The Eve/Mary parallelism/antithesis in the light of Christian theological tradition and its reflection in the iconography of the Annunciation *(15th century)*

José María Salvador-González
http://doi.org/10.33209/2519-4348-2707-9627-2021-9-95

This article's relevance derives from having documented the generic thesis of the parallelism between Eve and the Virgin Mary. For reaching these result, we have drawn on the solid doctrinal tradition established by countless exegetical texts of Greek and Latin Church Fathers and medieval theologians, as well as numerous liturgical hymns of the Middle Ages. The current article aims to undertake three mains goals: first to find out and explain some exegetical comments from Church Father and medieval theologians on the parallelism/antithesis between Eve and Mary, and, as a consequence, between Adam and Christ; second to analyze iconographically some paintings of the Annunciation of the 15th century that include in the scene the figures of Adam and Eve; third to prove the possible relation between these doctrinal texts and those pictorial images. For achieving these goals, we will use two complementary methodological strategies: above all, the in-depth analysis of the patristic and theological comments, as well as some medieval liturgical hymns, to emphasize their eventual mutual concordances or discrepancies; in the second term, the iconographic analysis of several paintings of the Annunciation with Adam and Eve based on the millenarian patristic and theological tradition on this matter. As a credible conclusión, we can confirm that these pictorial images of the Annunciation with our first parents reflect the established doctrinal tradition on the parallelisms/antitheses between Eve and Mary, between Adam and Christ, as well as between sin-death and redemption-life. Finally, the current partial approach to the issue under study is just a first step for extensive and in-depth research that one can, and must, undertake over this complex subject, whose relevance is essential both for Mariology and Christology.

Key Words: *Original Sin, Redemption, Annunciation, Eve, Virgin Mary, Christ's incarnation.*

1. METHODOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. The problem and its significance

You know well that the event of the Annunciation of the angel to Mary contains three fundamental theological nuclei: God the Son's incarnation as a man, his supernatural conception in Mary's womb through the intervention of God, and Mary's virginal divine motherhood. The parallelism/antithesis that the Church Fathers and theologians established early between Eve and the Virgin Mary, in a confrontation similar to the one they found between Adam and Christ, is also well known. After all, the Annunciation is just a decisive and founding event in mankind's history of salvation. In the Annunciation the angel Gabriel notified Mary of the divine plan of having been chosen as the Mother of God the Son when he will incarnate to redeem the sin with which Adam and Eve had contaminated the human race when they disobeyed God.

This article aims to briefly explore the extremely deep and complex parallelisms in the Annunciation between Original Sin and Redemption, and therefore between Eve and Mary, as well as between Adam and Christ. In this endeavor, we will not restrict only to the theological field but also see its reflection in this special event's iconography. To be more exact, we will highlight how the exegetical reflections of the Fathers and theologians regarding these parallels are fully illustrated in some pictorial images of the Annunciation of the 15th century.

First of all, it should be pointed out that this paper is only a slight outline or quick approach to the problematic and profound theological issue of the plural parallelism between Eve and Mary and between Adam and Christ according to the Christian doctrinal tradition. That is an issue studied more o less deeply by many authors, such as, for example, B. Capelle[1], H. Barre[2], W.J. Burghardt[3],

---

[1] *B. Capelle,* "Le thème de la Nouvelle Ève chez les anciens docteurs latins", Études Mariales 12 (1954), 55-76.

[2] *H. Barre,* "Le mystère d'Ève à la fin de l´époque patristique en Occident", Études Mariales 13 (1955), 61-97.

[3] *Burghardt, W.J.,* "María en el pensamiento de los Padres orientales. I. La nueva Eva". In *Carol, J.B. Mariología* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1964), 488-499.

L. Cignelli[4], L. F. Mateo Seco[5], J. L. Bastero de Eleizalde[6], E. Romero Pose[7], M. Ponce Cuéllar[8], S. de Fiores[9], R. Laurentin & S. Meo[10], J.C.R. García Paredes,[11] and M. Hauke[12]. It is not possible, indeed, in this short article to develop in full --not even in large part-- such a broad theme which, if it is already demanding in the mere theological sphere, it becomes even more compromising when it is also considered in its relation to the iconography.

A second clarification is necessary. The parallelisms/antitheses between the four mentioned protagonists reflect in various iconographic themes of Christian art. However, in this paper, we will focus our attention exclusively on the iconography of the Annunciation.

1.2. Analysis of the research and methodological tasks

To develop the problem from the proposed dual perspective, the theological and the iconographic, we will approach it according to two complementary methodological strategies, namely: first, the comparative analysis of texts from primary Christian sources referred to our object of study; secondly, the comparative analysis of images of the Annunciation of the 15th century that include Adam and Eve in the represented scene.

In the iconographic aspect, the choice of the 15th century is justified because, in the previous centuries, no Annunciation includes our first parents. The centuries after the 15th already exceed the borders of our research interests, which concentrate in medieval iconography. For the rest, that 15th century is especially illustrative of our problem. It is then when the Annunciation scene reaches

---

[4] *L. Cignelli,* Maria nuova Eva nella Patrologia greca (sec. II-V) (Assisi: Studio Teologico "Porziuncola", 1966).

[5] *L. Mateo Seco,* "María, nueva Eva, según ls Padres", Estudios Marianos 50 (1985), 53-69.

[6] *J. L. Bastero de Eleizalde,* María, Madre del Redentor (Pamplona, Eunsa, 1995), 40-43.

[7] *E. Romero Pose,* "El paralelismo Eva -María en la primera teología cristiana", Estudios Marianos 64 (1998), 158-163.

[8] *Ponce Cuéllar, M.,* María, madre del Redentor y de la Iglesia (Barcelona, Herder, 2001), 447-459.

[9] *de Fiores, S.,* María, Madre de Jesús. Síntesis histórico-salvífica (Salamanca: Secretariado Trinitario, 2002)., 137-171: *y de Fiores, S.,* María, sintesis de valores. Historia cultural de la mariología (Madrid: Ediciones San Paolo, 2011), 120-124.

[10] *Laurentin, R. & Meo, S.,* "Nueva Eva". In de Fiores, S. & Meo, S. (dirs.), Nuevo Diccionario di Mariología (Madrid: Ediciones Paulinas, 19864), 1474-1787.

[11] *García Paredes, J. C. R.,* Mariología (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2015), 191-223.

[12] *M. Hauke,* Introducción a la Mariología (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2015), 140-141.

a compositional-narrative complexity and a symbolic richness of extraordinary relevance[13]. In this area, we will proceed to detect, among the numerous images of the Annunciation, those that include Adam and Eve in their composition. After identifying the paintings with these specific characteristics, we will analyze them comparatively in light of the patristic and theological texts that we have found on the matter.

On the theological side, we will trace some prominent medieval Church Fathers and theologians' writings, aiming to discover some references to the parallelism/antithesis between Eve and Mary and between Adam and Christ. We will also try to detect through comparative analyzes the possible coincidences or discrepancies between the different versions of the Fathers and theologians on the subject under study.

To reach our objectives, we will first analyze the doctrinal sources in three successive stages: first the references of the Eastern Church Fathers, then the comments of the Western Fathers and theologians, and thirdly the liturgical hymns that refer to the subject studied.

After analyzing the textual sources, we will then iconographically analyze some images of the Annunciation of the 15th century that include Adam and Eve in the scene to highlight the perfect correspondence between the doctrinal texts and those images that illustrate them.

[13] On the iconographic theme of the Annunciation in the Middle Ages we have written some papers, among which we can highlight the following: "The bed in images of the Annunciation of the 14th and 15th centuries. A dogmatic symbol according to Greek-Eastern Patrology", Imago. Revista de Emblemática y Cultura Visual, 12 (2020), 7-31. DOI: https://doi.org/10.7203/imago.12.17155; "The symbol of light's ray in images of the Annunciation of the 14th and 15th centuries according to Greek Patrology", História Revista, 25 / 3 (2020), 334- 355. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5216/hr.v25i3.63194; "The temple in images of the Annunciation: a double dogmatic symbol according to the Latin theological tradition (6th-15th centuries)", De Medio Aevo, 14 (2020), 56-68. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5209/dmae.69014: "Haec porta Domini. Exegeses of some Greek Church Fathers on Ezekiel's porta clausa (5th -10th centuries)", Cauriensia, 15 (2020). 615-633. DOI: https://doi.org/10.33209/2519-4348-2707-9627-2020-8-7710.17398/2340-4256.15.615; "Iconographic Interpretation of the Temple as a Theological Symbol in Images of the Annunciation of the 14th and 15th Centuries", Fenestella. Inside Medieval Art, 1 (2020), 23-41. DOI: https://doi.org/10.13130/fenestella/12672; "The Symbol of Bed (Thalamus) in Images of the Annunciation of the 14th-15th Centuries in the Light of Latin Patristics", International Journal of History, vol. 5, n. 4 (2019): 49-70; "Capítulo 3. La Anunciación". In Salvador-González, J. M., Ancilla et Regina. Aproximaciones a la iconografía mariana en la Edad Media (Saarbrücken: Editorial Académica Española, 2012), 73-104.

