated in governing of the Church.

¹⁸² *Pastor aeternus*. In: *Thesaurus Doctrinae Catholicae*, 1936, p. 313.

¹⁸³ *Atlante storico del Concilio Vaticano II*, 2015, p. 216.

¹⁸⁴ On synthesis of ecumenical movements for example ERNESTI, J.: *Breve storia dell'ecumenismo*, 2010.

¹⁸⁵ *Atlante storico del Concilio Vaticano II*, 2015, pp. 44–45.

¹⁸⁶ *Dizionario dei Concili*/VI, 1968, p. 78.

¹⁸⁷ *Lumen gentium*, chapter 3, line 18,

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vatii_const_19641111_lumen-gentium_en.html (14.3.2016).

In accordance to this text it is possible to understand some of the Pope's actions from the period of Vatican II, including the renunciation of attributes interconnected with the Popes primacy. The papal tiara, worn by popes from the early eighth century to 1963 when it was last used by Pope Paul VI on his coronation, can serve as a good example.¹⁸⁸ Paul VI abandoned the usage of tiara at the Second Vatican Council. At the third session on the 13th November 1964 the Pope deposited the tiara on the altar of St. Peter. The *Secretary of Vatican state* via the *General Secretary of Vatican II* informed that this gesture should represent papacy as more simple and appropriate.¹⁸⁹ The gesture of offering the tiara, however, in the context of the third session of the Vatican II (shortly before promulgation of *Lumen gentium*) has another strong connotation: it was meant also to attract attention to the equality among all bishops, in other words that the priesthood of the bishop is the same as the priesthood of the Roman pontiff. To verify this, the Pope instead tiara wore a lappet as all the bishops. This gesture represented the Pope's target; he was no longer strictly superior to other bishops, but he intended to be seen as their companion. This aim was expressed by Pope Paul IV verbally at the opening of the second council session on the 29th of September 1963. His opening remarks focused on the subjects he wished to consider: collegiality, the relationship between bishops and the Pope, and ecumenism.¹⁹⁰

In the same line I intend to interpret the treatment with *Cathedra Petri*. I dare to compare the event of providing *Cathedra* for research and abandonment of the papal tiara. They both show the will of the Catholic Church to get rid of the obsolete symbols of Papal authority.

The *Pontificio Comitato di Scienze Storiche* (the Pontifical Committee of Historical Sciences),¹⁹¹ in a reaction to the pope's gesture of opening the Vatican archive for a period of Pius IX's pontificate, presented in a letter at the 29th of December 1966 to the Pope Paul IV an opportunity to completely new study on *Cathedra*. As a reason for the proceeding and new examination was mentioned a request of numerous Catholic and non-Catholic for its importance in many historical discipline.¹⁹² On the proposal the special Commission was created to discuss questions and present the project of work.¹⁹³ On the basis of this project an 'executive' commission was convened, consisted mainly by important church representatives—Mons. Michele Maccarrone, as president, who was in that time a president of *Pontificio comitato di scienze storiche*; Mons. Dante Balboni; then presbyter and archeologist and epigraphist Antonio Ferrua, Jesuit priest, in the that the secretary of *Pontificia commissione di archeologia sacra* (Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology), who participated in the excavation under St. Peter's Basilica and he was regarded as the founder of

¹⁸⁸ *Mondo Vaticano - Passato e Presente*. Ed Niccolò Del RE, 1995, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/documentazione/documents/sp_ss_scv/insigne/triregno_storia_it.html (14. 3. 2016).

¹⁸⁹ MALNATI, E.: *I gesti profetici di Paolo VI*, 2013, chapter 18.

¹⁹⁰ Paul VI. In: *The great popes through history*, 2002, p. 526.

¹⁹¹ It was a pontifical commission, which had a mandate to contribute to the development and proper utilization of the historical sciences. More for example in: De PALMA, L. M.: *Chiesa e ricerca storica*, 2005.

¹⁹² *La cattedra lignea*, 1971, pp. V–VI.

¹⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. VI.

St. Peter's tomb. To cooperate on the research also scholars outside of the church hierarchy were invited: for instance important archeologist Pietro Romanelli; or German historian Percy Ernst Schramm.

