

Inverse Operations:
Sinful Lust and Salvific Virginity
in Central Italian Imagery of the Second Eve
by
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A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Approved April 2015 by the
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May 2015

ABSTRACT

Eighteen late medieval central Italian paintings featuring the figure of Eve reclining on the ground beneath the enthroned Virgin have been the center of a decades-long debate among scholars. The dispute centers on whether the imagery depicts Mary as Eve's counterpart in the role of virgin mother or intercessor as the Second Eve. I argue that these two possibilities are not mutually exclusive and instead support one another. I maintain that Eve and Mary appear as opposites according to their contrasting sexual statuses because their antithesis lies at the center of the theology of the Second Eve and the heart of the signification of these paintings. Though frequently overlooked, my exploration of this imagery begins with the attributes used to identify Eve: the woman-headed serpent, the fig, and clothing. Specifically, I analyze the relationship between the particular attributes employed and the theological interpretation of the Fall as a result of concupiscent sexual intercourse. My study then turns to the individual imagery of the central figure of Mary and its reference to church teachings. Appearing amidst allusions to the Annunciation and with emblems of her roles as mother and queen, the Marian imagery in these eighteen paintings specifically reiterates the dogma of her perpetual virginity. I conclude my investigation with a discussion of how the attributes and imagery examined in the first two chapters relate to the theology of the Second Eve and provide a fundamental meaning for all medieval audiences. In light of the references to these women's sexual statuses, the imagery of the Second Eve suggests that Mary is the special advocate of men and women, religious and lay.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the members of my committee, especially my mentor and chair Dr. Corine Schleif, for their patient guidance during the planning, research, and writing of this thesis.

I would also like to thank my family and friends for their loving support and willingness to listen to me go on and on about art, history, and religion.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCING THE PROBLEM

Over the last few decades, scholars have debated the possible meanings and original reception of a small set of central Italian paintings featuring the figure of Eve reclining on the ground beneath a central image of Mary. In total, scholars have located eighteen extant paintings dating to between c. 1335 and c. 1445 which feature this imagery, though in one case a Tree of Life replaces the figure of the Virgin.¹ According to one feminist interpretation, Mary and Eve represent the Trecento view of the good woman and the bad woman.² Art historians opposed to this reading believe that the imagery depicts Mary's intercessory power as the Second Eve and, therefore, honors the first woman as the mother of humanity and model recipient of the Virgin's mercy.³ I argue that these two readings are not necessarily mutually exclusive and instead could actually support or enhance one another. In light of medieval theological traditions of Eve and Mary, I believe that the attributes of Eve and imagery of Mary used in the eighteen paintings of the reclining Eve and enthroned Mary depict these women as

¹ Anne Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra: Central Italian Paintings of Mary as the Second Eve, c. 1335-c. 1445" (PhD diss., University of Warwick, 1997), 5, ProQuest (AAT 3382264); Anne Dunlop, "Flesh and the Feminine: Early-Renaissance Images of the Madonna with Eve at Her Feet," *Oxford Art Journal* 25 (2002): 130-31.

² Margaret R. Miles, *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 139-41. See also, Margaret R. Miles, *A Complex Delight: The Secularization of the Breast 1350-1750* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 10, 82-83.

³ Beth Williamson, "The Virgin Lactans as Second Eve: Image of the Salvatrix," *Studies in Iconography* 19 (1998): 107-08, 131-32; Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 2-3; Dunlop, "Flesh," 140-44.

inherently opposite due to their contrasting sexual statuses. In addition, I contend that this sexual opposition lies at the center of the Second Eve imagery and at the heart of the signification of these paintings for both men and women, whether religious or lay.

I have chosen to focus my study of the imagery of Mary enthroned above the reclining Eve on three specific works: Ambrogio Lorenzetti's fresco depicting the *Maestà* in the former monastery of San Galgano in Montesièpi (fig. 1); Paolo di Giovanni Fei's *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints, Eve and the Serpent* (fig. 2); and Carlo da Camerino's *Madonna of Humility and Temptation of Eve* (fig. 3). I have chosen these three works because their differences in medium, size, and possible audience make them representative of the eighteen Mary and Eve paintings. One of six extant frescos depicting the enthroned Virgin and reclining Eve, Lorenzetti's *Maestà* is the oldest known version of this imagery, dating to c. 1335.⁴ Lorenzetti is also the best known artist to whom art historians have attributed the paintings featuring this unique imagery.⁵ Paolo di Giovanni Fei's small panel dated 1385-90, part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Lehman Collection, is both representative of the ten small panel paintings of the Madonna and Eve and reflects the influence of Lorenzetti's, possibly foundational, fresco.⁶ Dating to c. 1400, Carlo da Camerino's panel, presently in the Cleveland Museum of Art's collection, has recently received more attention from scholars for many reasons, among them its relatively large size, which makes it one of two panels likely

⁴ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 16, 47-48; Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 108-09.

⁵ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 47-48.

⁶ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 210-11; Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 113.

used as Church altarpieces, and the striking depth of symbolism found in the imagery of Mary.⁷ Although my study centers on these three works, I also make references and observations on how their compositions and imagery relate to the group as a whole.

I begin my study of the Mary and Eve imagery with its most common and least analyzed aspect: the attributes of Eve. Because many historians have treated the figure of Eve as merely an attribute of the Virgin, little has been written about the elements used to identify Eve beyond mere classification. I explore the signification of the chosen attributes, especially their relationship to a common theological explanation of the Fall as the result and origin of concupiscent sexual intercourse. I then shift focus to the figure of Mary and the imagery referencing her roles as Virgin Annunciate, Mother of God, and Queen of Heaven. Specifically, I investigate the way each relies on the dogmatic belief in Mary's perpetual physical virginity. Finally, I interpret the association between the attributes of Eve and the imagery of Mary as they relate to the theology of the Second Eve. In light of the theology of the Second Eve, the attributes of the reclining Eve and imagery of the enthroned Virgin underscore certain intercessory powers ascribed to the mother of God. Principally, these paintings present Mary's willingness to intercede on behalf of every member of the Church whether they followed the path set by the Virgin's perpetual virginity, like the clergy, or they repeated Eve's lustful sin, like most Christians.

⁷ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 1-11; Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 105-07, 113-18, 127-28.

Historiography

Although sharing a unique imagery, scholars have primarily studied the eighteen paintings of the reclining Eve and enthroned Virgin as individual works rather than as an iconographic group. Of the three paintings I use as case studies, Lorenzetti's fresco has received far more individual attention than either the Lehman or Cleveland panels. The majority of the research done on Lorenzetti's *Maestà* focused on its meaning within the fresco cycle in the chapel of the former monastery of San Galgano.⁸ The Lehman panel's attribution to a lesser known artist and its lack of a known historical context meant it received less individualized attention. Mostly appearing in survey texts or catalogs of the Lehman Collection, Mirella Levi d'Ancona suggested a connection between the imagery in Paolo di Giovanni Fei's panel and medieval arguments in favor of the doctrine of

⁸ Studies include F. Mason Perkins, "Di alcune opera poco note di Ambrogio Lorenzetti," *Rassegna d'arte* 4 (1904): 186-90; George Rowley, "The Gothic Frescoes at Montesiepi" *Art Studies* 7 (1929) 107-27; Ernst Guldán, *Eva und Maria: Eine Antithese als Bildmotiv* (Graz: Böhlau, 1966), 129-131; Bernard Berenson, *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance: Central Italian and North Italian Schools*, vol. 1 (London: Phaidon, 1968), 215-17; Eve Borsook, *Gli Affreschi di Montesiepi* (Florence: EDAM, 1969); Alison Luchs, "Ambrogio Lorenzetti at Monte Siepi," *Burlington Magazine* 119 (1977): 187-88; Gertrud Schiller, *Iconographie der christlichen Kunst, Band 4, 2: Maria* (Gutersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1980), 193-94; Bruce Cole, *Sienese Painting: From its Origins to the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 168-73; Andrew Ladis, "Immortal Queen and Mortal Bride: The Marian Imagery of Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Cycle at Montesiepi," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 119 (1992): 189-200; Diana Norman, "The Commission for the Frescoes at Montesiepi," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 56 (1993): 289-300; Victor M. Schmidt, "Artistic Imagination versus Religious Function: Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Annunciation at Montesiepi," in *The Power of Imagery: Essays on Rome, Italy, and the Imagination*, ed. Peter van Kessel (Sant'Oreste, Rome: Apeiron, 1993), 133-48; Anne Dunlop, "Once More on the Patronage of Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Frescoes at S. Galgano, Montesiepi," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 63 (2000): 387-403.

Mary's Immaculate Conception.⁹ Until the last few decades, the scholarly treatment of the Cleveland panel mirrored that of the Lehman panel. Besides appearing in survey texts and museum catalogs, attempts to discover the origins of the Cleveland panel suggested its imagery also venerated Mary's Immaculate Conception.¹⁰

Art historians first studied the eighteen paintings featuring the reclining Eve and enthroned Virgin as an iconographic group in the 1960s. In the article "Paintings of St. Fina and of Eve Recumbent," Michael Quinton Smith discussed the iconography of the reclining Eve in his attempt to contradict a traditional identification of the reclining figure as St. Fina in a panel attributed to the Master of the Strauss Madonna currently housed in the Astley Cheetham Art Gallery in Stalybridge, England.¹¹ Instead, Smith links the

⁹ Mirella Levi d'Ancona, *The Iconography of the Immaculate Conception in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance* (New York: College Art Association, 1957), 35-36. Other studies of the Lehman panel include Raimond Van Marle, *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting*, vol. 2 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1923-1936), 531; Guldan, *Eva und Maria*, 132; Berenson, *Italian Pictures*, 127-30; George Szabó, *The Robert Lehman Collection (A Guide)* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975), 16-17; Michael Mallory, *The Sienese Painter Paolo di Giovanni Fei (c. 1345-1411)* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1976), 110-12, 232-33; John Pope-Hennessy, *The Robert Lehman Collection*, vol. 1 (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987), 38-39.

¹⁰ Emma Simi Varanelli, "Spiritualità mendicante e iconografia mariana: il contributo dell'ordine agostiniano alla genesi e alle metamorfosi iconologiche della Madonna dell'Umiltà," in *Arte e spiritualità nell'ordine agostiniano e il convento San Nicola a Tolentino* (Tolentino, 1992), 77-99. Other studies of the Cleveland panel include Van Marle, *Development*, vol. 5, 167-69; Guldan, *Eva und Maria*, 132, 218; *European Paintings Before 1500: Catalogue of Paintings Part I* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1974), 59-61; Schiller, *Maria*, 193; Gabriele Barucca, "L'oreficeria a Fermo e nel Fermano tra Gotico e primo Rinascimento," in *Il gotico internazionale a Fermo e nel Fermano*, ed. Germano Liberati (Livorno: Sillabe, 1999), 114-17.

¹¹ Michael Quinton Smith, "Paintings of St. Fina and of Eve Recumbent," *Burlington Magazine* 104 (1962): 62-66. For a brief overview of Smith, see Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 107. For in depth discussion of the early treatment of the Mary and Eve paintings, see Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 6-7; Dunlop "Flesh," 133n6.

figure to the depiction of the reclining Eve found in Lorenzetti's *Maestà* and in the Lehman panel. Four years after the publication of Smith's article, Ernst Guldan grouped the six frescos and twelve panels featuring a reclining Eve into a unique iconographic set in a section of his book *Eva und Maria: Eine Antithese als Bildmotiv*.¹² He referred to them as the "Lorenzetti-Typ" because Lorenzetti's lunette fresco is the earliest extant version of the iconography.¹³ Like many of the earliest studies of the imagery of the reclining Eve and enthroned Virgin, Smith and Guldan focused on iconographic associations between the paintings rather than theoretical analysis.

The rise of feminist scholarship shifted the analysis of paintings of Eve and Mary from focusing on their iconographic and theological backgrounds to questioning their relationship with the social roles of women. Following this trend, Margaret R. Miles examined the association between Mary and Eve as depicted in the Cleveland panel in her book *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West*. Miles's interpretation followed the popular feminist explanation of Mary and Eve as the epitomes of the good and bad woman, respectively.¹⁴ Specifically noting the

¹² Guldan, *Eva und Maria*, 128-35, 215-18. Gertrud Schiller also discusses this iconographic group, though she does not include all eighteen examples, see Schiller, *Maria*, 193-94. For discussion of Guldan's iconographic study, see Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 133n15; Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 6; Dunlop, "Flesh," 133n6.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ A few examples of the general discussion of the oppositional relationship between Mary and Eve are Michela Pereira, *Né Eva né Maria: condizione femminile e immagine della donna nel medioevo* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1981); Henry Kraus, "Eve and Mary: Conflicting Images of Medieval Women," in *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 79-100; Adam S. Cohen and Anne Derbes, "Bernward and Eve at Hildesheim," *GESTA* 40 (2001): 19, 29; Miles, *Complex Delight*, 10, 82-83.

imagery of the Cleveland panel, Miles claimed the contrast between Mary and Eve stemmed from their disparate states of dress.¹⁵ Mary's goodness rested in her depiction as the pure and humble mother, whose body is hidden by voluminous garments except for the breast from which her child feeds. Eve's almost completely nude body, only her lap covered by a goat-skin, proclaimed her sinfulness.

Nearly a decade after the publication of *Carnal Knowing*, Anne Dunlop and Beth Williamson questioned this feminist reading of the relationship between Eve and Mary, especially in regard to the imagery of the reclining Eve and enthroned Virgin. Dunlop principally studied paintings with known historical contexts in order to determine a range of possible meanings for the imagery of Mary and Eve in her dissertation "Advocata Nostra: Central Italian Paintings of Mary as the Second Eve, c. 1335 – c. 1445."¹⁶ In the article "The Virgin *Lactans* as Second Eve: Image of the *Salvatrice*," Williamson concentrated primarily on the Cleveland panel and the meanings this painting had within the general context of late medieval Italy.¹⁷ Though focused on different works and different levels of signification, both Dunlop and Williamson believed the imagery of Mary seated above Eve depicted the Virgin in her role as the Second Eve.¹⁸ They

¹⁵ Miles, *Carnal Knowing*, 139-41. For discussion of the feminist argument, especially Miles' interpretation, see Williamson, "Virgin *Lactans*," 105-07; Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 9-10; Dunlop, "Flesh," 133-34, 134n10.

