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KUWABARA, Natsuko. The Iconographic Study of the Last Days of the Virgin along the Northern Wall of the Church of Santa Maria ad Cryptas in Fossa (L'Aquila)

My paper examines the iconographic formation of the *Last Days of the Virgin* (the cycle of the Dormition) along the northern wall of the church of Santa Maria ad Cryptas in Fossa (L'Aquila), and discusses the relationship between this cycle and the depiction of the deceased beneath its Marian cycle.

The northern wall presents six stories on the Virgin's infancy and six subjects on her Last Days: the *Annunciation of the Death*, the *Arrival of the Apostles*, the *Dormition*, the *Funeral Procession*, the *Entombment*, and the *Assumption*. Little study has been dedicated to this fresco, since neither painter nor donor are anonymous, and the history of fourteenth-century art in Abruzzo remains clouded. Nonetheless, the cycle of the Dormition in this church exhibits two interesting problems worthy of further research regarding the iconographic development of *Last Days of the Virgin*. These are that its iconographies differ from those described in the literary text, *Golden Legend*, and that the cycle is accompanied by an image of the deceased, likely the fresco's donor.

In my paper, I will first investigate the position of the donor and the style of the painter. This analysis will suggest that the donor must have been a feudal lord of Ocre and that the painter was influenced by the notable Umbrian painter Ugolino di prete Ilario.

Secondly, I will highlight how the iconographies of the *Arrival of the Apostles*, the *Dormition*, the *Funeral Procession*, and the *Entombment* deviate from the description in the *Golden Legend*. I will compare these iconographies to those of other cycles of the Dormition throughout Italy, revealing that the painter cited three singular sources: the altarpiece by the Cesi Master (Spoleto, c. 1290), the apse fresco in the chapel of Enrico Scrovegni by a pupil of Giotto (Padua, c. 1320), and the apse fresco in the cathedral of Orvieto by Ugolino di prete Ilario (Orvieto, 1370–1384). As a result, I will conclude that the painting of the fresco of Fossa commenced after the completion of the fresco of Orvieto in 1384.

Following this analysis, I will explain that Ottaviano Nelli depicted two cycles of the Dormition in Gubbio (c.1410) and Foligno (1424) after those in Orvieto and Fossa. Several subjects and iconographies among these cycles in Orvieto, Fossa, Gubbio, Foligno, and the cycle of the Dormition by an anonymous Milanese painter around 1490 are peculiarly similar. To explain this iconographic concordance, only one hypothesis is convincing: an influential cycle of the Dormition must have been depicted and widespread prior to the fresco of Orvieto in central Italy, whose remains no longer exist. Further to this theory, the most important historical event in Italy in the years prior to 1370 was the temporary return of Pope Urban V from Avignon to Rome. The pope's painter, Matteo Giovannetti, was commissioned to fresco the Vatican Palace for the pope's decisive return. In light of this fact, I will suggest that Matteo Giovannetti painted a cycle of the Dormition in the Vatican Palace, the lost iconographies of which are reflected in the cycle of the Dormition of Fossa.

In conclusion, I will elicit examples across Italy that pair the cycle of the Dormition with an image of the deceased to disclose the donor's expectation of a peaceful afterlife. I hope that these examples will persuade scholars to consider that the donor of Fossa, whose eyes remain exceptionally open in his tomb gazing at the Crucifixion in the apse, hoped to see God after his quiet death.

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