Camaldolese
Stemma Project

Compiled by Phillip Saunders - Oblate
Camaldolese Downunder Community
(last update November 2026)



Christ the Lord is the one who, like a star, illuminates every person wherever the name of Camaldoli arrives.

- Text from Camaldoli: The Camaldolese Coat of Arms

Gratefulness

October 2020
Susan McGinnis Hardie for the design on the front cover. Susan is a Camaldolese oblate in mid-Michigan, USA.
This was a preliminary sketch for the tabernacle at Incarnation Monastery in Berkeley. The project was never completed. Susan reworked the artwork and colored for this document.
Susan's website: http://www.susanmcginnishardie.com/work-avenue#/new-gallery-1/

Don Emanuele Bargellini OSB Cam – for the insightful writing on the stemma.

Dom Thomas Mazzocco OSB Cam – for assistance with general queries and Italian text.

Dom Claudio Ubaldo Cortoni OSB Cam for assistance with his invaluable text of "The Camaldolese Coat of Arms".

Fr. Cyprian Consiglio OSB Cam, Prior New Camaldoli for encouragement and for inadvertantly birthing the idea.

Fr. Andrew Colnaghi, Incarnation Monastery, Berkeley, California. For making available the Don Bargellini document and assistance with translation.

Eleanor Errante – Camaldolese Oblate, California, USA - for editing suggestions, research, encouragement, fulfilling our Camaldolese charism by providing community and availability, and not least the Chocolate Stemma story.

Rich Veum, New Camaldoli –for photos.

Fr. Dorathick from Shantivanam, India and Tina Goodchild (oblate of Shantivanam) for information.

Chiara Damia friend of San Gregorio, Rome for her stunning artwork of the stemma.

Peter Ackerman (professional photographer) for use of his historic photos and guidance.

Google Translate - A lack of Italian language was wonderfully helped (with some glitches).

Writing is Learning

From the perspective of someone being geographically and culturally distant from Camaldoli this project has given more insight into the tradition and historic roots.
Hopefully this will be of help to other oblates in understanding our tradition.

The project was instigated by a question from a New Zealand oblate Michael Dougherty: *"Why the seven pointed star?"*

Apart from the direct knowledge from our Camaldolese community, the research is mainly a compliation using web search engines and then following the images to find the various explanations and examples. It is intended as a guide with the links to investigate if the section is of particular interest.

Introduction



There is much interpretation of stars. Is our medallion star 6 pointed with a tail or does the tail become another point making it a 7 pointed star?

After finding so many beautiful examples of the stemma the number of star points is maybe not that significant to our oblate community. What seems more significant is summed up in the following text from a booklet *Oblate Rule of Camaldolese Benedictine Monks* (although it does not mention a star)

The Camaldolese emblem, which in its own way sums up our spirituality, is very ancient, predating our Order. It can be found, in interesting variations, in the Ravenna church mosaics, in the catacombs of Rome and even in non-Christian art. It thus has an "archetypical" depth and power. The Camaldolese form includes the chalice and cross at the center, representing Christ in our midst, especially in his paschal and Eucharistic presence. The peacocks, ancient symbols of eternal life, represent the community of faith being nourished from the life of Christ. In their twofold presence they can represent the solitary and the communal dimensions of Camaldolese monasticism (the hermitage and the coenobium), and they can also stand for the monk and the oblate united in the one nourishing experience of Christ. The emblem in its simplest form is represented on the oblate medallion, and can thus be an ongoing reminder of our call to union with Christ, and thus with one another, in the bonding love of His life poured out for all.

Eleanor Errante an oblate in California USA has an earlier version of the oblate medallion. Below are images of her medallion and her notes to me.

As promised here is a photograph of my cloisonné oblate medallion. Cloisonné is apparently a very ancient technique. This one appears to be made of the traditional metal with enamel inlays.
You can see how thin it is. It's both delicate and yet sturdy.
What I know about it I have gleaned from Fr. Andrew Colnaghi of Incarnation Monastery. In a period from the late 80's into the early 90's (if memory serves he says) this oblate medallion was made by a group of Anglican nuns of the Holy Cross Community. Their particular order was known as Santa Helena. Fr Andrew says this arrangement only lasted about 5 years. Not too many were made because in those early years of the founding of Incarnation there were not many oblates. These nuns were located on the East Coast of the United States in West Park, New York where there is to this day a group of Episcopal monks.
The reason Fr Andrew knew of these nuns had to do with his, and Fr Robert Hale's relationship and community with Episcopal monks of the Holy Cross.







John Benedict McKay an Aotearoa/New Zealand oblate suggested that the medallions for this country should be worn using traditional Maori flax cord. All the oblates in Aotearoa/New Zealand now have flax cords. The photo shows the medallion presented to Pat Collins in February 2021.
The flax cord was woven by Kuia (elder) Te Aroha McKay of the Ngapuhi trbe in the Hokianga/ Bay of Islands New Zealand for the medallions.



The image below is from the Camaldolese Oblate Rule Booklet 2026



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Documents

N.B. All the documents were translated from the Italian with some slight revisions in the interest of clarity, but with sincere apologies for any unintended errors. The original documents in Italian are also within this project should the reader wish to refer to the original.

The first document below from Don Emanuele Bargellini, a previous Prior General of the Camaldolese Congregation, provides an insight into the stemma but also the considerable relationship to the Camaldolese charism.

Don Emanuele Bargellini OSB Cam
Monastery of the Transfiguration 22/09/2016.
-– translated into Italian and slightly revised 31/07/2020



Ego vobis vos mihi

I am God for you and you are a people for me

The Symbol of the Camaldolese Family

The Coat of Arms of the *Camaldolese Congregation of the Order of Saint Benedict,* consists of *two doves* who drink from the same cup. Under the chalice a small text reads: " *Ego vobis, vos mihi".*
Sometimes a star is placed above the chalice.

History of the Symbols Formation.
The current symbol has a long history before coming to be used as a symbol of the Camaldolese monastic community. This is why it carries within itself various levels of meaning.
We encounter for the first time a similar image in a mosaic fragment that is part of the archaeological remains of an ancient Roman villa in the city of Tivoli, not far from Rome. A group of flying doves approach a small tank filled with water flowing from top to bottom. By beating its wings against the background of blue sky, doves express vital energy and joy.

Evolution of Meaning.

In Christian circles, the first evidence of this image is located in the famous " Mausoleum of Galla Placida" in Ravenna (V century), an ancient Roman city that retains to this day deep Greek and Byzantine influences in its art.

All the decorations of the mausoleum offer various allusions to Baptism. By means of various symbols and allegories of nature, stars, birds, animals, flowers they refer to the life of the Christian community. Others refer to the Bible. This set of symbolic images leads us to interpret the two doves flying towards the basin to drink water, as a symbol of the faithful who, in Baptism, drink the living water of the Spirit of Christ, which gushes into their hearts (cf. John 7, 37-39).

Ravenna being the birthplace and the cultural homeland of Saint Romuald, Camaldoli cultivated a deep and constant relationship with the city, its culture and spirituality. A relationship strengthened by the long-standing presence of a Camaldolese monastic community.

In the 12th century the fundamental elements of this symbol are found in a stamp of the Prior General of Camaldoli: two doves drink from the chalice. A first reference to the image was found in an ancient codex of the Library of the Sacred Hermitage of Camaldoli, in which, however, instead of doves, two peacocks appear**,** a symbol of eternity. A little later the symbol appears in many codes and structures in the architecture of Camaldolese monasteries and hermitages.

The symbol is enriched with another element - underneath the chalice, a Latin inscription reads the biblical words *: "Ego vobis, vos mihi"* - " *I for you and you for me"* . The text is actually a synthesis of the formula used many times in Sacred Scripture (cf. Deuteronomy 26: 16-17), the prophets Jeremiah (cf 30.22; 31.31) and Ezekiel (cf 11.19-20) , to indicate the "nuptial covenant" between the Lord and the people of Israel, chosen as his "bride", and loved with a faithful and merciful love (cf. Hosea 2:1-25). The central theme of the texts cited is the gift of the Covenant that the Lord keeps despite the infidelity of the bride, and which must be lived in a relationship of intimacy of love, as the Lord did with his people in the desert, while he was on the way to the promised land (cf Hosea 2: 16-22).

The Camaldolese writers, starting from the 12th century, develop a new interpretation, placed in direct relation with the Camaldolese monastic life.

1- The monk / nun, called to follow God in the monastic life, receives the gift and the vocation to live the intimacy of love with God. This constitutes the deep core and purpose of the Christian contemplative life. This intimacy must be preserved and developed through the purification of the heart and the progressive unification of life in the Lord. The monk / nun is called to strive for this unification of life and this intimacy, nourished every day by the bread of his Word and drinking from the chalice of the Lord in the Eucharistic celebration, the

sacramental memorial of his Passover, that is, the supreme expression of his love.

2- The Camaldolese monastic life is divided into two forms, a reciprocal relationship with each other in the communion of charity: the *cenobitic life* or community lived in a monastery, and the *hermit life*, lived in the solitude of the hermitage. Each, and the two together, live a mutual love by drinking from the love of the Lord, shared in the chalice of the Eucharist. The Star, superimposed on the chalice, tells the divine origin of this brotherly/ sisterly love and its goal.

3- The general chapters of the Camaldolese Congregation of the Order of St. Benedict, that have taken place since Vatican Council II, and especially since 1993, have put more and more in light the *cenobitic life and the hermit's life,* not only an institutional pluralism in the Camaldolese context, but above all two interior dimensions that must coexist in the heart of every Camaldolese, whatever the institutional condition in which they live, chosen for temporary or definitive vocation. Monastery and hermitage are a geography - and an interior architecture. Not rigid. Not liquid. But flexible.

4- This inner dynamism of the Camaldolese monastic path, articulated by these two poles in tension, characterized in a healthy and constructive manner the monastic charism Romualdino-Camaldolese presence in the church, and in relation to their own way of other forms of Benedictine monastic life.

Unity in Diversity.

Unitary in its roots and in its objective, pluralistic in its expressions.

This is the Camaldolese monastic tradition and its gift for the men and women of today. A gift and challenge for the Church and human society, which seems less and less capable of welcoming and valuing the differences between people, between cultures and between religions. Diversity reconciled.

Mutual fraternal communion constitutes the visible witness of the Lord's perennial covenant with men and women of all times, prophesied in the first testament, fulfilled fully in the death and resurrection of Jesus, the "new man", and engraved in the hearts of all people as a gift and task to be accomplished in history with the action of the Spirit.

The Camaldolese monk and nun are called to live and witness, in simplicity and fidelity, this mystery of divine and human love. The prayer of Jesus to the Father that his disciples are "just one thing" as are he and his Father, - the burning fire of prayer of the Camaldolese monk and nun.

It expands its horizons towards positive relationships with all components of the human family: ecumenical dialogue between Christians of different confessions, religious dialogue between different religions and wisdom traditions, dialogue with non-believers in search, dialogue with the

multifaceted components of modernity, still so little elaborated by the Christian tradition. Only the Father is aware of the heart of each and all of these human movements. With the Camaldolese monk and nun abiding in the heart of God, Camaldolese is in the heart of men and women of our time, with all its potential, provocations and aspirations.





Don Emanuele Bargellini OSB Cam
Note the stemma on the vestment.

The following texts and notes are from Dom Claudio Ubaldo Cortoni

Note from Dom Claudio:
In most cases the star has six points, with the tail in the tip down, in the direction of the calyx. However, we can find stars with six, seven or eight points, always with the bottom one tailed, in the direction of the calyx. The star is normally yellow, in a blue field.
For the Camaldoli site (https://www.camaldoli.it/), and for the Camaldoli Cultura site (https://www.camaldolicultura.it/), we have adopted the 6-pointed star, with the one at the bottom tailed.
Attached I send a short text concerning the Camaldolese coat of arms and its evolution.
- Dom Claudio Ubaldo Cortoni OSB Cam - May 2020

The oldest evidence of the existence of a library in Camaldoli can be found in the 1253 law of Martin III governing the consultation of manuscripts. The first building that held the library were the rooms adjacent the sacristy that Prior General Mariotto Allegri had constructed circa 1460. It was later transferred to purpose-built premises built in 1620 by the Farnese family. The first library inventory dates back to 1406; it was rearranged in 1693 by Dom Odoardo Baroncini, and after the Napoleonic suppressions was reorganized once again and opened for consultation by the Camaldolese monk Lepri in 1854. With the suppression of religious institutions that took place from 1870 to 1890, the library suffered further dispersion. It was restored through the collections of the Abbot Fathers. Currently, the old library holds ten thousand volumes, including the Psalter of St. Romuald from the ninth century and prints such as the vernacular translation of the Legenda Aurea, printed in Venice in 1475 and miniated for the Rucellai family.

The Coat of Arms of the Camaldolese Order - is written by Dom Claudio Ubaldo Cortoni it is held in the Camaldoli library.

This has been translated from Italian for this project, therefore a link to the original Italian Transcript in the Appendix follows the English text.

The Coat of Arms of the Camaldolese Order [1].

The original setting of the Camaldolese coat of arms, in use in the seals of the Prior Generals since the 13th century and described by Dom Odoardo Baroncini (+1741), historian archivist and librarian of the Sacred Eremo di Camaldoli, in his Chronicon, sees two doves drinking from a single chalice. To this base, other details could be added, such as heraldic symbols taken from the coats of arms of a Prior General's family if of noble birth, or the monogram of the abbey to which it belongs, see the examples of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence and Classe in Ravenna.

If we look at the coats of arms respectively present:

- in the cloister of the Foresteria di Camaldoli, dating back to the XIV century.
- on the architrave of the Beato Mariotto room, also in the Foresteria, of the XV century.
- on the Camaldoli fountain, affixed by Ambrogio Traversari shortly after 1431, the year of his election as Prior General.
- on the tabernacle created by Gregorio di Lorenzo for the church of the Sacred Hermitage in 1462

we see that both the star and any other type of attribute are absent, thus attesting to a basic form that sees only two doves drinking from the same chalice.

The first study that aims to reconstruct the use of the Camalduli signum, through a careful analysis of the documents kept in the archive of the Sacred Hermitage, is due to Dom Odoardo Baroncini and talks about it as mentioned earlier in his Chronicon Camalduli; he underlines how he cannot speak of a single seal, but of different variants formed by the union of the basic emblem, the two doves drinking at the same chalice, along with that of the Prior General, (or parts of it), in office in the years in which the documents are issued.

