

**José María Salvador-González**

Complutense University of Madrid

jmsalvad@ucm.es

ORCID: 0000-0001-6854-8652

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12775/BPTh.2025.011>

18 (2025) 2: 179–214

ISSN (print) 1689-5150

ISSN (online) 2450-7059

## ***Fenestra coeli.* The Virgin Mary Symbolized as the Window of Heaven in Images of the Annunciation\***

**Abstract.** This article aims two main objectives. First, it intends to shed light on how the metaphor “window of heaven” (*fenestra coeli*) applied to the Virgin Mary translates the doctrinal meaning of her virginal divine motherhood. Second, it seeks to demonstrate that the circumstance that in some paintings of the Annunciation a window is crossed by a ray of light metaphorizes the virginal conception and the supernatural birth of God the Son incarnated as a man in Mary’s spotless womb. To achieve these objectives, we will use a double series of comparative analyses as methodological resources: first of all, we will expose many texts by Church Fathers, theologians, and liturgical hymnographers that allude to Mary as a window of heaven; then we will consider eleven paintings of the Annunciation in which the ray of light coming from God the Father passes through a window before reaching the Virgin. By relating these texts and these images, we can conclude that the proposed objectives are met with good logic.

**Keywords:** mariology; patristics; liturgical hymns; Marian iconography; medieval studies; late medieval painting.

### **Introduction**

In the artistic representations of the Annunciation from the Late Middle Ages and Early Modernity, a ray of light coming from God the Father toward Mary – often conveying the Holy Spirit’s dove – is almost always present. Many art historians (Mâle 1968 [1898]; Mâle 1995; Trens 1947; Panofsky 1966 [1953]; Réau 1957; Toscano 1960; Grabar 1979; Schiller 1980) have commented on this element. Nevertheless, most of them just mention it as a mere descriptive detail,

---

\* This article is a part of the Doctoral Thesis of the International Doctorate in History, Culture, and Thought at the Alcalá de Henares University.

lacking any connotation, so almost no author suspects the relevant doctrinal significance of such detail. Now, it is important to underline that the event of the Annunciation is crucial in humanity's redemption since in it God the Son's conception becomes real in Mary's virginal womb in the very instant when she accepts the Almighty's project of making her the mother of his divine Son incarnate. Therefore, it is logical to conjecture that this ray of light in the images of the Annunciation could have some theological purpose (Salvador-González 2020a, 334–355; 2022c, 39–85).

Among the many occurrences of the presence of this ray in the *Annunciations*, some complement the circumstance that this ray passes across a window before reaching Mary (Salvador-González 2022a, 39–85). We will analyze now such outstanding cases.

We will proceed according to four methodological strategies, based on in-depth research into the Christian primary sources. First, we will expose chronologically some texts by which several Church Fathers and medieval theologians designate Mary as the window of heaven (*fenestra coeli*). Second, we will present a set of fragments of medieval liturgical hymns that symbolically acclaim Mary as *fenestra coeli*. Third, we will analyze eleven European paintings of the Annunciation from the 14th–15th centuries that include a ray of light passing through a window. Finally, we will interrelate those patristic, theological, and hymnic texts with these artistic images to see if the latter illustrate as *visual metaphors* the *textual metaphors* highlighted by the Church Fathers, theologians, and hymnographers.

## 1. Mary as a window of heaven according to some Fathers and theologians

To understand the patristic, theological, and liturgical texts we will present in sections 2 and 3, we must remember that Christ is defined in John's Gospel as "The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world." This is what the evangelist proclaims:

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. 9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came

to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (Jn 1: 6–13. *Bible New International Version* online).

After all, Jesus defined himself as “the world's light” when he said: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” (Jn 8:12).

Considering these statements of John's Gospel, many Church Fathers, theologians, and liturgical hymnographers developed concepts referring to Christ as the light that eliminates darkness, as the inextinguishable Sun that dawns for the world, the Sun of justice, the luminous star, the splendor of the Father, a flame, a divine lamp, and other similar metaphors referring to full luminosity. Now, pondering these sentences about Christ as the divine light, the identification of Mary as a symbolic window of heaven reaches all its doctrinal significance, as we will see throughout this article, starting with the concepts issued by some Latin Church Fathers and theologians.