In the evening of the 26th of November 1968, from 6pm to 8pm, the Commission gathered to testimony the opening of the reliquary.¹⁹⁴ The research on *Cathedra* was conducted mainly in the year 1969.¹⁹⁵ Exactly in those years, the president of the Commission Maccarrone was occupied with a question of church history's revision and interpretation.¹⁹⁶ The Holy See (represented by Maccarrone) was widely open to the revision. The experience of the twentieth century's ideological regime clearly indicated that the ecclesiastical interpretation of the history based on the scholastic doctrine, in which motives of division and differences among Europeans were dominant, has to be revised and interpreted newly with emphasis on aspects of unification.¹⁹⁷ One of the aspects included cooperation and confrontation not only with the other Churches, but mainly with secular historians and their methods of work.¹⁹⁸

This statement mirrors in methods of examination conducted on *Cathedra* and published in the book in 1971. The technical examination included also dendrochronological and radiocarbon method of dating. All the decisions about technical examination were decided before the reliquary was opened. These results confirmed the non-authenticity of *Cathedra*. But still, it is kept in the reliquary, where it was repositioned after the examination. Such a proceeding is in accordance with the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei verbum*,¹⁹⁹ promulgated by Pope Paul VI on the 18th of November 1965. This Constitution clarifies that the faith of the Catholic Church is – besides the Bible – equally based on the Sacred Tradition, which is a teaching given by Jesus to apostles and developing in the Church with the assistance of the Holy Spirit.²⁰⁰ That means the tradition of common faith is the crucial point in veneration images (in the broadest sense, in this category may be included objects).

The text of M. Maccarrone, in *La cattedra Ligne*a,²⁰¹ still valid as the most convincing history written ever about *Cathedra Petri*, text reflects very clearly the new paradigm established by Vatican II. Maccarrone explains the veneration of *Cathedra Petri* as a result of popular devotion and not intention of popes. The today's status of *Cathedra Petri* can be explain by the Declaration of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), promulgated by Pope Paul VI on the 4th of December 1963, in point 125: "The practice of

¹⁹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁹⁵ Ibidem, p. 3.

¹⁹⁶ More on the topic of a revision of the church history: De PALMA, L. M.: *Chiesa e ricerca storica*, 2005, pp. 223–257.

¹⁹⁷ The Maccarrone statement is articulated in series of his letters De PALMA, L. M.: *Chiesa e ricerca storica*, 2005, pp. 223–227.

¹⁹⁸ Lettera di M. Maccarrone ad A. Cicognani, Vaticano 25.9.1968. (In: De PALMA, L. M.: *Chiesa e ricerca storica*, 2005, p. 227.)

¹⁹⁹ Dogmatic constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei verbum*, n. 10

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vatii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html (15. 3. 2016)

²⁰⁰ PESCH, O.H.: *Druhý Vatikánský koncil*, 1996, pp. 269–271.

²⁰¹ MACCARRONE, M.: *La storia della Cattedra*. In: *La cattedra ligne*a, 1971, pp. 3–70.

placing sacred images in churches so that they may be venerated by the faithful is to be maintained. Nevertheless their number should be moderate and their relative positions should reflect right order. For otherwise they may create confusion among the Christian people and foster devotion of doubtful orthodoxy." There is clearly indicated that veneration of images is permitted, but has its rules. In contrast, the point 111 of the same constitution deals with veneration of authentic relics: *"The saints have been traditionally honored in the Church and their authentic relics and images held in veneration."*

In 1940s and 1950s, during excavation under St. Peter's, was announced at first the discovery of the St. Peter's grave²⁰² and in 1965 M. Guarducci published a book confirming existence of Peter's tomb under the *confessio* and then discovery of remains of St. Peter.²⁰³ This turned over the attention to those relics of St. Peter, which were by Pope Paul VI in 1968 said to be *"identified in a way that we can consider convincing"*.²⁰⁴ In such a context the *Cathedra* was not necessary anymore and was offered for the research as an illustration of proclaimed opening to the world and reception of modern methods of scientific research.

To conclude, I would only like to mention an event in November 2013 confirming the rhetoric devoid of old-fashioned relics. Pope Francis displayed Saint Peter's bones during the end of the Solemnity of Christ the King in St. Peter's square.²⁰⁵ There the bones were in the same role as *Cathedra* many years ago, when was exhibited in summer 1867, in commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Paul and St. Peter.

²⁰² HUDEC, L.E.: *Recent Excavations under St. Peter's*, 1952, pp. 13–18.

²⁰³ GUARDUCCI, M.: *Le reliquie di Pietro*, 1965.

²⁰⁴ With this statement a large number of scholars disagree. For all one example: BIANCHI, L.: *"Pietro è qui"*, 2006/504, pp. 331–332, and 2006/505, pp. 363–365.

