

## ABSTRACT

Andrea De Marchi *Prato And The Sacra Cintola: Civic Mythopoiesis And New Forms Of Devotion, At The Crossroads Between The Church And The World* 4 1-24

Between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Prato developed the cult for the relic of the Cintola that the Virgin gave to St. Thomas, as evidence of the assumption of his own body. After an attempted theft of the relic in 1312 and in connection with the erection of the new church of Santo Stefano, a large panel by Bernardo Daddi was painted in 1337-38, which became a point of reference for the subsequent development of this iconography. The legitimacy of this story, based on apocryphal sources, was then much debated, but the growing popularity of the cult and the consequent fortune of the images, often extrapolating only the couple of St. Thomas and the Virgin, made it indisputable. The Prato model, where the Cintola is firmly grasped by Thomas, as a symbolic bond between divinity and humanity, distinguished itself from other formulations, in particular from the one spread in Siena. The Cintola had a polysemic value, alluding also to the miraculous fecundity of Mary and to her incorrupt body, and in Prato it became a propitiatory emblem of the same civic identity.

Keywords: Santa Cintola, Holy Girdle of the Virgin, Incredulity of St. Thomas, Assumption of the Virgin, Prato, Bernardo Daddi

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Michele Bacci *The Virgin's Belt In The Eastern Mediterranean* 24-37

The present paper focuses on the multiple ways in which the cultic identity of the Virgin Mary's girdle was given shape in Byzantine and Eastern Christian traditions. Emphasis is laid on the importance of vestments as symbolic indicators and surrogates of Mary's body and the interrelation between the public worship of her girdle and maphorion in Constantinople. The wide renown of such venerated objects probably explains why, in Late Byzantine iconography, the episode of Thomas receiving the girdle became standard in Dormition imagery. In this sense, some thoughts are offered as to the complex dynamics whereby relics, images, and apocryphal narratives interacted in the visual experience of Medieval believers. Furthermore, the paper points out that this complex relationship also included the far less investigated phenomenon of the topographic inscription of sacred events into Jerusalem's landscape, as evidenced by the emergence of a memorial site of the throwing of the girdle on the slopes of the Mount of Olives.

Keywords: Holy Girdle, Mary's vestments, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Byzantine imagery

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Aurora Corio *From Cabestany To Tuscany: Times And Vectors Of The Artistic Path Of An 'Itinerant' Maestry* 38-48

The figure of the Cabestany Master is still highly debated. Some scholars consider this Romanesque sculptor as a precise individual, while others refers to him as a historiographic myth. Several hypotheses have been proposed on fundamental questions concerning the artist and his workshop: did his training take place on Catalan or Tuscan models? What reasons pushed him to cross the regional borders and move within a horizon that

can be defined as Mediterranean? Taking into account his three most significant works (the tympanum of Cabestany, the capital with Daniel within the lions of Sant'Antimo, The Apparition of Christ from Sant Pere de Rodes), in which the diverse stages of the master's maturity are detectable, and highlighting some chronological fixed points provided by documents, this paper offers a new reflection on his route, along with the idea of the provision of marble as the possible trigger for the artist's voyage to Italy.

Keywords: Master of Cabestany, Itinerant Maestry, Pilgrimage Roads, Romanesque Sculpture

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Marco Burrini *The Cabestany Tympanum: Historical, Archeological And Chronological Aspects* 49-59

Cabestany is well known by historians and archeologists for a marble tympanum of the XII Century attributed to an anonymus sculptor known as the "Master of Cabestany"; this tympanum represent some scenes of the Resurrection, the Ascension and the Presentation of the Virgin Mary. Until now the studies on this work of art were directed towards points of view of stylistic and morphological nature without considering the historical events on the whole of the village of the village and the Church of Cabestany. On the contrary, this essay intends to analyse all the points of view, starting from geographical ones to the others referred to the viability and settlements in the plane of Roussillon in the Middle Age and concentrate further on the research on the presence of the Knights Temple in Cabestany, to whom is due probably the diffusion of the oriental cult of the Virgin Mary at the times when this famous tympanum were realized. His iconography and the will made in 1174 by the noble Arnau, lord of the village, give evidence in this hypothesis.