St. Augustine (354–430) states in a sermon on Christ's nativity that, when Mary was pregnant with Jesus, she felt his lightness in her body, because she had the light within her, therefore she could not have weight.<sup>1</sup> So, Augustine concludes: “Mary was converted into a window of heaven, because through her God spread true light to the world.”<sup>2</sup>

Since the 6th century the hymn *O gloriosa Domina*, attributed to Venantius Fortunatus (530–607), began to spread throughout the West. This hymn proclaims in one stanza:

You return to us with your nutritional germ	Quod Eva tristis abstulit,
All that the sad Eve took from us,	Tu reddis almo germine,
Enter like weeping stars,	Mundum pugillo continens
The one who contains the world in his fist	Intrent ut astra flebiles,
Is locked in the ark of your belly.	Ventris sub arca clausus est.
You have been turned into heaven's window.	Caeli fenestra facta es. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Cum esset gravida, salubri levitate plaudebat; lumen enim quod intra se habebat, pondus habere non poterat.” (Augustinus Hipponensis, *Sermo CXXII (a). In Natali Domini, VI (b)*, PL 39, 1991).

<sup>2</sup> “Facta est Maria fenestra coeli, quia per ipsam Deus verum fudit saeculis lumen.” (Ibid.).

<sup>3</sup> Venantius Fortunatus, *Miscellanea. Liber VIII. Caput IV. De Sancta Maria*, PL 88, 265.

In the next stanza the hymn praises Mary in these lyrical terms:

You are the door of the supreme King	Tu regis alti ianua
And the shining door of light,	Et porta lucis fulgida;
Redeemed peoples, applaud	Vitam datam per virginem,
The life that was given to us by the Virgin.	Gentes redemptae, plaudite. <sup>4</sup>

Almost five centuries later Peter Damian (1007–1072) states in a sermon on the Virgin's birth:

Today the queen of the world was born, the window of heaven, the door of paradise, the tabernacle of God, the star of the sea, the celestial ladder, by which the supreme King descended humiliated to the lowest; and the man, who was lying prostrate, ascended exalted to the highest heights. Today the star appeared to the world, through which the Sun of justice shone to the world. That is this of which it is said through the prophet: "A star will arise from Jacob, and a man will arise from Israel (Num. xxiv)."<sup>5</sup>

In another hymn in honor of Mary, Peter Damian asserts:

You are the new star of the sea,	Tu nova maris stella,
The sublime window of heaven,	Celsa poli fenestra,
The staircase that connects	Scala quae coelum terris,
The lowest with the highest.	Jungis ima supernis.
You conceived the immense,	Immensum concepisti
You gave birth to your Father,	Parentem peperisti,
The Producer becomes a product,	Fit factor et factura,
And the Creator [becomes] a creature.	Creans et creatura. <sup>6</sup>

Then, in a writing about the Virgin, Peter Damian expresses his confident feelings toward her in these terms:

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> "Hodie nata est regina mundi, fenestra coeli, janua paradisi, tabernaculum Dei, stella maris, scala coelestis, per quam supernus Rex humiliatus ad ima descendit; et homo, qui prostratus jacebat, ad superna exaltatus ascendit. Hodie apparuit stella mundo, per quam Sol justitiae illuxit mundo. Illa videlicet, de qua per prophetam dicitur: 'Orietur stella ex Jacob, et exsurget homo de Israel (Num. xxiv).'" (Petrus Damianus, *Sermo XLVI. Homilia In Nativitate Beatissimae Virginis Mariae*, PL 144, 753).

<sup>6</sup> Petrus Damianus, *Carmina et Preces. LXI. Rythmus de S. Maria virgine*. PL 145, 937.

oh, gate of heaven, window of paradise, true Mother of God and man, you are my witness that seven times a day I said your praise, and although I am a sinner, although I am unworthy, nevertheless I did not lack the gift of your praises in all the canonical hours.<sup>7</sup>

Some five decades later, Peter Abelard (1079–1142), citing in a sermon on Christ's Nativity the statement of John's Gospel that Christ "was the true light that illuminates everyone who comes to this world", alludes to the metaphor of the ray of sun that pierces the glass without breaking or staining it: Abelard asserts that in this way the true Light, which is the Father's Word and coeternal Wisdom, enters to us through the Virgin, in the same way that the clarity of the sun enters through a solid glass.<sup>8</sup>

Around the same years, Honorius of Autun (1180–1151) assures in a writing on Mary: "The blessed Virgin herself was also made the window of heaven, for through which the Sun of righteousness shone upon the house of the world."<sup>9</sup>