²⁰⁵ The Guardian, 24 November 2013, *Vatican displays Saint Peter's bones for the first time*.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/24/vatican-st-peters-bones-display-pope-francis> (29. 4. 2016)

Conclusion

The thesis dealt with the relic of *Cathedra Petri* in the course of a long period of time. The materiality of the throne, which reveals its Carolingian origins, was settled as a starting point. I accepted the consensus of other scholars on dating and province, for many of the researches were made on this topic. But since only a torso of throne's original splendor survived to these days, an attempt has been made to reconstruct its original appearance according to other Carolingians works of the given period. Once again, at least in mind, the shining gold throne reappeared, decorated with countless precious stones, delicate ivory strips and colorful ivory plaques, and with translucent engraved crystal with a relic in the center—although this hypothesis was left as an proposal to additional research. Because of the great magnificence and depiction of King Charles the Bald in ivory, the throne was definitely his commitment and probably had a certain function at his imperial coronation in 875 in the St. Peter's Basilica. After this ritual the throne was located in the St. Peter's chapel dedicated to Frank's patron Santa Petronilla, which featured, since the middle of eighth century, a demonstration of a legitimate connection between Frankish rulers and popes.

In the following chapter the transformation of the Carolingian throne to the relic throne of St. Peter was elaborated. Since 1140s the throne was used as a liturgical object during a celebration of *Cathedra Petri's* Feast on the 22nd of February. There was a moment in a liturgical protocol in which the pope sat down on a special throne located by an altar—it is highly probable that this throne was already the object which lately became known as the relic of *Cathedra Petri*. In this time, however, it was considered nothing more than a liturgical item. Nevertheless, the idea considering the throne to be an object used by St. Peter was born in the head of Pope Innocent III (1198–1216). The author of his idealized biography *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III* wrote that Innocent was consecrated on the 22nd of February, Feast of *Cathedra Petri*, and on this occasion he sat on the throne of the apostle Peter. By the Innocent period, the Feast celebration was enhanced and became one of the most important feasts in the Vatican Basilica. The Pope, however, did not really mean to create a relic for veneration but rather an object of his own representation, for instance as the Vicar of Christ. In relation to general relics' issue this chapter showed one example of making a second-class relic. In this case it was an intentional creation serving as confirmation of the Pope's status.

Subsequently, an effort was made to show that an encasement into the magnificent Bernini's reliquary established an important change in *Cathedra Petri's* meaning. The object was, through the reliquary, bound visually with St. Peter's grave and it was visible immediately when entering the Basilica. This insertion of the object into the reliquary increased its importance as one of the most significant relics confirming the Pope's primacy. Such a usage was clearly traced in the period of the second half of the nineteen century, when the crisis of papacy motivated the Pope Pius IX to exhibit *Cathedra* after two hundred years. As an occasion for this exhibition was chosen the celebration of the

seventeenth centenary's martyrdom of Saints Peter and Paul in the second half of the June 1867. Witnessed by innumerable pilgrims, the *Cathedra* demonstrated the continuity and legitimacy of the pontiff, who in the same time announced the convocation of an ecumenical council. The First Vatican Council lodged in minds as the council, where highly controversial and criticized doctrine of papal infallibility was declared.

This affair seems to be highly important for the following treatment with *Cathedra Petri*. The generation of Church representatives in the period of The Second Vatican council saw the *Cathedra Petri* as one of the old-fashioned relics, whose authenticity was not any longer sustainable, and which was connected with the pope's authoritative proclamations. Such manners were undesirable and unattractive in the ambience of the Vatican II. It has been demonstrated that the position of the pope among other bishops in the decrees of the Vatican II lead rather to the equality – in accordance to this trend the Pope renounced some attributes inseparably connected with this kind of manners. In this theoretical frame the treatment of *Cathedra Petri* was interpreted. The examination of the relic, supported by the Vatican, officially revealed its non-authenticity. The book *La cattedra lignea di San Pietro in Vaticano*, published in 1971 as a result of this examination, represents an extraordinarily interesting historiographical material to understand the way of further research and also the treatment of the object. In short, one of my conclusions bearing a general validity is a description of a way in which church councils shape the perception of objects.

In conclusion, the present text is not an exhaustive compendium about *Cathedra Petri*. The purpose was to highlight the most important key points; with such an approach it was not possible to elaborate on all the opened topics in detail and some of the topics were only briefly sketched. However, this text, in my opinion, has revealed new possible views of interest. Firstly, the period of Innocent III and his intentional invention of the relic, which can be included among many other intentional creations of relics in the medieval period, can formulate an interest in Innocent's relic policy taking into account this particular relic.

Secondly, a scholar interest would deserve topics regarding perception, reception and treatment with this kind of objects in a period of both Vatican councils, for this period strongly participated on the formation of current historiography of these objects. Although the discussion concerning *Cathedra Petri* seems in present rather unpopular the above presented text should point out some crucial points to open new approaches or to evoke new interests. A remarkable study would offer a consultation of recent (meaning the second half of the twentieth century) theological approaches to relics and methodology to objects of cult in general that create a paradigm of Catholic scholars and their manner of interpretation of objects from the past.

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Abbreviations

PL *Patrologiae cursus completus*. Series latina. Ed. J. P. MIGNE. Paris 1844–1864.

MGH *Monumenta Germanie Historica*.

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