

Hugh Farey

POSTER ABSTRACT

The Development of Three Marys Iconography

The visit of the holy women to the tomb of Christ on Easter morning was one of the earliest New Testament scenes to become popular, and has been depicted thousands of times. In every case there is a selection from quite a small range of stylistic elements, such as the tomb, the lid, the shroud, the angel and the women, whose exact depiction depends on the period, place, culture and context of the image. Early versions usually show the tomb as a building, whereas later ones show only a box-like sepulchre, sometimes mounted on legs. This reflects the use of the event in the liturgy, re-enacted by clerics, with portable representations of the scenic elements which could be stored when not in use. The Pray Codex image is an example of this iconography, and does not depart from type. In no case, even after the general acceptance of the Shroud as genuine in the 15th century, are the burial cloths shown with an image. Associated Biblical imagery, such as Deposition, Lamentation, and Resurrection scenes, also often show one of more large cloths, none of which are clearly references to the Shroud of Turin.