## 2. The Virgin Mary as *fenestra coeli* in medieval liturgical hymns

Based on the patristic and theological texts, many medieval hymnographers composed numerous liturgical hymns that take up the symbolic metaphor of Mary as a window of heaven. What we expose below is a selection exclusively of the stanzas in those hymns that allude to this specific metaphor. We have gathered these stanzas from volume 2 of the collection *Hymni Latini Medii Aevi* (Mone 1854), and from the 55 volumes of the *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi* (Dreves, and Blume 1886–1922). We will now extract from these collections some stanzas

---

<sup>7</sup> "o janua coeli, fenestra paradisi, vera Mater Dei et hominis, tu mihi testis es, quia septies in die laudem dixi tibi, et quamvis peccator, quamvis indignus, omnibus tamen canonicis horis tuae laudis obsequium non fraudavi." (Petrus Damianus, *Opusc. X. De Horis Canonicis. Caput X. LXI. Rythmus de S. Maria virgine*. PL 145, 230).

<sup>8</sup> "Unde et evangelista Joannes: Erat, inquit, lux vera, quae illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum, etc. (Joan. I, 9). Haec itaque lux, id est Verbum Patris, et coeterna ejus sapientia, sic ad nos per Virginem, quemadmodum claritas solis per solidissimi vitri specular ingreditur." (Petrus Abelardus, *Sermo II. In Natali Domini*, PL 178, 393).

<sup>9</sup> "Ipsa quoque beata Virgo coeli fenestra fuit, per quam Sol justitiae in domum mundi splenduit." (Honorius Augustodiniensis, *Sigillum Beatae Mariae ubi exponuntur Cantica Cantorum*. PL 172, 503).

in which the Virgin appears typified as one or other metaphorical expressions mentioned above, mainly “the window of heaven”, which allows the passage of the incarnate God the Son, described as the Sun, the light, or the Father’s splendor.

To better perceive the evolution of the concepts developed around these metaphors, we will present these fragments of hymns chronologically, grouping them by centuries.

### 10th century hymn

From this century we found only *Hymnus 43, Hymnus de beata Maria*, which praises the Virgin through these illustrative descriptions.

[Mary] Gestates the one who gestates every-	Portat portantem omnia,
thing,	Facta polorum janua
Converted into the gate of heaven	Et paradisi semita,
And the path to Paradise,	Porta et fenestra coelica. <sup>10</sup>
The door and the window of Heaven.	

### 12th century hymns

From the 12th century we have documented the following four hymns:

*Hymnus 33* enunciates Mary’s virginal divine motherhood through the symbol of the glass window unscathed after the passage of the sun’s ray, by indicating:

Like the sun’s ray	2. Ut solis radius
Penetrates without damaging	Intrat innoxius
The glass window,	Fenestram vitream,
Thus God the Son	Sic Dei filius,
[comes] in an even more subtle way	Immo subtilius
In the hall [the womb] of the Virgin.	Aulam virgineam. <sup>11</sup>

*Hymnus 110. Versus in honore sanctae Mariae* exalts Mary’s divine motherhood through various similes, expressing:

<sup>10</sup> *Hymnus 43. Hymnus de beata Maria. AHMA 2, 45.*

<sup>11</sup> *Hymnus 33. AHMA 20, 60.*

The Virgin gives birth to a flower, the flower [produces] a fruit, the fruit [produces] a smell, And the Virgin [gives birth to] the Redeemer! The giver of forgiveness and life.

In an unusual way the blessed Virgin was fertilized without semen with the honor of virginity. Glass does not know how to be violated by sunlight, nor glass by the sun, nor the Virgin who gives birth to her son.

He who rules the created universe did so and, living here in a body, approached us as the light and image of God the Father through [Mary's] sacred entrails, without separating himself from his [divine] Father.

Virgo parit florem, flos fructum, fructus odorem,  
Virgo redemptorem!, veniae vitaeque datorem.  
Insolito more cum virginitatis honore  
Fit fecundata sine semine virgo beata.  
Lumine solari nescit vitrum violari,  
Nec vitrum sole nec virgo puerpera prole.  
Cuncta creata regens fit et hic in corpore degens,  
Lux et imago patris per sacrae viscera matris  
Ad nos accessit, sed non a patre recessit.<sup>12</sup>

*Hymnus 152* poetically refers to Christ's supernatural birth from Mary's virginal womb by the metaphor under analysis, by stating:

Light that shines  
With the light of [God] the Father,  
The man Christ  
Comes out of a Virgin,  
After entering and leaving like this  
Through the hall [the womb] of the Virgin,  
Like the sun shining and not burning  
[enters and leaves] through the glass window,  
So that not even the splendor of the sun violates  
the glass when entering or corrupts it when leaving,  
Nor the mother [Mary] be violated or corrupted because  
of her son.