[2] . Baroncini traces the S. Salvatoris sealum Camalduli to around 1248, the period in which the most important Camaldolese legislator of the thirteenth century, the Prior Martino III, is engaged in the process of institutionalization and centralization of the Order. From the analysis of the archive of the Sacred Hermitage, Baroncini also lists the existence of five types of seals, in which the two doves who drink from the chalice are traced as common elements, to which are then added different details.

Of considerable interest is the fourth seal applied to the Registrum Camalduli of 1347, which seems to reproduce the four stars on the fragment of the XII book of the Moralia of S. Gregorio, bifolium preserved in the Municipal Library of Arezzo, in which two stylized peacocks appear, dorsally opposite, drinking at the same chalice, surrounded by four stars that symbolize the number of Gospels.

1 See CU Cortoni, Sigilla et insigna Eremi et Ordinis Camalduli. Notes for a history of the coat of arms Camaldolese, in "The books of silence. Writing and spirituality on the traces of the history of the Camaldolese Order in Ravenna, from its origins to the 16th century ", edited by Claudia Giuliani, Ravenna 2013, pp. 43-49.

2 Cf. G. Moroni, Dictionary of historical-ecclesian erudition, 1840-1861, p. 297.

In reporting of existing variants, the analysis of the document of 1512 is
Interesting where it describes a seal which instead of the star there are three mounds placed above the chalice, however it does not have anything to do with the mountains on the coat of arms of the Camaldolese Congregation of Monte Corona, which is not yet formed.
Another emblem of considerable interest is the one reported by the Camaldolese journalist Anselmo Costadoni, used by Ambrogio Traversari during his Generalate, which:

- in the first box is present the image of Christ the Savior, to whom the church of the Hermitage is named, in the central box there are the two facing doves drinking from the same chalice, having a crown for each on the head,
- in the left panel there is a saint with mitre, cope and pastoral, perhaps San Donato, patron of Arezzo and owner of the church of the monastery
- on the right panel a saint in cocolla and book, perhaps San Romualdo with the psalter,
- The lower box is unfortunately abraded and therefore not legible.

A second coat of arms, also not mentioned by Baroncini, is the one carved in marble for the Prior General Pietro Dolfin in 1492 for the facade of the Mausolea (later moved to the second Mausolea, rebuilt to replace the first in 1650); present are two dolphins, deriving from the Prior General's family arms, which support the doves also drinking in the same chalice, surmounted by a queued star. The star was replaced by the host in a terracotta emblem; this was commissioned by Dolfin himself, to Andrea della Robbia and placed at the chapel of Sant'Antonio Abate in the Sacred Hermitage.
The star appears to be an element stable in the coat of arms from the end of the fifteenth century, and two interpretations were given for this presence:

- Gregorio Farulli [3] claims that it was Dom David Bernardini, abbot of Badia di Saint Galgano of the Cistercian Order, elected Prior General of Camaldoli in 1251 by Innocent IV, to add a star from his noble family coat of arms, in which evidently there were three stars, he takes one to use in the Camaldolese coat of arms used by him.
- The annalists Mittarelli and Costadoni postpone the appearance of the star by just a year, following the analysis of a seal dated 1252, very similar to the Camaldolese one, owned by a certain Michele in charge of the parish church of Peccioli. Michele was commissioned by Innocent IV to deal with a lawsuit concerning Camaldolese monasteries of Pisa; unable to delegate the task to Sismondino parish priest of Calcinaia, Michele affixes the seal to the letter, formed by a pair of swans or cranes, which rest their legs above a cup or chalice, surmounted by a lily.

In the eighteenth century therefore Baroncini, Farulli and the annalists are those who try to reconstruct the history of the Camaldolese coat of arms; what emerges

3 G. Farulli, Historical information of the ancient and noble city of Siena, Lucca 1723.

from their studies is the presence of two birds facing, that from the thirteenth century drink from the same chalice on all the coats of arms, elements to which in some cases are added heraldic symbols taken from the family crests of the Prior General, if noble, or from the coat of arms of the monastery of origin.

Let us now pass to the hagiographic interpretation of the coat of arms.
Agostino Fortunio in 1575 dedicates an entire chapter of the Historiarum Camaldulensium Libri Tres to the Camaldolese coat of arms, inserting before the text a drop cap depicting the coat of arms with the star above it, and a tail that laps the chalice The author traces its origin to the mystical experience of San Romualdo, when fallen into ecstasy during the celebration of the Eucharist the spiritual meaning of the Sacred Scriptures were revealed to him.
To the story of San Pier Damiani, Fortunio adds the apparition to San Romualdo of two doves going to drink from the chalice. Looking to the meaning, Fortunio identifies in the two doves as the puritas cordis and the simplicitas, while the Christ the Lord is the one who, like a star, illuminates every person wherever the name of Camaldoli arrives.
In the XVIII century it is Guido Grandi who gives another interpretation, indicating with the two doves the relationship between the monastic forms of hermit and cenobitic, therefore between the contemplative and the active life, united by the only source, or the chalice they both draw on. These two forms of life, hermitic and coenobitic, are not what we see in practice in the hermitage-monastery of Camaldoli, but those practiced from the two congregations, that of Tuscany headed by Camaldoli, and the cenobitic Camaldolese congregation which belongs to San Michele di Murano. As for the birth of the coat of arms, Guido Grandi connects it to San Romualdo, although this is uncertain.
Returning to the studies conducted by Dom Odoardo Baroncini, the oldest form of the coat of arms seems therefore to be composed of "two dove-like birds drinking from a chalice", this deduction is plausible as it can be traced back to the Ravenna areas frequented by San Romualdo, belonging in some way to the late antique iconography of the Eucharistic cult. Instead it is unlikely there were two doves, at least until 1248, or before the Order had need to recognize itself in a conventional and common sign, under the Generalate of Martino III. The two doves facing, although present in the Ravenna iconography, hardly take on a Eucharistic meaning and even more rarely are placed on the sides of a kantharos. More complex analyzing on the other hand identifies the two birds as facing peacocks that drink at kantharos, symbolism very common in late antiquity, as the peacock, which represents the immortality of the soul is taken up by the Christian tradition as a symbol of the resurrection of the body.
Venice and Ravenna, where the Camaldolese presence is well rooted for a long time before the date reported by Baroncini as the appearance of the first Camalduli signum, are places of Byzantine influence where it is possible to observe this representative typology, but they are not the only ones, in fact even

in central Italy, after the Lombard occupation, it is possible to trace representations of two faced peacocks drinking from the same cup.
It therefore remains very difficult to understand what the origin of the Camaldolese coat of arms is, and in any case as already said, it begins to enter the common use of the Order by the Generalate of Martin III. The late ancient symbology of the two peacocks drinking at kantharos, present in several Camaldolese sites, including the Abbey of Classe, where San Romualdo enters monastic life, over time peacocks certainly turn into doves.

Link to Italian Text
Lo stemma dell' Ordine camaldolese

Section One
Camaldolese Symbol with Star

If there are any additional images that you feel could be included in this project please email them to me: phillipsaunders@xtra.co.nz

N.B. Where available the original website address preceeds the image.
Some of the links lead to a wealth of Camaldolese knowledge.

http://www.pittorearaldico.it/stemmi/la-posizione-delle-figure-nello-scudo/
The text below is from this website about heraldic symbols. (stemma- coat of arms)

As we have seen on the page dedicated to the Shield and its partitions , the *Field* can be left whole or geometrically divided with one, two, three or more dividing lines in a horizontal, vertical or transverse direction
The best thing would be not to divide it as several figures can harmoniously coexist inside it, but if you decide to do it, 2, 3, maximum 4 subdivisions will be more than enough, taking into account that the use of "partitioning" the shield is tied especially to the need to bring together several family stemma into one large coat of arms.



In keeping the whole field it is necessary that the internal figures, not stand alone and in bulk, but can tell a choral story (ours), as in the stemma of the Religious Order of the Camaldolese which presents " *a golden cup , supported by two counter-flying doves, in the act of drinking from a chalice, surmounted by a waving golden comet* ".
This composition symbolizes the history and the community and hermit lifestyle of the congregation. On the one hand it refers to the maxim of Pope *Gregory the Great* " Nothing outside of God is enough for the soul *that* truly seeks God", on the other it refers to the naturalistic mosaics of early Christian art as an allegory of rebirth through Eucharistic communion of the Souls (Doves) who feed on the Blood and therefore of the teaching of Christ (Cup), under the influence of the Holy Spirit (Stella).

It should be noted that the various links in the following images may have different interpretations, however the texts above from Don Bargellini and Dom Claudio are authorative for our community.



This contemporary text is included because of the relevance of the star in our lives.

2024 January -Epiphany of the Lord
Dom Matteo Ferrari OSB Cam, Prior of Camaldoli

"But the star and the scriptures are needed, because that tender light which God has placed in the heart of each of us leads us to contemplate the Epiphany of God's love for us at Bethlehem's mansion."

Is 60,1-6 Sal 71 Ef 3,2-3.5-6 Mt 2,1-12

THE STAR AND THE SCRIPTURE

Let's celebrate the feast of the manifestation of the Lord by listening to a story that tells us about a long journey. The Lord manifests himself at the end of a long itinerary undertaken by some men - not said to be three - who came from afar "to worship" the Lord. Theirs is sincere research: they go to bring gifts, they go freely. Herod's search is very different, who will not find the child: he also says he wants to adore him, but in reality he is just afraid of it. Let us then be fellow road mates of the magicians, who have come from afar, so that we too can come and worship the Lord.

What drives the magicians? First, it is a star, ancient herald of the birth of the Messiah: a star appeared from Jacob and a sceptre rose from Israel (Nm 24,17), Balaam prophesies in the book of Numbers. But what is a star? It's a sign in the sky that breaks through the history of humanity, illuminates it, raises questions, hope and wonder. The first thing that guides Magic is a light in life, something that lights up in your existence and pushes you to search for something/someone that was born, a child wandering through the tears of the world.

And yet this light contemplated in its emergence risks extinguishing, disappearing, if it is not met with another reality, with another light. It's what magicians find in Jerusalem: the scriptures. This is also the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy: Out of Zion the law comes, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Is 2,3). If life does not meet the Word of God, the star goes out, the small light risks becoming unseen, the dream hidden in our heart, to come to worship the Lord, to remain unheard. Only Scripture can make us find the star again and fill our hearts with joy, like the magicians who experienced a great joy (Mt 2,10), in finding that bright sign in the sky that preceded their path.

With the star and the scriptures, the magicians arrive in Bethlehem and can adore the child: they get there, after traveling a long way and overcoming a lot of hardships, to remain speechless, to put their hand to their mouth for the wonder. Here is the goal of that long walk: to remain open mouth, speechless, before the

manifestation of God in the humanity of a child. Now they can open their boxes: they've discovered that what they were looking for was already inside them. It's like a vocational path that of the magicians: they discover in the child of Bethlehem that what they were looking for was nothing but their deepest and most fruitful reality. The Magi from their chests extract the gold of royal dignity, the splendor and greatness of human life, the original vocation, God's dream for us; the incense of prayer and relationship with God, the offer of life and gratuity; the myrrh of fineness and mortality, the limit of creation and fragility. It is their existence that they offer to the child, to God, by opening the vault of their lives. And the child becomes like "a mirror" in which they can recognize their own life, their calling. Behold the Epiphany of God: in the child the magicians discover God's desire, his love for them.

The path of the magicians reveals something about our lives today. In those mysterious pilgrims who came from afar, in those "foreign" men, and even a little "strange", we can recognize ourselves: in their way we can recognize our innumerable paths, which, in different ways, lead us to worship the Lord, to remain "open mouth", speechless, contemplating in the dining room God's dream, His love for us. Because the end of every true walk of faith is not finding out what we can do for God, what we can give to him, but what God does for us, his love for us, his gift. At the end of the path we also discover that what we were looking for outside is actually nothing but the deeper and more fertile reality of ourselves. But the star and the scriptures are needed, because that tender light which God has placed in the heart of each of us leads us to contemplate the Epiphany of God's love for us at Bethlehem's mansion.



Date : 1605



Date (indicative) : 1715

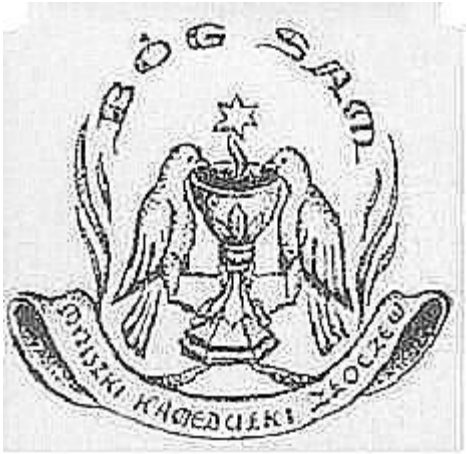


Date: 15th cent.?



