

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into Heaven

Written by W.J.Pais

Regarding the day, year, and manner of [Our Lady's](#) death, nothing [certain](#) is [known](#). The earliest [known](#)

literary reference to the Assumption is found in the Greek work *De Obitu S. Dominae*

.
[Catholic](#)
[faith](#)

, however, has always derived our [knowledge](#) of the [mystery](#) from [Apostolic Tradition](#)

.
[Epiphanius](#)

(d. 403) acknowledged that he [knew](#)

nothing definite about it (Haer., lxxix, 11). The [dates](#)

assigned for it vary between three and fifteen years after [Christ's Ascension](#)

. Two cities claim to be the place of her departure: [Jerusalem](#)

and Ephesus. Common consent favours [Jerusalem](#)

, where her [tomb](#)

is shown; but some argue in favour of Ephesus. The first six centuries did not [know](#)

of the [tomb of Mary](#)

at [Jerusalem](#)

.

The [belief](#) in the corporeal assumption of [Mary](#) is founded on the [apocryphal](#) treatise *De Obitu S. Dominae*

, bearing the name of [St. John](#)

, which belongs however to the fourth or fifth century. It is also found in the book *De Transitu Virginis*

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, falsely ascribed to
[St. Melito of Sardis](#)
, and in a spurious letter attributed to
[St. Denis the Areopagite](#)
. If we consult
[genuine](#)
writings in the
[East](#)
, it is mentioned in the
[sermons](#)
of
[St. Andrew of Crete](#)
,
[St. John Damascene](#)
, St. Modestus of Jerusalem and others. In the
[West](#)
,
[St. Gregory of Tours](#)
(De gloria mart., I, iv) mentions it first. The
[sermons](#)
of
[St. Jerome](#)
and
[St. Augustine](#)
for this
[feast](#)
, however, are spurious.
[St. John of Damascus](#)
(P.G., I, 96) thus formulates the
[tradition](#)
of the
[Church](#)
of
[Jerusalem](#)
:

St. Juvenal, [Bishop](#) of [Jerusalem](#), at the [Council of Chalcedon](#) (451), made known to the
[Emperor Marcian](#)
and
[Pulcheria](#)
, who wished to possess the body of the
[Mother of God](#)
, that

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[Mary](#)

died in the presence of all the

[Apostles](#)

, but that her

[tomb](#)

, when opened, upon the request of

[St. Thomas](#)

, was found empty; wherefrom the

[Apostles](#)

concluded that the body was taken up to

[heaven](#)

.

Today, the [belief](#) in the corporeal assumption of [Mary](#) is universal in the [East](#) and in the [West](#)

; according to

[Benedict XIV](#)

(De Festis B.V.M., I, viii, 18) it is a probable opinion, which to deny were impious and

[blasphemous](#)

.

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