3. Lumen lucens  
patris de lumine,  
Christus homo  
prodit de virgine,  
Sic ingressus et egressus  
Per aulam virgineam,  
Ut sol splendens nec incendens  
Per fenestram vitream,  
Cum nec vitrum splendor solis  
Neque matrem causa prolis  
Violet ingrediens  
Nec corrumpat exiens.<sup>13</sup>

*Hymnus 251. (2.) Prosa de Nativitate Domini* praises the mighty mother of God with various figures, including the window:

5b. You are a window, a door, a fleece,  
A royal hall, a house, a temple, a land,  
The virginity lily  
And the rose for martyrdom.

5 b. Tu fenestra, porta, vellus,  
Aula, domus, templum, tellus,  
Virginitatis lilium  
Et rosa per martyrium.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Hymnus 110. Versus in honore sanctae Mariae.* AHMA 46, 163.

<sup>13</sup> *Hymnus 152.* AHMA 20, 121.

<sup>14</sup> *Hymnus 251. (2.) Prosa de Nativitate Domini.* AHMA 48, 52. 234.

### 13th century hymns

From the 13th century we have registered the following five hymns:

*Hymnus 169* also alludes to Christ's supernatural birth from Mary's virginal womb through the metaphor at hand, in this stanza:

2. As the ray [passes through]  
the window of glass,  
Thus, indeed, the son [Christ]  
Comes out more subtly  
But without causing harm  
Through the golden gate  
From the Virgin's womb.

2. Ut fenestram radius,  
Vitream,  
Sic, immo subtilius,  
Portam sed innoxius  
Per auream  
Exit alvum filius  
Virgineam.<sup>15</sup>

*Hymnus 14. De beata Maria Virgine. In 1. Vesperis. Antiphonae* also illustrates Jesus' birth from Mary's virginal entrails with the symbol above, stating:

The sun vibrates a ray with innocent light  
through the glass, thus the Creator of the uni-  
verse  
Illuminating you with his light  
Did not injure you when he was born,  
leaving you a virgin,  
Nor did he despise your lap;  
Happy you, who deserved  
To become the mother of Christ.

Sol innocenti lumine  
Per vitrum vibrat radium,  
Sic te illustrans numine  
Non laesit factor omnium,  
Cum nascens ex te virgine  
Non sprexit tuum gremium;  
Felix, quae Christi  
mater fieri meruisti.<sup>16</sup>

*Hymnus 370. Sequentia de Virgine Maria* praises Christ's supernatural birth from Mary's immaculate womb through the metaphor under analysis, expressing:

Like glass is penetrated  
By the ray of the sun,  
and yet, from there it does not occur  
any injury to the glass,  
So, even more subtly,  
God the Son of God [the Father]  
Comes from his mother, like his wife,  
without corrupting her.

Sicut vitrum radio  
solis penetratur,  
inde tamen laesio  
nulla vitro datur,  
Sic, immo subtilius,  
matre non corrupta,  
Deus Dei filius  
sua prodit nupta.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Hymnus 169*. AHMA 20, 131.

<sup>16</sup> *Hymnus 14. De beata Maria V. In 1. Vesperis. Antiphonae*. AHMA 24, 46.

<sup>17</sup> *Hymnus 370. Sequentia de v. Maria*. Mone, 63.