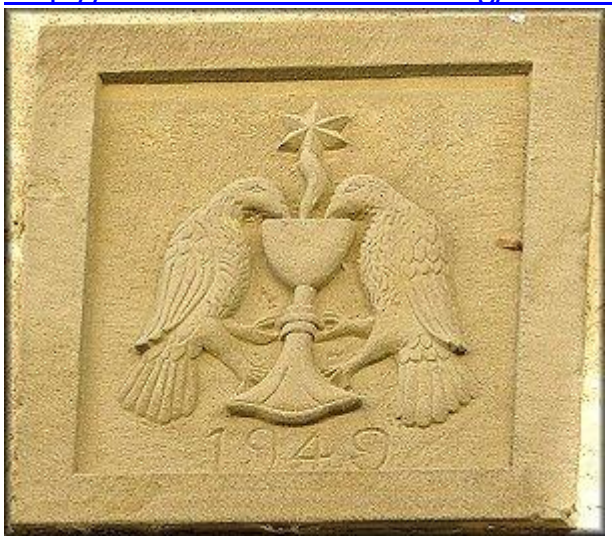
Church of San Martino – Gello di Bibbiena, Arezzo

https://www.kamedulki.eu/xhtml/index.htm

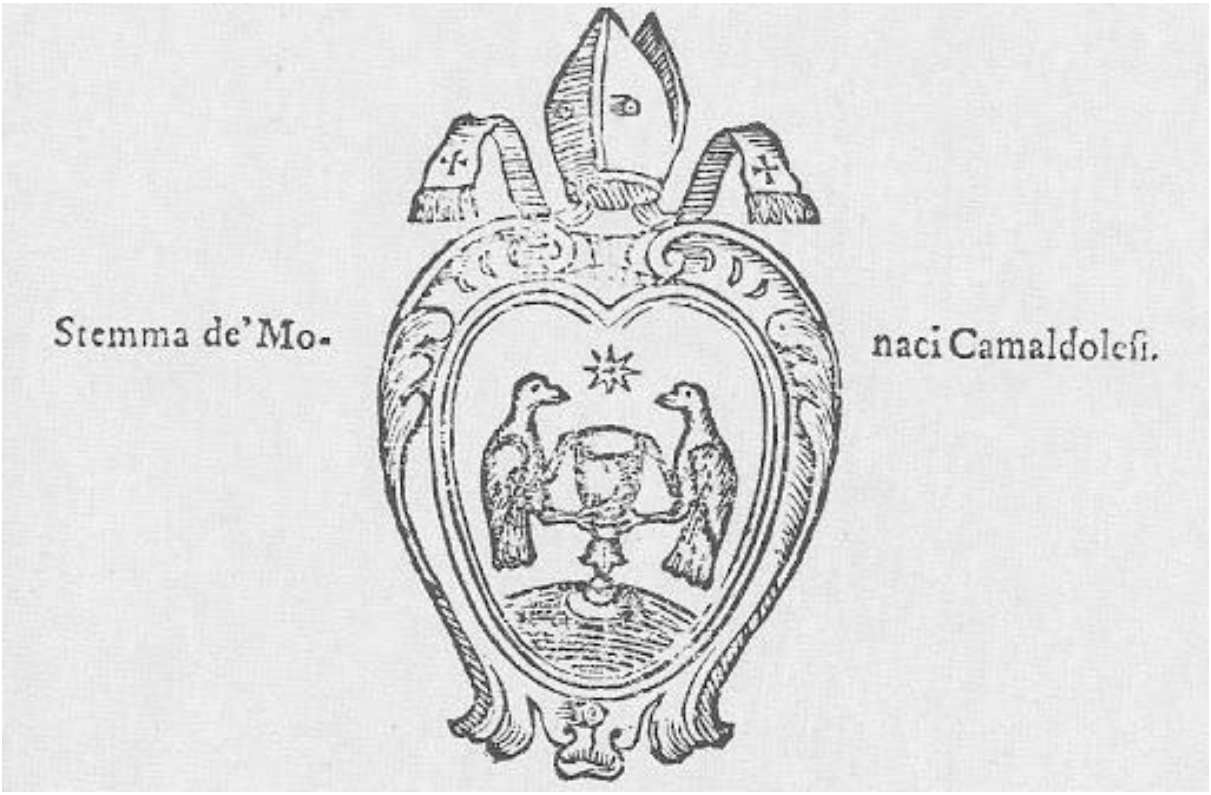


Camaldolese nuns from Złoczew

http://fraternitas1.altervista.org/scena8.html



PARROCCHIA
Santa Maria della Pace



https://calogeromiraviaggi.wordpress.com/2011/06/26/la-chiesa-di-san-pietro-piazza-stazione-ed-il-mercato-del-contadino-di-agrigento/
This website is linked to the illustrations below but does not show on the website, it seems to indicate this is in Genoa





https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Coa_fam_ITA_camaldoli.jpg



Stemma della famiglia Camaldoli (Coat of Arms of the Camaldoli family)
2009 Author: Massimop



Sacro Eremo, Camaldoli

http://www.abbaziadicarceri.it/

Abbazia di Santa Maria delle Carceri

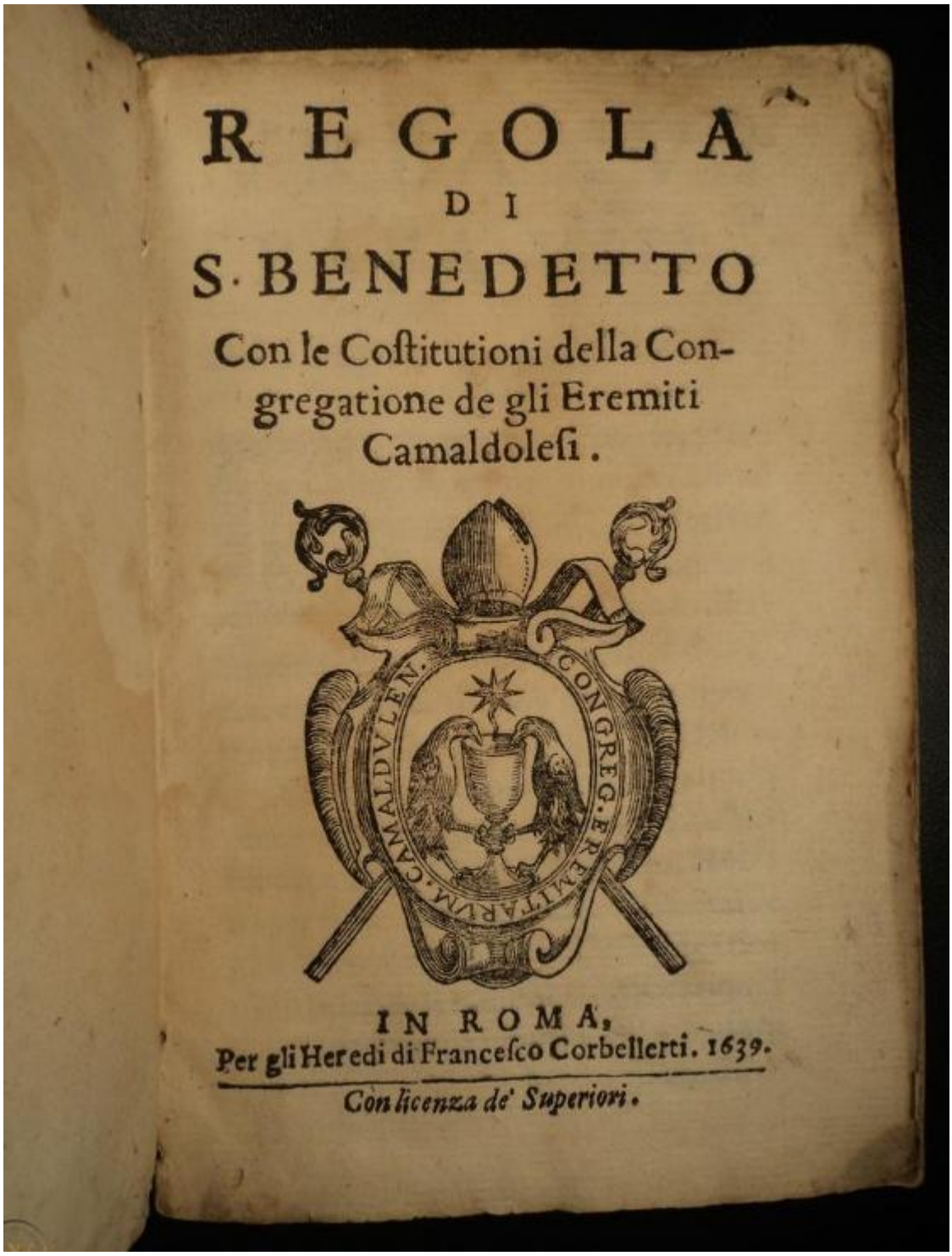


Abbey of Santa Maria of Carceri, via Camaldoli, Carceri, Padua
Camaldolese period: From 1408 to 1690 A

https://www.camaldolesidipoppi.it/en/

Camaldolese
NUNS OF POPPI

https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/1639-rule-saint-benedict-catholic-1787495303



REGOLA
DI
S. BENEDETTO
Con le Costitutioni della Congregatione de gli Eremiti Camaldolesi.

IN ROMA,
Per gli Heredi di Francesco Corbelletti. 1639.
Con licenza de' Superiori.

https://www.aimintl.org/en/2015-05-29-13-29-49/bulletin-103/renaissance-des-camaldules



http://www.tommasomagalotti.it/ceramica/





Ceramic tile and plate

https://www.viaggiaescopri.it/visitare-eremo-di-camaldoli-casentino/



Camaldoli Church

https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Monastir-Stemma.png



The golden comet, with seven rays and with the eighth ray incorporated by the waving tail in the pole, downward
the banner or coat of arms of an Italian municipality .

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:GregoryXVI.svg



This is a depiction of the coat of arms of Pope Gregory XVI.





The church of San Lorenzo, in nearby Mergo, the coat of arms of Gregory XVI, Barolomeo Alberto Cappellari, who, on the left heraldry, placed the coat of arms of the Camaldolese (whose order he joined in 1783, becoming vicar general thirty years later;) keeping that of the family on the right.

https://contemplation.com/photo-gallery/



Handmade stained glass version of stemma New Camaldoli looking into the cloister garden.



Eremo di Fonte Avellena

https://www.lospeziale.bio/viaggio-esperienza-a-camaldoli/



Camaldolese Downunder Newsletter



New Camaldoli Website

https://www.camaldoli.it/

COMUNITÀ DI CAMALDOLI

From Camaldoli Website

http://bianchetti-araldica.blogspot.com/2014/02/



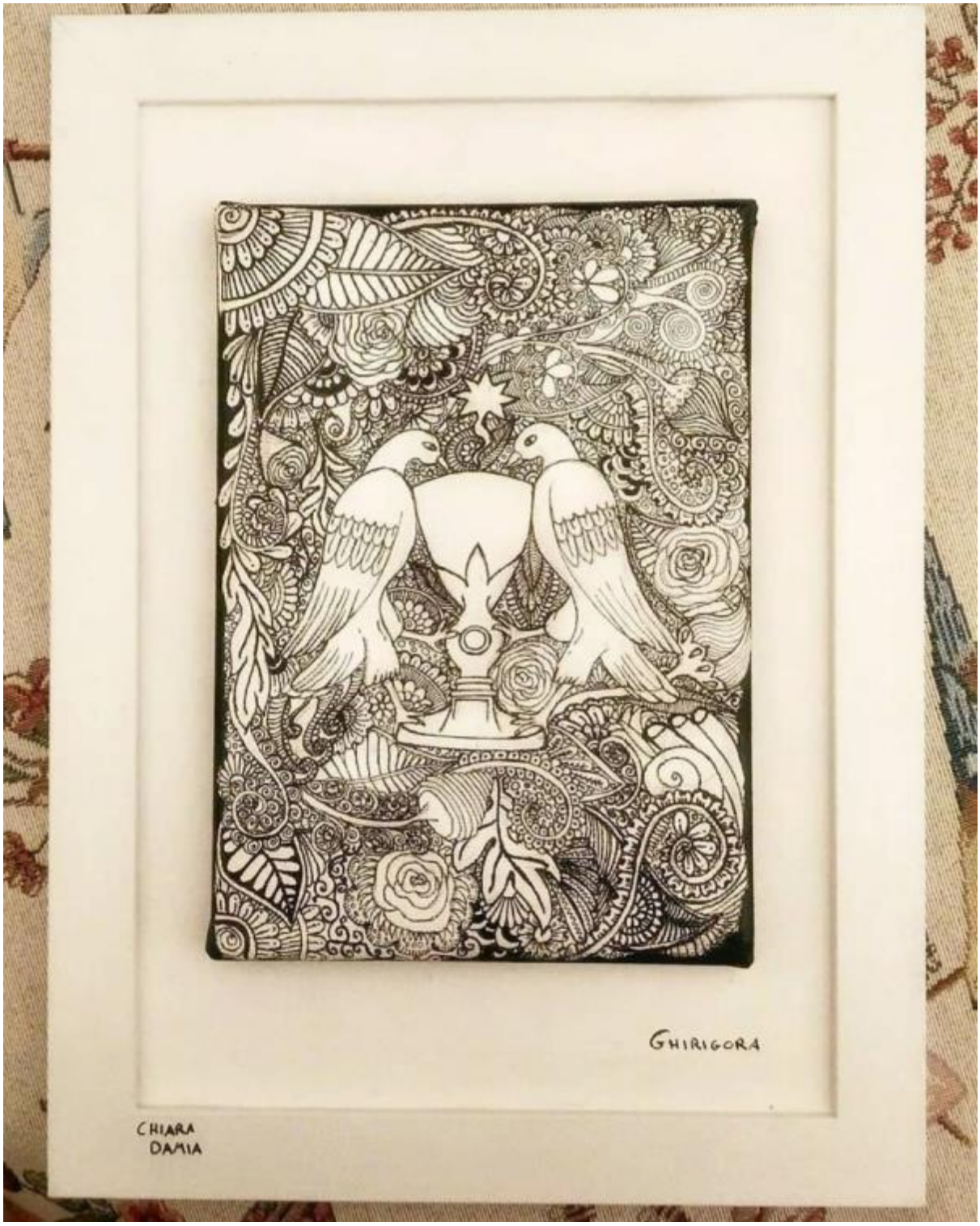
The abbey of Santa Croce built at the end of the XII century

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stemma_camaldolese_S_Agostino_Basciano.jpg



Above the portal of the Church of S. Agostino, Basciano

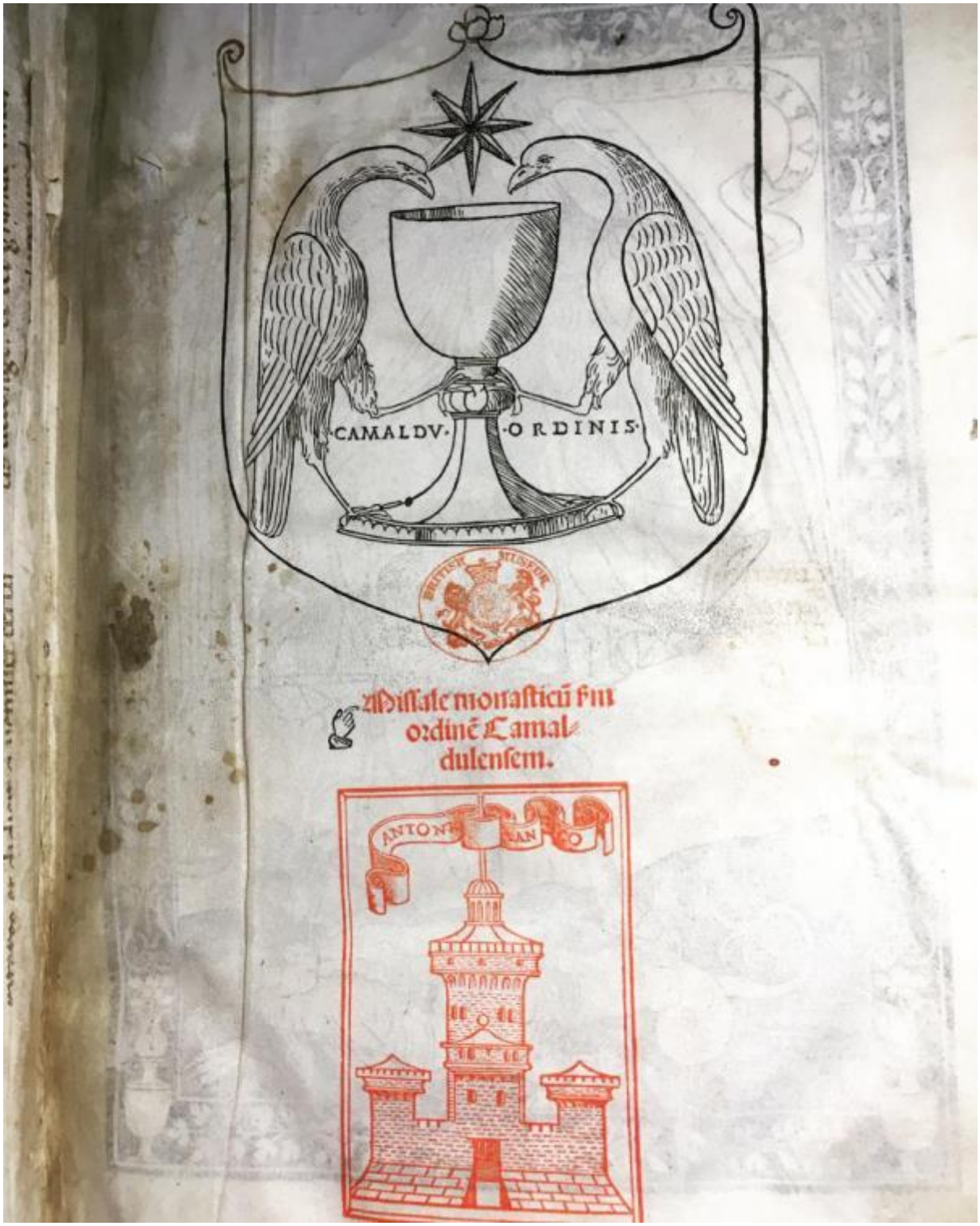
https://gramho.com/media/2264160783756349505



