



*Vierge personnifiant l'Église, Aix-la-Chapelle (?), 1^{er} quart du IX^e siècle,
ivoire d'éléphant, 22 x 14,5 x 0,5 cm.
New York, The Metropolitan Museum (Inv. 17.190.49).*

The Virgin Mary in Italy and *Francia* in the eighth and ninth centuries

A little explored field?



The Virgin Mary in Italy and *Francia* in the eight and ninth centuries

A little explored file?

This lecture will focus on the ways in which Mary's figure developed in the early medieval period between Italy and France. There, by the mid-eighth century, she came to be promoted in texts and images as the mother of all believers and of all nations, and as the main intercessor above all saints. However, she was also the object of a theological polemic on her Assumption into heaven. In the relatively scarce visual evidence, she is portrayed in different, sometimes puzzling ways.

Overall, most of the extant evidence, textual and beyond, is related to monks or monasteries. This suggests that Mary was the focus of special attention in monasteries well before the Cluniac and Cistercian orders were established. Eschewing the *lectio facilior* hypothesis that Mary appealed to clerics and monks since they were single males who sought comfort in her as a mother substitute, we will look at monastic authors and traditions also beyond the western world, as well as to specific theological and political circumstances, to try and explain a growing interest in her as main intercessor above all saints. We will consider the possibility that a renewed interest in Mary emerged in the eighth century thanks to a network of monastic connections which linked central Italy to the regions across the Alps, England, the Iberian Peninsula, and the eastern Mediterranean.

MERCREDI
30 AVRIL 2025
DE 14H À 16H
 GALERIE COLBERT
 SALLE PERROT
 (2^E ÉTAGE)
 2 RUE VIVIENNE
 75002 PARIS
 ENTRÉE LIBRE



Vierge, sculpture, Breedon-on-the-Hill, église St Mary and St Hardulph, vers 800.
 Cliché de Francesca Dell'Acqua

En couverture :
 Abside de l'église
 Sant'Ambrogio alla Rienna,
 Montecorvino Rovella (Salerno),
 IX^e siècle.
 Cl. de Francesca Dell'Acqua