Keywords: Master of Cabestany, Tympanum, Roussillon, Cabestany, Romanesque Sculpture

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Sonia Chiodo «*Ave Donna Sanctissima*». *Textual Sources And Iconographic Variants For The Miracle Of The Cintola In Illumination From The Thirteenth To The Fifteenth Century* 60-78

The essay considers the eccentric component implicit in the choice to depict the miracle of the Girdle, since it is a story taken from an apocryphal text such as the *Transitus Beatae Mariae Virginis*. It presents two case studies: the illumination with the Assumption, included in a thirteenth-century antiphonary (Oristano, Museo diocesano), and an illuminated cycle with the same subject contained in an unpublished manuscript with the *Storia di Maria e Cristo*, dated in the late thirties of the fifteenth century (London, British Library, Harley 3571). Through a detailed reconstruction of the circumstances relating to the commissioning of both works, the author intends to encourage reflection on the relationship between apocryphal texts and figurative arts. In the two study cases the presence of the Cintolesque episode is linked to circumstances involving wide-ranging issues: civic and identity values in the case of the Oristano antiphonaries, their original destination being reconducted to the church of San Francesco in Pisa; relationship between Greek and Latin culture in that of the *Storia*, composed and illustrated in the humanistic circles of northern Italy during the years of the Council.

Keywords: Antiphonary, Assumption, Oristano, Holy Girdle, Franciscans, Pisa San Francesco church, Alberto III Scotti

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Raffaele Argenziano «*Ora Voce Pia, Pro Nobis Virgo Maria*». *The Origins And Development Of The Iconography Of The Assumption Of The Virgin In Siena* 79-93

Although the first document proving the Assumption of Mary in heaven can be found in the prologue to the *Historia Francorum* by Gregorio di

Tours, in Siena the oldest remaining figurative testimony of the Assumption of the Virgin with her body, can be found in the stained glass window by Duccio di Buoninsegna made in the late eighties of the XIII century for the apse of the cathedral. This work analyzes the genesis of the Marian mystery of the Assumption in Siena and in the territory, by using local literary sources and through the analysing the first representations that are found in the miniatures accompanying liturgical texts.

Keywords: Marian Devotion, Assumption of the Virgin, Dormitio Virginis, Koimesis, Ordinarium

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Gabriele Fattorini *Sieneſe Girdles: Many Images And A Relic* 94-110

In the Sieneſe representations of the Assumption, the detail of the Virgin who drops her girdle in the hands of Saint Thomas appears only during the Trecento, reflecting then in the following century. Such an attribute can be likely justified by the presence in Siena of a relic of the half-belt of Mary, as part of a wealthy nucleus of sacred trophies which the ancient hospital of Santa Maria della Scala bought from Costantinople in 1359 (at the time of the so-called Governo dei Dodici), and still are preserved. Shortly thereafter Bartolomeo Bulgarini portrayed Saint Thomas at the foot of an Assumption painted for an altar in the hospital church, and Francesco di Vannuccio repeated a similar feature in a diptych ordered by a client linked to the Santa Maria della Scala. Since the hospital church had the title of the Annunciation - still today Santissima Annunziata - the relics purchased in 1359 were the protagonists for century of a public ostension on the Marian anniversary of 25 March: a date which was of political significance, because on that day a popular revolt determined the change of government from the “Nove” to the “Dodici” in 1355. However in that and other occasions civic devotion focused on a Sacred Nail - Sacro Chiodo - to the detri-

ment of the other relics. Thus the Sienese half-belt - on the contrary to the Prato Holy Girdle - was never able to attract a particular cult and veneration, as the events retraced in this contribution confirm.

Keywords: Siena, Assumption of the Virgin, Girdle of the Virgin, Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala, relics from Costantinople, Governo dei Dodici

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Gianluca Ameri *A Genoese Contribution To The Iconography Of The Miracle Of The Girdle In The Fourteenth Century* 111-23

The ms. ital. 112 now in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, contains a variety of religious texts, both in Latin and in Genoese vernacular, and is decorated with forty vivid full-page miniatures. Among them, a quite unique version of the miracle of the Holy Belt is depicted, in a diptych with the scene of the Coronation of the Virgin. Rather than following Iacopo da Varazze's account, its composition seems to be influenced by Augustinian spirituality, as in the treatise on the Virtues and Vices that opens the book; while the miniatures are stylistically close to various examples of manuscript illumination and painting, of both Genoese and Florentine origin. The manuscript, to be dated in the third quarter of the 14th century, was probably addressed to an audience of artisans and merchants, who used it as a didactic support for prayer and pious meditation.

