Divine Ances-tree:
Theological Connections in a Medieval Book of Hours

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Introduction

Many medieval Books of Hours feature a depiction of the Annunciation on the first page of the Hours of the Virgin. Often, the Annunciation is paired with an image of the Fall of Man, emphasizing the typological connections between Mary and Eve. However, one early sixteenth century example adds a third iconographic element to the mix: the Tree of Jesse.

M.175 fol. 21r (Figure 1) features a main miniature of the Annunciation in the center of the page. In the border is the Tree of Jesse. Jesse himself reclines along the bottom of the margin, with a tree trunk sprouting out of his torso that grows up the sides of the page, with Jesus' various ancestors among the branches. Within the wide outer border created by the Tree of Jesse is a thin frame, painted to look like wood. At the center of the upper edge of this thin frame is a small vignette featuring the Fall of Man: a male and female figure on either side of a tree that has a snake wrapped around the trunk.

The Annunciation page is unique in M.175 because its decorated border is made from another scene. Most of the marginal decoration found in the manuscript depicts floral patterns and hybrid creatures. Two exceptions are folio 76r, which features a main scene of David and Bathsheba with additional marginal scenes of David on the bottom border, and folio 89r, which features a main image of the Virgin and Child enthroned, with heraldry in the bottom of the floral border. Yet, neither of these anomalous border decorations compare to the decorative or theological complexity of the Tree of Jesse border on the Annunciation page. Likewise, no other page has anything resembling the Annunciation's thin frame border with the Fall of Man. The uniqueness of the Annunciation page within the manuscript points to its significance.

Lineage: The Virgin Mary and the Tree of Jesse

The Tree of Jesse iconography first appeared in the eleventh century, reaching the height of popularity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and can be found in a variety of mediums, including manuscripts, stained glass, sculpture, and painting.[1] The image developed out of a verse of the Old Testament book of Isaiah: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him:"[2]

The rod and flower were interpreted by medieval scholars as a prophecy that the Messiah would be born from the family line of Jesse, connecting Isaiah 11 to other Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah. The figurative language of "rod" and "flower" was understood to refer to Mary and Jesus. The fourth century theologian Jerome wrote, "We, however, understand the branch from the root of Jesse as holy Mary, the Virgin…and about whom we read above: *A virgin shall conceive and bear a son* (Isa 7:14). Blossom refers to the Lord and Savior who said in the Song of Songs: *I am a blossom of the field and a lily of the valleys* (Song 2:1 LXX)."[3] As Jerome points out, the prophecy in Isaiah 11 is also connected to the prophecy in Isaiah 7, which even more explicitly refers to the Virgin Mary. "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel."[4]

Due to the flowery figurative language, the text also lent itself to a more literal interpretation in artistic depictions, becoming a tree that literally sprouts from Jesse's chest. This imagery is also the root of the modern day "family tree" used to depict family ancestry.[5] A tree is an

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[1] Michael D. Taylor, "A Historiated Tree of Jesse," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 34/35 (1980): 141, https://doi.org/10.2307/1291450.; Susan L. Green, *Tree of Jesse Iconography in Northern Europe in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Routledge, 2019), 1-2.
[2] Isaiah 11:1-2 (Douay-Rheims)
[3] *Isaiah Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators*, trans. Robert Louis Wilken (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 137.
[4] Isaiah 7:14
[5] Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, "The Genesis of the Family Tree," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 4 (1991): 115, https://doi.org/10.2307/4603672.

exceptionally good vehicle for depicting genealogy because it starts at one common point and can depict branching generations through both blood relationships and marital alliances.[6]

There are two reasons why the use of the Tree of Jesse iconography became widespread: to emphasize the significance of Mary's role in the birth of Christ as the cult of Marian devotion spread in the twelfth century, and to show Christ's royal lineage which can be traced back to David and Jesse.[7]

It was especially important to early Christian scholars to be able to point to events in the Old Testament that prophesied Jesus as the Messiah, so the widely held interpretation that Isaiah prophesied Jesus and Mary using figurative language while at the same time indicating a genealogical connection that directly links Jesus to important Old Testament figures, such as Jesse and David, is significant. Increased use of the Tree of Jesse imagery also coincided with a surge of interest in the twelfth century in tracing secular lineages. Kings wanted to be able to demonstrate their prestige and social power by tracing their lineage to previous influential kings as lineage became a more important factor for maintaining power in the twelfth century.[8] A corresponding theological interest in tracing Christ's ancestry to important Old Testament figures such as Solomon and David is understandable, especially when combined with the desire to prove that Jesus is truly the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament.