Black ink on canvas

This stunning modern artwork is by Chiara Damia in Rome, Italy. Chiara is a friend of the Camaldolese community at San Gregorio on Caelian Hill monastery.
Chiara decided to pay the community homage by drawing their coat of arms with her technique of using inks on canvas and freehand decorations.
The artwork is now on display in the community's halls.

https://gramho.com/explore-hashtag/camaldolesemonks



Frontispiece, Missale monsticum ordine Camaldulensem, Venice, 1503. London, British Library, C.24.f.8. This early sixteenth-century printed Missal contains the liturgical texts for the Camaldolese monastery of San Michele in Isola. The volume also contains a variety of coloured woodcuts with biblical narratives and prophets. The two doves on the chalice is the Camaldolese emblem and represents their twinned lifestyles: eremitical and cenobitic.
Unknown Instagram Source

https://blogcamminarenellastoria.wordpress.com/2019/07/03/camaldoli-a-piedi-dal-monastero-alleremo/



Camaldoli

http://www.camaldolesiromani.com/monaci-camaldolesi/

Monastero di San Antonio abate

Monache Camaldolesi

Sant'Antonio Abate in Rome

https://www.cronacheancona.it/2018/04/05/torna-a-brillare-sulla-cittadella-lo-stemma-papalino-crollato-quattro-anni-fa/94116/



The heraldic symbol in Istrian stone fell in the summer of 2014
Gregorian Bastion of the Citadel of Ancona

https://www.beweb.chiesacattolica.it/percorsi/percorso/227/Sulle+orme+del+silenzio%3A+il+Vaso+Sacro/pagine/pagina/5/Monaci+nel+mondo%3A+contrapposizione+tra+mondo+e+monachesimo



Jackie Chew – oblate of New Camaldoli
sent this photo and the greeting below.
12th December 2022
Greetings from Brasil on this Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.
It is also the anniversary (2011) of Dom Luigi Lezza's heavenly birth.
He was prior of the Camaldolese monks of Mosteiro das Transfiguracao when I came here in 2008 and 2009-2010.
Last week the nuns took me to see D. Luigi at the Mogi das Cruzes cemetery.
You see the beautiful Camaldolese stemma and also a little photo of him. I left an origami crane in the flowers and two sand dollar shells from the California beach. (This is what I brought the monks in 2008.)
In gratitude for the life of Dom Luigi!
Paz, Jackie



Jackie Chew – oblate of New Camaldoli
Sent this photo of a towel made for her by Sister Genilda at the Camaldolese Monastery in Brasil.





http://www.freyasflorence.com/camaldolese

Since the thirteenth century the Camaldolese monks also have tended a large plot of land out of the forest down in the flat of the valley. Today the area extends over 270 hectares, most of which is used for animal grazing. Nine of the hectares, however, are dedicated to vineyards, which are all cultivated organically. The fermentation and bottling all takes place at the farm called 'La Mausolea' on site run by the monks. The farm has been receiving more and more attention and acclaim in the past few years, the red and dessert wine can be bought directly from the La Mausolea.



La Mausolea farm

There is also a pharmacy in the monastery, open daily to the public, where you can buy products made by the Order. The monks began a hospital next to the monastery in 1046 to help the sick from the surrounding villages…The pharmacy today sells fabulous soaps, creams and lip balm, shampoo, essences, and herbal drops amongst other products, in various scents and flavours.





Transfiguration Monastery, Windsor, New York, U.S.A.



Comissioned by Robert Bruno OSB Cam Obl.
Iconagraphy by the hand of Sayaka Kamakari https://sayaicons.com/



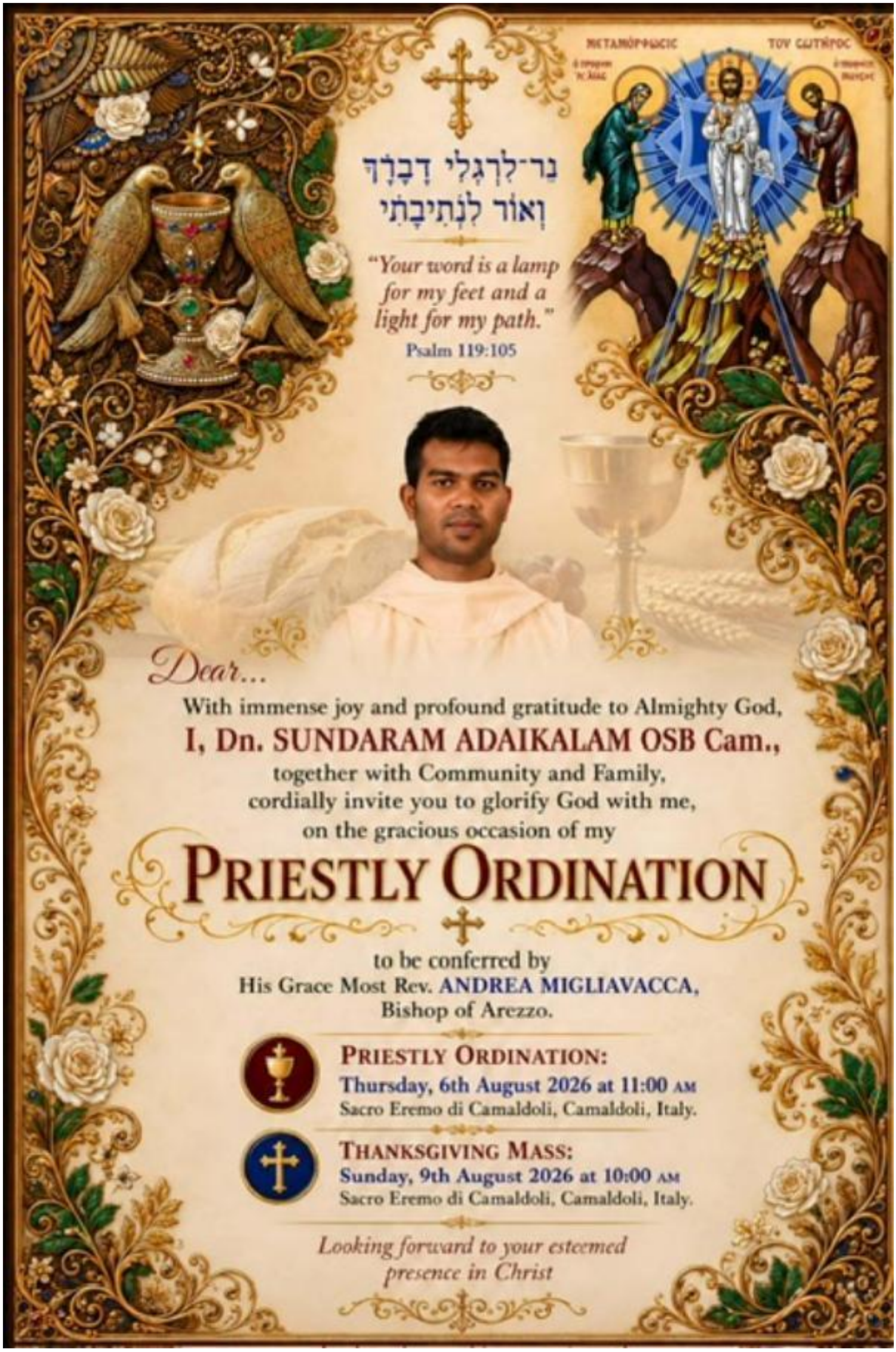
August 6th 2023 - Feast of the Transfiguation
St. Richard's Episcopal Church, Winter Park Florida, USA.
Blessing of Icon Rev. Dale Truscott with Sayaka Kamakara, Robert Bruno.







Monastery of the Risen Christ, St Louis Obispo, California USA
Renovation of the Chapel in May 2026


נֵר־לְרַגְלִי דְבָרֶךָ
וְאוֹר לִנְתִיבָתִי
"Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path."
Psalm 119:105
Dear...
With immense joy and profound gratitude to Almighty God,
I, Dn. SUNDARAM ADAIKALAM OSB Cam.,
together with Community and Family,
cordially invite you to glorify God with me,
on the gracious occasion of my
PRIESTLY ORDINATION
to be conferred by
His Grace Most Rev. ANDREA MIGLIAVACCA,
Bishop of Arezzo.
PRIESTLY ORDINATION:
Thursday, 6th August 2026 at 11:00 AM
Sacro Eremo di Camaldoli, Camaldoli, Italy.
THANKSGIVING MASS:
Sunday, 9th August 2026 at 10:00 AM
Sacro Eremo di Camaldoli, Camaldoli, Italy.
Looking forward to your esteemed presence in Christ

Section Two
Camaldolese Symbol Without Star

http://www.freyasflorence.com/camaldolese

The symbol of the order, two peacocks (symbol of immortality) balancing on the rim of a golden chalice drinking from the contents, can be interpreted as the two life bloods of the congregation, as well as a symbol of the life represented by the Eucharistic chalice.



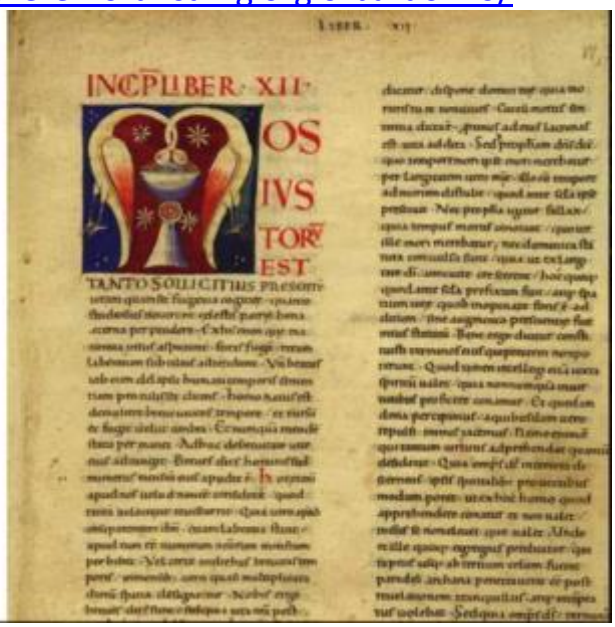
Sacro Eremo



Casentino,Camaldoli - Crest

https://www.elenacecchini.it/en/brand-eremo-di-san-giorgio-bardolino/

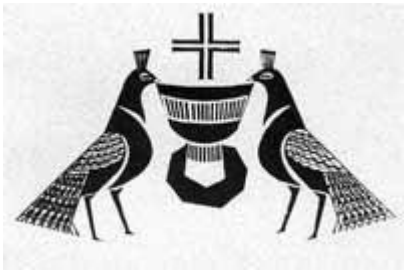




Reconstructed historical icon San Giogio, Bardolino Verona, Italy.
Worth visiting the website to see detail.



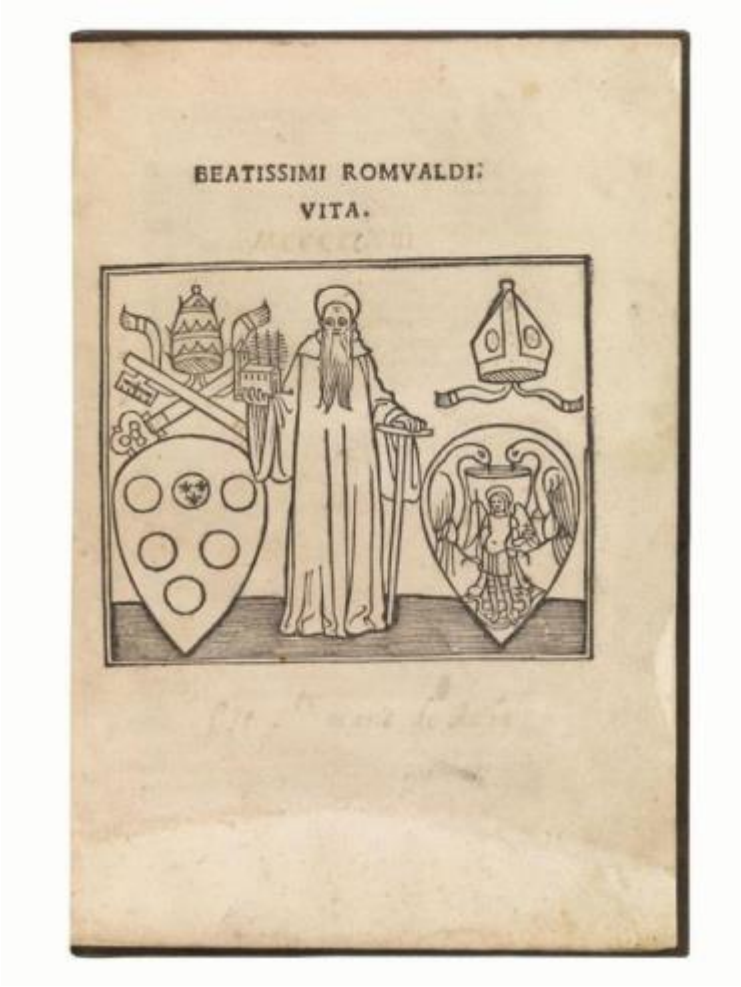
Abbazia di Santa Maria delle Carceri



New Camaldoli Booklet

https://romualdians.wordpress.com/





Book for Auction

(Camaldolesi - Illustrated 500) PIER DAMIANI. *Beatissimi Romualdi. Life.* (Impressum Florentiae, art & industry Philippi de Giunta Florentini, impensis uero totius Camaldulensis ordinis, 1513. die. 20. Ianuarii).
In small 4to (195 x 134 mm). 39 [1] cards, last white. Wide wood sticker with portrait of San Romualdo on the frontispiece, initials woodcut. Full Moroccan modern dark brown color, elegantly decorated in an antique style, sprayed cuts of blue, figured ex libris.
Part two of the approved *Reformatio Camaldulensis* by Pope Leo X, whose coat of arms appear in the illustration on the title page next to San Romualdo, portrayed with his two attributes (crutch and model of the Hermitage of the Camaldolesi), and accompanied by the emblem of the Camaldolese and from San Michele. San Pier Damiani wrote the biography of San Romualdo around 1042, while he was at monastery of San Vincenzo al Furlo (near Urbino), drawing from the direct news of those who had personally known the anchorite monk.
As the list in Sander 2290 shows, it is of a work in its own right, often sold separately from the first part.