2. PROSPECTING THE SUBJECT IN PRIMARY PATRISTIC, THEOLOGICAL, AND LITURGICAL SOURCES

2.1. References in the Greek Patristics

As early as the middle of the 2nd century, St. Justin Martyr (c. 100/14-162/8) seems to be the first to address our subject. In his apologetic Dialogue with Trypho, in effect, Saint Justin establishes some eloquent parallels between the disobedient vprgin Eve and the obedient Virgin Mary, and between the Original Sin causing death and the regenerating Redemption restoring life. The apologist thereby seeks to ratify the Christological and Mariological thesis mentioned in the Introduction. Justin puts the matter like this:

> *[God the Son] became man through the Virgin, so that, by the same path that disobedience began because of the serpent, that path would also be destroyed. […] Because Eve, being a virgin and uncorrupted, after conceiving with the words of the serpent, she gave birth to disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary, having received faith and joy, when the angel Gabriel announced to her the joyous forewarning that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and that the power of the Most High would cover her with its shadow, for which the saint who would be born from her would be the Son of God, he replied: "Let it be done to me according to your word." And the Son born of this is from whom we have already demonstrated that the Holy Scriptures said that God through him would defeat the serpent and the angels and men assimilated to it; instead, he will free from death those who do penance for their sins and believe in him*[14].

Similarly, in the second half of that 2nd century, Saint Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon (c.130-c. 202), establishes in his treatise against heretics suggestive double parallelism between EveMary and Adam's creation/Christ's conception. In the first of these parallels, he brings to light --as Saint Justin did before-- the correlation between the disobedience of Eve, who introduces death into the human race, and the obedience of Mary, who begets the regenerator of life for mankind. This is how he states it:

> *Just as Eve, disobeying, became the cause of death for herself and for the entire human race, Mary, having as her husband the one who had previously*

[14] *Justinus,* Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo, 100, 4-6. PG 6, 709-711.

> *been destined for her, being a virgin, became with her obedience the cause of salvation for herself and all mankind*[15].

In another passage in this book, the prelate of Lyon insists:

> *For in the same way that this one [Eve] was seduced by the speech of an [evil] angel who induced her to flee from God, and she prevaricated against the divine word, so the other one [Mary] was influenced by the speech of an angel [Gabriel] to lead God, obeying the divine word. If the first one had disobeyed God, the second, instead, allowed herself to be persuaded to obey God so that the Virgin Mary became the advocate of the virgin Eve. And in the same way that mankind was put to death by a virgin, it is also saved through a Virgin: the balance of virginal disobedience [of Eve] has been restored through virginal obedience [of Mary]*[16].

In another paragraph of the same apologetic treatise, Irenaeus takes up from another perspective the parallelism between Eve's lethal disobedience and Mary's redemptive obedience by pointing out:

> *Mary, too, being a virgin, manifested herself obedient by saying: "Behold, Lord, your handmaid; Let it be to me according to your word." Instead, Eve was disobedient because she, even being a virgin, did not obey. Just as Eve, having a husband, Adam, but remaining a virgin [...], by her disobedience was the cause of death for herself and the entire human race, so too Mary, even having a predestined husband [Joseph], remaining, however, a virgin, by her obedience became a cause of salvation, both for herself and the entire mankind*[17].

---

[15] *Irenaeus Lugdunensis,* Adversus Haereres. Liber III, 22, 4. PG 7-1, 859.

[16] *Irenaeus Lugdunensis,* Adversus Haereres. Liber V, 19,1. PG 7-2, 1.175.

[17] *Irenaeus Lugdunensis,* Adversus Haereres. Liber III, 22, 4. PG 7-1, 959. On this issue José Antonio Aldama states: "La armonía perfecta del plan divino para la redención del mundo contiene todavía, para San Ireneo, otro aspecto que vuelve a demostrar la maternidad virginal de la madre del Salvador. Es un nuevo paralelismo. Pero ahora no entre las personas del primero y el segundo Adán, sino entre la escena de la caída y la escena de la reparación: entre el pecado del paraíso y la redención incoada en la encarnación. Allí aparece Eva al lado de Adán en el momento de la ruina; aquí tenemos a María junto a Jesús cuando se inicia la salvación. Como antes nos habló San Ireneo de la correspondencia entre Jesús y Adán, así ahora nos presenta el paralelismo entre María y Eva. Este nuevo paralelismo alcanza en el obispo de Lyón perspectivas muy amplias, como tendremos ocasión de verlo más adelante. De momento nos interesa sólo el punto de la virginidad; con más precisión, el de la concepción virginal. Esta aparece aquí sólo indirecta e incidentalmente. La intención del pasaje se orienta más bien hacia la actuación de María y de Eva en el drama. Pero precisamente para subrayar la oposición antitética de la actuación de ambas se cuida San Ireneo de notar las características en que coincidían sus personas. Entre ellas está la virginidad de las dos en el momento de actuar. Eva era todavía

Several lines later, Saint Irenaeus confirms the thesis that Mary's faith and obedience have a powerful salvific value for mankind by pointing out: "But thus the knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience. What the virgin Eve bound with her unbelief, the Virgin Mary untied with her faith."[18]

As if that were not enough, Saint Irenaeus highlights the antitheses between death and sin produced by virgin Eve's disobedience in the tree of the Earthly Paradise and the life created by Virgin Mary's obedience, by accepting to be the mother of the Redeemer; he stresses also the antithesis that contrasts the sinner Adam with the Savior Christ, who will regenerate life with his death on the tree of the cross. This is how the bishop of Lyon explains it:

> *Thanks to her obedience on the tree [of the cross, Mary] recapitulated the disobedience of the other tree [the tree of the Earthly Paradise]; and the unbridled seduction, by which unfortunately that virgin Eve, who was already destined for a man [Adam], was seduced, and was dispelled by the truth of the one [Mary] who was well evangelized by the angel and was already under a husband, the virgin Mary [...]. And, just as the one who allowed herself to be seduced disobeying God, so the second one allowed herself to be persuaded by obeying God so that the Virgin Mary would become the advocate of the virgin Eve [...]. Consequently, the sin of the first man was repaired by the righteous conduct of the Firstborn [Jesus], and the cunning of the serpent was overcome by the simplicity of the dove [Mary], and thus the ties that bound us to death were broken*[19].

Approximately a century and a half later, Saint Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 295-373) also takes up the antitheses Eve/Mary and Adam/Jesus. In his sermon in honor of Mary and her cousin Elizabeth, he assures that the Virgin Mary is the mother of all people, having engendered Life (Christ) for everyone. At the same time, Eve is the mother of the dead since all they die in Adam and all are made alive in Christ. The Alexandrian Father then adds that Eve tasted the fruit of the tree and made her husband eat with her, and that is why he died, while in Mary, a prudent Virgin, God the Son lives, who is the tree of life[20].

St. Athanasius immediately says that, as Eve listened to serpent's suggestion, all people suffered deception, while Mary, hearing angel Gabriel's pleas, forgiveness flourished among the sons of mankind. Eve spoke with the serpent, and man-

---

virgen cuando pecó desobedeciendo a Dios; María era igualmente virgin cuando concibió a Jesús plegándose d´´ocilmente a la voluntad divina." (Aldama,92-93).

[18] *Irenaeus Lugdunensis,* Adversus Haereres. Liber III, 22, 4. PG 7-1, 959.

[19] *Irenaeus Lugdunensis,* Adversus Haereres. Liber V, 19,1. PG 7-2, 1.175.

[20] *Athanasius Alexandrinus,* Sermo de Maria Dei Matre et de Elisabeth Ioannis matre. In *S. Alvarez* Campos (comp.), Corpus Marianum Patristicum, (Burgos: Aldecoa, 1970), vol. II, 64.

kind was infected with serpent's venom, and perfidies and gluttony came with slander. But Mary, in conversing with the angel about how she was to give birth, the lips of all people were cleansed through forgiveness and justification[21]. St. Athanasius concludes this disquisition by affirming that, when Eve looked at the tree of Paradise with lust, voluptuousness and impudence multiplied throughout the earth. Still, when Mary looked gently at Gabriel as he spoke, modesty blossomed in mankind along with temperance, purity, and virginity[22].

Around the same years that St. Athanasius expounded these ideas, the exquisite hymnographer and theologian St. Ephrem of Syria (307-373) pointed out in a hymn about the Church:

> *1. Mary and Eve, both innocent and straightforward, were put into a set: one origin of our death, the other origin of our life.*
>
> *2. Eve's prudence corrupted her innocence, and she went mad. Mary, on the other hand, wisely constituted her prudence in the grace of her innocence*[23].

Several stanzas later, he goes on to say that, while Eve saw the beauty of the tree of Paradise and received in her soul the serpent's advice, Mary discovered by her ear the invisible God, who came through the angel's voice, and the fruit of her womb was the Power of the Most High that came to incarnate[24].

In another hymn about the Church, St. Ephrem expresses that Eve's body was perfect and whole before her creation, and as a symbol, it was extracted from a rib of Adam, since Eve is the occasion of sins; and, as that rib was destined to destroy Adam's wall the magnificent and honorable lightning coming from Adam and Eve disappeared because of Eve, and returned through Mary[25].