The earliest identified depiction of a Tree of Jesse, in the eleventh century Vyšehrad Codex, occurs on the pages immediately preceding the genealogy of Christ in the Gospel of Matthew,

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[6] Klapisch-Zuber, "The Genesis of the Family Tree," 106.
[7] Jean Anne Hayes Williams, "The Earliest Dated Tree of Jesse Image: Thematically Reconsidered," Athanor 18 (2000): 18, http://purl.flvc.org/fsu/fd/FSU_ARCH_N1A92_XVIII.
[8] Klapisch-Zuber, "The Genesis of the Family Tree," 107.

solidifying the connection between the prophecy of Isaiah and the Genealogy of Christ.[9] The Gospels give two Genealogies of Christ—one in Matthew and one in Luke. In Matthew, the genealogy begins with Abraham and descends toward Jesus.[10] In Luke, the genealogy begins with Jesus and traces backward all the way to Adam, the first man.[11] While the exact figures that appear in Jesus' ancestry differ between the Gospels, the Genealogies serve as a basis for the figures in the Tree of Jesse, with Solomon and David, and, of course, Jesse, appearing most consistently.

The Virgin Mary, as the Mother of Christ and the figurative "rod," was commonly depicted in a prominent place on the Tree, particularly due to the growth in the veneration of Mary in the twelfth century.[12] Mary is perhaps the most significant of all of Jesus' ancestors, for it is through her that Christians believe the Miracle of the Incarnation occurs: how the Son of God was made flesh. Mary as the vehicle of the Incarnation emphasizes the nature of Jesus as both fully human and fully divine, for she became pregnant through the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation and then gave birth bodily to Jesus.[13]

However, the Genealogies of both Matthew and Luke give Jesus an earthly father, tracing Christ's lineage back to Jesse through Joseph, rather than Mary, which would contradict the Virgin Birth. This contradiction was generally overlooked due to the rise of Marian devotion and increased concern with emphasizing the Miracle of the Incarnation and the Virgin Birth in order

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[9] Williams, "The Earliest Dated Tree of Jesse Image," 18.
[10] Matthew 1:1-17
[11] Luke 3:23-38
[12] Green, *Tree of Jesse Iconography,* 16.
[13] Marina Warner, *Alone of all Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Oxford University Press, 1976), 46-47.

to show that Jesus was both fully human and fully divine, which does not allow for Joseph as a father of Jesus from whom the blood of the line of Jesse could pass.[14]

The contradiction was occasionally explained by saying that Mary and Joseph were cousins—making Mary also descended from Jesse—and that the Gospels only listed Joseph instead due to the influence of a patriarchal society that traces lineage through the father.[15] Generally in depictions of the Tree, Mary simply supplants Joseph from his position in the genealogy. While at the time the Gospels were written there was a concern with proving the legitimacy of Jesus as the Messiah by connecting him with the line of David that outweighed an interest in Mary as a virgin, by the time the Tree of Jesse image became popular in the twelfth century, Jesus' legitimacy as the Messiah was well-established, and the concern turned to legitimizing Mary as the Virgin Mother of Christ, resulting in her prominence in the imagery rather than a direct representation of the Gospel text.[16] Joseph may be the descendant of Jesse based on the Gospel text, but Mary and Jesus are the metaphorical rod/flower prophesied in Isaiah, which was deemed more important at the time.

Although Mary does not appear in the branches alongside the ancestors in M.175's Tree of Jesse, the central painting of the Annunciation cleanly fills in the gap left by her absence on the Tree. If the point of Mary's appearance among the ancestors is to show that the prophecy of Isaiah—the flower from Jesse—is fulfilled when Mary gives birth to Jesus, then the Annunciation is the moment when the prophecy begins to be fulfilled, when Mary first discovers she is to conceive the Son of God.

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[14] Warner, *Alone of all Her Sex*, 20.
[15] Warner, *Alone of all Her Sex,* 21.; Klapisch-Zuber, "The Genesis of the Family Tree," 121.
[16] Warner, *Alone of all Her Sex*, 21.