Keywords: Holy Girdle, Augustinian Iconography, Genoese Confraternities, Devotional Literature, 14th Century Manuscript Illumination

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Nicoletta Matteuzzi *Pistoia 1363: A Typological Cycle Of Mary And Eve And A Madonna Della Cintola In An Unpublished Fresco In San Lorenzo* 124-37

In the former church of San Lorenzo in Pistoia is a fragmentary iconic/narrative hagiographic fresco whose central image, now mostly lost, must have portrayed a Madonna of the Girdle with St. Thomas. The side panels are unusual in that they illustrate two different episodes, one involving Mary, the other Eve. This is a conventional confrontation in Christian theology. The theme is also present in St. Augustine, and important reflections on the Assumption of Mary are found within the Augustinian sphere. Linked to this is the cult of the Girdle of Prato, object of the attention of Bishop Guidaloste Vergiolesi, founder of the church of San Lorenzo, in the second half of the 13th century.

Keywords: Pistoia St. Laurence Church, Assumption of the Virgin, Madonna of the Girdle, St. Thomas, Augustinian spirituality, Florentine Painting of XIVth Century

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Giampaolo Ermini *For The 'Intermediate' Chapel Of The Cintola In The Cathedral Of Prato (Post 1346-1395). Notes On The Construction And Structure Of The External Pulpit* 138-58

On the building site of the cathedral of Prato, work began in 1359 on an external marble pulpit intended for displaying the relic of the Virgin's belt. Probably completed in about two years, this pulpit was located on the south wall of the church, next to the corner of the old façade. It corresponded to the 'intermediate' chapel of the Virgin's belt inside the church. Only a few decades after its completion the pulpit was dismantled, and replaced with the

one by Donatello and Michelozzo on the corner of the new façade. Many aspects of the Trecento pulpit are still unknown or uncertain. This paper reviews the archival evidence on it, discussing new documents and revising the interpretation of known documents. A more precise chronology of the construction is provided, as well as a reconsideration of the materials used and of the roles of the artists involved. It has become obvious, for example, that the stonemasons Giovanni di Francesco from Florence and Niccolò di Cecco from Siena did not collaborate on the project, for the latter arrived only after Giovanni had already left the site. The concluding section discusses the traces of the pulpit still visible on the external wall of the church.

Keywords: Prato cathedral, Public display of relics, Pulpit, Giovanni di Francesco Fetti, Niccolò di Cecco del Mercio

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Marco Collareta *Women And Belts. Reflections Around A Fashion Accessory*  
159-64

After presenting the main symbolic implications that the belt knows in both the sacred and profane fields, the article takes into consideration some examples of this important complement of female costume between the Gothic and Renaissance periods. The cases examined highlight the close link that binds the sumptuary arts not only to their specific technical development, but also to the variation of the more general cultural context in which they are inserted from time to time. Particularly significant in this regard is the case of a late fifteenth-century Venetian belt, now in the British Museum. This object shows a motto, “Con el tempo”, which also recurs in a famous painting by Giorgione, thus helping us to better understand the meaning of that mysterious masterpiece by the painter from Castelfranco.

Keywords: History of costume, Sumptuary arts of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Giorgione

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Alessandro Diana *A Post-Conciliar Itinerary: John VIII Palaeologus Between Florence, Prato And Pistoia, And A Hypothesis On The Pisanello's Presence In Florence And Prato In 1439* 165-76

After the end of the Conciliar works, set off with the ephemeral Union of Florence (6th July 1439), the Byzantine emperor John VIII Palaeologus stayed in Tuscany a while longer. He went to nearby Prato and Pistoia to take part in the cities' concomitant religious feasts, culminating with the ostension of the Holy Girdle (Sacra Cintola) and the celebrations in honour of St. James the Greater. Local historiography enhanced the presence of the emperor, albeit records are often contradictory. A new study on these records and their incongruities could also help to frame a more eminently art historical issue. The debated matter of Pisanello's presence in Florence during the final stages of the Council could be potentially linked to these events, which could be better circumscribed through a re-examination of the large graphic corpus of the artist and his circle. A corpus that includes copies of Florentine works of fresh execution and installation as in the case of some drawings taken from the reliefs of the Pulpit of Prato by Donatello and Michelozzo.