Some decades later, St. Epiphanius of Salamis (c. 315 / 20-403) expresses in a passage from his treatise against heretics:

> *Indeed, Eve had been called the mother of the living after hearing the words: "You are earth, and to earth, you will return," after accepting sin. It seems worthy of admiration that she, after this sin, is attributed such an illustrious title. Looking at things from the outside, it is noticed that Eve is the one who is the origin of all humankind on earth. Instead, life itself has now been introduced into the world by the Virgin Mary so that she begets the living*

---

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Ephraem Syrus,* Hymni de Ecclesia 35. In *S. Alvarez Campos,* Corpus Marianum Patristicum, (Burgos: Aldecoa, 1970), vol. II, 509).

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] *Ephraem Syrus,* Hymni de Ecclesia 45. In *S. Alvarez Campos,* Corpus Marianum Patristicum, (Burgos: Aldecoa, 1970), vol. II, 511).

> *being [Christ], and thus Mary is the mother of the alive people. Therefore, similarly [to Eve], Mary is designated as the mother of all living people*[26].

A few lines later, St. Epiphanius delves into the Eve / Mary antithesis, arguing in these terms:

> *Eve became the cause of death for men because death entered the world through her. On the other hand, Mary was the cause of life because life was produced for us through her. For this reason, God the Son came into the world, and "where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more." From where death originated, life also arrived so that life would supplant death; if death came from a woman [Eve], the child of another woman [Mary] was born to exclude death and so that we would have life. And since, while the Virgin Eve was in Earthly Paradise, she offended God with her stubbornness, that is why the obedience characteristic of grace flowed from the Virgin Mary, after it was announced that the Word of God and eternal life would come from heaven incarnated in a [human] body*[27].

Perhaps during those same decades, St. Gregory Nyssen or of Nyssa (c. 330/35-c. 395) took up the thesis of the parallelisms/antithesis between Eve and Mary, and between Adam and Christ, when in a sermon on the Nativity of Jesus argued :

> *Death came through one man [Adam], and salvation came through another man [Christ]. The first man fell into sin; the second lifted whom had fallen. The woman [Eve] is defended by a woman [Mary]: the first opened the way to sin, while the second managed to open the way to justification. The first followed the serpent's advice, and the second one showed who would kill the serpent and gave birth to the author of the light. Through the wood [of Earthly Paradise's tree], the first introduced sin; the second, on the contrary, through the wood [of the cross], introduced the good. By wood, I understand the cross, whose fruit [Christ] is always green and becomes immortal life for those who taste it*[28].

Towards the end of the 4th century or the first half of the 5th, St. Cyril of Alexandria (c. 370 /73-444), after affirming that Christ came to be baptized and to sanctify baptism, states that, as the death occurred because of the virgin Eve, it was necessary that life be born through the Virgin, or, instead, be born

---

[26] *Epiphanius Salamis,* Adversus Haereses, 78,17-18. PG 42, 728.
[27] *Epiphanius Salamis,* Adversus Haereses, 78,17-18. PG 42, 728-729.
[28] *Gregorius Nyssenus,* In diem natalem Christi. PG 46, 1.148.

of the Virgin. And, as the serpent deceived that one, so the messenger Gabriel gave this security[29].

Probably around the same years, St. Proclus of Constantinople (c. 390-c. 446/47), in a sermon on Christ's incarnation, outlines some exciting ideas about the parallelism/antithesis between Adam and Christ poetically. In that text, in fact, after asking the Jews to be ashamed for denying the virginal childbirth of Mary, for saying that, if she gave birth, she could not be a virgin, Proclus confirms that, in the same way, that Adam was formed by God without any pain nor stain, the human birth of God incarnate is free from corruption[30]. Then, he points out that Christ is called the second Adam according to the flesh, because his predecessor, the first Adam, was an image of God when the clay gave form to his figure, and, ultimately, Adam carried the figure of Christ, so that he foreshadowed Christ incarnate[31]. Proclus concludes his discourse at this point by stating that God, the endless principle of life, formed Adam with his divine hands as an image of himself, while he became incarnate in Christ, his own image being uncreated of him; and while Adam, whose house is the Earthly Paradise, received his soul through an insufflation of God and had an insidious woman for his wife, Christ, whose house is heaven, was seen in the form of a servant and had the Virgin Mary in his thalamus[32].

In a sermon in praise of Mary, Proclus now dwells on the parallelism/antithesis between Eve and Mary, stating that Eve withered in the wild desire of the tree of Paradise, readily accepting the bad advice of the serpent. In contrast, Mary, rejecting evil thoughts, quickly closed her ears. And while Eve, lovingly picking the fruit of the tree, imagined that she would become a goddess, Mary, on the other hand, composed praises to God with the dignified union with God. And if Eve, in turning to corruption, intended to achieve an eminent dignity quickly, Mary, entering into divine joy, did not forget human stupidity[33].

Around the same years that Proclus issued such concepts, Hesychius of Jerusalem († c. 450), in a sermon on the Annunciation, responded in these terms to a rhetorical self-question:

> *Do you see how much and what is the dignity of the Virgin Mother of God? For she gestated as a child the Only Begotten Son of God creator of the universe,*

---

29 *Cyrillus Alexandrinus,* Cathechesis XII. De Christo incarnato, 15. PG 33, 742.

30 *Proclus Constantinopolitanus,* Oratio De Incarnatione Domini nostri Jesu Christi, 1. PG 65, 695.

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Ibid.*

33 *Proclus Constantinopolitanus,* Oratio De Laudibus sanctae Mariae, 16. PG 65, 751.

> *and reformed Adam, and sanctified Eve; she annulled the dragon [the devil] and opened heaven, preserving the seal [of virginity] of the womb*[34].

Some three-quarters of a century later, Procopius of Gaza (c. 465-528) states in a book of commentaries on Genesis that, while a woman (Eve) is condemned to sadness and servitude for her sin, Christ, born of woman, removed the curse for love of men; and, so that the objectionable cannot appear guilty, the angel Gabriel, coming from heaven, eliminated sadness with joy, using the introductory greeting *"Hail,"* and manifesting the cause of it by saying *"the Lord is with you."*[35] Procopius then adds that Mary was Eve's image since they were both virgins, and Eve, being still a virgin, sinned and obtained sadness from the serpent and founded sadness for all who sinned afterward; instead, Mary brought joy from God and removed the curse of mankind[36].

Almost a century and a half later, St. John Damascene (675-749) begins by greeting Mary in a sermon for the Annunciation with the praise *"Hail, daughter of Eve, [...] the first woman."*[37] Then, in his first sermon on the birth of the Virgin, he affirms that, if the gentiles, deceived, deluded and far from the truth, celebrate the birthdays of their kings with all honor, we must honor with much greater right the birth of the Mother of God, by whom the whole mankind has been reintegrated, and by whom the sadness of our first mother Eve has been turned into joy; as, while Eve heard the divine sentence *"You will give birth in pain"* and "Your desire will go to your husband," Mary heard *"Hail, full of grace"* and *"The Lord is with you."*[38]

In his second sermon for the Dormition of the Virgin, the Damascene says that Eve listened to the announcement of the serpent and heard the suggestion of the enemy, giving way with her senses to the fallacious voluptuousness, with which she deserved the divine sentence of giving birth with pain and being condemned to death along with Adam[39]. On the contrary, the Holy Virgin Mary, who listened to the word of God and was filled by the intervention of the Holy Spirit, and impregnated by the power of the Father, conceived without male concourse the person of the Word of God, and she delivered him painlessly. Therefore, Damascene asks rhetorically, how could death devour such a privileged woman?

---

[34] *Hesychius Hierosolymitanus,* Sermo V. Ejusdem de eadem [Sancta Maria Deipara]. PG 93, 1462.
[35] *Procopius Gazensis,* Commentarius in Genesin, Vers. 16. PG 87-1, 212.
[36] *Ibid.*
[37] *Iohannes Damascenus,* Homilia in Annuntiationem B.V. Mariae. PG 96, 650.
[38] *Iohannes Damascenus,* Homilia I In Nativitatem B.V. Mariae, 1. PG 96, 662.
[39] *Iohannes Damascenus,* Homilia II In Dormitionem B.V. Mariae, 3. PG 96, 727.

How was hell going to take her in? How could corruption invade that select body from which Christ received life as a man?[40]

2.2. References in Latin Patristics and theology

Although scarcer and less effusive than those of the Greek-Eastern Fathers, numerous are also the statements of Latin-Western Fathers and theologians on the subject under study. By way of a series of representative examples, we will now glean some of those comments in the Latin sphere.

Towards the middle of the 4th century, St. Zeno of Verona (c. 300-371/72) accepts this double parallelism/antithesis between the four referred protagonists, exclaiming with an emphasis in one of his apologetic treatises:

> *Oh charity, how pious and how rich! How powerful! Who does not have you has nothing. You were able to change God into a man. You made him pilgrim from the immensity of his abbreviated majesty for a short time. You locked him up for nine months in your virginal jail. You reinstated Eve as Mary. You renewed Adam in Christ*[41].

A couple of decades later, St. Ambrose of Milan (330-397) takes up the Eve / Mary parallelism, posing it through emphatic antitheses. This is how the holy bishop of Milan argues:

Therefore, evil came for a woman, likewise good came for a woman; as for Eve we have fallen, for Mary, we are standing; for Eve we are prostrate, for Mary we are upright; Eve led us into servitude, Mary set us free. Eve subdued us for a long time; Mary restored us in perpetuity. Eve gave us condemnation for the apple of a tree. Mary absolved us for the fruit of another tree because Christ was hanging on a tree [the cross] like a fruit[42].