Redemption: Eve and the Virgin Mary

The Annunciation and the Tree of Jesse are not the only biblical scenes on the page. The small scene of the Fall of Man at the top of the inner border is typical of border decoration for Annunciation pages in Books of Hours. The Annunciation and the Fall were often paired together and there were many different ways manuscript artists would do this. The Fall could appear as a marginal scene in the border, as in M.1160 (figure 2), or as part of an architectural frame, such as in M.151 (figure 3) and M.290 (figure 4). No matter the format, the placement of the Fall in proximity to the Annunciation indicates a thematic connection between the two stories that viewers should consider as they contemplate the main Annunciation image.

When Adam and Eve eat the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, they commit the first sin—sin which Christians believe all of humanity inherits. Eve in particular is held responsible for bringing sin into the world, often depicted as a seductress and a temptress, for she is the one who converses with the Serpent, who eats first, and who convinces Adam to eat. Modern feminist scholars have argued that no biblical texts indicate Eve's responsibility for any temptation or deception, but the view of Eve as a seductress continues to dominate and was especially prevalent in the twelfth through fifteenth centuries.[17] Due to the belief that Adam and Eve are the first man and woman, Eve is understood as the prototype of all women, and her duplicitous and subservient nature becomes representative of all women.[18]

Yet, at the same time that scholars and theologians enumerate the many sins of Woman/Eve, they also uplift and venerate Mary due to her unique identity as a woman: the

[17] Jean M. Higgins, "The Myth of Eve: The Temptress," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 44, no. 4 (1976): 644, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1463485; Higgins, "The Myth of Eve," 640.
[18] Higgins, "The Myth of Eve," 640-641.

Mother of God.[19] Mary's purity and piousness are often emphasized in depictions of the Annunciation where she is found reading, praying, or weaving, often accompanied by a white lily, symbolizing purity. Mary's frequent depiction reading or surrounded by books became especially prevalent in fourteenth and fifteenth century Annunciation imagery.[20]

It is no coincidence that the dominant view of Eve as a seductress in the twelfth through fifteenth centuries coincided with the height of the cult of Mary. Eve is understood as the mother of humanity, from whom all people are descended, but she is also the mother of humanity's sin, and one of her punishments for the Fall is that she shall bring forth children in sorrow.[21] Mary, on the other hand, is the Virgin Mother of God, whose pregnancy and motherhood are untainted by associations with sex. She escapes association with the punishment of Eve/Woman.[22] Sexuality was a danger and a flaw of Eve, but Mary's virginity was its opposite and conqueror.[23] Mary serves as the starkest contrast to Eve, for while Mary's unique status positions her as a role model for women, promoting devotion and obedience, her rank is also fundamentally unattainable for the typical human woman tainted by traces of Eve's sin.

Because Mary's virgin motherhood functions as a narrative opposite to Eve, she becomes known as the "New Eve," or "Second Eve," much like how Jesus was called the "Second Adam" for his role in redeeming humanity's sin.[24] Eve's sin is understood to prefigure Mary's ultimate redemption of not just women, but humanity, through the birth of Jesus. When Mary accepted

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[19] Howard R. Bloch, "Medieval Misogyny," *Representations*, no. 20 (1987): 8, https://doi.org/10.2307/2928500.
[20] Susan Groag Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture," *Signs* 7, no. 4 (1982): 761, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3173638.
[21] Genesis 3:16
[22] Warner, *Alone of all Her Sex*, 53.
[23] Warner, *Alone of all Her Sex*, 51.
[24] Warner, *Alone of all Her Sex,* 60.

her role as the Mother of God at the Annunciation, she became the vessel for the redemption of Eve's sin.[25]

While Eve was disparaged for her sin, it was also understood as a necessary part of the narrative. While Eve's sin caused the loss of paradise, without it there would be no need for the Miracle of the Incarnation.[26] Some even claimed that Mary's ultimate redemption of Eve's sin was evidence that the Fall and subsequent redemption was part of God's plan all along, making the Fall a necessary evil.[27] The frequent juxtaposition of the Fall and the Annunciation found in Books of Hours is meant to remind viewers of Mary's important role in the cycle of redemption.