¹⁶ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 16-17, 45, 192-207. A portion of the research done in this dissertation appears in Dunlop, "Flesh," 129-47.

¹⁷ Williamson, "Virgin *Lactans*," 105-07, 113-18.

¹⁸ Williamson, "Virgin *Lactans*," 107-08, 131-32; Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 2-3; Dunlop, "Flesh," 140-44.

discounted the reading of these images as expressions of the social place of women in fourteenth and fifteenth century Italy, especially because neither art historian viewed the image of Eve as particularly derogatory.¹⁹ Dunlop and Williamson point to Eve's honorary halo and the necessity of portraying her in a positive light to avoid tarnishing her descendant, Mary, as signs that these works do not represent the good and bad woman.²⁰ Additionally, Dunlop questioned Miles's reading of Eve's nudity and pose as sexually suggestive, claiming this sensual interpretation was merely the product of the "modern, post-Freudian" mind.²¹

Though both Dunlop and Williamson interpreted the imagery of the reclining Eve and enthroned Virgin as representing Mary's theological role as Second Eve, Dunlop suggests the imagery held different meanings for the few known patrons and audiences. Perhaps the most obvious of the explanations for these Second Eve paintings, Dunlop linked Lorenzetti's fresco, located in a former Cistercian monastery, to the order's belief in the special advocacy of the Virgin for their order (ibid., 87-89). Dunlop associated three additional frescos and the Cleveland panel, all featuring references to Mary's role as Queen of Heaven, with the power of the Church to rule over the Christian world (121-22). Because of their tentative connection to members of the minor nobility, the final two frescos of the Second Eve depict Mary in the role of the courtly lady to whom they

¹⁹ Williamson, "Virgin *Lactans*," 113-20; Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 9-15; Dunlop, "Flesh," 139-40.

²⁰ Williamson, "Virgin *Lactans*," 121-22; Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 9-15; Dunlop, "Flesh," 139-40.

²¹ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 3.

devoted their military campaigns (154-56). Finally, Dunlop viewed the altarpiece which belonged to a Dominican convent as an example of how the imagery might be read as a depiction of female strengths and weaknesses (178-82). Notably, these readings involve primarily learned audiences, clergy and nobles able to afford the commission of artworks, even though many of the Mary and Eve paintings were potentially on view to wider audiences. In other words, though these paintings could have carried certain personal meanings for their patrons, their potential public viewing would require their imagery also bearing significations for wider audiences.

CHAPTER 2

FALLEN WOMAN: THE ATTRIBUTES OF EVE'S SEXUALITY

Though modern art historians cannot definitively determine how the original audience of an artwork received it, I believe that an investigation of the story and attributes of the first woman reveal that the reclining figure of Eve depicted below Mary had a sexual connotation. The biblical story of the Temptation and Fall did not specifically deal with sexual intercourse, but theological interpretations of the story made human sexuality key to the first couple's sin. In the Bible, the serpent tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, and then she shared it with her husband. God discovered the humans' sin, punished them, and expelled them from the Garden. Early Church Fathers and medieval theologians interpreted this story as both an allegory of human reason and as the origin of concupiscent sexual intercourse. Together, these theological traditions described the Temptation and Fall as the animal passions overcoming human reason.

Although the plot of the Fall of Humanity is rather straightforward, the author, or authors, of Genesis did not bother to provide specific descriptions of certain details pertinent to the story's exposition. The appearance of the serpent, forbidden fruit, and Adam and Eve's post-lapsarian garments were left indeterminate. The lack of information regarding these elements of the Fall allowed patrons and artists to exercise their imagination when depicting the story of the first sin or, as in the Mary and Eve paintings, when deciding which attributes should accompany the first humans when they appeared outside the narrative. Because of their key roles in the Temptation and Fall, the serpent, fruit, and state of dress became the most common attributes of Adam and Eve. I believe the use of the woman-headed serpent, the fig, and a white shift or fur wrap as

Eve's attributes in the Mary and Eve paintings particularly connect this imagery to the theological tradition of the sexual Fall.

The Allegorical and Sexual Traditions of the Fall

From the earliest days of Christianity, theologians viewed the story of Adam and Eve's original sin as an allegory of human reason. In the fourth century, Ambrose wrote a commentary on the story of Adam and Eve which included a discussion of the signification of the three actors in the Fall of Humanity.¹ Ambrose assigned the serpent the role of carnal pleasure. Eve represented the senses, or the ability to perceive the world. Adam, the superior of Eve, signified a higher level of reason Ambrose referred to as the mind. Using his allegorical definitions, Ambrose described the Fall as "pleasure [stirring] the senses, which, in turn, have their effect on the mind" (ibid.). He concluded by claiming that "pleasure, therefore, is the primary source of sin" (ibid.).

A few decades later, Augustine reaffirmed the allegorical explanation of the Fall, though he altered the three levels of human reason. In his treatise on the Trinity, Augustine acknowledged Ambrose's work and the tradition from which it arose, but disagreed with the assignment of the senses to Eve.² Augustine believed that the "senses

¹ Ambrose, "Paradise," in *Hexameron, Paradise, and Cain and Abel*, trans. John J. Savage (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1952), 15.73. For discussion of this allegorical tradition, see A. Kent Hieatt, "Eve as Reason in a Tradition of Allegorical Interpretation of the Fall," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* 43 (1980): 221-26; Eugene TeSelle, "Serpent, Eve, and Adam: Augustine and the Exegetical Tradition," in *Augustine: Presbyter Factus Sum*, ed. Joseph T. Lienhard, Earl C. Muller, and Roland J. Teske (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1993), 341-42.

² Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. Stephen McKenna (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1963), 12.13.20. For in depth discussion, see TeSelle, "Serpent, Eve," 341-61.

of the body” were representative of the animal mind not a part of human reason, which he felt was meant to deal with “spiritual things” rather than “corporeal things” (ibid., 12.12.17). Instead, the serpent took the role of the “carnal or animal sense” (12.12.17), while Eve became “that part of the reason which is turned aside to regulate temporal things” (12.7.12). Augustine described Adam’s role as “that part of the mind of man in which it clings to the contemplation and consideration of the eternal reasons” (12.7.12).

Augustine’s version of the allegorical tradition of the Fall reemerged in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the works of the Augustinian monk Hugh of St. Victor and Thomas Aquinas. In his treatise *On the sacraments of the Christian faith*, Hugh discussed the allegorical identities of Adam, Eve, and the serpent within his commentary on matrimony’s prelapsarian origin.³ He consolidated Augustine’s description into a simple hierarchy with Adam at the top as wisdom, Eve as prudence, and the serpent as sensibility. Just over a century later, Aquinas added his voice to the allegorical tradition in his *Summa Theologiae*.⁴ Unlike his predecessors, Aquinas did not feel the need to assign names or to give specific descriptions of the different levels of reason represented by Adam and Eve. Instead, he merely described them as higher and lower human reason. The serpent’s role shifted slightly from sensibility to sensuality, which essentially reaffirmed Ambrose’s definition of the serpent as pleasure.

³ Hugh of St. Victor, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1951), 1.8.13.

⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Latin text and English translation, with introductions, notes, appendices, and glossaries (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 2b.165.2.

A second tradition of the Fall, concurrent with and related to the allegorical tradition, associated the first couple's sin with their sexuality. Augustine, Hugh, and Aquinas all believed that sexual intercourse existed before the Temptation, but in a form unknown to modern man.⁵ Aquinas offered a particularly interesting proof for the existence of sexual intercourse before the Fall. In his view, Eve could only have been "a help to man" in procreation "because another man would have proved a more effective help in anything else."⁶ Although their exact wording differed, all three theologians shared a basic description of the difference between pre- and post-lapsarian sexual intercourse. Before the Fall, reproduction occurred without lust and the genitals obeyed human will.⁷ After the Temptation of Eve, characterized as an education in concupiscent sexuality or animal passions, the genitals rebelled against human reason.⁸

The allegorical and sexual explanations of the Temptation and Fall of humanity made sexual intercourse and the sexuality of Adam and Eve an integral part in the history

⁵ Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Gerald G. Walsh and Grace Monahan (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1952), 14.23; Hugh, *Sacraments*, 1.8.13; Aquinas, *Summa*, 1.98.1-2. Miles, *Carnal Knowing*, 94; Joyce E. Salisbury, *Church Fathers, Independent Virgins* (New York: Verso, 1991), 42.

⁶ Aquinas, *Summa*, 1.98.1.

⁷ Augustine, *City of God*, 14.23, 14.26; Hugh, *Sacraments*, 1.8.13; Aquinas, *Summa*, 1.98.2.

⁸ Augustine, *City of God*, 14.23, 14.26; Hugh, *Sacraments*, 1.8.13; Aquinas, *Summa*, 1.98.2. For discussions of the Fall as a change in human sexuality, see Miles, *Carnal Knowing*, 94; Salisbury, *Church Fathers*, 13, 42; Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1994), 78-79; Pamela Norris, *The Story of Eve* (London: Picador, 1998), 187-88; E. Jane Burns, "A Snake-Tailed Woman: Hybridity and Dynasty in the Roman de Mélusine," in *From Beasts to Souls: Gender and Embodiment in Medieval Europe*, edited by E. Jane Burns and Peggy McCracken (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 204; Hieatt, "Eve as Reason," 221-22.

of human salvation. It resulted in the linkage of sexual intercourse with original sin, specifically with the dissemination of original sin from the first humans to all of humanity.⁹ The sin of Adam, the part of reason dealing with the incorporeal world, represented weakness of the spirit and the sin of Eve, the part of reason dealing with the physical world, signified weakness of the flesh. Medieval medical theory held that conception involved the combining of the spirit, the male offering, and the flesh, the female offering.¹⁰ Thus, if concupiscent sexual intercourse was the true Temptation and caused the Fall, original sin was the seed conceived in that pairing and in every human pairing since.

The Serpent

The Lehman and Cleveland panels (figs. 5 and 6) include the serpent as an attribute of the mother of humanity.¹¹ As the only character the serpent interacted with in the biblical narrative, it is a logical attribute for the mother of humanity. Eve's encounter with the serpent opens the story of the Fall, implying that the depiction of Eve accompanied by her tempter could specifically refer to the beginning of the story. Through a series of questions, the Serpent proved to Eve that God's prohibition on eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil rested on the false declaration that the humans would die from the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:1-5 New American Bible). Instead,

⁹ Marilyn McCord Adams, "Mary: A Thought-Experiment in Medieval Philosophical Theology," *Harvard Theological Review* 103 (2010): 135.

¹⁰ Dunlop, "Flesh," 142.

¹¹ In total, ten of the Second Eve paintings include the serpent as Eve's attribute. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 116, 117n74, 120.

the Serpent asserted that the humans would not die but gain the wisdom of God, implying that their creator had forbidden them from eating the fruit out of fear or greed (Gen. 3:5).

The serpent in the Lehman and Cleveland panels is specifically a half-human, half-snake hybrid with a woman's head and blonde hair.¹² The woman-headed serpent is not unique to the Mary and Eve paintings, but was a popular iconographic tradition which occurred simultaneously with depictions of the serpent as a normal snake.¹³ Two explanations for the origin of the hybrid serpent imagery exist: one linking it to a passage in a twelfth century commentary on the book of Genesis and the other associating it with an ancient Hebrew legend. In a discussion of the Temptation, Peter Comestor stated that the serpent "had the countenance of a virgin" which ensured its success in tempting Eve because "like favors like."¹⁴ The human head hides the serpent's nefarious purpose, but its resemblance to Eve suggests they have a close physical relationship as half-sisters.

Though the serpents in the Lehman and Cleveland panels have a similar physical appearance, they do not appear in the same location. In the Lehman panel, the serpent

¹² All ten of the Second Eve paintings featuring the serpent use a half-woman serpent. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 116, 117n74, 120.

¹³ Nona C. Flores, "'Effigies Amicitiae... Veritas Inimicitiae': Antifeminism in the Iconography of the Woman-Headed Serpent in Medieval and Renaissance Art and Literature," in *Animals in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, edited by Nona C. Flores (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996), 174.

¹⁴ Peter Comestor, *Historica Scholastica* 1.21, *Patrologia Latina* 198.1072, quoted and translated in Henry Ansgar Kelly, "The Metamorphoses of the Eden Serpent during the Middle Ages and Renaissance," *Viator* 2 (1971): 308. This passage is also discussed in Beryl Rowland, *Animals with Human Faces: A Guide to Animal Symbolism* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1973), 144; Flores, "'Effigies Amicitiae,'" 167-68; Burns, "Snake-Tailed Woman," 196; Salisbury, *Beast Within*, 156-57; Norris, *Story of Eve*, 318-19.

rests at a distance from Eve, its body wrapped around the forbidden tree at her feet.¹⁵ The Cleveland panel, in which the serpent wraps around Eve's thigh and appears to rise from between her legs, depicts a much more intimate relationship between the first woman and her tempter.¹⁶ In both paintings, the serpent lifts its head and most of its body off the ground so that it can converse with Eve face to face. Again, the imagery of the serpent appears to follow the commentary of Comestor who claimed that, though it had the face of a maiden, it was "erect like a man."¹⁷ While Comestor's description may have merely referred to a man's stature, it could also have been a play on the use of the word erect to describe the aroused state of a man's penis. In light of the snake's traditional phallic symbolism, it seems highly likely that the second purpose was at least a part of Comestor's aim.¹⁸ Perhaps modern art historians cannot determine whether or not medieval viewers thought Eve's nudity was erotic, but based on the theological interpretation of the Fall as an alteration of humanity's sexual intercourse, the image holds sexual implications in its inclusion of a serpent as one of Eve's attributes.

The half-sister theory mentioned above ties the imagery of the human-headed serpent to another story which has been considered an alternate basis for this tradition. According to one reading of the woman-headed serpent, this figure refers to the snake-

¹⁵ The serpent appears at a distance from Eve in a total of seven of the Second Eve paintings. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 120, 149, 163, 211, 220, 223-24.

¹⁶ In total, three of the Second Eve paintings depict the serpent intimately rising between Eve's legs. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 2, 217-18, 222.