---

[40] *Iohannes Damascenus,* Homilia II In Dormitionem B.V. Mariae, 3. PG 96, 727.

[41] *"O charitas, quam pia et quam opulenta! O quam potens! nihil habet, qui te non habet. Tu Deum in hominem demutare valuisti. Tu eum breviatum, paulisper a maiestatis suae immensitate peregrinari fecisti. Tu virginali carceri novem mensibus relegasti. Tu Evam in Mariam redintegrasti. Tu Adam in Christo renovasti."* (*Zeno Veronensis,* Liber I, Tractatus II, 9. PL 11, 278).

[42] *"Ergo malum per feminam, imo per feminam bonum; quia per Evam cecidimus, per Mariam stamus: per Evam prostrati, erecti per Mariam: per Evam servituti addicti, per Mariam liberi effecti. Eva nobis sustulit diuturnitatem, Maria nobis reddidit perpetuitatem: Eva nos damnari fecit per arboris pomum, Maria absolvit per arboris donum; quia et Christus in ligno pependit, ut fructus."* (*Ambrosius Mediolanensis,* Sermo 45. De primo Adamo et secundo, 2. PL 17, 715).

Approximately three decades later, the famous polygraph St. Jerome of Stridon (c. 347-420) states in one of his epistles:

> *Eve was constantly giving birth in pain. But, after the Virgin conceived in her womb and gave birth to her Child […], the curse was broken. Death entered through Eve, life through Mary. For this reason, and more richly, the gift of virginity flowed to women because it began with a woman*[43].

More than a century later, St. Eleutherius of Tournai (c. 456-531) insisted on this antithesis between Eve and Mary, stating in a sermon for the Annunciation:

> *Our mother, Eve, was aggravated by three evils, but the Holy Virgin Mary is excluded from them, and she rejoices with tripartite happiness. As she is comforted with the angel's greeting; after she is already comforted, she is blessed, and it is announced that she will be fertilized with the fullness of grace*[44].

Towards the middle of the 6th century, the bishop St. Venantius Fortunatus (c. 530-c. 607/10)-- proclaims in one of the stanzas of his famous Marian liturgical O Gloriosa Domina :

> *What sad Eve took from us,*
> *you restore it with your divine Son;*
> *For the unfortunate can enter glory,*
> *You have been turned into a window to heaven*[45].

Six centuries later, the controversial writer Peter Abelard (1079-1142) notes in a sermon on the Assumption of Mary:

> *The devil certainly tempted our first parents in the serpent of the forbidden tree, he captivated the male and the female, and we are condemned by those four; namely, the forbidden tree, the persuasive serpent, Eve seduced, and Adam deceived. But for as many, we have been repaired. While Mary believed the angel that was sent to her, just as Eve gave her consent to the devil; the new Adam [Christ] redeemed us on the tree of the cross, and with*

---

[43] *"et in doloribus jugiter Eva pariebat. Postquam vero Virgo concepit in utero, et peperit nobis puerum […] soluta maledictio est. Mors per Evam: vita per Mariam. Ideoque et ditius virginitatis donum fluxit in feminas, quia coepit a femina."* (*Hieronymus Stridonensis,* Epistula XXII, 21. PL 22, 408).

[44] *"Mater nostra Eva tribus malis aggravatur, beata vero Maria ab his excluditur, et tripartita felicitate laetatur. Salutatione etenim angelica confortatur, confortata benedicitur, et plenitudine gratiae fecunda esse nuntiatur."* (*Eleutherius Tornacensis,* Sermo in Annunciationis festum. PL 65, 97).

[45] *Quod Eva tristis abstulit, / tu reddis almo germine; / intrent ut astra flebiles, / coeli fenestra facta es.* (*Venantius Fortunatus,* O Gloriosa Domina. Miscellanea. Liber VIII. Caput IV. De Sancta Maria. PL 88, 265).

> *that tree, he repaired the damage to the other tree [of the Earthly Paradise] and cured as with medicine the lethal taste of the poisonous apple; and for those fruits assumed from the tree of the cross*[46].

Some years later, the influential Cistercian teacher Saint Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux (1090-1153), in his second sermon in honor of the Virgin Mary, addresses our first parents in these rhetorical terms:

> *Rejoice, Father Adam, but rejoice even more, O mother Eve, who, as parents of all human beings, were also their destroyers, and, what is even more unhappy, were more destroyers than parents. Console each other in the daughter [Mary], and such a daughter; but even more this one [Eve], from whom evil was first born, whose reproach then passed to all women. [...] Therefore, Eve, run towards Mary; run, mother, to her daughter; let the daughter answer for the mother, eliminate the reproach of the mother, satisfy the father for the mother, because, if the man fell for the woman, he no longer gets up except through the intermediary of a woman*[47].

Almost half a century later, Adam of Saint-Victor (1122-1192), in a hymn for the octave of Christmas, formulates:

> *The old Adam at last joyful*
> *promote a new song*
> *Fugitive and captive:*
> *Proclaim in public*

---

[46] *"Diabolus quippe in serpente de ligno vetito primos parentes tentavit, virum et feminam captivavit, et per haec qoatuor damnati sumus, scilicet lignum prohibitum, serpentem suadentem, Evam sedu¬ctam, Adam deceptum. Per totidem etiam reparati sumus. Dum angelo ad se misso Maria credidit, sicut diabolo Eva consensit; Adam novus in ligno erucis redemit, et de ligno ligni damna reparavit, et noxii pomi lethiferum gustum quasi medicamine quodam curavit; fructibus illis de arbore crucis assumptis".* (*Petrus Abelardus,* Sermo XXVI. In Assumptione Beatae Mariae. PL 178, 545).

[47] *"Lætare, pater Adam, sed magis tu, o Eva mater, exsulta, qui sicut omnium parentes, ita omnium fuistis peremptores, et, quod infelicius est, prius peremptores quam parentes. Ambo, inquam, consolamini super filia, et tali filia; sed illa amplius, de qua malum ortum est prius, cuius opprobrium in omnes pertransiit mulieres. Instat namque tempus, quo iam tollatur opprobrium, nec habeat vir quid causetur adversus feminam, qui utique, dum se imprudenter excusare conaretur, crudeliter illam accusare non cunctatus est, dicens: Mulier, quam dedisti mihi, dedit mihi de ligno, et comedi. Propterea curre, Eva, ad Mariam; curre, mater, ad filiam; filia pro matre respondeat, ipsa matris opprobrium auferat, ipsa patri pro matre satisfaciat, quia ecce si vir cecidit per feminam, iam non erigitur nisi per feminam."* (*Bernardus Claraevallensis,* Homilía II. In laudibus Virginis Matris Homilía II, 3. In Obras completas de San Bernardo. Edición bilingüe promovida por la Conferencia Regional Española de Abades Cistercienses, vol. II. Tratados (2º) (Madrid: La Editorial Católica, 1984), 616).

The sadness of Eve: the joyful Virgin
Produced the fruit of life[48].

Not many years later, the ecclesiastic and poet Peter of Blois [1135-1204] assures in one of his sermons:

> *Eve was created from old Adam, but the new Adam and the Redeemer of the old Adam is born of Mary. That [Eve] expelled from paradise the one who was both her husband and her father; he assumes her [Mary] as her husband as her son to an even happier Paradise. […] Eve's pride took away paradise, Mary's humility returned us to heaven.*[49]

2.3. References in medieval liturgical hymns

Based on the concordant patristic and theological tradition, firmly consolidated from generation to generation for more than a millennium, countless liturgical hymns arose from early on, recited or sung in various religious ceremonies and prayers and recitation of the Hours. We are especially interested in analyzing the hymns produced in honor of the Virgin Mary for our topic. In this regard, we have drawn on the vibrant collection of Marian medieval hymns collected in 1854 by the German historian and archaeologist Franz Josef Mone in the second volume of his famous repertoire of medieval liturgical hymns[50].

Among all these Marian hymns, we have selected --because they somehow capture the parallelism/antithesis between Eve and Mary, and between Adam and Christ-- the following, which we will cite with the number with which F.J. Mone register them:

---

[48] *"Adam vetus tandem laetus / Novum promat canticum / Fugitivus et captivus :/ Prodeat in publicum. / Eva luctum : vitae fructum / Virgo gaudens edidit."* (Adamus a Sancto Victore, Sequentiae III. Dominica intra octavas Nativitatis. PL 196, 1432).

[49] *"De veteri Adam creata est Eva ; novus autem Adam et veteris Redemptor generatur ex Maria. Illa de paradiso illum suum tam virum quam parentem expulit, hanc hodie suus tam sponsus quam filius ad feliciorem paradisum assumpsit. […] Evae superbia nobis abstulit paradisum, Mariae humilitas nos revexit ad coelum.* (*Petrus Blesensis,* Sermo XXXIV, In eadem Assumptione, PL 207, 663-665).