Prophecy: The Fall and the Tree of Jesse

Looking again at the Annunciation page in M.175, it is clear that Adam and Eve are typologically connected to Mary through sin and redemption, and Mary is connected to the Tree of Jesse as part of Jesus' family tree, but at first glance any connection between Adam and Eve and the Tree of Jesse may be obscured. Fortunately, M.175 is not the only medieval work that incorporates both the Fall and the Tree of Jesse. For example, in both M.312 (figure 5) and M.102 (figure 6), the Fall appears with the Tree of Jesse without the mediation of the Annunciation. While Mary appears prominently on both pages among the ancestors, her appearance here is not part of the Annunciation scene.

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[25] Adam S. Cohen and Anne Derbes, "Bernward and Eve at Hildesheim," *Gesta* 40, no. 1 (2001): 33, https://doi.org/10.2307/767193.
[26] Maria Evangelatou, "Threads of Power: Clothing Symbolism, Human Salvation, and Female Identity in the Illustrated Homilies by Iakobos of Kokkinobaphos," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 68 (2014): 294-295, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24643760.
[27] Anne Dunlop, "Flesh and the Feminine: Early-Renaissance Images of the Madonna with Eve at Her Feet," *Oxford Art Journal* 25, no. 2 (2002): 131-132, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3600481.

M.312 features a central image of the Tree of Jesse, where Jesse sits asleep in a chair, the tree sprouting from his back, or perhaps the top of his head. He is accompanied by prophets, and the ancestors are found among the tree branches. The page's border is made up of scenes from the Life of Adam and Eve. At the top are scenes of Creation, the Fall is in the middle on the left, and going down the right side are the Creation of Eve, the Judgement of Adam and Eve, and the Expulsion from the Garden. At the bottom are scenes from after the Expulsion: Adam and Eve at Labor, and Cain Killing Abel.

The position of the Fall and Creation of Eve scenes directly to the left and right of Jesse indicates a thematic connection between them, particularly as the Fall is located out of order. Logically, the Fall would come between the Creation of Eve and the Judgement, but it has been placed opposite the Creation of Eve instead. If the sequence is read from left to right this would seem to imply that the Fall occurs before the Creation of Eve, and if read clockwise starting with the Creation scene in the upper left corner, the Fall would occur last. Clearly, the specific order of events was not the most important concern when arranging the layout. While it is possible the Fall was placed on the inner left margin because the composition best fit the smaller space, it also seems likely it was placed there to emphasize the thematic importance of the Tree of Jesse's prophecy of redemption.

The placement of the Creation of Eve scene on Jesse's other side also seems to indicate a direct connection between Jesse and Adam. While Adam and Jesse's poses do not match—Adam definitively reclines, compared to Jesse's seated and enthroned position—Adam still sits rather upright, with his right arm raised to support his head in much the same way that Jesse's arm is positioned.

A clearer example of the connection between Jesse and Adam through the Creation of Eve scene can be seen in M.102. The Tree of Jesse appears as a full-page initial "B," with scenes of Creation interspersed. Jesse is the largest figure on the page, found in the lower half of the initial. He is seated upright, with his legs cast to the right, and his head propped up on his right arm as he sleeps. The tree sprouts out of his side. Directly to Jesse's right in the lower bow of the "B" is the Creation of Eve scene. God holds the head of Eve while Adam reclines asleep. Adam's position directly mirrors Jesse's. Adam's legs are cast out to the left and, based on the folds in Jesse's robe, they appear to be in the same position. Adam also supports his head on his hand, although, unlike Jesse, he turns his face away from God.

In most depictions of the Creation of Eve scene, Adam sleeps on his side, with Eve located behind him as if she's appearing from the unseen far side of him, usually somewhere between his shoulder and hip.[28] This can be seen in contemporary Books of Hours H.5 (figure 7) and M.117 (figure 8).