¹⁷ Comestor, *Historia Scholastica*, quoted and translated in Kelly, 1971.

¹⁸ Rowland, *Animals*, 142.

demon Lilith, who in Hebrew legends of the Talmudic period, the second to fifth centuries C.E., became conflated with the woman created at the same time as man in Genesis 1:27.¹⁹ The first two chapters of the book of Genesis, though commonly viewed as a single narrative telling of the creation of the world, actually feature two separate stories. The first and, according to biblical exegetes, newer of the two stories ends at Genesis 2:4a and dates to the period after the Babylonian exile of the Jews, in approximately the fifth century B.C.E.²⁰ In this creation story, God spent six days commanding the universe and everything within it into existence, ending the final day of creation with the simultaneous formation of man and woman (Gen. 1-2:4a). The second story, beginning at Genesis 2:4b, dates approximately to between 1000 and 900 B.C.E. and leads to the story of the Fall.²¹ Here, an anthropomorphic God created on a much smaller, more intimate scale. Like a craftsman, the God of the second story formed man from the mud, planted a garden, drew the animals from the ground, and finally molded woman from the man's rib (Gen. 2:4b-25).

To explain the inclusion of two disparate stories of creation, particularly the different ways God created woman, a legend arose which suggested that Adam had two wives, the second of which was Eve. As recounted by John A. Phillips, Adam's first

¹⁹ Raphael Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess* (Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 1967), 221.

²⁰ Elaine H. Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (New York: Random House, 1988), xxii; Theodor Reik, *The Creation of Woman* (New York: George Braziller, 1960), 18-19. For further discussion of the two stories of creation, see John A. Phillips, *Eve, The Story of an Idea* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984), 27; Norris, *Story of Eve*, 14.

²¹ Pagels, *Adam*, xxii; Reik, *Creation of Woman*, 18-19.

marriage to Lilith was an unhappy one, mainly because she wanted equality with him in all things in recognition of their creation from the same substance, the earth.²² Their problems came to a head when she insisted that she should have equal time in the superior position during sexual intercourse, which Adam refused to countenance (ibid.). Because he would not let her have her way, Lilith fled to the Red Sea and became the lover of demons, her appearance changing to reflect her new life (ibid.). God, wishing to ease Adam's loneliness, created a second wife for him from his flesh to ensure her subordination and submissiveness (ibid.). By this story, Lilith's creation from the same substance as Adam made her a kind of half-sister of Eve, who shared Adam's flesh.

The story of Lilith's return to the garden as the tempting serpent supports the theological explanation of the Fall. She left because she was unsatisfied with the form of sexual intercourse preferred by her husband and sanctioned by their creator. While in self-imposed exile, Lilith fulfilled her sexual desires with demons and turned into a half-snake demon. Hearing of the creation of a new wife for Adam, especially an obediently submissive wife, Lilith returned to the garden to tempt her half-sister with new forms of deviant sexuality. The decision to depict Eve's serpent attribute as a half-woman hybrid links it to this story of human sexuality.

The Forbidden Fruit

²² Phillips, *Eve*, 38-39. For further discussion of the legend of Lilith, see Raphael Patai, *Hebrew Goddess*, 223; Reik, *Creation of Woman*, 21.

Lorenzetti's fresco (fig. 4), the Lehman panel (fig. 5), and the Cleveland panel (fig. 6) employ the forbidden fruit as one of Eve's attributes.²³ The object of Eve's Temptation appears in three different ways: as an actual fruit in the Cleveland panel, a branch of the tree in Lorenzetti's fresco, or a small version of the tree in the Lehman panel. The presence of the fruit or its tree brings the action in the narrative forward to the point where Eve disobeys God's rule. Deciding that she wanted to be like God and that the fruit looked delicious, Eve took one from the tree and ate it (Gen. 3:6). She then shared the fruit with Adam, who ate it without protest or question (Gen. 3:6). "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked" (Gen. 3:7). Feeling great shame for their nakedness, the couple sought to cover their genitals with fig leaves (Gen. 3:7). Like the Temptation's serpent, because the authors of the Bible did not mention which fruit was forbidden, artists used a variety, though the apple and fig appeared most often.²⁴ The apple became associated with the Fall because the Latin word for apple was formally related to the word for evil (ibid.). Alternatively, the use of the fig's leaves to cover the humans' initial shame became the basis for its consideration as the sinful fruit (ibid., 97, 338). Apparently a plant with some level of consciousness, the fig gave its leaves to the humans because it felt a kind of guilt for bringing about their Fall (ibid.).

²³ Besides these three paintings, an additional ten of the eighteen Second Eve paintings include a reference to the forbidden fruit. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 2, 72, 95, 120, 149, 211-12, 215, 217, 222, 224-25, 227.

²⁴ Norris, *Story of Eve*, 338.

The fig appears as the forbidden fruit in Lorenzetti's fresco, the Lehman panel, and the Cleveland panel.²⁵ Like the snake, the fig was traditionally a phallic symbol.²⁶ In Italy, the geographic region from which all the Eve and Mary paintings originated, the fig additionally came to signify female genitalia because of a play on the Italian word for fig, fico. Fico bears a close relationship to fica, a derogative Italian term for female genitalia.²⁷ Based on these significations, the fig takes on more complex layers of meaning in depictions of the Fall and as an attribute of Eve. Not only does it represent the actions of the Fall, it references the first humans' realization of their nakedness after eating from the Tree of Knowledge.

The relation of the fig to both male and female genitalia not only connects this particular fruit to the biblical narrative of the Fall, but ties the Eve and Mary paintings to the story's theological interpretations. As noted above, theologians read the Fall as an allegorical story of human reason being overcome by animal passions. The allegorical tradition focused on the active characters of the Fall, Adam, Eve, and the serpent. Theologians did not exactly ignore the forbidden fruit, but spoke only of what they believed was the true object of the humans' temptation, concupiscent sexual intercourse. Thus, the fig merges the story in Genesis 3 with the theological tradition. As a fruit, the fig satisfies the biblical narrative. Because of the fig's symbolism of both male and

²⁵ All thirteen of the Second Eve paintings featuring the forbidden fruit use the fig. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 2, 72, 95, 120, 149, 211-12, 215, 217, 222, 224-25, 227.

²⁶ Rowland, *Animals*, 81.

²⁷ Phillips, *Eve*, 68-69. For further discussion of the fig's connection to female genitalia, see James Clifton, "Gender and Shame in Masaccio's Expulsion from the Garden of Eden," *Art History* 22 (1999): 644; Norris, *Story of Eve*, 338.

female genitalia, it references sexual intercourse. By eating the fig, Adam and Eve's reason was overthrown by physical passion and they partook of concupiscent sexuality.

The sexual interpretation of the Fall as presented by Aquinas suggested that the true forbidden fruit was Eve's own body. The fig as the object of Eve's temptation in the Mary and Eve paintings confirms this theory. Eve was tempted by her own potential sexuality, by the possibilities the serpent showed her, and then tempted her husband with her sexualized body. The Cleveland panel, in particular, links Eve's entire body with the fig. Dunlop notes the fig held by the Cleveland Eve bears a physical resemblance to her breast.²⁸ The plump fruit with its central stem mirrors the structure of Eve's full, hemispherical breast and erect nipple. The fig becomes an all-encompassing symbol, linguistically conflated with female genitalia and pictorially associated with the breast.

In the Lehman and Cleveland panels the fig helps support the view that the woman-headed serpent is in fact Adam's first wife Lilith. As mentioned above, Lilith left Adam because he refused to grant her equal time as the sexual superior.²⁹ Sharing Eve's gender, Lilith returned to the garden to awaken her submissive half-sister's sexual desire and to thwart Adam's domination. The fig, signifying female genitalia, further links the two female figures and implies the interaction between them was sexually deviant. Lilith empowered Eve, giving her sister control over her own sexuality and freeing it from higher human reason.

²⁸ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 3.

²⁹ Phillips, *Eve*, 38-39.

Finally, the fig confirms that the stain of original sin lies within sexual intercourse. The forbidden fruit passed sin to the first humans. As a symbol of male and female genitalia, depicting the fig as the forbidden fruit houses the sin that captured Adam and Eve within the expression of their sexuality. The association of sexual intercourse and original sin played an important role in the rest of salvation history and in the creation of certain Marian doctrines. Beginning with Augustine, many theologians held that the stain of Adam and Eve's original sin passed to all of humanity through the act of sexual intercourse.³⁰ Christ came to free humanity from sin in general, but original sin in particular. As the son of God, he could not bear the stain himself. Thus, he was born of a Virgin who conceived by the Holy Spirit.

The Clothed Eve

Of the three attributes accompanying Eve in the Lorenzetti fresco, Lehman panel, and Cleveland panel, her clothing is by far the most unusual. As Dunlop notes, it is not exactly uncommon for Adam and Eve to appear clothed in medieval and early Renaissance art, though nudity was the couple's easiest attribute.³¹ In Lorenzetti's fresco (fig. 4) and the Lehman panel (fig. 5), Eve wears a clinging white, almost transparent,

³⁰ Norris, *Story of Eve*, 141. See also Adams, "Mary," 135.

³¹ Dunlop, "Flesh," 138.

shift and a goat-skin wrap.³² The Cleveland panel (fig. 6) depicts Eve clothed in, or covered by, nothing but a furry goat-skin.³³

Like the serpent and the fig, the clothed Eve references a specific point in the biblical narrative of the Fall. The first humans' recognition of their physical vulnerability after eating the forbidden fruit and subsequent attempt to ameliorate the discomfort which came with this revelation did not remain hidden from God for very long. Upon entering the garden, God noticed a change had come over his creations and, after hearing their reasoning for the fig-leaf coverings, identified their crime (Gen. 3:8-11). Adding to their shame, both Adam and Eve attempted to pass the blame for their disobedience to others. Adam accused both Eve for bringing him the fruit and God for creating Eve (Gen. 3:12). Eve shifted her guilt to the serpent (Gen. 3:13). Further angered by their refusal to take responsibility for their actions, God prescribed punishments for the three sinners. The serpent was told it would forevermore crawl on its belly and be at odds with the woman and her descendants (Gen. 3:14-15). Eve would give birth in great pain, but would desire her husband and be under his control (Gen. 3:16). Adam would no longer live in ease, but would have to work to feed and shelter his family (Gen. 3:17-19). Most strikingly, God doomed man and all his descendants to die and return to the earth from which they came (Gen. 3:19). God then expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, but in an

³² A total of twelve of the Second Eve paintings depict Eve dressed in a shift, in four of them she also wears a fur. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 72, 95, 97, 120, 156, 211-12, 215, 217, 224-25, 227.

³³ Four of the Second Eve paintings show Eve wearing only a fur. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 2, 219, 222-23.

act of mercy provided them with garments of leather to protect them in the wild (Gen. 3:21).

The author, or authors, of Genesis 3:21 did not bother to specify what kind of leather God used to make the first humans' clothes. Neither of the two main outfits, sheer fabric or fur, worn by Eve in the Mary and Eve paintings matches the biblical story, but both speak to the message of the expulsion. God's final punishment for Adam was that he would toil until the day he died and returned to the earth, for he "[was] dirt, and to dirt [he would] return" (Gen. 3:19). The ultimate punishment for the humans was death symbolized by the expulsion from the garden and the leather garments they were given. Essentially, the humans were clothed and marked with their punishment.

The fabric shift and fur both reference the humans' death penalty. The shift, sheer and formfitting, bears a resemblance to a burial shroud. Her position on the ground, reclining in a rectangular space in the Lehman and Cleveland panels, supports this notion by making her appear to lie within a grave.³⁴ Perhaps more in line with the biblical account than the fabric shift, the goat-skin covering still departs from the Genesis story. While the leather of the Bible story could have been made from goat, it would have been furless. Leather, by definition, is tanned animal skin, a process which involves the removal of fur or hair.³⁵ The animal skins featured in Lorenzetti's fresco and the Cleveland panel clearly has a thick coat of fur. Williamson affirms that the skin is from a

³⁴ Miles, *Carnal Knowing*, 141; Miles, *Complex Delight*, 83. In both texts, Miles specifically refers to Eve's space in the Cleveland panel as a grave.

³⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "leather," accessed January 23, 2015, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/view/Entry/106763?rskey=kr8oIf&result=1#eid>.

goat, which fits with the distinctly dirty grey or brown color and the little cloven hooves which remain attached to it in Lorenzetti's fresco.³⁶ Even with the fur, the goat-skin refers to the introduction of death into the garden after the humans' disobedience. I would argue it is an even more poignant expression of this concept than simple leather because the skin with the fur still attached bears a closer resemblance to the living creature. The addition of the goat's legs and feet further reminds the viewer that this pelt came from an animal that was once alive.

Since the goat-skin appears in the first known instance of the Mary and Eve imagery, Lorenzetti's fresco, it is not surprising that subsequent versions continued to use a goat. Originally, though, there must have been a reason to choose a goat-skin as an attribute of Eve over all other possibilities. Whether the decision was made by Lorenzetti, his patron, or the Cistercian monks whose abbey church houses the fresco, it is clear the goat fit better within the Mary and Eve iconography than any other animal. In *Animals with Human Faces*, Beryl Rowland provides a detailed summary of the symbolism of the goat from ancient times through the late Middle Ages. Rowland's analysis of the goat's signification shows that many of the medieval views of the goat originated in the myths and festivals of the ancient world.³⁷ Associated with the Greek goddess Aphrodite and the Roman fertility festival of Lupercalia, the goat became intimately linked with the human libido and sexual intercourse in the ancient world (ibid., 80, 85). By the Middle Ages, the ancient association between the goat and sexuality had

³⁶ Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 105. Legs and feet are attached to the goat-skin in two other paintings of the Second Eve. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 72, 222-23.

³⁷ Rowland, *Animals*, 80-86.

become more sinister. Rather than the attribute of the goddess of love, the goat became associated with lasciviousness and personifications of Luxuria and Voluptas appeared resting on a goat-skin or riding a living goat (85). Even the half-man, half-goat satyr became appropriated by medieval Christians as a warning for men of what would happen to them if they surrendered to “carnal passions” (81). Perhaps the most well-known signification of the goat during the Middle Ages which still holds some weight today was as a disguise for the devil (83-84).