[50] *F. J.Mone (ed.).* Hymni Latini Medii Aevi. E Codd. Mss. Edidit et adnotationibus illustravit Franc. Jos. Mone. Tomus Secundus. Hymni ad. B.V. Mariam (Friburgi Brisgoviae: Sumptibus Herder, 1854 From now on we will quote this compilation of medieval hymns with the abbreviation Mone, followed by the page on which the quoted stanza of the hymn is found.

Hymn 324 *Ad beatam Virginem Mariam* (12th century) states:

Your conception
restored us,
to whom the deception of the serpent
overwhelmed us,
and ended
To exile
promoted by Eve[51].

Hymn 357 *De beata Maria. Prosa* (14th century) expresses:

As the mankind
been fallen by crime
of mother Eve,
Gabriel quickly sent to this [Mary]
With the Alliance,
Promises her: "Hail." [52]

The hymn 492 *Oratio de beata Maria virgine* (14th century) says:

The banished sons of Eve
And the wayward sinners
[trust] in the name of your Son,
who suffered for mankind,
so that with his blood spilled
wash us from sin[53].

The hymn 498 *Oratio super Ave maris stella* (from the 15th century) states:

Changing Eve's name,
give us a slight burden,
so that the gall of primeval guilt
do not corrupt us.
You have a loving man
And famous,
You have a sweet soul
You, heavenly honey.

---

[51] *Tua nos restituit / conceptio, / quos serpentis obruit / deceptio , / de mortis eripuit / confinio, / et finem imposuit / exilio , / quod Eva promeruit.* (*Hymnus* 324, Ad b. V. Mariam. In Mone, 6).

[52] 324. *Tua nos restituit / conceptio, / quos serpentis obruit / deceptio , / de mortis eripuit / confinio , / et finem imposuit / exilio , / quod Eva promeruit.* (Hymnus 324, Ad b. V. Mariam. In Mone, 6).

[53] *Exules Evae filios / peccatoresque devios / in tui filii nomine, / qui passus est pro homine, / ut ejus sparso sanguine / nos lavaret a crimine.* (492. Oratio de b. M.v. In Mone, 212).

Turn the cry of Eve
In a joyous laugh,
So that we enter the meeting like this
In which God abides[54].

Hymn 363 *De Annuntiatione. Prosa* (undated) says:

Gabriel was sent from heaven,
As a faithful messenger of the Word,
To say holy words
To the holy Virgin.
The excellent and gentle Word
It unfolds inside the room [the womb of Mary]
And forming "Ave" from Eve,
reversing Eve's name[55].

3. ICONOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF SOME ANNUNCIATIONS OF THE 15TH CENTURY

After exposing the doctrinal meanings brought to light by the Greek and Latin Fathers and theologians and by the Marian hymns analyzed on the parallelsisms/antitheses between Eve and Mary, and between Adam and Christ, as well as between sin-death / redemption-life, it is now time to analyze some images of the Annunciation that include the figures of our first parents in their scene.

Fra Angelico, Altarpiece of the Annunciation, 1425-26.
Prado Museum, Madrid.

---

[54] *Mutans nomen Evae, / confer onus leve, / ne culpae primaevae / nos corrumpat fel. / nomen amorosum / habes et famosum, / spiritum favosum, / tu coeleste mel. / Evae transfer fletum / in arrisum laetum, / sic intremus coetum, / ubi manet el.* (Hymnus 498. Oratio super Ave maris stella. In Mone, 221).

[55] *Missus Gabriel de coelis, / verbi bajulus fidelis, / sacris disserit loquelis / cum beata virgine. / Verbum bonum et suave / pandit intus in conclave / et ex Eva formans ave, / Avae verso nomine.* (Hymnus 363. De annuntiatione. Prosa. In Mone, 55).

In this emblematic Annunciation Altarpiece in the Prado Museum, Fra Angelico stages the episode in an elegant house in the shape of a Renaissance loggia or portico. Both protagonists fill almost the entire space[56]. With respectful attitude, the radiant angel Gabriel begins to kneel before the Virgin Mary, who, sitting modestly, with the prayer book open on her right leg, crosses the hands on her chest and bows her head as a sign of acceptance before the divine will that the heavenly messenger communicates to her.

In the upper left corner of the painting, the hands of God the Father emit towards Mary the ray of light --a symbol of God the Son--, in whose wake the dove of the Holy Spirit flies, in a clear illustration of the angelic announcement: "The Holy Spirit will come over you, and the power of the Most High will over-

[56] We hace studied this Prado Museum altarpiece in the chapter J.M. Salvador-González, *"La Anunciación de Fra Angelico en el Museo del Prado. Interpretación de sus significados doctrinales"*. In P. de Paz Amérigo & I. Sanz Extremeño (eds.), Eulogía. Estudios sobre cristianismo primitivo. Homenaje a Mercedes López Salvá (Madrid, Guillermo Escolar Editor, 2018), 345-367.

shadow you." The ray of light and the dove thus symbolize the immediate conception of the divine Son incarnate as man in the Virgin's womb at the very instant that she accepts the will of the Most High to become the mother of the Redeemer. Perhaps to make this incarnation more evident, the painter has represented the adult Christ's head in the tondo located over the central column.

Now, for our aims, the most exciting thing in this altarpiece is, in the left sector of the composition, the prominent presence of Adam and Eve, modestly covered with one-piece dresses, who, embarrassed by the Original Sin just committed, are being expelled from the Earthly Paradise by the angel that flies over their heads. It should be noted how, in the middle of that lush forest that symbolizes Paradise, a standing palm tree emerges, which could suggest the Tree of the Science of Good and Evil.

In any case, it is clear that the cult painter Fra Angelico (a Dominican friar) has here significantly highlighted the figure of our first parents after sinning and being thrown out of Paradise, in contrast to the scene of the Annunciation as an effective way to signify the parallelisms/antitheses between Eve and Mary, and between Adam and the newly incarnate Christ the Redeemer. Oddly enough, not a few commentators on this work, such as José Manuel Cruz Valdovinos[57] or Magnolia Scudieri[58], forget to mention these essential parallelisms/antitheses. In contrast, others interpret them unconvincingly, as in Diego Angulo Íñiguez[59] and Adolfo Sarabia[60].

---

[57] In commenting this Prado Museum Annunciation, José Manuel Cruz Valdovinos (Escuela italiana". In Buendía, J.R. et al., El Prado. Colecciones de pintura, 11-350) not even mentions Adam and Eve.

[58] In her comment on the Annunciation by Fra Angelico in the Prado Museum, Magnolia Scudieri (in Scudieri, M. & Giacomelli, S., Fra Giovanni Angelico. Pittore miniatore o miniatore pittore? (Firenze, Giunti, Firenze Musei, 2007) does not mention the theme of Adam and Eve.

[59] When analyzing various Annunciations by Fra Angelico, Diego Angulo Íñiguez, Museo del Prado. Pintura italiana anterior a 1600 (Madrid, Gredos, 1979) makes this insignificant comment on the subject: *"Tanto en el Museo del Prado como en Cortona el tema de la Anunciación va acompañado por el comentario de la historia de la expulsión del Paraíso de nuestros primeros padres, pero desde el punto de vista artístico lo importante es que permite al pintor conceder una cierta parte del escenario al paisaje."* (p. 33-34).

[60] On this Prado Museum altarpiece, Adolfo Sarabia (Cinco Anunciaciones en el Museo del Prado, Madrid, Fundación Amigos del Museo del Prado, 1998) highlights the gestures of Adam and Eve that way: *"Aquí, sin embargo, tenemos dolor contenido, el ¿qué he hecho? de Adán y un gesto ya de oración de Eva. Nada más pecar aparece e| arrepentimiento y, con el arrepentimiento la esperanza del perdón. No van desnudos, sino vestidos de una forma una vez más, simbólica. […] Pues ese mismo vestido [de peregrinos] es el que llevan aquí Adán y Eva, peregrinos para siempre por una tierra llena de dificultades y de espinas como las que simbólicamente ciñen sus cinturas, y lejos del lugar donde todo era dicha, del Edén, del que literalmente están saliendo".* (p. 51).

Fra Angelico, Annunciation of San Giovanni Valdarno, c. 1430-32. Museum of Santa María delle Grazie.

Fra Angelico structures this altarpiece of San Giovanni Valdarno with a compositional-narrative model almost identical to the one used in the recently analyzed Prado Museum altarpiece: an almost similar house-portico, equal positions in the Virgin and the angel, opening of the portico to the left into a garden. There are also some differences between the two altarpieces: the vaulted ceiling of the Prado Museum becomes a flat roof in the Valdarno altarpiece, the hands of God the Father and the ray of light disappear, and the dove of the Holy Spirit is now

on the head of the Virgin, while in the tondo on the central column now shows the bust of the prophet Isaiah displaying a phylactery with his prophecy *"Ecce virgo concipiet ..."*.

However, from the point of view of visual prominence, the most notable difference is that the expulsion of Paradise in the Valdarno altarpiece appears relatively minimized in the distance, in a fragment of the upper part of the left band. However, despite its small size, this scene of the expulsion from Paradise retains the same tragic density as in the altarpiece in the Prado Museum, especially when in Valdarno our first parents step on, not a flowery garden, as in the painting of Madrid, but a barren and bare land, a symbol of the sufferings and death of those who have been condemned after sinning disobeying God.

