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**Exclude or Convert? The Image of the Muslim Slave in the Iconography
of the *Vision of St John of Matha* in Rome**

On 28 January 1193, St John of Matha had a vision as he celebrated his first Mass. In it, Christ was holding the hands of two men in chains, one black and deformed and the other white and malnourished. After this event, John of Matha and Felix of Valois founded the Order of the Most Holy Trinity, which received the approval of Pope Innocent III in 1198. The order's mission was the redemption of Christian slaves from the hands of the Saracens to prevent them from renouncing their faith and embracing that of the infidels. From the 13th century onward, depictions of the saint's vision became the iconographic *topos* of the order itself. This article aims to analyse images of the Muslim slave in the vision of St John of Matha, particularly in the numerous examples still found in the Church of the Santissima Trinità degli Spagnoli in Rome, in which the Muslim slave is given certain singular features.