As a symbol of the devil, the goat-skin references the role of evil and sin in the Temptation and Fall of Man. The devil, the first sinner whose pride led to his own fall from Heaven, corrupted his former master’s beloved creations. Certainly the images which show Eve wearing a goat-skin associated her with the sin of luxuria, but the addition of a goat-skin generally links Eve with wanton, perhaps even bestial, sexuality. The sexual implication is made particularly apparent by the placement of one of the goat-skin’s hooves in Lorenzetti’s fresco. The skin drapes around Eve’s shoulders, but a sinuous, almost snake-like, leg wraps over Eve’s hip, the hoof resting between her legs. Yet again, an attribute of Eve references the theological interpretation of the Fall as a sexual encounter between Adam and Eve. It also connects Eve’s sexual sin with death, the inheritance passed down to all of humanity from the first man and woman.

Conclusions

The evidence that the figure of the reclining Eve in paintings of Mary as the Second Eve could have been read by late medieval viewers as sexually suggestive rests in the attributes chosen to identify the mother of humanity. Though the eighteen paintings of Mary and Eve are by no means identical, they share the use of certain objects to

indicate Eve's role in the Fall and to refer to certain points in the biblical narrative. To reference the first temptation by the serpent, Eve appears with her tempter in the form of a woman-headed snake. When alluding to the first humans' disobedience of God's one rule, Eve holds a fig or rests near a fig tree. Eve's body clothed in a transparent shift or furry goat-skin indicates the events of the Fall had already taken place and God had expelled the humans from paradise.

Whether the artist, patron, or, in some cases, religious community which housed the painting made the decision of which attributes of Eve to use, the hybrid serpent, fig, and clothing must have served specific purposes within the overall composition. Besides their links to the Fall, these attributes held other meanings for their late medieval viewers. Specifically, each of these attributes references sexual intercourse. Besides literally interpreting a statement made by Peter Comester in his commentary on the Fall, the woman-headed serpent resembles Adam's promiscuous and sexually deviant first wife Lilith. The fig generally acted as a phallic symbol, but in Italy it became associated with an offensive term for female genitalia. The sheer shift references Eve's ultimate punishment of death, a signification reinforced by her place on the earth. Since the ancient world, the goat signified unbridled sexuality. Thus, the use of these objects as attributes of Eve associates these images with a theological tradition of the Fall which held that it involved concupiscent sexuality.

CHAPTER 3

PURE IDEAL: THE IMAGERY OF MARY'S VIRGINITY

Because Mary takes the position of honor in nearly every painting which pairs her with Eve, the signification of the works relies on the persona of the mother of God. Of the innumerable roles and devotional images of Mary, these eighteen paintings depict her as Virgin Annunciate, Mother of God, and Queen of Heaven. On the surface these personas do not seem related except through their association with the Virgin, but when studied alongside the doctrines of Mary a similarity appears. All three of these identities, because of their related theology, are reliant on the Virgin's assumed permanent lack of sexual knowledge. I believe the imagery of Mary which appears in the Mary and Eve paintings reflects the centrality of the dogma of her perpetual virginity in Mariology. Certainly, Mary's virginity is not as easy to depict as Eve's seductiveness, but it is not impossible for the imagery of the Virgin to reference her sexual purity through allusions to and associations with the Gospels and doctrines of the Church.

Mary and her virginity may play a relatively minor role in the biblical story of Christ, but by the late Middle Ages theologians elaborated upon the story of the mother of God and declared her ever-virgin. The gospels of Matthew and Luke note Mary's virginity at the time she conceived Christ in an effort to link the story of Jesus to the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah. Beyond the Bible, Mary appears in various apocryphal texts which provide more biographical information about the humble Jewish girl who became the mother of God, including her in partu and postpartum virginity. Leaders of the Church and theologians expanded these narratives and, through dialogue and interpretation, declared four Marian dogmas which bear some relation to Mary's physical

purity. By the late middle ages, the virginity of the Virgin became a central tenet of her role in the story of human salvation.

Doctrines of Mary

The first dogma of the Virgin relates to her role within salvation history. At the Council of Ephesus in 431, Church leaders officially proclaimed Mary the Theotokos, or God-bearer.¹ The Church based the declaration of Mary as Theotokos on Hebrew prophecy and the Gospels. According to Isaiah, “the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14). Debates have arisen over the translation of this prophecy and whether the original term translated as “virgin” actually referred to a woman’s physical virginity or simply her youth and unmarried status, though the former interpretation was most popular during the Middle Ages.² The gospels of Matthew and Luke include infancy narratives which link the story of Jesus to Isaiah’s prophecy. In both narratives, the authors take pains to reference Mary’s virginal status. Matthew states that “when [Jesus’] mother Mary was

¹ Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: the Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), 65. For further discussion of the Theotokos, see Margaret R. Miles, “The Virgin’s One Bare Breast: Female Nudity and Religious Meaning in Tuscan Early Renaissance Culture,” in *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Susan Rubin Suleiman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 200; George H. Tavard, *The Thousand Faces of the Virgin Mary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 59-60; Paola Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, and Identity* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 158-59; Christine Havice, “Approaching Medieval Women Through Medieval Art,” in *Women in Medieval Western European Culture*, ed. Linda Elizabeth Mitchell (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999), 347; Miles, *Complex Delight*, 39; Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 46-47.

² *Ibid.*, 19-20. For further discussion of the mistranslation of Isaiah’s prophecy, see Norris, *Story of Eve*, 30.

betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 1:18). In Luke’s gospel, the Virgin herself attests to her lack of sexual knowledge, telling the angel Gabriel that she cannot bear a child “for [she had] no relations with a man” (Luke 1:34). As presented in these gospels, Mary’s virginal, or at least unmarried, state at the time of her pregnancy confirmed that she was the mother of the messiah as defined by the Old Testament prophet.

The second official doctrine of Mary held that, not only did she conceive as a virgin, but she retained her virginity throughout her entire life. In 451, at the Council of Chalcedon, Mary was officially given the title *Aeiparthenos*, ever-virgin, asserting that she retained her physical virginity after giving birth and throughout the rest of her life and, in 649, Pope Martin I declared this belief dogma.³ The gospels never mention Mary’s virginity after the birth of Jesus. In fact, they do the opposite by making references to Christ’s brothers and sisters, suggesting that either Mary’s husband Joseph had older children by a previous wife or Mary had other children after Jesus.⁴ Support of Mary’s lifelong virginity appears in the apocryphal gospels, specifically the Proto-Gospel of James. Providing more information about the life of Mary before the Annunciation, James also expands upon the story of the Nativity. Unlike the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke, James claims midwives attended the birth of Christ, including a

³ *Ibid.*, 65-66. See also Norris, *Story of Eve*, 233.

⁴ Tavard, *Thousand Faces*, 3, 10-12. Tavard mentions specific passages in Matthew (12:46-47, 13:55-56) and Mark (3:31-32, 6:3) which reference and name Jesus’ brothers and mention Jesus’ sisters. See also Warner, *Alone*, 19.

woman named Salome.⁵ Suspicious of the claims of Mary's virginity, Salome tested the new mother's hymen with her hand and her arm withered for her disbelief.⁶ Thus, God defended Mary's intact virginity at least through the birth of her son. The perpetual virginity of Mary became important to the Church and the story of Christ because it proved her devotion both to her son and to God.⁷ She lived her life as her son's first disciple, not beholden to the stirrings of lust for her husband or the obligation to care for other children.

The final two Marian dogmas, her Immaculate Conception and Assumption, are entirely based on apocryphal stories and theological dialogue. George H. Tavard's text *The Thousand Faces of the Virgin Mary* provides a concise account of the evolution of these two doctrines. Though the Immaculate Conception and Assumption did not become official dogma until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both featured prominently in the high Marian devotion which arose in the eleventh century and reached its peak in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁸ The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception held that Mary was conceived and born without original sin. In the Proto-Gospel of James, Mary's parents, barren and aged but longing for a child, received

⁵ Warner, *Alone*, 28. For further discussion of the curse of Salome the midwife, see Tavard, *Thousand Faces*, 21.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Margaret R. Miles, *Image as Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 89.

⁸ Tavard, *Thousand Faces*, 19, 23-25, 90-93, 190-99. See also Miles, *Image*, 76; Cohen and Derbes, "Bernward," 29; Anne L. Clark, "The Priesthood of the Virgin Mary: Gender Trouble in the Twelfth Century" *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 18 (2002): 8.

wondrous dreams announcing that they would become parents.⁹ After receiving their respective dreams, Mary's father Joachim returned from a long journey and Anne conceived at the moment of their meeting at the city gate.¹⁰ In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, this doctrine was the focus of a number of theological debates. The question of Mary's Immaculate Conception centered on how a regular human woman, subject to the human condition of original sin, could have given birth to the son of God.¹¹ The Immaculate Conception made the Virgin special enough for her role as Theotokos, but it also threatened to strip her of the humanity which was her contribution to Christ's incarnation.

Because Mary had such a miraculous conception, theologians concluded that she also must have had a wondrous death. The doctrine of the Assumption, originally called the Dormition, holds that Mary fell into a death-like slumber and was taken to Heaven by Christ to join the heavenly court.¹² Like the Immaculate Conception, the story of Mary's Assumption appears in apocryphal texts, most notably in the writings of Pseudo-Meliton and Pseudo-John.¹³ Though Mary may have been due this honor because of her role as the Mother of God, theologians offered another explanation. Because she was free from original sin according to the Immaculate Conception and a lifelong virgin, death could

⁹ Ibid., 19. For further discussion of the apocryphal story behind the Immaculate Conception, see Warner, *Alone*, 239.

¹⁰ Warner, *Alone*, 239.

¹¹ Tavard, *Thousand Faces*, 90-92, 190-91.

¹² Ibid., 23-25, 92-93. See also Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 98-99; Warner, *Alone*, 82-83.

¹³ Ibid.

not corrupt her body and she was free to join Jesus in Heaven.¹⁴ Not as controversial as the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption was a major feast day in the late medieval Church calendar, receiving its own chapter in Jacobus de Voragine's *The Golden Legend*.¹⁵

In addition to these four dogmas of the Virgin, Christian tradition has given her two additional, somewhat correlated roles: *Mediatrix* and Co-Redemtrix. Both of these positions refer to Mary's power to influence Christ and aid humanity in salvation.¹⁶ These powers did not manifest themselves until Mary joined her son in Heaven and her subsequent coronation as Queen of Heaven, therefore linking them to Mary's Assumption.¹⁷ Like a regular mother, Christians believed Mary had special sway over her Son. His loyalty to her for giving him life, especially since she willingly gave her body to bear him, allowed Mary to influence Jesus' decisions as King of Heaven.¹⁸ Thus, because she was the Theotokos, the virgin God-bearer, she had especially strong powers

¹⁴ Adams, "Mary," 146. See also Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 99-100.

¹⁵ Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 463-483.

¹⁶ Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death: The Arts, Religion and Society in the Mid-Fourteenth Century* (Harper Torchback Edition. New York, Evanston, and London: Harper and Row, 1964), 151; Donna Spivey Ellington, *From Sacred Body to Angelic Soul: Understanding Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 31, 110-11. For further discussion of these roles, see Phillips, *Eve*, 136; Beth Williamson, *The Madonna of Humility: Development, Dissemination, & Reception, c. 1340-1400* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2009), 49, 150.

¹⁷ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 107.

¹⁸ Meiss, *Painting*, 151. See also Miles, *Image*, 79.

of mediation for those who called upon her for aid. Neither her role as *Mediatrice* nor as Co-Redemptrix would have been possible if not for Mary's virginal life.

In her role as the mother of Christ, the savior whose death reversed the exile of Adam and Eve, Mary reversed the sexual sin of Eve with her unwavering virginity. Theologians particularly enjoyed this reading of Mary's role in salvation in light of the belief that unruly sexual intercourse was the cause of the Fall and was the carrier of original sin.¹⁹ Virginity became the holiest state for Christians, leading to celibacy and chastity as rules for religious men and women.²⁰ Countless female martyr saints died as virgins for their faith and for dedicating their lives to Christ by maintaining a state of sexual purity.²¹ To follow Mary's example would lead to heavenly bliss through renunciation of sexual intercourse.

Virgin Annunciate

The Annunciation in Luke's infancy narrative is one of the very few appearances of the Virgin in the Gospels where she actually plays an active role in the story of Christ's life. According to this evangelist, God does not merely impregnate Mary, but

¹⁹ Augustine, *City of God*, 14.23, 14.26; Hugh, *Sacraments*, 1.8.13; Aquinas, *Summa*, 1.98.2; Norris, *Story of Eve*, 141, 187-88. For discussions of the Fall as a change in human sexuality, Miles, *Carnal Knowing*, 94; Salisbury, *Beast Within*, 78-79; Burns, "Snake-Tailed Woman," 204; Heatt, "Eve as Reason," 221-22. For further discussion of sexual intercourse as the carrier of original sin, see Adams, "Mary," 135; Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 36.

²⁰ Phillips, *Eve*, 131. See also Christa Grössinger, *Picturing Women in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 4; Kathleen Coyne Kelly, *Performing Virginity and Testing Chastity in the Middle Ages* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 2-3.

²¹ Gail Paterson Corrington, "The Milk of Salvation: Redemption by the Mother in Late Antiquity and Early Christianity," *The Harvard Theological Review* 82 (1989): 396.

sends His messenger to her. The angel Gabriel presents Mary with God's plan for her future as the mother of his Son, Jesus (Luke 1:26-38). Mary reacts with disbelief to the angel's entrance and questions his pronouncement of her virgin pregnancy. After Gabriel offers her more information and reassurance, Mary accepts her role and grants permission for God to use her body. The Annunciation opens the story of salvation, leading the way for Christ's intervention on behalf of humanity.