The Bible gives two accounts of the creation of woman in Genesis. The first implies that man and woman were created simultaneously: "And God created man to his own image: to the image of God he created him: male and female he created them."[29] The second account goes into more detail and also positions Eve as a secondary creation after Adam, specifically defining woman in relation to man. "Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam: and when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs, and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman: and brought her to Adam. And Adam said: This now is bone of my

[28] Jack M. Greenstein, *The Creation of Eve and Renaissance Naturalism: Visual Theology and Artistic Invention* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 33.
[29] Genesis 1:27

bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man."[30] The English translation highlights that "woman" is derived from "man" with etymologically connected words that preserve a similar wordplay in the original Hebrew text and the Latin Vulgate.[31]

The second account serves as the basis for the Creation of Eve iconography, although typically the rib is not depicted and Eve sprouts fully formed from Adam.[32] Much like how Mary replaces Joseph in the Tree of Jesse due to a desire to emphasize her virgin motherhood, the imagery of the Creation of Eve is derived from the account that emphasizes Eve/Woman's inferiority and subservience to Adam/Man.[33]

The reclined position of Jesse often found in depictions of the Tree is reminiscent of the typical position of Adam in depictions of the Creation of Eve. Eve sprouts from Adam's side while he sleeps in much the same way the Tree sprouts from Jesse's chest or side. This connection between Jesse and Adam and Eve emphasizes the lineage and descent of Jesus, sprouting not just from Jesse, but all the way back to Adam, the first man and first sinner, whose original sin Jesus finally redeems. Even without the presence of the Annunciation scene, the connection between Jesse and Adam and Eve is a prominent reminder of what is symbolized by the Tree of Jesse—the sin of the Fall, the expulsion of humanity from the paradise of Eden, and that all of it will be redeemed. For medieval Christians, the prophecy of Isaiah represented by the Tree promises a Messiah and promises redemption through Jesus and Mary. When all three scenes—the Fall of Man, the Tree of Jesse, and the Annunciation—are present on the same page,

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[30] Genesis 2:21-23
[31] Greenstein, *The Creation of Eve*, 16.
[32] Greenstein, *The Creation of Eve*, 33, 38.
[33] Greenstein, *The Creation of Eve*, 17.

the entire cycle of redemption is shown: the moment of sin, the generations of waiting, and finally the promised Messiah.

Didactic Power: The Book of Hours and its Owner

What would someone looking at this page in the early sixteenth century have thought? The answer could be found by considering the book as a whole—who would have been using it and how.

Books of Hours, like M.175, were often owned by noblewomen. Women's public participation in spiritual life was not welcomed, so many women turned instead to monastic life or private devotional practices, such as praying from a Book of Hours.[34] By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the number of laywomen who owned books had substantially increased, based on evidence from wills, inventories of household goods, and dedications in books to patrons.[35] The Virgin Mary's frequent depiction reading or surrounded by books is a strong indication that many women at the time were devoted readers, and that this was encouraged as virtuous behavior for women.[36] The increase in women book owners in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries coincided with the increased prevalence of vernacular literature—because women were supposed to model themselves after biblical heroines but were seldom taught Latin—as well as the increased popularity of Books of Hours.[37] Books of Hours were popular because the customization and privacy of their use allowed them to be highly personal and not directly controlled by the church, which would have been appealing for women engaging in

[34] Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners," 752.
[35] Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners," 744.
[36] Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners," 761.
[37] Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners," 752, 758.

private devotional practices.[38] Because each Book was uniquely designed, the chosen texts and decorations can reveal much about what the person who commissioned the book thought and cared about.

While men also owned and used Books of Hours, M.175 was likely owned by a woman, a conclusion which is supported by the imagery contained within the rest of the manuscript. At the end of the manuscript, among the saints' lives, are portraits of St. Barbara, St. Catherine of Alexandria, St. Margaret of Antioch, and St. Genevieve of Paris. St. Barbara, St. Catherine, and St. Margaret were all widely venerated in the Middle Ages as virgin martyr saints, while St. Genevieve would have been a more localized choice.[39] This affinity for female saints suggests that the owner of the book was also a woman. As further confirmation, the page depicting St. Barbara (figure 9) contains a larger full-body portrait of the saint, whereas all of the other saints, including all of the men, are depicted in smaller half-body images. Accompanying St. Barbara is a kneeling woman, almost certainly the person who owned the manuscript. All of the female saints except Margaret are depicted holding an open book, perhaps another way for the patron to feel connected to them as she reads her own Book of Hours.