Keywords: Council of Ferrara-Florence, John VIII Palaeologus, Pisanello, Matteo de' Pasti, Pulpit of Prato by Donatello and Michelozzo

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Paolo Benassai *Stories And Miracles Of The Girdle In The Chapel Of The Provost Filippo Salviati* 177-91

This essay is devoted to the cycle of frescoes with Virtues and Miracles of the Virgin belt which completely decorate the chapel on the first floor of the Bishop Palace in Prato, before Provost Palace. The chapel is dedicated to Saint Antonino and indeed the altarpiece represents the Exhibition

of the Virgin belt by Saint Antonino, painted in 1608 by the Florentine Domenico Frilli Croci (1580-1632). The frescoes were restored in 2003-2004 but this intervention could not fix the scrapings made when they were painted white - we don't know the time. The cycle, brought back to light in 1933, can be assigned to a Florentine painter of the beginning of the XVII century and it is possible to discern some contacts with the altarpiece by Frilli Croci. Committee was Monsignor Filippo Salviati, Prato Provost since 1605, whose image is known thanks to a portrait painted in 1723 by Pier Simone Vannetti: from 1607 are registered payments to reorganize an oratory inside the Provostry Palace. It is fair to point out that the predella with the Virgin belt stories by Bernardo Daddi now in the Museo di Palazzo Pretorio was moved from San Martino oratory not to the present Bishop Palace but to the Palace of the Bishops, now Crocini.

Keywords: Prato Chapel of the Provost Palace, Stories of the Virgin girdle, Provost Filippo Salviati, Domenico Frilli Croci, Prato Bishop Palace

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Laura Biggi - Isabella Gagliardi *Virginitatis Zonam: The Marian Thaumaturgy In Prato* 192-201

The article presents two parts. In the first, the author traces the history of the origins of the Marian sanctuary of Cintola and the stories of miracles attributed to the Virgin venerated in this shrine. The relic of the belt arrived in Prato during the 12th century, while a relic of St James the Apostle was brought to Pistoia by the Pistoiese bishop Atto di Pistoia in 1144, testifying to a process of competition between the cities that ended finally in 1653 when Prato became a diocese. An analysis of the miracles attributed to the Prato relic reveals a prevalent exorcistic connotation of the Belt of the Virgin. In the account of these exorcisms the author also reads the historical dynamics of the local ecclesiastical institutions. The second part of the article focuses on the circuit of Marian shrines in Prato and analyses the stories of miracles attributed to the intercession of the Madonna venerated

in the sanctuary of Carceri. Through this analysis too, the author shows how the image of Prato as the city of the Virgin was formed.

Keywords: Relics, Shrines, Medieval Marian devotions, Medieval miracles

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Teresa Megale *As For Fading, The Marian Hierophany Of Prato Between Religious Rite And Profane Spectacle In The Modern Age* 202-11

This paper aims to expand on the rituals and on the spectacular performance implemented to worship the Holy Girdle of the Virgin Mary, the major relic of the city of Prato, by discussing the strategy behind its display, which lies at the core of the enjoyment of all religious rites, and the opposite, i.e. the art of fading, that enshrouds all human matters, and, as a consequence, much of the centuries-old devotional history of the relic as well. The paper provides, first, an examination of the elements of the worship performance, intertwined with the elements of the ceremony and those of the rite. Then, it examines the additional performance of the so-called canterini, with whose chanted poetry the imagery tied to the Holy Girdle proliferated. Thanks to newly discovered archival evidence, the Holy Girdle acts as creator of performances in between liturgy rites, sacred oratory, and performance, staged either outside in the squares, or inside convents and monasteries. Enacting the conjunction of sacred and secular theatre, to the cult of the Holy Girdle is eventually beholden the spectacle of the city of Prato itself.

Keywords: Marian hierophany, art of fading, sacred and secular theatre, rite, performance

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