Fra Angelico, Altarpiece of the Annunciation, 1433-34. Diocesan Museum of Cortona

In this third version of the Annunciation, Fra Angelico reformulates to a large extent the compositional and narrative approaches that he structured in his two previous versions of Madrid and Valdarno, although with a closer approach to the latter: similar house-portico open towards the flowery garden, similar flat roof, similar bust of the prophet Isaiah in the tondo over the central column, similar arrangement of the divine dove (without a ray of light or the hands of the Most High) over the head of the Virgin, similar location of the scene of the expulsion from Eden towards an arid land in the upper left corner of the painting, although in the Cortona altarpiece the figures of the first parents and the angel who expels them are more extensive than in Valdarno painting.

A remarkable difference concerning the Prado and Valdarno versions is that Fra Angelico brings Gabriel a more active pose in this Cortona altarpiece, using two visual resources. First of all, because, instead of having the hands crossed over his chest, as in the other two altarpieces, Gabriel points up here with his left index finger -- to signify the origin of the message he communicates to Mary--, while with the right one points to the Virgin, to indicate that she is the one chosen by God to be the mother of his divine Son. Secondly, because the painter makes the dialogue between the two protagonists visible, through inscriptions in gold letters that flow from their mouths: Gabriel emits his speech in two separate lines: the upper line, curving upwards, carries the phrase Sp[iritu]s S[anctus] sup[er]ve[n]iet i[n] te; the lower line, descending rectilinearly, bears the phrase virt[us] Alti[s]si[mi] obu[m]brabit tibi. For her part, Mary responds in the middle line -- with the letters inverted from bottom to top, as if the Most High can read them -- with the sentence, Ecce ancilla Do[mi]n[i fiat mihi secundum] v[er] bu[m] tuum.

As in the two preceding altarpieces, this one of Cortona Fra Angelico clearly illustrates the parallelism and antitheses Eve/Mary, Adam/Christ, sin/redemption, so clearly explained by the Fathers and theologians of the Eastern and Western Churches[61].

Jan van Eyck, 4.1. The Annunciation. 4.2. Adam and Eve, panels extracted from The Ghent Altarpiece, 1432. Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent

[61] When analyzing this Cortona Annunciation of Fra Angelico, A. Zuccari ("Simbolismi medievali e forme rinascimentali: la 'porta dischiusa' nell'arte dell'Angelico". In Zuccari, Morello & de Simone, Beato Angelico. L'alba del Rinascimento, 247-274) brings this irrelevant comment: *"Nell'Annunciacione di Cortona (1434 curca, fig. 4) il prospettico colonnato creato dal punto di fuga esterno al dipinto indiriza lo sguardo verso la 'caduta' dei Progenitori senza sminuire la centralità della porta e la valenza simbolica della colonna che si frappone tra l'angelo e la Vergine."* (p. 35).

Zacharias propheta
Ave Maria

The extraordinarily complex Polyptych of Saint Bavo, altarpiece of the main altar of the Cathedral of Ghent, also known as The Ghent Altarpiece, contains among its multiple panels the scene of the Annunciation (visible when the altarpiece is closed), and the separated, naked images of Adam and Eve (visible in the lateral wings of the upper register when the altarpiece is open).

The Annunciation, which occupies the entire upper register of the closed altarpiece, is located in a vast palatial enclosure in whose interior the two protagonists, both on their knees, settle the ends of the chamber, while its central part is modeled by a bigeminal window (on the left side) and various symbolic objects (on the right side). Despite the large compositional distance between the angel and the Virgin, the painter partially fills the compositional void and connects both characters by inscribing the dialogue between them in gold letters. Thus from Gabriel's mouth comes the inscription AVE GRACIA PLENA D[OMI]N[U]S TECU[M], while Mary's mouth sends out the inscription ECCE ANCILLA D[OMI]NI, inverted from the bottom up, as Fra Angelico does in his already analyzed Cortona Altarpiece.

In this Ghent Altarpiece, it is important to emphasize that, despite the mutual discrepant arrangement -- the Visitation (the Promised Redemption) in the closed altarpiece, Adam and Eve (the Original Sin) in the open altarpiece--, both sets are intrinsically interconnected from the theological perspective, in the various doctrinal senses brought to light so clearly by the Eastern and Western Fathers and theologians, as we have explained throughout this paper.

Giovanni di Paolo, The Annunciation and the Expulsion from Paradise, c-1435. National Gallery of Art, Washington. Photo: Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington

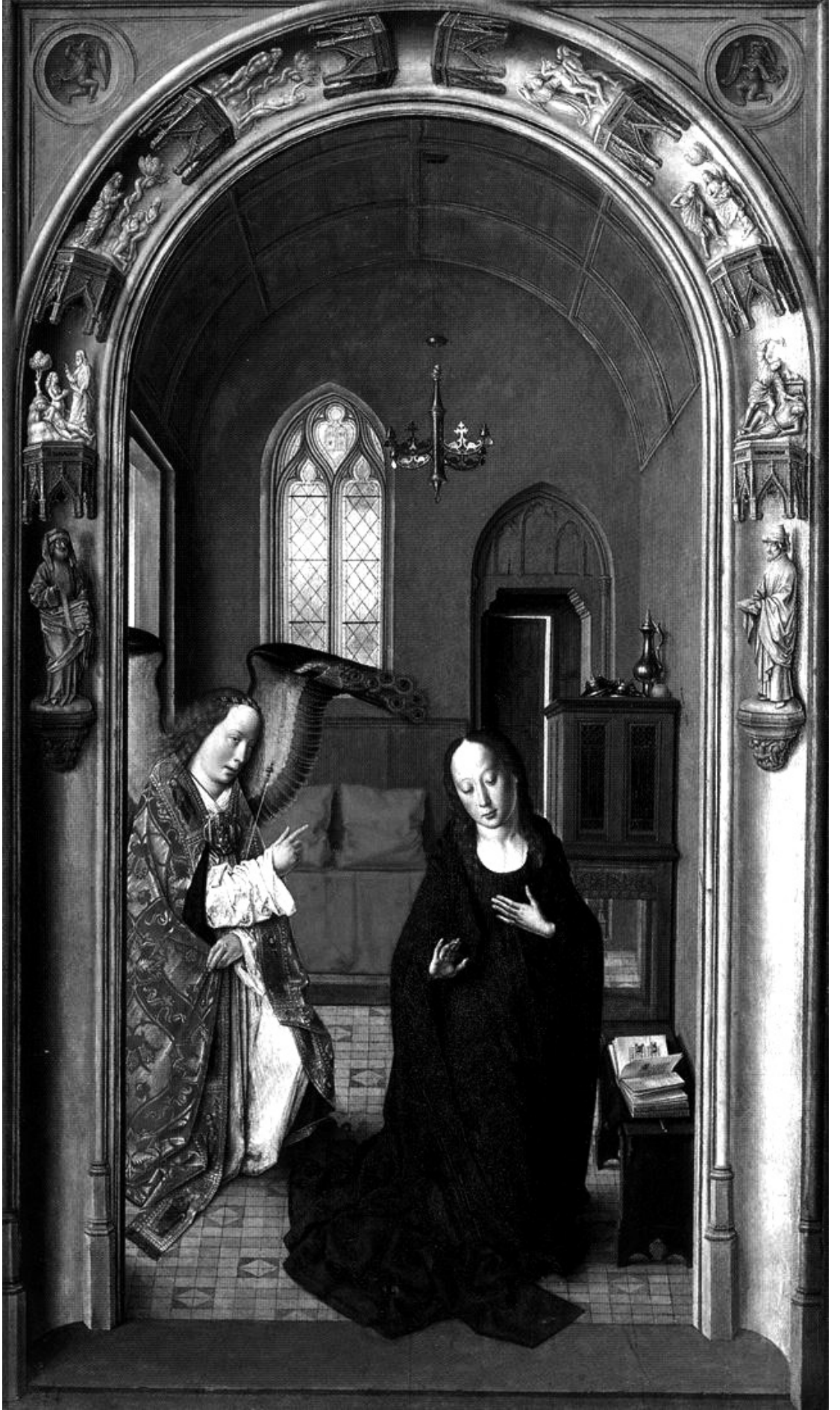
Despite its modest dimensions, being one of five panels in a predella of an unidentified Sienese altarpiece, this painting by Giovanni di Paolo, The Annunciation and the Expulsión from Paradise, c. 1435, in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, is very eloquent and rich in meaning. The painter places the scene inside a house with an incongruous structure and whimsical perspective, with views towards the bedroom and other rooms, open towards a lush garden inhabited by rabbits. In the central area of that house, the upright Gabriel and the seated Virgin exchange their dialogue, both with the hands crossed on their chests. In an enclosure to the right, Saint Joseph warms himself before the fireplace, utterly oblivious to the conception of Christ, which is taking place at that moment in the central room of the house.

The most interesting for our purposes is the scene of the expulsion from Paradise, which Giovanni di Paolo formulates on the left side of the painting with a quite unique narrative approaches: Adam and Eve appear entirely naked, at the moment when an angel --surprisingly almost naked -- pushes them violently out of the Earthly Paradise, symbolized by a door. Above them, in the upper left corner and surrounded by a circular golden mandrel, God the Father serves as a hinge to both scenes: because, in the setting of Adam and Eve, he is the Creator who, as a severe judge, orders to expel from Paradise the disobedient first parents; on the contrary, in the scene of the Annunciation He is the benevolent Most High who blesses and "covers with his shadow" the Virgin Mary to become the Mother of the Redeemer.