Marker at border of Camaldoli Forest.

http://monasteryrisenchrist.com/



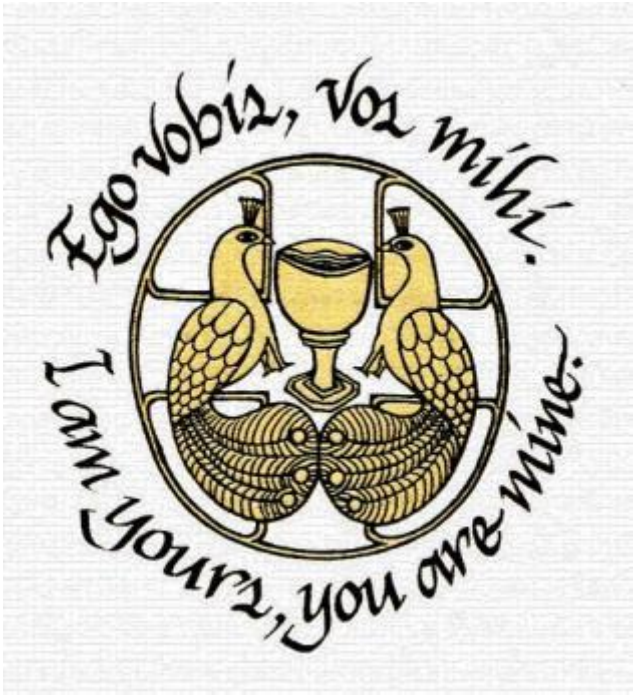
https://incarnationmonastery.com/oblates/

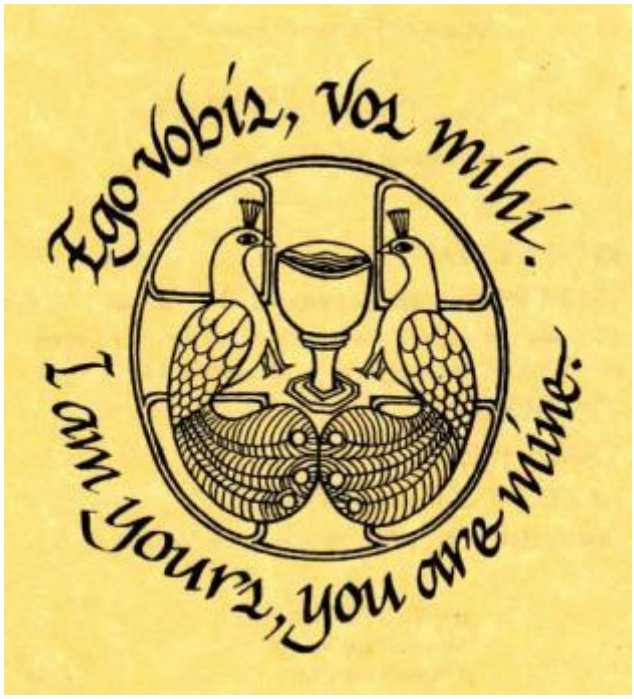


From Incarnation Monastery, California



Sacro Eremo, Camaldoli





The images above were “commissioned” by Fr. Cyprian Consiglio OSB Cam for his solemn vows. The calligraphy is by Brother Mark Mahoney OSB Cam, now deceased. The image is by Father Arthur Poulin OSB Cam of Incarnation Monastery, Berkeley, California. Father Arthur’s contemplative art website is http://www.fatherarthurpoulin.org/





These four images are from New Camaldoli kindly supplied by Rich Veum



Saccidananda Camaldolese Ashram (Shantivanam) - Tamil Nadu, South India.



https://pixels.com/art/dove



https://rear-view-mirror.com/2015/06/08/the-peacock-in-all-its-splendour-and-glory/





Mausoleum of Galla Placidia



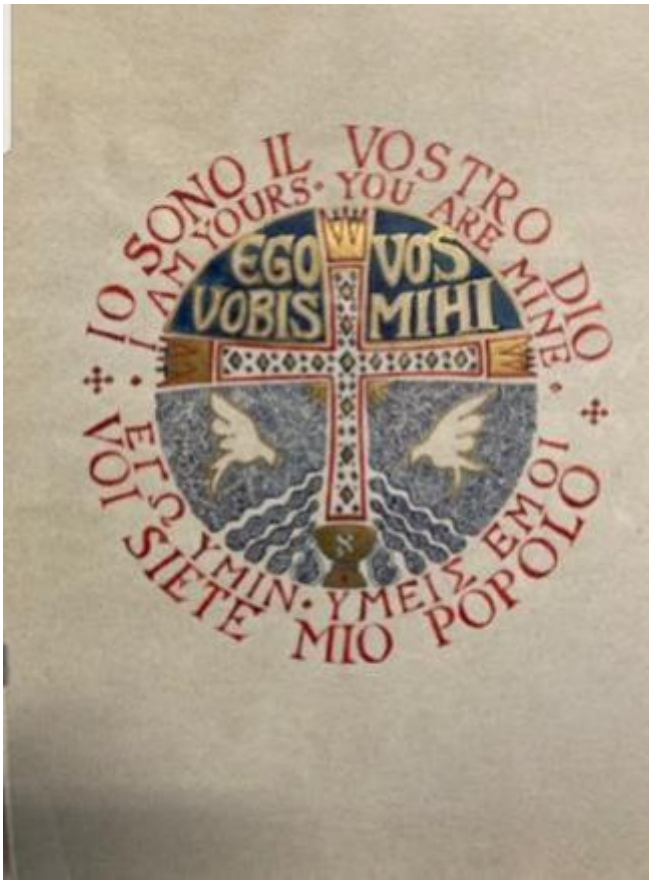
Transfiguration Basilica

This church is on Mt Tabor in the Galilee. The church is where the transfiguration is said to have taken place.

The Basilica was built in the 1920's. The stained glass art is described as "art deco".

Rather than having a star there is instead a triangle. The triangle is said to represent the Holy Trinity.

In 1099 a Benedictine Monastery was founded on this exact site.



A beautiful version of our logo, motto and stemma... – Fr. Cyprian Consiglio OSB Cam 6th September 2021, Camaldoli



This sign (which contains our stemma?!) describes how you can see two "universality spiritual" centers from Poppi, Camaldoli and La Verna which Dante wrote is "in the raw stone between the Tiber and the Arno." – Fr. Cyprian Consiglio OSB Cam 17th September 2021

The link below is a large collection of photos by Peter Ackerman, some very ancient examples.
A few photos from the collection are below.
https://www.flickr.com/photos/28433765@N07/with/18775671231/



Rome, Santa Maria in Trastevere - early Christian relief fragments with representations of a pair of antithetic peacocks around a chalice, a snake at the neck of one peacock, crosses, tree of life, grapes etc.



Rome, Santa Maria in Trastevere - early Christian relief fragment



Rome, Santa Maria in Trastevere. Two antithetic birds around a vessel and Chrismon early Christian relief fragments

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O108800/capital-architecture-capital-unknown/

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England
Architecture capital, Loire France ca. 1100-1125

"Fons vitae" – Fountain of life, stemmed from Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Sassanian sources. It is a symmetrical icon. Two winged creatures, facing each other, are shown drinking (or flanking) from a cup or goblet, the 'Fons Vitae'
In Christianity it developed into a Eucharistic symbol associated with Baptism and Resurrection. In Romanesque art this iconography can be found often within the Auvergne, but there are carvings in Western France and Spain as well.



Sant'Apollinare outside Ravenna
In the monastery of Sant'Apollinare, Saint Romualdo probably began his monastic journey in the year 972 and remained there for approximately three years.



Copper Contemporary Artwork Jan Aijian

"I became an Oblate about 10+ years ago. I've long thought the design of the stemma exquisite. As a metal artist working mostly with larger copper sheet, I was challenged by working at such a small scale. That's probably why I didn't include the Star, it already felt so tiny. The medallion, once it was done, sat for many years on my worktable. I had made a back piece in which I hammered out the motto, "I am yours, you are mine." It doesn't look that great. Due to not making jewelry, I made the mistake of soldering the back onto the front, then hammering the motto. In the upper part, it sort of caved into the cavity of the front. As the retreat approached, I finally decided to make it wearable. I love what I get to do as an art form. It's a very ancient technique, the exact same by which the raised designs on Roman armor were done. I had started sculptural welding in my late 40's. Then transitioned to this technique in 2014. I'm 70 now, and it's a very physical activity to stand over a piece hammering. Arthritis has not shown up in my hands yet, for which I'm deeply grateful!"

- Jan Aijian https://www.janaijian.com/





Santa Maria de Taüll is an 11th-century Romanesque church in the Pyrenees of Catalonia, Spain. It operated as a canonica (a community of Augustinian canons) It was later converted into a parish church and, in 2000, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



The Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta is a spectacular Venetian-Byzantine basilica on the quiet island of Torcello, just 10 km north of Venice. Established in 639 AD The Byzantine marble panels (11th century) on the iconostasis in the Cathedral are carved with peacocks drinking from the fountain of life. The bas-reliefs of the ancient ambones of the cathedral, now incrusted into the wall behind the choir, hardly deserve mention as works of art, but are curious as exhibiting, in distinct rows, the fish, the dove, the lamb, the stag, the peacock, &c - “the whole sacred menagerie,” (Lindsay (1847))



The monastery of Santa Maria Teodote, also known as Santa Maria della Pusterla, was one of the oldest and most important female monasteries in Pavia, Lombardy, now Italy.



Section Three
Vestments

The Historical Library and Archives of Camaldoli, constructed with the support of Ranuccio Farnese in 1622, today contain texts and documents which not only illuminate the history of a thousand year old congregation (1012-2012), but which also encompass the entire history of Western culture.
https://www.camaldolicultura.it/en/

https://www.camaldolicultura.it/en/opere-arte/paramenti-liturgici/?term&orderby=date&order=ASC
Objects of jewelry and liturgical vestments created with precious fabrics, first appeared in the sacristy of the Hermitage of the Monastery of Camaldoli under Prior General Bonaventura da Fano (1315 – 1348) who brought the Camaldolese community, still connected to the Romualdo ideal of poverty, to an increased dignity in liturgical furnishings.
Currently the oldest vestments date back to the 16th century, and are made of Florentine velvet; the most recent one is the chasuble belonging to Gregory XVI (1831-1846), who was a Camaldolese monk.



Pontifical Parade of San Romualdo



Parato Pontificale di San Romualdo





Pontifical parade of the Assumption sec. XVII-XVIII







Section Four
Peacock

From Fr. Zacchaeus's homily for the Easter Vigil... Posted on New Camaldoli Facebook page 13th April 2020 during Covid-19 lockdown

"As I have been thinking about this time we are in now, I couldn't help but think back to another time that we were in a situation like this, held together here somewhat against our will, though not with the same severity. It was three years ago and we were somewhat quarantined by the landslides, with Highway 1 being closed to the south and the bridge in Big Sur collapsing to the north. And we were forced to watch and wait each day to see if our highway was going to be opened and the bridge resurrected. And then, on that Easter Sunday three years ago, the Camaldolese bird showed up in the back in our cloister garden, in the car port and parking lot—a great big beautiful peacock strutted on to our property. This was a sign for us that all would be well, that our fears are over, and that our road and the bridge would someday be renewed and reopened. Our Easter joy showed up as a beautiful blue peacock from our neighbors' property, named Gus, to give us the good news of our salvation still to come."





The following text is from the webpage of Robert Horvat.

https://rear-view-mirror.com/2015/06/08/the-peacock-in-all-its-splendour-and-glory/

The peacock has a long history of being worshipped as a pagan deity or used as a symbol by royalty and the wealthy. Its use in the art of medieval Europe was also largely symbolic and generally related to Christianity. It is from this Christian perspective and interest in Byzantine art that the image of the peacock first appealed to this author. Adorning the floor and wall mosaics of many surviving Christian and Byzantine churches, you are instantly struck by the peacocks vibrant colors and beauty, in particular its 'all seeing eye' feathers.

The peacock was not always a recognised Christian symbol; its roots first lay across in the east in India. As the revered nature of the bird developed through many ancient cultures, Christians began to borrow elements of stories to suit their own needs. The Aristotelian notion that the peacocks flesh never decayed was borrowed heavily by Christianity to associate it with Christ.

In Christian mythology, it is believed that the peacock was rewarded for its abstinence because it graciously declined to eat the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. As a result its flesh would never decay after death.

In nature, the male peacock sheds and replaces his feathers every season, and as such, added to the Christian legend of the peacock as a symbol of rebirth and renewal for Christ.

The peacock and its brilliant plumage and iridescent tail made it therefore an obvious target for early Christian and Byzantine artists to use. For example, the peacock's tail feathers fanned out in a 'halo-like' position symbolized the divinity of saints, while a solitary tail feather came to symbolize immortality and usually often associated with the Christian martyr Saint Barbara.



This peacock relief is a fragment of a ciborium.

Because of the peacock's symbolic protective functions, altars and baptismal fonts of churches were often covered by a ciborium, a stone canopy that is supported by columns, featuring the peacock. Importantly, the peacock also features on funerary art because of its symbolism associated with paradise and resurrection. A wonderful example of this is portrayed on Bishop Theodore's sarcophagus in the right nave of the church of San Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna.

