The Dormition of Mary

DISCOVERING APOCRYPHAL ANCESTRY IN THE EARLY ITALIAN RENAISSANCE
Presentation Roadmap

- Research Question
- Proposal
- Methodology
- Findings
- Iconographical Analysis
- Richter Lessons
- Research Goal and Acknowledgments
My Research Question

What aspects of the various Dormition narrative traditions show up in the iconographical record of the Early Italian Renaissance?

What is the Dormition of Mary?

Why the Early Italian Renaissance?
My Research Proposal

- Itinerary
  - 9 weeks France and Italy

- Methodology
  - Iconographical Analysis

- Hypothesis
  - Literary Tradition maps to Iconography
How I did my research

1. Read Dormition narratives and homilies from each of the three traditions, including other scholarly articles

2. Took notes on elements that made a text a part of a specific literary tradition
3. Examined 11 different Dormition works from the 13\textsuperscript{th}-15\textsuperscript{th} century

4. Identified iconographical elements that matched with each literary tradition

5. Categorized works based off of literary tradition elements
Findings

Orthodox tradition in Roman Catholic spaces
The Sienese school and the Palm Tradition
Iconographical Analysis

What is iconographical analysis?

What characters/images was I looking for?

Why?
Iconographical Analysis

Apostles (Specific placement) & Mary’s body lying on her bed

The Earliest Greek Dormition Narrative (Palm tradition) v.68 “And after praying, she went in and lay down on her bed, and she fulfilled the course her life. Peter sat at her head and John at her feet, and the others were in a circle around her bed.”
The Earliest Greek Dormition Narrative (Palm tradition) v. 21 “Father John take this palm-staff so that you may carry it before me, for this is why it was given to me”

Christ and Mary’s baby soul

The Earliest Greek Dormition Narrative (Palm tradition) v. 35 “The Lord embraced her and he took her holy soul...it was perfect in every human form, except for the shape of male or female, with nothing being in it, except for a likeness of the complete body and a sevenfold whiteness”
Iconographical Analysis

Palm Tradition
Dormition
Elements

Apostles

The Palm frond

Christ and Mary’s baby soul

Mary’s body lying on her bed
What has the Richter program taught me?

- Be Flexible
- Expect the Unexpected
- Do What You Love
A truly interdisciplinary project, Religious Studies and Art History

Richter Trust and selection committee
Julie Santos
Professor Upson-Saia
Professor Frank
Parents