In any case, Giovanni di Paolo also reflects in this small panel the long patristic and theological tradition on the antagonisms between Eve and Mary, Adam and Jesus, sin and redemption.

Dirk Bouts, The Annunciation,
the left panel of Life of the Virgin triptych,
c. 1445. Prado Museum, Madrid.

The Flemish painter Dirk Bouts locates the Annunciation scene --the left panel of the Life of the Virgin Triptych, c. 1445, from the Prado Museum--, inside a bourgeois house, exquisitely designed and adorned with elegant furniture, with utensils of undeniable symbolism. Almost on the lintel of a portico-like door with rich sculptural decoration, Mary appears kneeling, with the eyes lowered and the left hand on her chest and the right one extended forward, as in a gesture of solemn swearing. At the same time, Gabriel, covered with a luxurious embroidered pluvial cape, blesses the Virgin.



What is most interesting for our purposes in this painting is the sculpted frame that focuses the scene. While the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel appear on its jambs, the most relevant episodes for our theme take place in the archivolt: in the left semi-arch, starting from the bottom, there are the scenes of the creation of Eve from Adam's rib, God forbidding our first parents to eat from the Tree of Good and Evil (visible among them, with the snake/devil already coiled around its trunk), the original sin with the serpent in the same situation; in the right semi-arch, from top to bottom, the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, the sufferance of both after the expulsion (Adam working the earth with sweat, Eve with Cain and Abel children, after giving birth to them with pain) and finally, Cain killing his brother Abel.

In this panel, Dirk Bouts also illustrates clearly, and with larger projection, the antitheses we are analyzing; because, in addition to the already known antitheses, Eve`s disobedience/Mary`s obedience, sinner Adam/Redeemer Christ, original sin/Redemption, the artist now adds, with the final scene of the murder of Abel, the antithesis between the sins after the Original Fall and the universal Redemption that Christ guarantees for every sin of all human beings.

The Annunciation, from a Book of Hours (data unknown)

This anonymous Annunciation, a miniature of a Book of Hours whose data we do not know, is singularly interesting in our issue. From the outset, the inversion of both protagonists' positions sounds somewhat exceptional, with Mary on the left side and the genuflecting angel on the right, who also points to the Virgin with his left hand while holding the herald's staff with the right hand. The scene takes place inside a fanciful palace, adorned with large statues (prophets?), whose central space the monumental throne on which the Virgin is seated fills largely. At the same time, God the Father, wearing a papal tiara and surrounded by a blue mandorla, send from on high the dove of the Holy Spirit.

But more than that strange compositional inversion of the angel and the Virgin, and more than the unusual palace open to the landscape, it is worth highlighting here the scene of Original Sin, located at the bottom of the central sector, just as the link between Mary and Gabriel. Such a deliberate dispositive circumstance has been designed undoubtedly to make more evident the essential connexion between the Fall of the progenitors of mankind and their Redeemer, who is being conceived at that instant in Mary's womb. In that scene, our first parents remain next to the Earthly Paradise Tree, already trying to cover their nakedness by being ashamed of their sin after having accepted the deceptive proposal of the devil/serpent with the head of a woman, curled up in the tree.

Giovanni Francesco Maineri, The Annunciation, f 13 from the Pico della Mirandola Book of Hours Use of Rome ('The Mirandola Hours'), c. 1490/99. Padua or Venice. The British Library

Giovanni Francesco Maineri poses this exquisite miniature of the Annunciation from the Book of Hours of Pico de la Mirandola according to a highly complex composition, ornamented with a multitude of decorative elements, in the middle of a "palace" that is structured on three levels and opens completely into outer space.

Apart from these ornamental elements, including the two coats of arms --by Galeotto Pico della Mirandola (on the left) and Bianca Maria d'Este (on the right)-- it is essential to highlight the contrast between the scene of the Annunciation in the middle level of the "palace," and that of Original Sin on the lower level. The Annunciation, designed in the shape of a triangle, whose top is occupied by God the Father, surrounded by a cohort of angels at the top of the page, while the vertices of the base are occupied by Gabriel and Mary, both covered by splendid robes. In the absence of the dove of the Holy Spirit and the fertilizing ray of light emanated by the Most High, the impregnation of the Virgin is here visualized by Christ himself, who, in the form of a naked little child, is already descending from heaven towards the Virgin[62].

In the Original Sin scene, Adam and Eve appear, who is taking the apple that the serpent/devil with a female bust, curled around the Tree of Life, urges them to eat, in contravention of the explicit order of the Creator.

Also, in this precious miniature, the links/contrasts between Eve and Mary, Adam and Christ, original sin and the redemption of mankind turn out to be meridians, in perfect correspondence with the solid doctrinal tradition that the Fathers and theologians of Eastern and Western Churche, as we have already explained.

---

[62] This subject of Christ represented as a naked little child (often carrying a cross on his shoulders), after emerging sporadically in the 14th century, was relatively frequent in the 15th, until it was definitively prohibited by the Council of Trent, at the risk that could induce to the error of believing that the body of Christ came already formed from heaven, without having been begotten in Mary's womb.

INCIPIT OFFICIV BEA
TEMARIE VIRGINIS SECV
DVM CONSVETVDINE
ROMANE CVRIE ADMA
TVTINVM VERSVS DO
MINE LABIA MEA APE

4. CONCLUSIONS

At the end of the current study, we can reach three main conclusions.
First, an in-depth analysis of the patristic, theological and liturgical primary sources allows us to highlight a millenarian, solid doctrinal tradition on various parallelisms/antitheses between Eve and the Virgin Mary, between Adam and Christ and between sin-death and redemption-life.

Second, through the iconographic analysis of several paintings of the Annunciation of the 15th century that incorporate in the scene the figures of Adam and Eve, we have verified their essential relationship with the dogmatic content of the Annunciation.

Third, through the comparative analysis of these patrístic, theological and liturgical texts, we have confirmed that these paintings of the Annunciation with our first parents reflect the firmly established Christian tradition on the parallelisms/antitheses mentionned above.

References:

1. *Adamus a Sancto Victore,* "Sequentiae III. Dominica intra octavas Nativitatis. PL 196, 1431-1434.
2. *Alvarez Campos. S. (comp.).* Corpus Marianum Patristicum (Burgos, Aldecoa, 1970-1981), 7 vols.
3 *AmbrosiusMediolanensis,* Sermo 45, 2, pl 17, 715.
4 *Athanasius Alexandrinus,* Sermo de Maria Dei Matre et de Elisabeth Ioannis matre. In S. Alvarez Campos (comp.), Corpus Marianum Patristicum (Burgos: Aldecoa, 1970), vol. II, 64.
5. *Bernardus Claraevallensis,* Sermones en alabanza de la Virgen Madre Sermones. Homilía II. In laudibus Virginis Matris Homilía II.. In Obras completas de San Bernardo. Edición bilingüe promovida por la Conferencia Regional Española de Abades Cistercienses, vol. II. Tratados (2º), (Madrid, La Editorial Católica, Col. BAC, 1984), 616.
6. *Cyrillus Alexandrinus,* Cathechesis XII. De Christo incarnato, 15. PG 33, 742.
7. *Ephraem Syrus,* Hymni de Ecclesia 45. En: S. Alvarez Campos (comp.), Corpus Marianum Patristicum, (Burgos: Aldecoa, 1970), vol. II, 511.
8. *Ephraem Syrus,* Sermo de Domino nostro 3. In S. Alvarez Campos (comp.), Corpus Marianum Patristicum (Burgos: Aldecoa, 1970), vol. II, 513.
9. *Ephraem Syrus,* Hymni de Ecclesia 35. In S. Alvarez Campos (comp.), Corpus Marianum Patristicum (Burgos: Aldecoa, 1970), vol. II, 509.