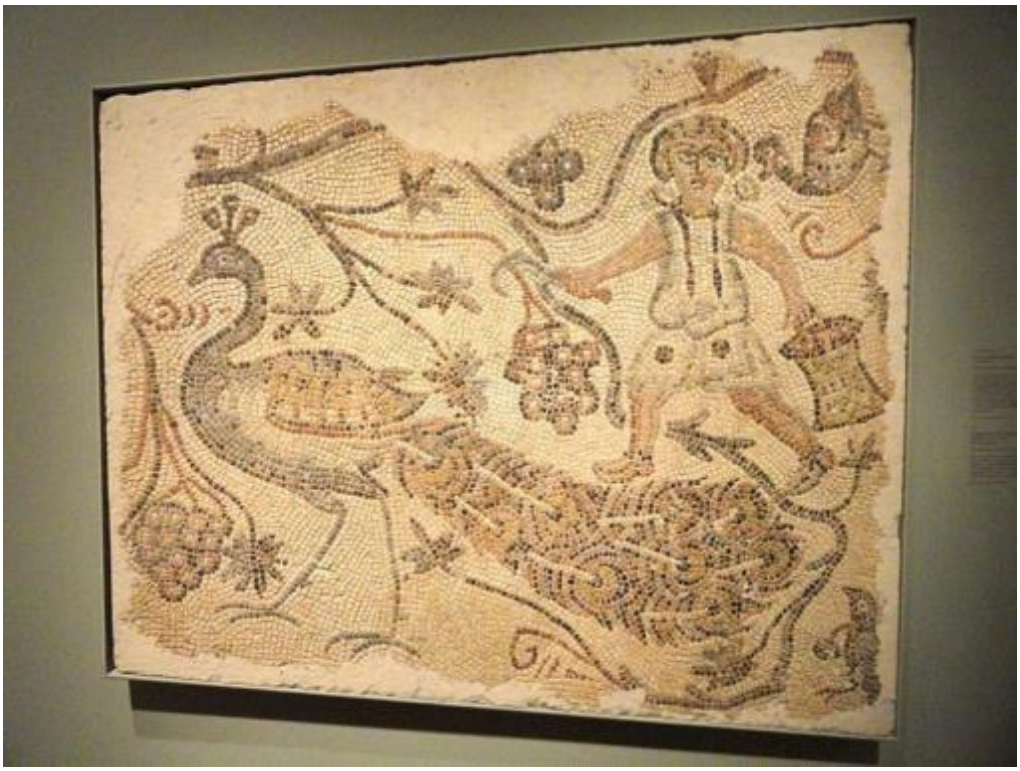


Bishop Theodore's sarcophagus

On the many surviving floor and wall mosaics of churches today, the peacock is strongly represented. You only have to type in a search result for Byzantine mosaics featuring peacocks and you will be pleasantly surprised by the colour and array of peacock images. Often you will find a single peacock or a pair of peacocks depicted drinking from a chalice or fountain. Its symbolism in scenes like this are associated with spiritual rebirth.



Peacocks and other birds are depicted here with a pitcher on this mosaic floor, 6th century. San Vitale Basillica, Ravenna, Italy.

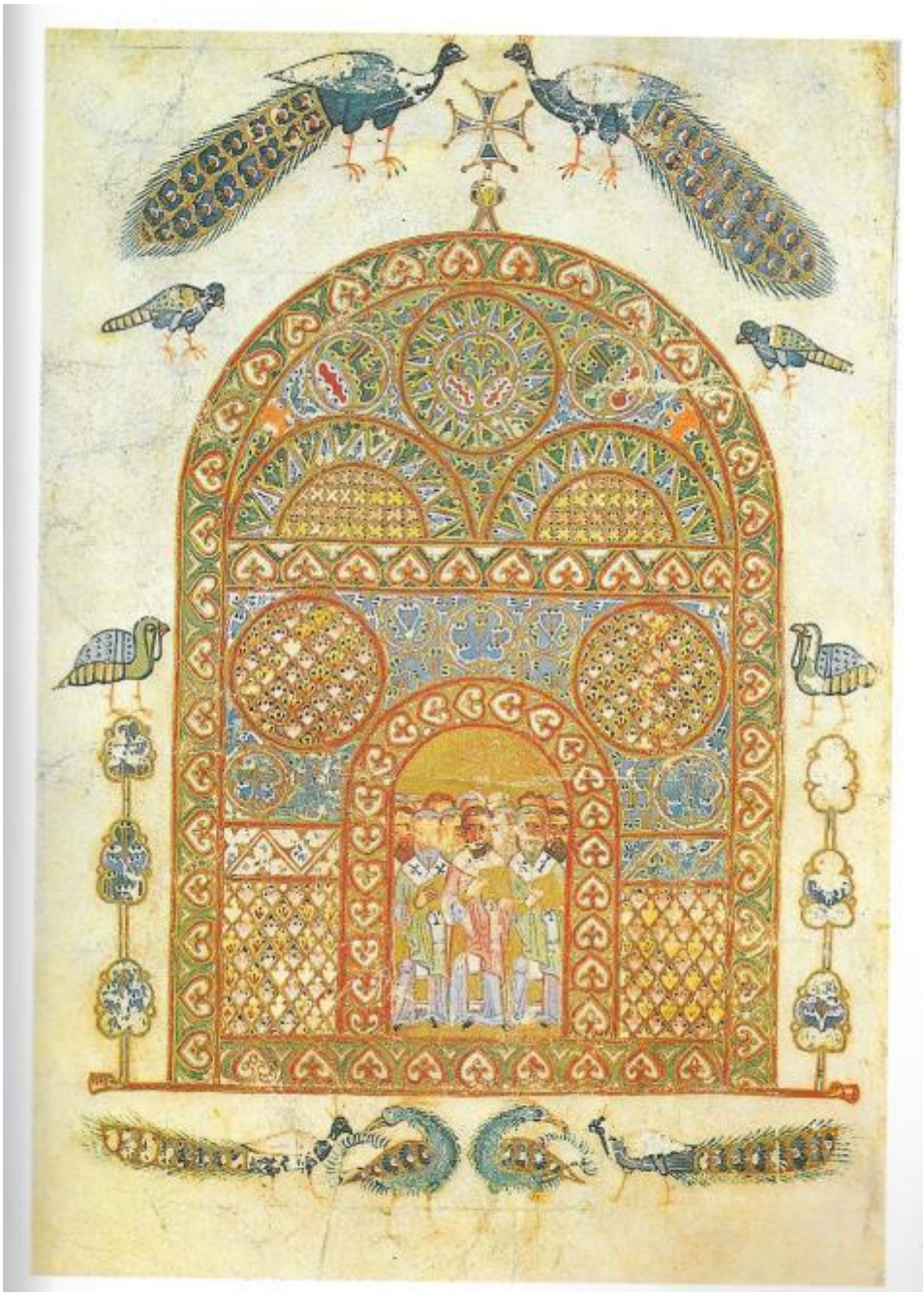


Fragment of a Floor Mosaic, Grape Harvester and Peacock, circa 400s AD, Northern Syria.



This peacock mosaic adorned what was once the atrium of a large palace complex outside the city wall of Byzantine Caesarea, 6th century AD.

It is finally worth noting that apart from adorning the walls and floors of mosaics in churches, medieval Christian manuscripts, both western and Byzantine, were often decorated with beautiful illustration of varies birds including peacocks with meticulous detail. Some were accurately drawn, but most were generally stylized for effect. The miniature overleaf by Christian author, Izbornik Sviatoslava of 1073 is a wonderful example of the typical work carried out by Byzantine artists. It was originally made for Iziaslav Yaroslavich, the prince of Kiev. However it is named for his brother, who ousted him from Kiev in 1073, shortly after the manuscripts completion.



Izbornik manuscript - The Synaxarian of the Three Hierarchs [1073] - Miniature from the Sviatoslav collection

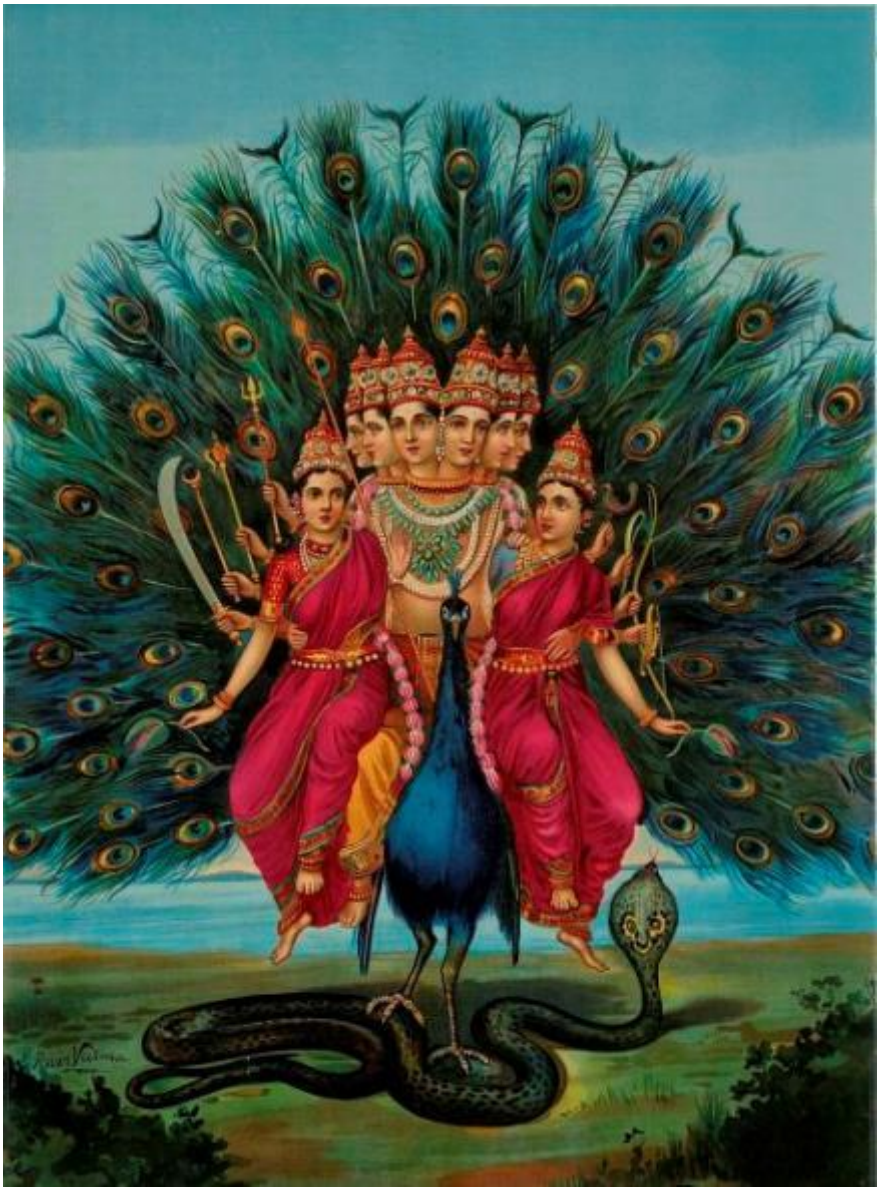
Three Holy Hierarchs
St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian and St. John Chrysostom.

Izbornik of Sviatoslav (1073). Manuscript written in the ustav script consisting of 266 two-column, illustrated parchment folios. It was discovered in 1807 by K. Kalaidovich in the Resurrection Monastery of the New Jerusalem near Moscow and is preserved at the Moscow Historical Museum. A unique theological compendium, it contains excerpts from the works of the Fathers of the Church.

For information about the Izbornix Manuscript visit
http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CI%5CZ%5CIzbornikofSviatoslav1073IT.htm

The following text is also from the webpage of Robert Horvat
https://rear-view-mirror.com/2015/06/06/the-peacock-worshipped-and-revered-around-the-world-not-just-because-he-is-a-showoff/

In its native home of India, peacocks played a part in various myths. Interestingly, for thousands of years it is said that the peacock graced Indian palaces and temples fighting off evil snakes. Further east in China, the peacock was considered a good omen that was able to ward off evil spirits.
In Hindu mythology the peacock was worshipped as a symbol of the sun. The peacock also served as a mounted vehicle to many of the Hindu's war gods including Brahma and Kama, and Kartikeya (below).



The peacock's arrival west of India to Persia or the Middle East is often linked to King Solomon. Biblical stories recall accounts how he brought the peacock back to Jerusalem on board his trading ships. However, we should take this account with a grain of salt, but not wholly dismiss its notion as the peacock has been in this region particularly ancient Persia for a long time. (The peacock was once a great symbol of royalty and power in Persian culture.)

Section Five
Stars and Comets

This website appears the most informative about star symbolism.
http://www.planetgast.net/symbols/stars/stars.html

Star (4-Pointed)



A four-pointed star is usually styled to resemble a cross and is used as the "star of Bethlehem" or "natal star." The cross shape reminds us both of Jesus' birth and the purpose for which He was born.

Season: Christmas

Star (5-Pointed)



The five-pointed star is the star of Bethlehem. Shaped roughly like a human being, it represents Jesus' incarnation.

The Christian five-pointed star should be distinguished from the pagan pentagram, which is formed of five lines which intersect. Most often shown upside down, the pentagram is associated with satanic ritual.

Num. 24:17 "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a sceptre will rise out of Israel. (NIV)

Matt. 2:1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." (NIV)

Season: Advent, Epiphany

Star (6-Pointed)



The six-pointed star is the Creator's star. Its six points stand for the six days of creation. The points are also said to represent the six attributes of God - power, wisdom, majesty, love, mercy and justice. This star is also known today as the Star of David, and is a symbol of modern-day Israel. The six-pointed star is of ancient origin and is used in many religions with a variety of meanings.

Star (7-Pointed)



The seven-pointed star represents the seven gifts of the Spirit - wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, fear of the Lord, and delight in the Lord.

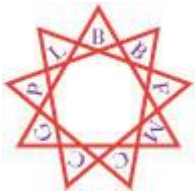
Isa. 11:2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him - the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD - 3 and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. (NIV)

Star (8-Pointed)



Eight is traditionally the number of regeneration. (It is for this reason that many baptismal fonts have an octagonal base.) Jesus was circumcised and given his name when he was eight days old. Baptism is understood to be the New Testament equivalent of the covenant of circumcision.