Due to the importance of the annunciation within Marian Devotion, it is not surprising that some of the paintings of Mary and Eve appear in a cycle with or include references to the gospel story. The oldest version of the Mary and Eve imagery, Lorenzetti's *Maestà* (fig. 1), appears as one scene within a cycle of frescos dedicated either to the life of San Galgano or to Mary.²² Directly below the *Maestà* is a depiction of the Annunciation (fig. 7). In the lower fresco, the angel Gabriel kneels before the Virgin while Mary kneels with a bowed head and her hands crossed over her chest. Based on Michael Baxandall's categorization of the traditional poses of the Virgin displayed in Florentine depictions of the Annunciation, Lorenzetti painted the moment Mary accepted the angel's message and declared herself God's handmaiden.²³ Noticeable through the top layers of fresco, Lorenzetti's original composition depicted Mary grasping the pillar beside her in great fear of the angel's message, signaling the

²² Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 46-48, 52-54.

²³ Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 50-51.

opening of the scene.²⁴ Either moment indicates Mary's virginal status because of her utter humility before God's messenger. Because the fresco of the Annunciation appears below the image of Mary and Eve, it seems to be the natural progression of Mary's role in the salvation of humanity from her acceptance of God's plan to her place as Queen of Heaven.

The Mary and Eve panel paintings by Paolo di Giovanni Fei and Carlo da Camerino reference the annunciation within their main compositions. Two miniature figures of the angel Gabriel and Mary appear within the spandrels above the arched frame of the Lehman panel (figs. 8 and 9). Though separated, the angel and the Virgin clearly look like they are in conversation, confirming the belief that this is a miniature depiction of the Annunciation.²⁵ Gabriel, in the left spandrel, holds his hands to his chest and bows his head towards the Virgin, signifying his honorific greeting of "Ave Maria." Mary, appearing in the right spandrel, acknowledges the angel's words with a humbly bowed head and a hand brought to her chest. Returning to Baxandall's categorization of the Virgin's poses during the Annunciation, it would appear Paolo di Giovanni Fei painted the moment of the Virgin's reflection on the angel's words, a moment right in the middle of the narrative.²⁶ It is possible these miniatures depict the moment when Mary

²⁴ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 53-54; Baxandall, *Painting*, 50-51. For discussion of the original *Annunciation* composition, see Borsook, *Affreschi*, 29-30; Leonetto Tintori, *Antichi colori sul muro: esperienze nel restauro* (Florence: Opus Libri, 1989), 56-58; Ladis, "Immortal Queen," 190-92; Schmidt, "Artistic Imagination," 138-48.

²⁵ Meiss, *Painting*, 149n72. See also Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 113; Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 210-11.

²⁶ Baxandall, *Painting*, 50-51.

contemplated how she could become the mother of God's son while remaining a virgin. Thus, the inclusion of this scene reminds viewers of her perpetual virginity, which remains intact as she sits with the Christ child in the space below the spandrels.

In Carlo da Camerino's *Madonna of Humility and Temptation of Eve* (fig. 3), the archangel Michael and Saint George appear to Mary's left, while the archangel Gabriel kneels before her in a pose frequently used in depictions of the Annunciation.²⁷ Since Mary sits with Christ on her lap, Gabriel's presence and pose only reference the Annunciation but do not actually illustrate it. A second trait which alludes to the angel's visitation of Mary is the visibility of the Virgin's ear.²⁸ Although Luke's story of the angel delivering God's message to Mary is relatively straightforward, theologians sought to define the exact moment at which the Virgin conceived the Christ child in the course of the angel's visit. Following the narrative, the logical answer would be that Mary did not conceive until after granting permission for the use of her body by declaring herself the Lord's handmaiden. Some theologians believed the Virgin actually conceived much earlier in the conversation. According to this theory, Mary became pregnant upon hearing Gabriel's initial greeting, suggesting that the phrase "the Lord is with you" actually meant that she was already with child (Luke 1:28).²⁹ This interpretation also fit well with the description of Christ as "the Word" in John's gospel (John 1:1-5, 14).

²⁷ Meiss, *Painting*, 149n72. See also Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 127; Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 108.

²⁸ Miles, *Carnal Knowing*, 16, 139. See also Lasse Hodne, *The Virginity of the Virgin: A Study in Marian Iconography* (Rome: Scienze e lettere, 2012), 80; Warner, *Alone*, 37.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 80. See also Hodne, *Virginity*, 80; Warner, *Alone*, 37.

Since words enter the body through the ear, the logical conclusion was that Mary conceived Christ through her ear, thus retaining her virginal body.

The story of the angel's annunciation is significant to the role of Mary within Christianity, and specifically to the rise of the high Mariolatry of the later Middle Ages. Gabriel's greeting, "Ave Maria, gratia plena," became the basis for the most widely used prayer asking for Mary's intercession.³⁰ The annunciation not only proved Mary's physical motherhood of Christ, but also her singularity among human women. She was not an average woman, but a specially chosen vessel for the coming of the Savior. From this remarkable moment, it was not difficult for theologians to extrapolate other extraordinary characteristics of the Virgin and, thereby, to expand the mythology surrounding her. At least three of the four doctrines of Mary bear some connection to Luke's story. During the annunciation, Mary herself pointed out that she could not be pregnant because she was still a virgin, a state of being which led to the belief in her perpetual virginity. The annunciation also proved that Mary was indeed the Theotokos, or God-bearer, because the angel professed her to be. The annunciation even bears some responsibility for the Immaculate Conception, considering the purpose of this doctrine was to make Mary a more perfect vessel to bear Christ.

Madonna and Child

Mary's role as Theotokos forms the basis for her most common appearance in Christian art: the Madonna and Child. Following this tradition, the Madonna and Child are the focus of the compositions of Lorenzetti's fresco (fig. 10), the Lehman panel (fig.

³⁰ Warner, *Alone*, 107, 306.

2), and the Cleveland panel (fig. 3).³¹ Noticeably absent from these works is Mary's husband and foster father of Jesus, Joseph. The absence of Joseph, not unusual during the Middle Ages, confirms God's paternity of Jesus as well as Mary's physical virginity when she conceived.³² From this basic formulation, different symbols or compositional variations alter the meaning of the Madonna and Child to help it serve particular devotional purposes. No matter the specific message, the image of the Madonna and Child moves the story of salvation forward, referencing the moment of Christ's sacrifice. At times, Mary holding Christ on her lap signifies the sacrificial altar for the Lamb of God (1 Pet. 1:19).³³ Alternatively, in light of Christ's designation as the bread of life, theologians compared Mary's virginal womb to an oven (John 6:35).³⁴ The Virgin offers her Son to the world as the sacrifice which saved humanity from its sins.

The Lehman and Cleveland panels specifically depict Mary as the Madonna *lactans*.³⁵ The imagery of Mary breastfeeding Jesus originated in Italy and became

³¹ The Madonna and Child are the central figures in fourteen of the Second Eve paintings. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 1, 53, 119-20, 126, 162, 210, 212, 217, 219, 221, 223-25, 227.

³² Julia Kristeva, "Stabat Mater," in *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. by Susan Rubin Suleiman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 108. See also Kelly, *Performing Virginity*, 8.

³³ Jerome Mazzaro, "Dante and the Image of the 'Madonna Allattante,'" *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society* 114 (1996): 98. See also Corrington, "Milk," 399; Grössinger, *Picturing Women*, 28.

³⁴ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 271.

³⁵ In total, seven of the Second Eve paintings present Mary as the Madonna *lactans*. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 1, 126, 210, 212, 223, 225, 227.

popular during the fourteenth century, particularly in private devotional paintings.³⁶ The Madonna *lactans* does not differ greatly from the standard imagery of the Madonna and child, except for the exposure of Mary's breast as she actively nurses or pauses while feeding her son. The Lehman and Cleveland panels show Mary and her son, paused in the process of suckling, gazing out of the picture plane. In both paintings, Mary's breast emerges from a voluminous, figure-concealing gown and mantle.

The Cleveland panel combines the Madonna *lactans* imagery with another iconographic tradition popular in late medieval Italy, the Madonna of Humility. Here, Mary sits on a cushion on the "ground," in this case a raised platform which separates her from the reclining figure of Eve at the bottom of the painting. In this panel, Mary truly has become her infant son's throne. Some contemporary historians and art historians consider the Madonna *lactans* as an alternate version of the Madonna of Humility imagery because of the cultural and social situation of fourteenth century Italy.³⁷ Late medieval Italy saw a rise in the use of wet-nurses by upper-class women for a variety of reasons, including the medieval understanding of female physiology and the pressure to bear multiple children in light of the high infant mortality rate.³⁸ Because women of

³⁶ Meiss, *Painting*, 146. For further discussion of the history of the Madonna *lactans* imagery, see Victor Lasareff, "Studies in the Iconography of the Virgin" *The Art Bulletin* 20 (1938): 34-36; Miles, *Image*, 78; Miles, *Complex Delight*, 6-8, 41-42; Miles, "Virgin's," 193; Williamson, *Madonna*, 19, 132-34; Havice, "Medieval Women," 350.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 146, 151. See also Warner, *Alone*, 201-02; Williamson, *Madonna*, 19, 132-34; Miles, *Image*, 78; Miles, *Complex Delight*, 41-42; Miles, "Virgin's," 193; Havice, "Medieval Women," 350.

³⁸ Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* trans. Lydia Cochrane. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 133, 158. See also Williamson, *Madonna*, 134, 138.

lower classes worked as wet-nurses, modern researchers believe that breastfeeding became undignified.³⁹ Thus, historians and art historians claim that paintings of Mary nursing Christ show her as a humble woman.⁴⁰

The two main purposes of the Madonna *lactans* imagery were to remind Christians of Christ's humanity and of Mary's special role as *Mediatrix*. Christ, like all other human infants, needed the sustenance of his mother's breast to survive his early years.⁴¹ Already sharing Mary's flesh according to the medieval understanding of conception, the nursing Christ reaffirms this physical relationship with his human mother.⁴² Because medieval physiologists believed breast milk was an altered form of the mother's blood, not only was a child made of its mother's flesh but it also survived from drinking its mother's purified blood.⁴³ Besides the close physical relationship

³⁹ Warner, *Alone*, 202. See also Mazzaro, "Dante," 100.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 201. See also Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 19; Williamson, *Madonna*, 132; Meiss, *Painting*, 151.

⁴¹ Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion* Second Edition (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 15. See also Hodne, *Virginity*, 104. See also Clark, "Priesthood," 8; Havice, "Medieval Women," 350.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 151. See also Hodne, *Virginity*, 104.

⁴³ Natalie Angier, *Woman: An Intimate Geography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1999), 157. For further discussion of the medieval physiological understanding of the breast, see Elizabeth S. Bolman, "The Enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa and the Cult of the Virgin Mary in Egypt" in *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. by Maria Vassilaki (Aldershot, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 17; Alison Bartlett, *Breastwork: Rethinking Breastfeeding* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2005), 15; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, c1982), 132; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books,

between a nursing mother and her child, breastfeeding creates a deep emotional bond. Mary nursing Christ depicts this bond between mother and child, and the means by which she mediates with Christ on behalf of humanity.⁴⁴ Most poignant in images of the Double Intercession (fig. 11), in which Mary exposes her breast to the adult Christ to remind him of the debt he owes her and can repay to her by showing mercy to humanity, typical Madonna *lactans* scenes in general depict Mary as *Mediatrix*.⁴⁵ Mary offers her virgin breast to the infant Christ asking for mercy on behalf of humanity.

Mary's act of nursing in the painting additionally confirms her post-partum virginity, at least until she weaned the infant Christ. According to medieval physiology, a woman's menstrual blood both fed the unborn child and, after the birth, transformed within the woman's body to become breast milk.⁴⁶ Mothers were instructed to nurse infants for at least the first two years of the child's life.⁴⁷ During this time period a woman was also instructed to avoid becoming pregnant, typically by refraining from

1991), 100, 214; Beth Williamson, "The Cloisters Double Intercession: The Virgin as Co-Redemptrix" *Apollo* 152 (2000): 50; Marilyn Yalom, *A History of the Breast* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 70; Bynum, *Holy Feast*, 270; Klapisch-Zuber, *Women*, 159; Norris, *Story of Eve*, 138; Williamson, *Madonna*, 141-42.

⁴⁴ Yalom, *History of the Breast*, 36. See also Miles, *Complex Delight*, 3.

⁴⁵ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 117. For further discussion of the Double Intercession, see Gertrud Schiller, *Iconographie der christlichen Kunst*, vol. 1, trans. Janet Seligman (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1971), 224-25; Bynum, *Holy Feast*, 272; Ellington, *Sacred Body*, 112, 124; Warner, *Alone*, 199-200; Williamson, "Double Intercession," 48; Miles, *Complex Delight*, 8.

⁴⁶ Angier, *Woman*, 157.

⁴⁷ Yalom, *History of the Breast*, 42, 70.

sexual intercourse, because to be pregnant and nursing could endanger the nursling.⁴⁸ Specifically, physicians believed the mother's milk was stripped of its nutrients in favor of the unborn child and became harmful to the already living child.⁴⁹ Thus, in the medieval view, for Mary to properly care for Jesus, she would have had to remain a virgin for at least the first two years of his life.

Mary nursing the Christ child also played a part in the debate over Mary's own conception and whether or not it involved sexual intercourse.⁵⁰ Those theologians against the Immaculate Conception believed that for Mary to be born without original sin would have made her so exceptional as to be nearly the equal of Christ.⁵¹ In other words, her purpose was to provide Christ's human flesh, so the removal of that which made her most human, the stain of original sin, would conflict with her role in salvation. These same theologians viewed breastfeeding as a result of the Fall, a part of Eve's punishment and a sign of the original sin passed on to each descendant of Adam and Eve.⁵² Mary nursing Christ as the ultimate sign of her role as *Mediatrix* would therefore prove that

⁴⁸ Angier, *Woman*, 157; Klapisch-Zuber, *Women*, 159.

⁴⁹ Klapisch-Zuber, *Women*, 159.

⁵⁰ As noted in the first chapter, scholars have suggested the Lehman and Cleveland panels were associated with the Immaculate Conception. These scholars based this reading on the complete imagery of the reclining Eve and enthroned Mary, not simply the inclusion of the Madonna *lactans* imagery. For these readings, see Levi d'Ancona, *Immaculate Conception*, 35-36; Simi Varanelli, "Spiritualità mendicante," 77-99.

⁵¹ Ellington, *Sacred Body*, 58. See also Adams, "Mary," 135-36.

⁵² *Ibid.*

she, too, bore the stain of original sin. Essentially, images of the Madonna *lactans* discounted the theory of the Immaculate Conception in the eyes of its detractors.