10. *Eleutherius Tornacensis,* Sermo in Annunciationis festum. PL 65, 97.
11. *Epiphanius Salaminis,* Adversus Haereses, 78, 18. PG 42, 700.
12. *Hesychius Hierosolymitanus,* Sermo V. Ejusdem de eadem [Sancta Maria Deipara] PG 93, 1462.
13. *Hieronymus Stridonensis,* Epistula XXII, 21. PL 22, 408.
14. Hymnus 324. Ad b. V. Mariam, In Mone, F.J. (ed.), Hymni Latini Medii Aevi. E Codd. Mss. Edidit et adnotationibus illustravit Franc. Jos. Mone. Tomus Secundus. Hymni ad. B.V. Mariam (Friburgi Brisgoviae: Sumptibus Herder, 1854), 6.
15. Hymnus 326. De conceptione s. Mariae virg. In Mone, 8-9.
16. Hymnus 357. De b. Maria. Prosa. In Mone, 49.
17. Hymnus 363. De annnuntiatione. Prosa. In Mone, 55.
18. Hymnus 420. Purificationis b. Mariae v. In Mone, 129.
19. Hymnus 492. Oratio de b. M.v. In Mone, 212.
20. Hymnus 498. Oratio super Ave maris stella. In Mone, 221.
21. *Iohannes Damascenus,* Homilia in Annuntiationem B.V. Mariae. PG 96, 650.
22. *Iohannes Damascenus,* Homilia I In Nativitatem B.V. Mariae, 1. PG 96, 662.
23. *Iohannes Damascenus,* Homilia I In Dormitionem B.V. Mariae, 7. PG 96, 710.
24. *Iohannes Damascenus,* Homilia II In Dormitionem B.V. Mariae, 3. PG 96, 727.
25. *Iohannes Damascenus,* Homilia II In Dormitionem B.V. Mariae, 8. PG 96, 734-735.
26. *Irenaeus Lugdunensis,* Adversus Haereses. Liber III, 22,4. PG 7-1, 858-860.
27. *Irenaeus Lugdunensis,* Adversus Haereses. Liber V, 19.1. PG 7-2, 1.175.
28. *Justinus,* Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo. PG 6, 709-711.
29. *Migne, J.-P.,* Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca (Paris: Garnier, 1857-1867), 166 vols.
30. *Migne, J.-P.,* Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina (Paris: Garnier, 1844-1864, 221 vols.
31. *Mone, F.J., (ed.),* Hymni Latini Medii Aevi. E Codd. Mss. Edidit et adnotationibus illustravit Franc. Jos. Mone. Tomus Secundus. Hymni ad. B.V. Mariam (Friburgi Brisgoviae: Sumptibus Herder, 1854).
32. *Petrus Abelardus,* Sermo XXVI. In Assumptione Beatae Mariae. PL 178, 539-547.
33. *Petrus Blesensis.* Sermo XXXIV, In eadem Assumptione. PL 207, 663-665.
34. *Proclus Constantinopolitanus,* Oratio De Incarnatione Domini nostri Jesu Christi, 3. PG 65, 695.
35. *Proclus Constantinopolitanus,* Oratio De Laudibus sanctae Mariae, 16. PG 65, 751.
36. *Procopius Gazensis,* Commentarius in Genesin, Vers. 16. PG 87-1, 212.
37. *Venantius Fortunatus,* O Gloriosa Domina. Miscellanea. Liber VIII. Caput IV. De Sancta Maria. PL 88, 265.
38. *Zeno Veronensis,* Liber I, Tractatus II, 9. PL 11, 278.

Bibliography:

39. *Aldama, J. A. de,* María en la Patrística de los siglos I y II (Madrid: La Editorial Católica, 1970).
40. *Angulo Íñiguez, D.,* Museo del Prado. Pintura italiana anterior a 1600 (Madrid: Gredos, 1979).

41. *Argan, G.C.,* Fra Angelico. Étude biographique et critique (Genève: Skira, 1965).
42. *Baldini, U.,* L'opera completa dell'Angelico (Milano: Rizzoli, 1970).
43. *Barre, H.,* "Le mystère d'Ève à la fia de l´époque patristique en Occident", Études Mariales 13 (1855), 61-97.
44. *Bartz, G.,* Guido di Piero, llamado Fra Angelico. Hacia 1395-1455 (Colonia: Könemann, 2000).
45. *Bastero de Eleizalde, J. L.,* María, Madre del Redentor (Pamplona, Eunsa, 1995).
46. *Buendía, J.R.* et al., El Prado. Colecciones de pintura (Barcelona / Madrid: Lunwerg, 1994).
47. *Burghardt, W.J.,* "María en el pensamiento de los Padres orientales. I. La nueva Eva". In Carol, J.B. Mariología (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1964), 488-499.
48. *Capelle, B.,* "Le thème de la Nouvelle Ève chez les anciens docteurs latins", Études Mariales 12 (1954), 55-76.
49. *Carol, J.B.,* Mariología (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1964).
50. *Cignelli, L.,* Maria nuova Eva nella Patrologia greca (sec. II-V) (Assisi: Studio Teologico "Porziuncola", 1966).
51. *Cruz Valdovinos, J.M.,* "Escuela italiana". In Buendía, J.R. et al., El Prado. Colecciones de pintura, 211-350.
52. *de Fiores, S.,* María, Madre de Jesús. Síntesis histórico-salvífica (Salamanca: Secretariado Trinitario, 2002).
53. *de Fiores, S.,* María, sintesis de valores. Historia cultural de la mariología (Madrid: Ediciones San Paolo, 2011).
54. *de Fiores, S. & Meo, S. (dirs.).* Nuevo Diccionario di Mariología (Madrid: Ediciones Paulinas, 19864).
55. *García Paredes, J. C. R.,* Mariología, (Madrid, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2015), 1474-1487
56. *Hauke, M.,* Introducción a la Mariología (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2015).
57. *Laurentin, R. & Meo, S.,* "Nueva Eva". In de Fiores, S. & Meo, S. (dirs.). Nuevo Diccionario di Mariología (Madrid: Ediciones Paulinas, 19864)1474-1787.
58. *Mateo Seco, L.,* "María, nueva Eva, según ls Padres", Estudios Marianos 50 (1985), 53-69.
59. *Ponce Cuéllar, M.,* María, madre del Redentor y de la Iglesia (Barcelona: Herder, 2001).
60. *Pope-Hennessy, J.,* Fra Angelico (London, Phaidon Press, 1952).
61. *Pope-Hennessy, J.,* Fra Angelico (Florencia: Scala / Nueva York: Riverside, 1992).
62. *Romero Pose, E.,* "El paralelismo Eva-María en la primera teología cristiana", Estudios Marianos 64 (1998), 158-163.
63. *Salvador-González, J. M.,* "The house/palace in Annunciations of the 14th and 15th centuries. Iconographic interpretation in light of the Latin patristic and theological tradition", Eikón Imago 15 (2021). DOI: https://doi.org/10.5209/eiko.74161
64. *Salvador-González, J. M.,* "The bed in images of the Annunciation (14th-15th centuries): An iconographic interpretation according to Latin Patristics", De Medio Aevo, 15-1 (2021), 77-93. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5209/dmae.70663

65. *Salvador-González, J. M.,* "The bed in images of the Annunciation of the 14th and 15th centuries. A dogmatic symbol according to Greek-Eastern Patrology", Imago. Revista de Emblemática y Cultura Visual, 12 (2020), 7-31. DOI: https://doi.org/10.7203/imago.12.17155

66. *Salvador-González, J. M.,* "The symbol of light's ray in images of the Annunciation of the 14th and 15th centuries according to Greek Patrology", História Revista, 25 / 3 (2020), 334- 355. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5216/hr.v25i3.63194

67. *Salvador-González, J. M.,* "The temple in images of the Annunciation: a double dogmatic symbol according to the Latin theological tradition (6th-15th centuries)", De Medio Aevo, 14 (2020), 56-68. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5209/dmae.69014

68. *Salvador-González, J. M.,* "Haec porta Domini. Exegeses of some Greek Church Fathers on Ezekiel's porta clausa (5th-10th centuries)", Cauriensia 15 (2020). 615-633. DOI: https://doi.org/10.33209/2519-4348-2707-9627-2020-8-7710.17398/2340-4256.15.615

69. *Salvador-González, J. M.,* "Iconographic Interpretation of the Temple as a Theological Symbol in Images of the Annunciation of the 14th and 15th Centuries", Fenestella. Inside Medieval Art 1 (2020), 23-41. DOI: https://doi.org/10.13130/fenestella/12672

70. *Salvador-González, J. M.,* "The Symbol of Bed (Thalamus) in Images of the Annunciation of the 14th-15th Centuries in the Light of Latin Patristics", International Journal of History, vol. 5, n. 4 (2019), 49-70.

71. *Salvador-González, J. M.,* "The house/palace in Annunciations of the 14th and 15th centuries. Iconographic interpretation in light of the Latin patristic and theological tradition", Eikón Imago, 15 (2021). DOI: https://doi.org/10.5209/eiko.74161

72. *Salvador-González, J. M.,* "La Anunciación de Fra Angelico en el Museo del Prado. Interpretación de sus significados doctrinales". In de Paz Amérigo, P. & Sanz Extremeño, I. (eds.), Eulogía. Estudios sobre cristianismo primitivo. Homenaje a Mercedes López Salvá (Madrid: Guillermo Escolar Editor, 2018), 345-367.

73. *Salvador-González, J. M.,* "Capítulo 3. La Anunciación". In Salvador-González, J. M., Ancilla et Regina. Aproximaciones a la iconografía mariana en la Edad Media (Saarbrücken: Editorial Académica Española, 2012). 73-104).

74. *Sarabia, A.,* Cinco Anunciaciones en el Museo del Prado (Madrid: Fundación Amigos del Museo del Prado, 1998).

75. *Scudieri, M. & Giacomelli, S.,* Fra Giovanni Angelico. Pittore miniatore o miniatore pittore? (Firenze: Giunti, Firenze Musei, 2007).

76. *Zuccari, A., Morello, G. & de Simone, G. (a cura di),* Beato Angelico. L'alba del Rinascimento (Roma, Musei Capitolini, 8 aprile-5 luglio 2009, Ginevra / Milano: Skira, 2009).

77. *Zuccari, A.,* "Simbolismi medievali e forme rinascimentali: la 'porta dischiusa' nell'arte dell'Angelico". In Zuccari, Morello & de Simone, Beato Angelico. L'alba del Rinascimento, 247-274.