Star (9-Pointed)



The nine-pointed star symbolizes the nine fruits of the Spirit listed in the Epistle to the Galatians. This star is sometimes shown with the Latin initials for each of the fruits (charitas, gaudium, pax, longanimitas, benignitas, bonitus, fides, mansuetudo and continentia) placed within the points.

Gal. 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (NIV)

Star (12-Pointed)



A twelve-pointed star may be used to represent the twelve tribes of Israel or the twelve apostles. It may also be used at Epiphany, the twelfth day of Christmas, on which the church celebrates the manifestation of Christ as the Son of God.

Stars & Orbs



Twelve stars surrounding a sun and moon represent Jacob and his wife and Jacob's 12 sons, who themselves became the fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel. Together they are an Old Testament type of the whole company of God's elect.

Comets



In history Comets were seen as foretelling bad events.
Pope Calixtus III (1455-1458) excommunicated Halley's Comet, considering it to be from Satan.

https://www.sciencepastor.com/contradictions/signs-in-heavens.php

Nowhere does scripture say that the sun, moon and stars are signs of divine anger and imminent punishment, as the result of an event or action on earth.

Spiritually comets can be interpreted in different ways, rebirth being perhaps more apt for the Oblate medallion, our tradition and values today.
New beginnings from which we can begin the next part of our life journey.

https://notesfromstillsong.blogspot.com/2019/06/feast-of-pentecost-battle-for-kingdom.html

This edited homily below for the Feast of Pentecost from Stillsong Hermitage provides an interesting interpretation. The full text can be read from the link above.

Stillsong Hermitage is a Catholic (Canon 603 or Diocesan) Hermitage in the Camaldolese Benedictine tradition.

The imagery of this reading is profound. For instance, in the world of this time coins were stamped with Caesar's picture and above his head was the image of a tongue of fire. Fire was a symbol of life and potency; it was linked to the heavens (stars, comets, etc.). The tongue of fire was a way of indicating the Emperor's divinity. Similarly, the capacity for speech, the fact that one is given a voice, is a sign of power, standing, and authority.

- Sr. Laurel M. O'Neal Er. Dio.

The Story of the "Chocolate Stemma".



In the summer of 2018 Eleanor Errante a Camaldolese oblate in California volunteered to arrange a cake for the party honoring Fr Andrew Colnaghi's retirement as Prior of Incarnation Monastery after his 26 years of service.

This cake clearly needed to be special. While musing on this in her garden Eleanor spotted a stone image of the stemma that had been in her garden for some years. Eleanor brought the stemma into her house, cleaned it up, and headed to the bakery with the idea that somehow this could serve as inspiration for a cake decoration.

On arriving at the bakery, Eleanor asked to speak with Mr Rulli the cake maker but he was busy so she was directed to his wife, a partner in the business. What ensued was a 45 minute consultation of what was needed and what was possible. The cake ingredients itself were full of complex decisions about each of its layers...many possibilities of fillings as just one example. And what kind of liquore flavor and so on. When all of that was finally settled the question of decoration was next.

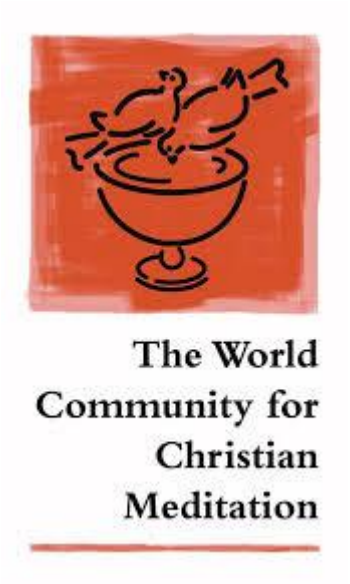
Eleanor with slight embarrassment produced the stone stemma taken from her garden. The baker's wife stared at it but did not laugh or otherwise roll her eyes, she examined it very carefully as Eleanor explained what it represented and who the cake was meant to honor. Mrs Rulli then took the garden stemma back into the working part of the bakery to consult with her husband.

When she returned she was smiling and said that indeed the baker could make a chocolate mold of the stemma, cover it in silver frosting, and adorn the top of the cake. She mentioned that the stone image would first have to go through several of their industrial dishwasher cycles!

The cake was large enough to feed at least 50 people and had the message “Grazie Mille Andrea” - a thousand thanks.



Eleanor’s Garden Stemma



https://www.wccm.org/content/about-world-community-christian-meditation
The World Community of Christian Meditation uses a similiar symbol with two doves.

The symbol of the Community - the two birds looking in different directions but resting on the chalice - is a modern version of an ancient way of representing the union of the contemplative and active dimensions of life.

Below is another fuller interpretation naturally much in line with the Camaldolese history of the stemma.

In the Logo of the World Community for Christian Meditation the evocative image of a pair of doves perched on the rim of a chalice-shaped dish, as adopted by the World Community for its logo, is heir to an ancient pictorial and symbolic tradition, that was disseminated through the Byzantine and. early-Christian channels via bas-relief, pottery, textile and mosaic.
There are surviving representations of this theme form Greek as well as Roman times, but its ultimate origin is probably Phoenician, connected with the cult and worship of Astarte. The famous mosaic of four drinking doves form the Emperor Hadrian's Villa, built after 124 at Tivoli, near Rome, was probably the model for the less sophisticated representation found in one of the early Christian churches of Ravenna, the tomb of Galla Placidia which served as inspiration for the logo.
The ultimate origin of the image is one by Sosus of Pergamum made at Delos in the last centuries before the birth of Christ. It was much acclaimed, celebrated and copied throughout the ancient world. The Roman historian, Pliny, admired and wrote about it. A hellenistic representation, this mosaic displays extraordinary skill and technical ability in its execution and the pictorial representation of a variety of difficult surfaces and textures, such as polished metal with diffused highlights and hard, detailed contours, soft feathers and a slab of marble on which the vessel stands. It is achieved by intricate laying of minute glass and stone tesserae that denies the medium. There is an excellent copy of this work in the Palatine Museum, Rome.
The iconographic conjunction of water and doves, represents a complex, sacred, and very ancient pre- Christian funerary symbolic tradition that has been embraced by, and survived within the Christian Church, with representations of the type found in the decorative programmes of baptisteries and martyria.

The symbolism here is as profound as it is archetypal. It is a trans-

cultural metaphor for the universally sacred, that can be apprehended not through empirical information, but through personal experience. Symbols by nature are energy releasing and directing signs, sacraments of an inner reality - one we all share. A poetic reading, therefore is appropriate to the character and function of a symbol, which is of no value as a fact, but only as an awakener of the soul.

An emblem of universal matrix, water always illustrates the mystical symbolism of the cycle of death- birth -regeneration; i.e. Purification. Informed by its ritual function, this archetype always denotes fecundity and resurrection. Traditionally, it is the female principle in nature, connected to the phases of the moon and life-giving waters. In funerary symbolism it served to reflect hope of immortality.

In Roman funerary monuments the deceased is often shown as a woman, identified with Aphrodite Urania (heavenly, of the spirit), as she is represented upon the sarcophagus, with her special bird, the dove. By thus identifying with the archetype of life in perpetual renewal, the deceased is ensuring his/her resurrection. Therefore, one can say that the drinking doves of the logo are iconographically akin to the veneration of the mother goddess of pre-Christian religions, having survived within Christianity via Greek and Roman pictorial representations and the writings of the neo-Platonists.

'…. for it is she we know to be planted deep in our fabric, she it is by whom men are impelled to have thoughts of love and perform works of peace...'
(Lucretius)
and again
'You alone can give men the serene benefits of peace'
(Lucretius)

This is Aphrodite, the sacred feminine principle (one of her sacred shrines was at Delos, decorated by drinking doves of Sosus') not the debased vulgarised Venus of erotic love most of us are familiar with.

'Such numinous symbols of our inheritance of myth as these', Joseph Campbell says, 'become integrated within the Christian Church -images of transformation opening outward to combine with their non- Christian, pagan, oriental counterparts and thereby become transformed into non-sectarian, psychologically significant symbols, revealing a sacred timeless event going on within man/woman always' **.** Carl Jung, in his Symbols of Transformation credits the Logos for filling our understanding and desires with meaning '.....makes it drunken as if with nectar'. Nectar, in classical literature, is the drink of fertility and immortality. The soul thus fructified is called the Heavenly Aphrodite (Urania). Yet, it knows the pangs of birth,…..as earthly Aphrodite (Pandemos). It is not without reason that the dove is the symbol of the Holy Spirit

In popular mythology, winged creatures represent spiritual messengers or simply, the Spirit itself, as in angels, the myth of Eros and Psyche (love and the human spirit). The dove of love and peace is also the symbol of the soul in India. In China, it stood for marital fidelity and long life. Usually represented in pairs - male and female - they appear in the headdress of the goddess of fertility. In medieval alchemy the white dove represents the whitening of the primal matter as it is turned into the philosopher's stone - the transformation of the black raven into the white dove.

In Christian art, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are often seen as doves, perching on a tree or drinking the waters of Eternal life. Thus, we see them in our logo -a pair of doves -one drinking, the other happily standing by -on the rim of a chalice-shaped vessel filled with water. The chalice is a reference to Christ's sacrifice -as in the Eucharist, and, by the same token, offering us hope of eternal life, an assurance of the Resurrection.

This simple and beautiful representation - the logo of The World Community for Christian Meditation - enfolds a meaning that is both universal and most profoundly Christian - one held sacred through the ages, offering a subjective glimpse into what ultimately is a numinous, transpersonal symbol. A metaphor pointing to a transcendental reality. –

Polly Schofield
Montreal Oblate and WCCM Archivist

https://www.theschoolofmeditation.org/

The School of Meditation
SIMPLICITY · GROWTH · COMMUNITY

The School of Mediation is a division of WCCM and has altered the colouring of the symbol.

Indigenous Stories of Birds Sipping Water

A Maori friend Avril Manley was discussing the WCCM symbol with me; she said it made her remember the story of the Taiamai rock below.
There must be many similar stories which are beyond the scope of this document.
https://www.teaomaori.news/ngapuhi-landmark-officially-recognised-wahi-tapu



Not directly relating to the stemma but a legend from the Maori people of New Zealand of a bird sipping from a rock pool.

Te Tino a Taiamai is a prominent rock sacred to the hapū (sub tribe) of Taiamai of Ngāpuhi, Aotearoa/ New Zealand It has traditional, spiritual, and mythological sense.
Te Tino a Taiamai stands about 3 metres tall and is located in a clearing just south of the township of Ohaeawai.
The rock became associated with a mystical bird after the conquest of the Taiamai plains by an alliance of Ngapuhi hapu around 1790.
Legend says the inhabitants of the area are said to have caught sight of a large and beautiful white bird that circled around in the sky before settling on the rock. The bird then proceeded to sip the rainwater from the small pools created by indentures on top of the rock - just as many birds do today.
Every afternoon the bird Taiamai would settle on the rock to sip water from one of the pools, and the presence of the bird is said to have added greatly to the prestige of the chief Kaitara and his people in the eyes of other tribes.
“This fame was a double-edged sword as Taiamai’s fame spread around the area, and attracted the jealousy of a neighbouring chief who set out to capture the bird for his own purposes.
One evening the chief came to capture the bird Taiamai, in the process violating the edict that Kaitara had put in place declaring that the bird was to be left alone. Rather than be captured, however, the bird vanished by melting into the rock and was never seen again. The rangatira fled, fearful that a maketu [curse] would be placed on him as a result of his actions.
The Taiamai is said to possess its own mana tapu or sacred influence and over the years became an uruuru whenua – a place at which travellers deposited small offerings; generally small pieces of vegetation. Travellers would also recite karakia/prayer to clear their spiritual path through the area.



Ego vobis vos mihi
Io sono Dio per voi e voi siete popolo per me

IL SIMBOLO DELLA FAMIGLIA CAMALDOLESE

Lo Stemma della *Congregazione Camaldolese dell'Ordine di San Benedetto*, è costituito da *due colombe* che bevono allo stesso calice. Sotto il calice una piccola scritta recita: "*Ego vobis, vos mihi".* Qualche volta sopra il calice è collocata una *stella.*

Storia della sua formazione. Il simbolo attuale ha una lunga storia prima di arrivare a essere usato come simbolo della comunità monastica camaldolese. Per questo porta in se stesso vari livelli di significato.

Per la prima volta incontriamo una immagine simile in un frammento di mosaico che fa parte dei resti archeologici di un'antica villa romana nella città di Tivoli, non lontano da Roma. Un gruppo di colombe in volo si avvicinano a una piccola vasca piena di acqua che fluisce dall'alto verso il basso. Battendo le ali contro lo sfondo del cielo azzurro, le colombe esprimono energia vitale e gioia.

Evoluzione del significato. In ambito cristiano, la prima testimonianza di questa immagine si trova nel famoso "**Mausoleo di Galla Placidia" in Ravenna** (sec V), antica città romana che conserva fino ad oggi profondi influssi greci e bizantini nella sua arte. L'insieme delle decorazioni del Mausoleo propone varie allusioni al Battesimo.

Esse si riferiscono alla vita della comunità cristiana per mezzo di vari simboli e allegorie della natura, stelle, uccelli, animali, fiori. Altre fanno riferimento alla Bibbia. Questo insieme di immagini simboliche induce a interpretare le due colombe che volano verso la vaschetta per bere acqua, come simbolo dei fedeli che, nel Battesimo, se abbeverano all'acque viva dello Spirito di Cristo, che sgorga nel loro cuore (cf Giov. 7, 37-39).

Camaldoli coltivò una profonda e costante relazione con la città di Ravenna, con la sua cultura e spiritualità, essendo il luogo di origine, e la patria culturale

e spirituale di San Romualdo. Rafforzata dalla presenza secolare in essa di una comunità monastica camaldolese.

Nel secolo XII gli elementi fondamentali di questo simbolo si trovano in un **timbro del Priore Generale di Camaldoli: due colombe** bevono al calice. Un primo riferimento all' immagine si incontrava in un antico codice della Biblioteca del Sacro Eremo di Camaldoli, nel quale, però, invece che le colombe appaiono **due pavoni,** simbolo di eternità.

Poco più tardi il simbolo appare in molti **codici e strutture della architettura** dei monasteri ed eremi camaldolesi. E si arricchisce di un altro elemento. Sottostante al calice una scritta in latino recita le parole bibliche*:" **Ego vobis, vos mihi"- "Io per voi e voi per me"**.* Il testo in realtà è una sintesi della formula usata molte volte nella Sacra Scrittura (cf Dt 26,16-17), soprattutto dai profeti Geremia (cf 30,22; 31,31) e Ezechiele (cf 11,19-20), per indicare l'"alleanza nuziale" tra il Signore e il popolo di Israele, scelto come sua "sposa", e amata con un amore fedele e misericordioso (cf Os 2,1-25).