As with most theological arguments, those in support of the doctrine of Mary's special sin-free and sexless conception had responses to those using the Madonna *lactans* as proof of Mary's normal origin. Holding to the argument that God was all-powerful and capable of anything, supporters of the Immaculate Conception argued that it would not have been impossible for God to give Mary the milk to feed the infant Christ.⁵³ Considering Mary conceived virginally without sexual intercourse and supposedly gave birth without pain or anguish, it is easy to believe that her breasts miraculously filled with milk to feed her son. Another argument grew out of the medieval belief that breast milk transferred part of the mother's character to her infant.⁵⁴ If Mary was not free of original sin, then she could have passed it to her son through her milk. Thus, Mary had to be born without sin lest in caring for her son she give him the stain of Adam and Eve. So the Madonna *lactans* could just as easily be considered a pro-Immaculate, and sexless, Conception image.

Heavenly Queen

The final category of Marian imagery used in the Mary and Eve paintings alludes to her role as the Queen of Heaven. In Lorenzetti's fresco (fig. 10) and the Lehman panel (fig. 2), Mary sits on a throne raised on a dais surrounded by a court of saints and

⁵³ Bolman, "Coptic Galaktotrophousa," 17-18.

⁵⁴ Yalom, *History of the Breast*, 43. See also Miles, "Virgin's," 198; Mazzaro, "Dante," 101.

angels.⁵⁵ The raised dais not only signals her royalty, but also asserts that her rule is in Heaven by clearly separating the Virgin from the earth and Eve. Mary specifically appears as Queen of Heaven and Co-Redemptrix in Lorenzetti's *Maestà*, the first instance of the Mary and Eve iconography. Though the composition today shows Mary enthroned with Christ on her lap, the original composition revealed by the 1966 restoration depicted Mary crowned and holding a scepter instead of her son.⁵⁶ Although an instance of the Madonna of Humility imagery because the Virgin rests on a cushion, the Cleveland panel (fig. 3) still references Mary's royalty by raising the cushion up off the ground on a dais and dressing her in a crown and fine clothes. Without Mary, Christ could not have achieved his goal of human salvation. Through her acceptance of God's will, she initiated Christ's time on earth. In John's gospel, Mary also initiates Jesus' ministry by pressing him to perform his first miracle of turning water into wine (John 2:1-11). The Eve and Mary paintings featuring the Virgin as queen complete the story of human salvation, illustrating the heavenly kingdom of the risen Christ and foretelling the Last Judgment.⁵⁷

Because Mary does not take on her title, Queen of Heaven, until after her death, the depictions of her in this role reference her Dormition and Assumption as well as her perpetual virginity. Unlike the souls of the saints surrounding her in a number of the

⁵⁵ Thirteen of the Second Eve paintings include a throne and dais. Four specifically depict Mary as Queen, two depict her coronation. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 1, 53, 91, 119-20, 126, 162, 210, 212, 217, 219, 221, 223-25, 227.

⁵⁶ Borsook, *Affreschi*, 35-38; Tintori, *Antichi colori*, 56-58. See also Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 53, 91; Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 109.

⁵⁷ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 107.

paintings, many of them martyrs, Mary peacefully fell into a death-like slumber and was taken to Heaven by her son. Mary's Assumption and rule over Heaven were possible not only because of her relationship to Christ, but also because of her lack of original sin as professed by her Immaculate Conception. Born sinless and remaining virginal, her flesh would not age in life or decay in death, thus the Virgin's body was able to be taken to Heaven.⁵⁸

Again, the Cleveland panel departs from the rest of the Mary and Eve paintings with specific references to not only Mary's role as Queen of Heaven but also her conflation with the Apocalyptic Woman from the Book of Revelation. The twelfth chapter of Revelation tells the story of a woman, in labor, beset by a dragon waiting to kill her child the moment it is born. The woman is described as "clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rev. 12:1). When the woman finally gives birth, "her child [is] caught up to God" and the woman flees into the wilderness (Rev. 12:5-6). Medieval theologians identified the woman of Revelation 12 with the "Christian church" or "Mary and the church."⁵⁹ Not only did Mary reverse Eve's sin through her virginal conception, but as the Virgin Queen of Heaven she will intercede for humanity, especially those of the Church who follow her example of sexual purity, during the end of days. Essentially, the Virgin not only assures

⁵⁸ Kristeva, "Stabat Mater," 102. See also Adams, "Mary," 146.

⁵⁹ Felise Tavo, *Woman, Mother and Bride: An Exegetical Investigation into the "Ecclesial" Notions of the Apocalypse* (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2007), 235.

humanity access to eternal life in Heaven, she also confirms that all those she believes worthy will have a second life when the time of the Last Judgment arrives.

Whatever the interpretation, the Cleveland panel incorporates imagery which references this passage from Revelation. Twelve gold stars featuring portraits of the twelve apostles surround Mary's head. A golden sun rests to Mary's right and supports the reading that the gold striations on her blue gown represent the sun's rays, thus clothing her in the sun.⁶⁰ Though Mary sits, a crescent moon appears next to her feet, completing the image of the woman in the wilderness.⁶¹ Further confirming this identification, the archangel Michael, holding a sword and scale, and another warrior saint stand to Mary's left, referencing the battle of good and evil which will occur at the Last Judgment as described by Revelation.⁶² Unlike Eve, who succumbs to the serpent's wiles, Mary defeats the tempter and gives birth to a son who triumphs over death.

Conclusions

The four Marian dogmas and the two titles of Mary most frequently associated with her role as Second Eve, the *Mediatrix* and Co-Redemptrix, all deal with the avoidance or lack of concupiscent sexual intercourse. Mary, unmarried and physically pure, conceived by the spirit and remained perpetually virgin. Her virginity confirmed her role as the Theotokos, assuring that her son was truly divine. Mirroring the conception of Christ, the sexless Immaculate Conception of Mary freed her from the stain

⁶⁰ Meiss, *Painting*, 151n84, 154n99, 154, 154n101. For the imagery of the Apocalyptic Woman in Carlo da Camerino's painting, see Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 110; Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 105.

⁶¹ Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 105. See also Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 110.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 112.

of Eve's sin. Her freedom from the burden of original sin and her life-long sexual purity allowed for her Assumption into Heaven to take on the roles of Queen, *Mediatrix*, and Co-Redemptrix. Mary's power, though tied to her role as Christ's mother, stemmed from her virginal state.

Paralleling the figure reclining beneath her, the personas of the Virgin featured in the paintings of Mary and Eve tell the story of salvation and assert her status as ever-virgin. References to the Annunciation, particularly the presence of the angel Gabriel, allude to the beginning of human salvation and attest to Mary's virginal state prior to her conception of Christ. The Madonna and Child imagery introduces Christ's sacrifice as the Lamb of God given to humanity by his mother. Based on the association between the imagery of the Madonna *lactans* and theological arguments over the Immaculate Conception, this set of symbols is also suggestive of Mary's in partu and postpartum virginity. Mary becomes Queen of Heaven after her Assumption, her raised throne signifying her life-long virginity.

CHAPTER 4

THE NEW EVE: MARY AS MEDIATRIX OF THE HUMAN CONDITION

Though the steps taken by Eve and Mary to assume their roles as mother of humanity and mother of God were parallel, the means by which they did so were antithetical. Paul's designation of Christ as the Second Adam created the formula for this kind of typological relationship. Adam sinned and died; Christ died for humanity's sins and lived again. Mary's role as Second Eve required the same kind of parallel, yet oppositional characterization of the Virgin and the mother of humanity. Eve vainly disobeyed God's order and he exiled her from Paradise; Mary humbly submitted herself to God's will and Christ crowned her as Queen of Heaven. Sexuality repeatedly appears as a common theme throughout the discourse on the relationship between the mother of humanity and the mother of God. Eve sinned through an act of concupiscent sexual intercourse, but Mary brought salvation to humanity by devoting her virginal body to God.

The imagery used in the eighteen paintings of Mary as the Second Eve not only highlights the similarities between these women's tales, it brings attention to their contrasting natures, particularly their opposite sexual statuses. The attributes of Eve and the imagery of Mary narrate their disparate life stories and pinpoint the corresponding steps in their respective timelines. Although the theology of the Second Eve focused on how Mary and Eve "conceived" their contributions to the history of human sin and salvation, the imagery of the paintings primarily references the association between their roles as temptress and mother as well as their different ends. I believe that the allusion to these women's opposing sexual statuses confirms that these paintings depict the Virgin as

the Second Eve for only through Mary's decision to remain perpetually a virgin could the sinful lust of Eve be undone.

The Second Eve

The belief that the lives and actions of the Gospels' main figures paralleled, and at times reversed, those of the characters from the Old Testament originated in the Epistles attributed to Paul. In the first letter to the Corinthians, Paul constructed the parallel between Adam and Christ mentioned above. According to this epistle, the first Adam, made of the earth, provided humanity with a physical life, but the second Adam, "a life-giving spirit...from heaven," gave humanity a spiritual life (1Cor 15:45-49). Paul recognized the parallels between the stories of the first man and the son of God, but ignored one noticeable difference between Adam and Christ: the first man's female partner. Arguably, Eve, the first person to be tempted by sin and to eat of the forbidden fruit, had a more central role in the Temptation though the humans' sin was not complete until Adam succumbed to her advances. Christ did not have nor require a mate in his act of salvific self-sacrifice on behalf of humanity, yet his presence on earth would not have been possible without his mother. Though Paul focused on the relationship between Adam and Christ, the natural progression of this original association was to link the lives of their female "partners."

Mary did not receive the designation of the Second Eve from theologians until about a century after Paul's letter. The first mention of a relationship between the first woman and the mother of Christ appeared in Justin Martyr's second century treatise

*Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew.*¹ The purpose of Justin's *Dialogue* was to prove that the events of the Gospels were foretold by the events of the Old Testament. According to Justin,

...[Christ was] born of the Virgin, in order that the disobedience caused by the serpent might be destroyed in the same manner in which it had originated. For Eve, an undefiled virgin, conceived the word of the serpent, and brought forth disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary, filled with faith and joy, when the angel Gabriel announced to her the good tidings that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her, and therefore the Holy One born of her would be the Son of God, answered: 'Be it done unto me according to Thy word.'²

Justin's association between Eve and Mary rested primarily on the obvious similarities between their biblical stories. Both women received visits from otherworldly beings, a talking serpent and an angel, who spoke with them and left them changed, Eve having fallen into sin and Mary having conceived by the Holy Spirit. His characterization of Eve's role in the Fall as a form of conception ensured that the link he wished to highlight between the mother of humanity and the mother of God would have been especially clear.

After Justin's initial commentary on the typological relationship between Eve and Mary, the concept of the Second Eve grew in sophistication and evolved from merely a comparison between the Temptation and Annunciation. As recounted by Dunlop, by the thirteenth century, the role of Mary as Second Eve became part of general Christian belief, chiefly through the sermons of mendicant friars and popular texts such as Jacobus

¹ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 22.

² Justin Martyr, "Dialogue with Trypho," in *The Writings of Saint Justin Martyr*, trans. Thomas B. Falls (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1965), C. For further discussion, see Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 22-23.

de Voragine's *The Golden Legend*.³ The association between Eve and Mary had also moved beyond focusing on the parallels in the stories of the Temptation and the Annunciation to more fully illustrate Eve's role as "type" of the Virgin. Specifically, theologians made a new association between the story of Mary's Assumption and Eve's punishment after the Fall.⁴ In the end, the Virgin's role as the Second Eve came to describe the part she played in the history of salvation as Christ's mother and first disciple.

Temptation and Annunciation

The parallel structure of the Temptation of Eve and the Annunciation to Mary invited comparison, while their different stories led the way for Mary to become the Second Eve. Both Eve and Mary received messages counter-intuitive to their understanding of the worlds in which they lived from representatives of the powers of evil and good, respectively. Contrary to what God or Adam had told Eve, the serpent assured her that the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil would not kill her but give her understanding equal to God's own (Gen. 3:1-5). The angel Gabriel notified Mary that she would bear a son, even though she physically remained a virgin (Luke 1:31-37). In the end, both women had to consent to or accept the messages of their visitors in order to assume their roles in the story of human sin and redemption. Their consent, through Eve's actions and Mary's words, was essential to their roles in salvation history, proof that they acted of their own free will.

³ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 18-20, 27-29, 37.

⁴ Jacobus de Voragine, *Golden Legend*, 479-80. For further discussion of *The Golden Legend* see Dunlap, "Advocata Nostra," 20.

Though the patterns of Eve and Mary's encounters with their otherworldly messengers were parallel, the character of their actions had to be oppositional for Mary's deeds to have any effect on the course of human salvation. As Justin Martyr pointed out, both Eve and Mary were virgins when the serpent and angel approached them and both women "conceived."⁵ Though Mary retained her virginity because of her humility, Eve "lost" hers by arrogantly following the serpent's false instruction. Thus, the oppositional nature of Eve and Mary rests in the manner of their responses as well as the status of their physical virginity. Eve, full of pride and wanting to share God's wisdom, disobeyed his order and ate of the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6). As the theology surrounding the story of the Fall grew, Eve's eating of the forbidden fruit became a metaphor for learning or participating in concupiscent sexuality.⁶ Mary reversed these acts through the simple humility of her statement "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). She freely accepted God's plan for her life and conceived without sexual intercourse.

The parallel stories of the serpent's temptation and the angel's annunciation served as the most common explanation of Mary as Second Eve during the late Middle Ages, yet only two of the eighteen paintings of Eve and Mary definitively depict this aspect of their relationship. The Lehman and Cleveland panels (figs. 2 and 3) most clearly exemplify this relationship because of their inclusion of both the serpent and

⁵ Justin, "Dialogue," C.