The other scenes chosen to decorate the manuscript are also fitting for a book owned by a woman. Scenes such as the Visitation with St. Elizabeth, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, the Presentation at the Temple, and the Flight Into Egypt emphasize Mary's role as the mother of the newborn Christ while scenes such as Pentecost, the Coronation of Mary, and Mary Enthroned emphasize her virtue as one chosen by God. The Annunciation, of course, works in both of these ways. Even the one illustrated page that does not include Mary—the page with scenes of

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[38] Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners," 753.
[39] Stanley E. Weed, "Venerating the Virgin Martyrs: The Cult of the 'Virgines Capitales' in Art, Literature, and Popular Piety," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 41, no. 4 (2010): 1056-1066, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40997602.

David—is focused on the story of David and Bathsheba. Bathsheba, like Eve, is a typological antitype to Mary, and the page could be interpreted as a warning for women against seductive or provocative behavior.

Female Emphasis: The Holy Kinship

One interesting inclusion that appears before the Annunciation page on folio 17v is a Holy Kinship scene (figure 10). The Holy Kinship was a highly uncommon scene to be included in a Book of Hours compared to other scenes from the Life of the Virgin, such as the Nativity or the Annunciation. Although it could be found throughout Europe, the Holy Kinship was most popular in Germany in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[40] The scene's inclusion in a French manuscript is therefore unusual, and indicates that it was likely specifically requested by the patron.

The Holy Kinship depicts Mary, her mother St. Anne, and her two apocryphal half-sisters, Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome, and their children. Within the scene in M.175, the focus is clearly on the women. While the husbands of all four women appear, they look through windows, separated by both a wall and the cloak Anne holds up to surround her daughters, creating a space solely for women and children. Mary's extended family, depicted in this scene, was created as an explanation for why the Bible calls some of the Apostles Jesus' brothers, which contradicts the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity; instead, these "brothers" are Jesus' cousins by Mary's half-sisters.[41] With the rise of the Cult of Mary, medieval Christians went to great

[40] Mellie Naydenova-Slade and David Park, "The Earliest Holy Kinship Image, the Salomite Controversy, and a Little-Known Centre of Learning in Northern England in the Twelfth Century," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 71 (2008): 97, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20462778
[41] Warner, *Alone of all Her Sex*, 23-24.; [41] Naydenova-Slade and Park, "The Earliest Holy Kinship Image," 95-96.

lengths to justify seeming contradictions to Mary's virginity, much like how they replaced Joseph with Mary on the Tree of Jesse to preserve the Miracle of the Incarnation.

While most Holy Kinship scenes depict the extended Holy Family existing in the same space, some early examples, such as a page in the thirteenth-century Imola Psalter (figure 11), bear more resemblance to a Tree of Jesse—a series of busts linked together to show the familial connections.[42] The similarity between the Holy Kinship and the Tree of Jesse in the Imola Psalter is heightened because the two iconographic scenes can be found facing each other, with the Holy Kinship preceding the Tree on fol. 10v and the Tree of Jesse (figure 12) on fol. 11r. The Imola Psalter's Tree of Jesse bears more complex and floral decoration than the Holy Kinship, to highlight its arboreal nature, but both scenes share a similar structure of portraits in medallions linked by lines emulating branches. The Tree of Jesse and Holy Kinship scenes share similar themes of lineage and kinship, though the Holy Kinship puts more emphasis on matrilineal descent, which might be more comforting and engaging for a female reader, such as the one who likely owned M.175.

In M.175, the placement of the Holy Kinship scene directly before the Annunciation page with the Tree of Jesse primes the reader for thinking about the role of women in the family tree, namely, a wife's responsibility to bear children, which is underscored by the plethora of images depicting Mary as a mother. While medieval Christians believed that no woman is capable of perfectly imitating the Virgin Mary, she was still a figure to be emulated. Whether the images were chosen with aspirational intent by the book's owner or chosen by her husband or even her

[42] Naydenova-Slade and Park, "The Earliest Holy Kinship Image," 99-109.

own mother for didactic purposes, the message is clear: be like Mary, be a virtuous mother, and contribute to your husband's lineage.

The connections found in Book of Hours M.175 between the Annunciation, the Fall of Man, and the Tree of Jesse, as well as these scenes' overall connection to the other imagery of the book, highlight Jesus' redemption of humanity's sin through a focus on Mary as the Mother of Christ and a dutiful and virtuous woman. A female reader would have absorbed a message not just about the redemption of sin, but about the importance of a woman's role in the continuity of lineage.

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