Il tema centrale dei testi citati **è il dono dell'Alleanza** che il Signore custodisce nonostante l'infedeltà della sposa, e che deve essere vissuto in un rapporto di intimità di amore, come il Signore ha fatto con il suo popolo nel deserto, mentre era in cammino verso la terra promessa (cf Os 2, 16-22).

Gli scrittori camaldolesi, a partire dl secolo XII, divulgano una **nuova interpretazione**, messa in relazione diretta con la vita monastica camaldolese.

1- il monaco/la monaca, chiamato/a da Dio a seguirlo nella vita monastica, riceve il dono e la vocazione a vivere **l'intimità dell'amore con Lui**. Questo costituisce **il nucleo profondo e lo scopo della vita contemplativa cristiana.** Tale intimità deve essere custodita e sviluppata per mezzo della purificazione del cuore e l'unificazione progressiva della vita nel Signore.
   Il monaco/la monaca è chiamato/a a tendere a questa unificazione della vita e tale intimità, alimentato ogni giorno dal pane della sua Parola e bevendo al calice del Signore nella celebrazione eucaristica, memoriale sacramentale della sua Pasqua, cioè della espressione suprema del suo amore.
2- **La vita monastica camaldolese** si articola in due forme, una in relazione di reciprocità con l'altra nella comunione della carità: **la *vita cenobitica*** o comunitaria vissuta nel monastero, e la ***vita eremitica***, vissuta nella solitudine dell'eremo . Ciascuna, e le due insieme, vivono l'amore reciproco bevendo dall'amore del Signore, condiviso nel calice della eucaristia. La **Stella,** sovrapposta al calice, dice l'origine divina di questo amore fraterno e la sua meta.
3- **I capitoli generali della Congregazione Camaldolese** dell'Ordine di San Benedetto, che si sono succeduti a partire dal Concilio Vaticano II, e soprattutto dal 1993, hanno messo sempre più in luce che ***vita cenobitica e vita eremitica,*** non costituiscono solo un pluralismo istituzionale in ambito camaldolese, ma anzi tutto **due dimensioni interiori** che devono convivere nel cuore di ogni camaldolese, qualunque sia la condizione istituzionale in cui vive, scelta per vocazione temporanea o definitiva**.**
   Monastero ed eremo sono una geografia e una architettura interiore. Non rigida. Non liquida. Ma flessibile.
4- Questo dinamismo interiore del cammino monastico camaldolese, articolato da due poli in tensione, distingue in maniera sana e costruttiva **il carisma monastico romualdino-camaldolese** nella sua presenza nella chiesa, e in rapporto al modo proprio di altre forme del carisma monastico benedettino.

Unità nella diversità. Unitaria nella sua radice e nel suo obiettivo, **pluralista** nelle sue espressioni. Questa è la tradizione monastica camaldolese e il suo dono per gli uomini e le

donne di oggi. Dono e sfida. Per la chiesa e la società umana, che sembra sempre meno capaci di accogliere e valorizzare le differenze tra le persone, tra le culture e tra le religioni. Diversità riconciliate.

La reciproca comunione fraterna costituisce la testimonianza visibile dell'Alleanza perenne del Signore con gli uomini e le donne di tutti i tempi, profetizzata nel primo testamento, realizzata in pienezza nella morte e resurrezione di Gesù, l'"uomo nuovo" ( ), e incisa nel cuore di tutte le persone come dono e compito da realizzare nella storia con l'azione dello Spirito.

Il monaco e le monaca camaldolese sono chiamati a vivere e testimoniare, in semplicità e fedeltà, questo mistero di amore divino e umano.

La preghiera di Gesù al Padre affinché i discepoli siano "**una sola cosa**" come lo sono lui e il Padre, costituisce il fuoco ardente della preghiera del monaco e della monaca camaldolese.

Ne dilata gli orizzonti verso relazioni positive con tutte le componenti della famiglia umana: dialogo ecumenico tra i cristiani di diverse confessioni, dialogo interreligioso tra religioni e tradizioni sapienziali diverse, dialogo con i non credenti in ricerca, dialogo con le sfaccettate componenti della modernità, ancora così poco elaborato da parte della tradizione cristiana. Solo il Padre consce il cuore di ciascuno e di tutti questi movimenti umani.

Abitando **nel cuore di Dio**, il monaco e la monaca camaldolese sta **nel cuore dell'uomo e della donna** del nostro tempo, con le sue potenzialità, provocazioni e aspirazioni.

Don Emanuele Bargellini OSB Cam

Mosteiro da Transfiguração 22/09/2016. -– tradotto in italiano e leggermente rivisto 31/07/2020

Lo stemma dell'Ordine camaldolese[1]

L'impostazione originaria dello stemma camaldolese, in uso nei sigilli dei Generali già dal XIII secolo e descritta da don Odoardo Baroncini (+1741), storico archivista e bibliotecario del Sacro Eremo di Camaldoli, nel suo Chronicon, vede due colombe che si abbeverano a un unico calice; a questa base, potevano essere aggiunti altri dettagli, quali simboli araldici presi dagli stemmi di famiglia dei Generali, se di nascita nobile, oppure il monogramma dell'abbazia di appartenenza, vedi gli esempi di Santa Maria degli Angeli a Firenze e di Classe a Ravenna.

Se osserviamo gli stemmi presenti rispettivamente nel chiostro della Foresteria di Camaldoli, risalente al secolo XIV, sull'architrave della sala Beato Mariotto sempre nella Foresteria, del secolo XV, sulla fontana di Camaldoli, fatto apporre da Ambrogio Traversari poco dopo il 1431, anno della sua elezione a Priore Generale, e sul tabernacolo realizzato da Gregorio di Lorenzo per la chiesa del Sacro Eremo nel 1462, vediamo infatti che sono assenti sia la stella, che qualsiasi altro tipo di attributo, attestando così una forma base che vede raffigurate esclusivamente due colombe che si abbeverano ad uno stesso calice.

Il primo studio che mira a ricostruire l'uso del signum Camalduli, attraverso un'analisi attenta dei documenti conservati presso l'archivio del Sacro Eremo, si deve proprio a don Odoardo Baroncini, e ne parla come detto in precedenza nel suo Chronicon Camalduli; già lui sottolinea come non si possa parlare di un unico sigillo, ma di diverse varianti formate dall'unione dello stemma di base, le due colombe che si abbeverano allo stesso calice, con quello del Priore Generale, o parti di esso, in carica negli anni in cui vengono emessi i documenti2. Il Baroncini fa risalire il sigillum S. Salvatoris Camalduli al 1248 circa, periodo in cui il più importante legislatore camaldolese del Duecento, il Priore Martino III, è impegnato nel processo di istituzionalizzazione e centralizzazione dell'Ordine;dall'analisi dell'archivio del Sacro Eremo, il Baroncini elenca inoltre l'esistenza di cinque tipi di sigilli, in cui si rintracciano come elementi comuni le due colombe che bevono dal medesimo calice, a cui poi si aggiungono particolari differenti. Di notevole interesse risulta essere il quarto sigillo applicato al Registrum Camalduli del 1347, che sembra riprendere le quattro stelle del frammento del XII libro dei Moralia di S. Gregorio, bifolio conservato presso la Biblioteca comunale di Arezzo, in cui compaiono due pavoni stilizzati, dorsalmente opposti, che bevono allo stesso calice, contornato da quattro stelle che simboleggiano gli altrettanti Vangeli. Nella rendicontazione delle varianti esistenti, interessante è l'analisi del documento del 1512 dove si

[1] Cfr. C.U. Cortoni, Sigilla et insigna Eremi et Ordinis Camalduli. Appunti per una storia dello stemma camaldolese, in "I libri del silenzio. Scrittura e spiritualità sulle tracce della storia dell'Ordine camaldolese a Ravenna,
dalle origini al XVI secolo", a cura di Claudia Giuliani, Ravenna 2013, pp. 43-49.

[2] Cfr. G. Moroni, Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiatica, 1840-1861, p. 297.

descrive un sigillo con i tre monticelli, al posto della stella, posti sopra il calice, che però non ha niente a che vedere con i monti dello stemma della Congregazione camaldolese di Monte Corona, non ancora nata.
Altro stemma di notevole interesse è quello segnalato dall'annalista camaldolese Anselmo Costadoni, usato da Ambrogio Traversari durante il suo generalato, in cui nel primo riquadro è presente l'immagine di Cristo Salvatore, a cui è intitolata la chiesa dell'Eremo, nel riquadro centrale ci sono le due colombe affrontate che bevono dallo stesso calice, aventi una corona per ciascuna sul capo, nel riquadro di sinistra è raffigurato un santo con mitria, piviale e pastorale, forse san Donato, patrono di Arezzo e titolare della chiesa del monastero, e sul riquadro di destra un santo in cocolla e libro, forse San Romualdo col salterio, purtroppo è abraso e quindi non leggibile il riquadro in basso. Un secondo stemma, anche questo non segnalato da Baroncini, è quello fatto scolpire in marmo dal Priore Generale Pietro Dolfin nel 1492 per la facciata della Mausolea (successivamente spostato sulla seconda Mausolea, riedificata in sostituzione della prima nel 1650); sono qui presenti due delfini, derivanti dall'arme di famiglia del Generale, che sostengono le colombe che anche qui bevono allo stesso calice, sovrastato da una stella accodata, sostituita poi dall'ostia nello stemma inserito nella terracotta, commissionata dallo stesso Dolfin, ad Andrea della Robbia e collocate presso la cappella di Sant'Antonio Abate nel Sacro Eremo. La stella sembra essere un elemento stabile nello stemma dalla fine del XV secolo, e per tale presenza sono state date due interpretazioni: Gregorio Farulli3 sostiene che sia stato don David Bernardini, abate della Badia di San Galgano dell'Ordine Cistercense, eletto Generale di Camaldoli l'anno 1251 da Innocenzo IV,ad aggiungere una stella, delle sue tre gentilizie. Gli annalisti Mittarelli e Costadoni invece posticipano di appena un anno la comparsa della stella, in seguito all'analisi di un sigillo datato 1252, molto simile a quello camaldolese, di proprietà di un certo Michele preposito della pieve di Peccioli. Michele viene incaricato da Innocenzo IV di occuparsi di una causa riguardante monastery camaldolesi di Pisa; impossibilitato delega il compito a Sismondino pievano di Calcinaia e sulla lettera Michele appone il sigillo, formato da una coppia di cigni o gru, che appoggiano le zampe sopra una coppa o calice, sormontato da un giglio.
Nel XVIII secolo sono quindi Baroncini, Farulli e gli annalisti che cercano di ricostruire la storia dello stemma camaldolese; ciò che emerge dai loro studi è la presenza di due uccelli affrontati chesi abbeverano ad uno stesso calice, sin dal secolo XIII, su tutti gli stemmi, elementi a cui in alcuni casi si aggiungono simboli araldici ripresi dagli stemmi di famiglia dei Priori Generali, se nobili, odallo stemma del monastero di provenienza.

3 G. Farulli, Notizie istoriche dell'antica e nobile città di Siena, Lucca 1723.

Passiamo ora all'interpretazione agiografica dello stemma; Agostino Fortunio nel 1575 dedica un intero capitolo dell'Historiarum Camaldulensium libri tres allo stemma camaldolese, inserendo prima del testo un capolettera raffigurante appunto lo stemma con la stella sovrastante, e la coda che lambisce il calice; l'autore fa risalire la sua origine all'esperienza mistica di san Romualdo, quando caduto in estasi durante la celebrazione dell'Eucaristia, gli si svelò il senso spirituale delle Sacre Scritture. Al racconto di san Pier Damiani, il Fortunio aggiunge l'apparizione a san Romualdo di due colombe che vanno ad abbeverarsi al calice. Venendo al significato, il Fortunio identifica nelle due colombe la puritas cordis e la simplicitas, mentre il Cristo Signore è colui che, come una stella, illumina ogni uomo ovunque giungerà il nome di Camaldoli. Nel XVIII secolo è Guido Grandi a dare un'altra interpretazione, indicando con le due colombe il rapporto fra la forma monastic eremitica e quella cenobitica, quindi fra la vita contemplativa e la vita attiva, unite dall'unica fonte, ovvero il calice, cui ambedue attingono. Queste due forme di vita, eremitica e cenobitica, non sono quelle che vediamo in pratica nel rapporto eremo-monastero di Camaldoli, bensì quelle praticate dalle due Congregazioni, quella di Toscana che fa capo a Camaldoli, e la Congregazione cenobitica camaldolese che fa capo a San Michele di Murano. Per quanto riguarda invece la nascita dello stemma, Guido Grandi la collega a san Romualdo, anche se questo dato risulta incerto.
Tornando agli studi condotti da don Odoardo Baroncini, la forma più antica dello stemma sembra quindi essere composta da "due uccelli simili a colombe che bevono ad un calice", ricostruzione plausibile in quanto riconducibile agli ambienti ravennati frequentati da san Romualdo, e appartenente in qualche maniera all'iconografia tardoantica del culto eucaristico; è invece improbabile che fossero due colombe, almeno fino al 1248, ovvero prima che l'Ordine avesse necessità di riconoscersi in un segno convenzionale e comune, sotto il generalato di Martino III. Se le due colombe affrontate, seppur presenti nell'iconografia ravennate, difficilmente assumono un significato eucaristico e ancora più raramente sono poste ai lati di un kantharos, più complessa da analizzare risulta invece l'identificazione dei due uccelli in pavoni affrontati che si abbeverano al
kantharos, simbologia molto diffusa nel tardo antico, in quanto il pavone, che rappresenta
l'immortalità dell'anima, viene ripreso dalla tradizione cristiana come simbolo della risurrezione del corpo. Venezia e Ravenna, dove la presenza camaldolese è ben radicata da molto tempo prima della data segnalata dal Baroncini come comparsa del primo signum Camalduli, sono luoghi di influenza bizantina dove è possibile osservare questa tipologia rappresentativa, ma non sono gli unici, infatti anche nel centro Italia, dopo l'occupazione Longobarda, è possibile rintracciare raffigurazioni di due pavoni affrontati che bevono da una stessa coppa.
Rimane quindi molto difficile capire quale sia l'origine dello stemma camaldolese, che comunque come già detto inizia ad entrare nell'uso comune dell'Ordine dal generalato di Martino III; richiama sicuramente la simbologia tardo antica dei due pavoni che si abbeverano al kantharos, presente in diversi siti camaldolesi, fra cui l'Abbazia di Classe, dove San Romualdo fa il suo ingresso nella vita monastica, pavoni che nel tempo si trasformano in colombe.