⁶ Augustine, *City of God*, 14.23, 14.26; Hugh, *Sacraments*, 1.8.13; Aquinas, *Summa*, 1.98.2. For discussions of the Fall as a change in human sexuality, see Miles, *Carnal Knowing*, 94; Salisbury, *Beast Within*, 78-79; Salisbury, *Church Fathers*, 13; Norris, *Story of Eve*, 187-88; Burns, "Snake-Tailed Woman," 204; Heatt, "Eve as Reason," 221-22.

references to the Annunciation. The Cleveland panel makes Eve's loss of virginity as a result of the Fall fairly explicit through the woman-headed serpent's erect position between her thighs. Mary's uncovered ear alludes to her virginal conception of Christ upon hearing the angel's message. Gabriel's position, set apart from Mary, emphasizes that she did not require physical intimacy to conceive. The Lehman panel depicts both the serpent and the Annunciation in a more traditional fashion. Rather than twining around Eve's body, the serpent appears within the fig tree at Eve's feet. Similarly, Paolo di Giovanni Fei depicted a miniature Annunciation scene, rather than simply referencing it through symbols, in the spandrels of the gold border surrounding the central figure of the Madonna and Child.

Lorenzetti's fresco (fig. 1), the first known use of the Second Eve imagery, does not reference the opening episodes in the stories of Eve and Mary. Though Lorenzetti's *Maestà* appears within a fresco cycle situated directly above a depiction of the Annunciation (fig. 7), the iconographic association of the two paintings remains unclear.⁷ Unlike the Cleveland and Lehman panels, Lorenzetti's *Maestà* does not include the serpent as an attribute of Eve. Thus, the relationship between the Annunciation fresco and the *Maestà* lunette does not necessarily serve as a part of the depiction of Mary as the Second Eve. This lack of, or perhaps minimal, reference to the stories that form the basis for most theological explanations of the Second Eve suggests that the Annunciation was not as important to the intercessory power of Mary in this role. Mary's power stemmed from her motherhood of Christ, so the imagery of her as Madonna and Child, and its

⁷ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 46-48, 52-54.

relation to Eve's attribute of the fig, as the central image within paintings of the Second Eve more accurately depicts the mother of God's intercessory power.

Temptress and Mother

Though not as frequently explored within theological treatises, the stories of Mary and Eve continue along their parallel paths after the serpent's Temptation and the angel's Annunciation. I believe the lack of theological dialogue relating Eve's role as temptress and Mary's role as mother may lie in the different lengths of narrative or chronological time needed for the exposition of their stories. Eve's temptation of Adam takes but a few verses in Genesis, but Mary's motherhood of Christ appears sporadically throughout the entire narrative of the four Gospels. When translated into time, Eve's temptation takes but a few moments, while Mary's motherhood lasts the thirty-three years of her son's life on earth and continues eternally in Heaven. The great difference in the length of time Eve spent as temptress and Mary spent as mother makes it more difficult to point out particular instances of parallel construction. At best, only general statements about Mary's activities from the time of Christ's birth to his death and Resurrection are easily compared to Eve's temptation of Adam. For example, both Eve and Mary present that which they "conceived" to the rest of humanity. After eating the forbidden fruit, Eve gave it to her husband, the only other human, so that he could share in her sin (Gen. 3:6). By tempting Adam, she not only caused him to sin but brought the stain of original sin upon every succeeding generation through sexual intercourse.⁸ God's purpose in having Mary give birth to Christ was to deliver a proper sacrifice to redeem humanity and open

⁸ Norris, *Story of Eve*, 141. See also Adams, "Mary," 135-36.

the way for eternal life. Mary provided Christ with the human flesh needed for his incarnation, making him kin to those he sought to save.

Eve and Mary's respective roles in the Fall and salvation of humanity required that they continue with the same sexual status, Eve remaining lustful and Mary remaining virginal. According to the sexual interpretation of the Fall examined in the first chapter, Eve sexually seduced Adam, allowing animal passions to overtake human reason.⁹ God punished her accordingly, increasing the pain of childbirth while making her desire to fulfill her husband's needs (Gen. 3:16). Thus, she was destined to repeat the action of her sin until her death. As related in both canonical and apocryphal texts, Mary remained devoted to her son, guiding him through his childhood and encouraging him to begin his ministry at the wedding in Cana (Luke 2:41-52; John 2:1-11). The dogma of her perpetual virginity explained this endless devotion, for her physical virginity meant she was not beholden to the needs of her husband or to any younger children.¹⁰ Mary, as the mother of God, remained unchanged from her original virginal state.

Because of the relationship between Eve's role as temptress and Mary's role as mother, Eve's attribute of the forbidden fruit and the imagery of the Madonna and Child which repeatedly appear in the Mary and Eve paintings confirm that these works represent Mary as the Second Eve. In Lorenzetti's fresco (fig. 1), the Lehman panel (fig. 2), and the Cleveland panel (fig. 3), the fig as Eve's attribute not only represents the forbidden fruit from the Genesis story, but also references the sexual interpretation of the

⁹ Augustine, *City of God*, 14.23, 14.26; Hugh, *Sacraments*, 1.8.13; Aquinas, *Summa*, 1.98.2.

¹⁰ Miles, *Image*, 89.

Fall because of its allusions to both male and female genitalia.¹¹ In contrast, Mary appears in these paintings as a young mother holding the infant Christ on her lap, including the three works just mentioned.¹² The infant Christ as Mary's attribute is indicative of her dogmatic role as the Theotokos, or God-Bearer.¹³ Mary's virginity at the time of her conception confirmed her role as Theotokos by proving God's paternity of Jesus. Thus, in response to the fig's reference to Eve's sexualized body, Mary's infant son proclaims her virginal body.

The fig and the Christ child not only reference these women's opposing sexual states, they also most clearly refer to how these women altered the course of human history through their flesh. The image of Eve holding the fig interprets the biblical story of the Fall with reference to its sexual interpretation. The fig is both fruit and metaphor for her fleshy, sexualized body which she gave to her husband as "everyman." As the central figure in the Mary and Eve compositions, the Virgin looks out of the picture plane suggesting that she presents her son not only to the saints and holy people around her, but also to those who view her image. Like Eve, Mary actually presents her own flesh and

¹¹ Rowland, *Animals*, 81; Phillips, *Eve*, 68-69. For further discussion of the fig's connection to female genitalia, see Clifton, "Gender and Shame," 644; Norris, *Story of Eve*, 338. The same attribute appears in a total of thirteen of the Second Eve paintings. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 2, 72, 95, 120, 149, 211-12, 215, 217, 222, 224-25, 227.

¹² Mary appears as a young mother in fourteen of these paintings. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 1, 53, 119, 126, 162, 210, 212, 217, 219, 221, 223-25, 227.

¹³ Martin Kemp, "The Altarpiece in the Renaissance: A Taxonomic Approach," in *The Altarpiece in the Renaissance*, ed. Peter Humfrey and Martin Kemp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 11; Charles Hope, "Altarpieces and the Requirements of Patrons," in *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, ed. Timothy Verdon and John Henderson (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 544. See also Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 109.

blood in offering her child to the Church. Explained in depth in the previous chapter, medieval physiology held that a woman provided her unborn child's flesh and fed her infant her own blood transformed into milk.¹⁴ Thus, the infant on Mary's lap shares her flesh, most poignantly confirmed through her depiction as the Madonna *lactans* in the Cleveland and Lehman panels.¹⁵ The infant Christ even shares the fig's nature as a food through his alternate epithets of the bread of life and sacrificial lamb (John 6:35; 1 Pet. 1:19). As the "oven" for the "bread of life" and the "altar" for the "sacrificial lamb," Mary presents her flesh in the form of her son as food for the Church.¹⁶

Expulsion and Assumption

Though not as common as the association between the Temptation and Annunciation, the relationship between Eve's Expulsion from paradise and Mary's Assumption into heaven appeared in medieval theological discussions about Mary as the Second Eve. Unlike the earlier incidents in their stories, the parallels between Eve's punishment and Mary's Assumption were inherently oppositional. After the temptation of Adam, God's final punishment for the first humans was expulsion from the earthly Paradise of the Garden of Eden and denial of access to the Tree of Life. Though God only told Adam that he would die after a life of toil, returning to the dust from which he

¹⁴ Yalom, *History of the Breast*, 42, 44, 69-70. For further discussion of the medieval physiological understanding of the breast, see Bolman, "Coptic Galaktotrophousa," 17; Bynum, *Fragmentation*, 100, 214; Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 132; Klapisch-Zuber, *Women*, 159; Williamson, *Madonna*, 141-42; Norris, *Story of Eve*, 138.

¹⁵ In total, seven of the Second Eve paintings depict Mary as the Madonna *lactans*. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 1, 126, 210, 212, 223, 224, 227.

¹⁶ Bynum, *Holy Feast*, 271; Mazzaro, "Dante," 98. See also Corrington, "Milk," 399; Grössinger, *Picturing Women*, 28.

had been made, the expulsion of both humans implied that Eve would suffer the same fate. Christ's sacrificial death and Resurrection forgave humanity's sins and opened the gates of the heavenly Paradise to them, but Mary's bodily Assumption into Heaven also served a purpose within the story of salvation. Not only did her Assumption confirm her lifelong virginity and freedom from Original Sin, it acted as an example to humanity of a sure path to Heaven. Christ's entry into Heaven was in some ways not particularly special because he was divine and belonged there with God the Father. Mary's bodily Assumption as a fully human woman was more spectacular and arguably paved the way for the rest of humanity, especially those who chose to follow her example and remain virgins or abstain from sexual intercourse. Christ undid Adam's sin through his death and Resurrection, but Mary reversed the sin of Eve through her perpetual virginity and Assumption.

Though the comparison between Eve as temptress and Mary as mother is arguably the central focus of the Mary and Eve paintings, the relationship between Eve's role as the earthly mother of humanity and Mary's rule as Queen of Heaven are also prominently featured. While the serpent only appears in the Lehman and Cleveland panels (figs. 2 and 3), Eve wears some form of clothing in both panels and Lorenzetti's fresco (fig. 1).¹⁷ Mary definitively appears as Queen in Lorenzetti's fresco and the Lehman panel, but the Cleveland panel also references her heavenly rule.¹⁸ Hidden beneath a layer of later

¹⁷ Eve wears clothing in all but two of the eighteen Second Eve paintings. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 2, 72, 95, 97, 120, 149, 156, 163, 211-12, 215, 217-20, 222-25, 227.

¹⁸ Mary appears definitively as Queen of Heaven in eleven of the Second Eve paintings, two actually depicting her coronation. Five works additionally reference her heavenly

repainting, the Lorenzetti fresco originally depicted Mary as a regal Queen enthroned on a dais, without her son, above a reclining Eve wearing a shift and goat-skin, without her serpent attribute.¹⁹ As the first known version of the imagery of Mary as Second Eve, the focus on the Virgin as Queen of Heaven and the attributes of Eve which parallel and oppose her descendant's role, suggests that the mother of God's power to intercede on behalf of humanity originally stemmed more from her heavenly reign.

The paintings of Eve and Mary use both their clothing and their relative positions to reference the disparate ends of the mother of humanity and the mother of God. In the Lehman panel, the differences in dress are readily noticeable. Both women's clothes are elegant, even though they are made of distinctly different fabrics. Eve wears a sheer white shift with a grayish-brown fur mantle, lined in red, draped over her shoulders and her left leg. The shift references both the cause of original sin by showing her body through the fabric and the consequence of the Fall by resembling a burial shroud. Further confirming this reference, Eve lies on the earth within a rectangular space reminiscent of a grave. The goat-skin refers both to the biblical story of the expulsion in which God clothed the first humans in leather and to the sexual interpretation of the Fall because of the goat's association with lasciviousness. The goat-skin, its red lining highlighting the fact that it was once a living creature, is the physical embodiment of concupiscent sexuality and death.

rule. See Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 1, 53, 95, 97, 119, 126, 162, 210, 212, 217, 219, 221, 223-25, 227.

¹⁹ Borsook, *Affreschi*, 35-38; Tintori, *Antichi colori*, 56-58. See also Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 53, 72, 91; Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 109.

In contrast, a deep blue mantle lined in white covers Mary from head to foot, with her gold gown only visible at her chest, allowing her son to nurse from her one uncovered breast. The patterned gold fabric of Mary's dress is fitting of her status as Queen of Heaven. The Virgin's cushioned throne held up by angels and raised up on a dais emphasizes her separation from the earth-bound Eve, confirming that the mother of God appears within the heavenly kingdom even though her son appears as an infant rather than an adult. Unlike Eve's coverings, the Virgin's blue mantle covers her entire body, except for her right ear and left breast. Mary's perpetual virginity ensured God's paternity of her son, but her flesh proved his humanity. Though God used Mary's body to carry the Christ child, it was her flesh that God needed for his son's incarnation. Thus, the majority of her body remains covered, alluding to her freedom from lust, while those parts pertinent to the story of the incarnation, namely her ear and her breast, remain uncovered. Her ear proves that she conceived as a virgin and remained physically virginal postpartum.²⁰ Her breast, in light of medieval physiological theory, stands for the flesh and blood she shares with her son.²¹

The Cleveland panel shares a number of similarities with the Lehman panel in its depicted relationship between the richly clothed and crowned Queen of Heaven and the scantily clad mother of humanity, but it becomes more complex with its references to the Apocalyptic Woman of Revelation 12. Clothed in the sun and crowned by stars, Carlo da Camerino's Mary is not simply the Queen of Heaven, she is the Queen of the Last

²⁰ Miles, *Carnal Knowing*, 16, 139. See also Hodne, *Virginity*, 80; Warner, *Alone*, 37.

²¹ Yalom, *History*, 42, 44, 69-70. See also Havice, "Medieval Women," 350.

Judgment, ready to intercede on behalf of humanity.²² Eve, in relation, looks up from her grave-like lower register, her lap barely covered by a shaggy brown goat-skin.²³ The first woman is very much of the earth and, in light of the apocalyptic imagery surrounding Mary, could act as an allegory for the souls of humanity as they rise from their graves at the end of days seeking salvation. She looks up at her descendant, the woman whose flesh and blood became the sacrifice which cleansed humanity, including the first humans, of their sins.

Conclusions

The role of Mary as Second Eve relied on the existence of parallels between the stories of the Virgin and her biblical ancestor, though for the sake of human salvation their natures had to be contradictory. Eve lies beneath Mary, identified by attributes which reference the story of original sin and the involvement of sinful sexuality. The imagery of Mary as Annunciate, Mother, and Queen counteracts the sexual signification of Eve's serpent, fig, and clothing by highlighting the mother of God's perpetual virginity. The eighteen paintings of the Second Eve most commonly feature the attributes of Eve and the imagery of Mary associated with their contributions to salvation history, Original Sin and salvation, and the conclusions of their stories, expulsion and coronation. The references to their disparate ends particularly focus the imagery of the Second Eve in these paintings on Mary's associated role of *Mediatrix* for humanity, especially in death and at the end of time.

²² Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 110.

²³ Miles, *Carnal Knowing*, 141.

Mary as the Second Eve was not only the intercessor for those who asked for her help or followed her example of virginity or sexual abstinence, but for those who fell victim to the human condition. Mary's general role of *Mediatrix* required the sinful to seek her assistance. Because of her merciful nature, the Virgin would intercede with Christ on behalf of those who paid her particular devotion or prayed to her for aid, but she did not generally mediate for those who did not prove in some way that they deserved it. Mary's special advocacy for Eve, as suggested by the Second Eve imagery, was not in response to a special request from the mother of humanity, but instead from their shared human flesh. Even in Eve's fallen state, the template of the human condition, the Virgin did not turn her back on her ancestor. Thus, not only those who sought the love of the mother of God through following her example or requesting her help would receive it, but even men and women trapped in the ways of the first woman could look forward to the Virgin's favor.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

My goal has been to find a common ground between the two main explanations of the imagery of the Virgin enthroned above a reclining Eve found in eighteen central Italian paintings from the Trecento and Quattrocento. On the one hand, Miles claimed this imagery depicted their oppositional relationship as embodiments of the pure, virginal good woman and the fallen, seductive bad woman.¹ On the other hand, Dunlop and Williamson linked this imagery to the theology of the Second Eve and suggested that the mother of humanity and the mother of God do not appear as opposites but as related through their human flesh.² Additionally, Dunlop noted that the religious meaning and devotional context of these paintings would have limited the reading of Eve's body as sexually alluring.³ Although these theories appear to be in conflict, I argue that basic elements of each interpretation are not contradictory and, if used together, can augment the understanding of the imagery of Eve and Mary in these eighteen paintings.

I believe that the imagery of Mary enthroned above a reclining Eve does depict Mary as the Second Eve, a role directly related to her power as *Mediatrix*. Besides the convincing arguments made by Williamson and Dunlop, the strength of the theological tradition of the Second Eve, both in terms of its history within Christian teaching dating

¹ Miles, *Carnal Knowing*, 139-41. For general discussion of the Mary/Eve opposition, see also Miles, *Complex Delight*, 10, 82-83; Cohen and Derbes, "Bernward," 19, 29; Pereira, *Né Eva*; Kraus, "Eve and Mary," 79-100.

² Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 107-08, 131-32; Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 2-3; Dunlop, "Flesh," 140-44.

³ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 1-2, 10.

to the second century and its prominence as part of the Mariology of the late Middle Ages, supports this interpretation.⁴ Though, according to theologians, for Mary to be the Second Eve, the partner of Christ as Second Adam in the course of human salvation, her actions had to parallel Eve's while undoing them through their inverses. In contrast to Williamson and Dunlop, I argue that if these paintings depict Mary as the Second Eve, then their imagery must reference the inherently oppositional natures and actions of the first woman and the Virgin.

I argue that the paintings of the Virgin enthroned above the reclining figure of Eve specifically depict the difference between these women as stemming from their opposite sexual statuses. Though I tend to agree with Williamson and Dunlop that Eve is not necessarily presented in a negative light, even though she reclines on the earth, I think Miles is astute in noting a difference, particularly regarding sexuality, between the first woman and the Virgin.⁵ To explore the contrasting presentations of Mary and Eve in the Second Eve imagery, I examined the particular attributes of Eve and the imagery of the Virgin appearing throughout this selection of paintings. Eve's attributes in the Second Eve paintings, the serpent, the forbidden fruit, and clothing, all reference the sexual interpretation of the Fall presented by medieval theologians, including Ambrose, Augustine, and Aquinas. Though these attributes take various forms in medieval art, the artists of the Second Eve paintings exclusively used the woman-headed serpent, the fig, and either a sheer white shift or shaggy goat-skin as signifiers of Eve's identity. These specific objects each relate to Eve's participation in concupiscent sexuality. The fig and

⁴ Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 107-08; Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 18-45.

⁵ Miles, *Carnal Knowing*, 139-41.

clothing additionally associate sexual intercourse with the transmission of Original Sin to future generations and humanity's ultimate punishment of death. Whether or not Eve's body was viewed as seductive, the significations of the attributes surrounding her suggest her reclining figure was intended to reference the sexual interpretation of the Fall.

Like the attributes of Eve, the imagery of Mary present in the Second Eve paintings refers to the theological doctrines of the Virgin, especially the belief in her lifelong abstinence from sexual intercourse. Through Church councils, papal declaration, and theological dialogue, the Virgin's life became defined by four main doctrines, yet the second, her perpetual virginity, helped to prove the other three and was central to her role in salvation history. Mary's lack of a sexual relationship with her husband, Joseph, not only assured God's paternity of Jesus but showed her devotion belonged solely to her son, and by association God. Iconography of the Annunciation, though typically not part of the central Marian imagery of the Second Eve paintings, references her humble virginity at the time of her conception. The primary depiction of Mary as the mother of God or the Queen of Heaven signifies her perpetual virginity through allusions to the doctrines of the Theotokos and Assumption. Mary's fully clothed body may not have indicated her physical purity, but the references to the doctrinal stories of her life and her role in the history of salvation make her figure representative of her lack of sexual knowledge.

By examining Eve's attributes and the Marian imagery found in the Second Eve paintings I hoped to avoid the question of reading these women's bodies as the sole expression of their sexuality. Besides the lack of any evidence which could provide insight into how the original medieval audience would have received the figures of Mary

and Eve, particularly regarding their contrasting physical appearances, I feel there is a certain danger in continually interpreting the female body as the site or expression of human sexuality. Certainly a precedent exists for the nude female body to be used and interpreted as a sexual object, but it has become too easy to simply state that a female figure is representative of female sexuality depending on her state of dress or undress without proof beyond the figure's sex. To always read the nude or partially nude female body as sexually alluring has the potential to validate and re-inscribe the view of woman as nothing but a sexual object. In the case of Eve and Mary, the allusions to their sexual statuses do not rely solely on the presentation of their bodies, but also on the attributes and imagery surrounding them which reference their biblical and theological narratives.

Rather than simply depict the Christian embodiments of the bad and good woman, the paintings of the Second Eve tell the story of human sin and salvation through the bodies of the mother of humanity and the mother of God. In a way, the female body is most representative of humanity through its association with the flesh. Medieval medicine held that the female role in reproduction was to provide the flesh of the unborn child while the male provided the spirit or form.⁶ Eve brought about the Fall because the serpent tempted her flesh and her flesh in turn tempted Adam with concupiscent sexual intercourse. As the mother of humanity, every human being's flesh is Eve's flesh, thus everyone bears the stain of Original Sin, essentially the human condition of life, reproduction, and death. Mary initiated human salvation through the gift of her virginal flesh to make Christ human. In the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, as well as the Virgin's own death and assumption, Mary's flesh granted humanity access to

⁶ Dunlop, "Flesh," 142.

heaven and everlasting life. The imagery of the Second Eve thus juxtaposes Eve and Mary as the embodiments of the human condition and the path to salvation.

Because of the multiple layers of imagery housed within the paintings of Mary as the Second Eve, these eighteen works could have held a number of different meanings for their patrons and intended audiences. I believe the imagery of Eve reclining below the Virgin had a signification which was meaningful for both patrons and viewers, whether religious or lay, woman or man. Specifically, Mary appears as the *Mediatrix* for all of humanity, both the religious who emulate her with devotion to Christ and the laity who live out the human condition. Because of her virginity, Mary had the power to intercede for her fallen ancestor. Due to their shared flesh, the Virgin advocated on behalf of Eve despite her decision to pursue the sinful path of concupiscent sexuality. Thus, the paintings of the Second Eve had the power to assure both members of religious houses and the laity of the Virgin's advocacy, as proven by the imagery's popularity among both groups.

Though only eighteen paintings featuring Eve reclining beneath Mary exist today, considering the majority take the form of small panels possibly meant for private devotion many more could have existed that simply did not survive over time. In her dissertation, Dunlop explores the contexts of the eighteen surviving images of Mary as the Second Eve. Of the eighteen surviving works, only the six frescos and two large altarpieces have known contexts: two, including the Lorenzetti fresco (fig. 1), were housed in monastic communities; one appeared in a cathedral cemetery; and five,

including the Cleveland panel (fig. 3), were located in local churches.⁷ The imagery clearly appealed to a variety of religious orders, since the works with known contexts have associations with Cistercians, Dominicans, Augustinians, Franciscans, and Regular Canons.⁸ The other ten works, all panel paintings, have no clear context. Based on size, many were likely private devotional panels for members of the minor nobility or altarpieces in smaller side chapels, including the Lehman panel (fig. 2).⁹

Using the three works I have focused on, I would like to investigate how the sexual interpretation of the imagery of the Second Eve could have applied to the intended viewers. Lorenzetti's *Maestà* fresco appears within a chapel at the Cistercian abbey of San Galgano.¹⁰ Besides the special relationship between the Cistercians and Mary, who they believed was their special advocate, the celibate lives of the monks would have mirrored the abstinent marriage of the Virgin. Thus, these monks could have viewed the Second Eve as their assurance of entry into heaven because they followed her example and devoted themselves to her son not only spiritually, but physically. Although the original context of the Lehman panel remains a mystery, this work was potentially on view to members of the laity, possibly in a private setting.¹¹ The Cleveland panel's

⁷ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 193-96, 198; Barucca, "L'oreficeria," 114-117. For further discussion of the possible contexts of these works, see Dunlop, "Flesh," 136; Williamson, "Virgin Lactans," 127-28. Williamson specifically discusses the Cleveland panel.

⁸ Dunlop, "Advocata Nostra," 198.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 200-01.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 46-49.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 208, 211-12.

donation by a friar implies that its imagery was acceptable to the Church and its place as a chapel altarpiece in a local church suggests that the laity viewed it, at least during some parts of the liturgical year.¹² The laity, both nobles and commoners, would find comfort in the depiction of Mary as advocate of Eve because of their shared human condition with the first woman, specifically the propensity for desiring and participating in concupiscent sexuality. The imagery implies that, if Mary advocated for the lustful Eve, she would do so for those who remained trapped by the pattern of the first humans' sin.

¹² Dunlop, "Flesh," 136.

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FIGURES



Figure 1. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Maestà Lunette*, c. 1335, fresco. San Galgano, Montesiepi, Provincia di Siena, Italy. (ARTstor)



Figure 2. Paolo di Giovanni Fei, *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Peter, Saint Agnes, Saint Catherine of Alexandria, Saint Lucy, and Unidentified Female Saint, Saint Paul, and Saint John the Baptist, with Eve and the Serpent; the Annunciation*, 1385-90, tempera on wood, gold ground. Overall, with engaged frame, 34 1/4 x 23 1/4 in. (87 x 59.1 cm); painted surface 27 7/8 x 17 1/4 in. (70.8 x 43.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, New York. (ARTstor)



Figure 3. Carlo da Camerino, *The Madonna of Humility and the Temptation of Eve*, c. 1400, tempera and gold on wood. Overall, with frame, 75 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 38 $\frac{15}{16}$ in. (191.5 x 99 cm); painted surface 71 $\frac{7}{16}$ x 34 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (181.5 x 88.6 cm). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio. (ARTstor)



Figure 4. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Detail of Eve, from the *Maestà Lunette*, c. 1335, fresco. San Galgano, Montesiepi, Provincia di Siena, Italy. (ARTstor)



Figure 5. Paolo di Giovanni Fei, Detail of Eve, from *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Peter, Saint Agnes, Saint Catherine of Alexandria, Saint Lucy, and Unidentified Female Saint, Saint Paul, and Saint John the Baptist, with Eve and the Serpent; the Annunciation*, 1385-90, tempera on wood, gold ground. Overall, with engaged frame, 34 1/4 x 23 1/4 in. (87 x 59.1 cm); painted surface 27 7/8 x 17 1/4 in. (70.8 x 43.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, New York. (ARTstor)



Figure 6. Carlo da Camerino, Detail of Eve, from *The Madonna of Humility and the Temptation of Eve*, c. 1400, tempera and gold on wood. Overall, with frame, 75 3/8 x 38 15/16 in. (191.5 x 99 cm); painted surface 71 7/16 x 34 7/8 in. (181.5 x 88.6 cm). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio. (ARTstor)



Figure 7. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Annunciation*, c. 1335, fresco. San Galgano, Montespiesi, Provincia di Siena, Italy. (ARTstor)



Figure 8. Paolo di Giovanni Fei, Detail of the Angel Gabriel, from *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Peter, Saint Agnes, Saint Catherine of Alexandria, Saint Lucy, and Unidentified Female Saint, Saint Paul, and Saint John the Baptist, with Eve and the Serpent; the Annunciation*, 1385-90, tempera on wood, gold ground. Overall, with engaged frame, 34 1/4 x 23 1/4 in. (87 x 59.1 cm); painted surface 27 7/8 x 17 1/4 in. (70.8 x 43.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, New York. (ARTstor)



Figure 9. Paolo di Giovanni Fei, Detail of the Virgin Annunciate, from *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Peter, Saint Agnes, Saint Catherine of Alexandria, Saint Lucy, and Unidentified Female Saint, Saint Paul, and Saint John the Baptist, with Eve and the Serpent; the Annunciation*, 1385-90, tempera on wood, gold ground. Overall, with engaged frame, 34 1/4 x 23 1/4 in. (87 x 59.1 cm); painted surface 27 7/8 x 17 1/4 in. (70.8 x 43.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, New York. (ARTstor)



Figure 10. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Detail of Mary, from the *Maestà Lunette*, c. 1335, fresco. San Galgano, Montesiepi, Provincia di Siena, Italy. (ARTstor)



Figure 11. Attributed to Lorenzo Monaco (Piero di Giovanni), *The Intercession of Christ and the Virgin*, before 1402, tempera on canvas. Overall, 94 1/4 x 60 1/4 in. (239.4 x 153 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, New York. (ARTstor)