*Hymnus 259. De Beata Maria Virgine* alludes to God the Son's supernatural conception in Mary's virginal womb, poetically illustrating it through the metaphor at hand, in these rhymes:

7. The glass is crossed by the sun, Yet it is never violated At the entrance of light;	7. Vitrum sole penetratur, Nunquam tamen violatur In ingressu luminis;
8. The mother of Christ is impregnated, And when she is fertilized, she becomes pregnant. Preserving the right of virginity.	8. Mater Christi fecundatur, Fecundata gravidatur Salvo iure virginis. <sup>18</sup>

*Hymnus 84. De Beata Maria Virgine* subtly hails Mary's virginal divine motherhood through the metaphor under study:

5a. This [Mary] is the royal hall, This is the glass window Not broken by light.	5a. Haec est aula regia, Haec fenestra vitrea Non confracta lumine.
5b. A star that generates the sun Which Gideon, venerating her, Presignifies with his fleece.	5b. Stella solem generans, Quam Gedeon venerans Praesignat in vellere. <sup>19</sup>

### 13th–14th century hymns

From an unknown date between these two centuries, we found these two hymns:

*Hymnus 100. De Beata Maria Virgine* alludes to the prodigies of Christ's supernatural conception and birth in Mary's virginal womb through the metaphor above, stating:

3a. As the sun penetrates the glass, So God entered into you; Oh, what wonderful power!	3a. Ut intrat vitrum helios, Te sic intravit hagios; O quam mira potentia! <sup>20</sup>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<sup>18</sup> *Hymnus 259. De Beata Maria V. AHMA 54, 404.*

<sup>19</sup> *Hymnus 84. De Beata Maria V. AHMA 40, 90.*

<sup>20</sup> *Hymnus 100. De Beata Maria V. AHMA 40, 102.*

*Hymnus 105. De Beata Maria Virgine* proclaims the sublimity of Mary with several symbols, expressing:

14a. Glass, ark, cloister, cell,  
House, royal hall, city.

14a. Vitrum, arca, claustrum, cella,  
Domus, aula, civitas,

14b. Flower, window, light, star,  
Sun, dawn, clarity.

14b. Flos, fenestra, lumen, stella,  
Sol, aurora, claritas.<sup>21</sup>

### 14th century hymns

From the 14th century we documented these two hymns:

*Hymnus 67. De beata Maria Virgine* sings Mary with several metaphorical praises in these stanzas:

3a. You are called stalk, bush,  
Flower, window, door.

3a. Virga, rubus appellaris,  
Flos, fenestra, janua,

3b. Mother of God, sunlight,  
Naïve lineage of Jesse.

3b. Mater Dei, lux solaris,  
Jesse stirps ingenua.<sup>22</sup>

*Hymnus 8. De Beata Maria V. In 3. Nocturno. Antiphonae* exalts Christ's supernatural birth from Mary's virgin womb, alluding to the metaphor above, saying:

2. Glass objects are not broken  
By the ray of the sun,  
Neither the hall [the womb] of the Virgin  
[is broken] through a virgin birth,  
On the contrary, she becomes purer,  
More complete and more beautiful,  
Having nobody like her.

2. Non conquassatur vitrea  
Per radium solarem,  
Sic nec aula virginea  
Per partum puellarem,  
Immo fit tota purior,  
Integrior et pulchrior,  
Non habens sibi parem.<sup>23</sup>

### 14th–15th century hymns

Datable to some unknown date between those two centuries, we found the following two hymns:

<sup>21</sup> *Hymnus 105. De Beata Maria Virgine*. AHMA 40, 105.

<sup>22</sup> *Hymnus 67. De beata Maria V*. AHMA 8, 61.

<sup>23</sup> *Hymnus 8. De Beata Maria V. In 3. Nocturno. Antiphonae*. AHMA 17, 36.

*Hymnus 121. Super Ave Maria* praises the heavenly mother of God with various symbolic figures, including “crystal chamber”, through these rhymes:

11. Woman, salvation of man,  
Queen of angels,  
This is the one that washes away crimes,  
The medicine of sin,  
This is the ark of the sacred flame,  
This is the doctrine of life  
That preserves the divine words,  
This is the glass chamber  
Of all divinity.

11. Mulier, salus hominis,  
Angelorum regina,  
Haec est lavatrix criminis,  
Peccati medicina,  
Haec arca sacri flaminis,  
Haec est vitae doctrina  
Servans verba divina,  
Haec est totius numinis  
Camera crystallina.<sup>24</sup>

*Hymnus 85. De Beata Maria Virgine* refers to the supernatural prodigies of Christ’s conception and birth through the metaphoric figure under analysis, by expressing:

2a. Just like the ray of the sun  
Penetrates without damaging  
And goes ahead  
Through the glass window,

2a. Sicut solis radius  
Penetrat innoxius  
Et transit ulterius  
Per fenestram vitream,

2b. Thus, and, on the contrary, more subtly  
The Son of God enters  
And passes more smoothly  
Through the hall [womb] of the Virgin.

2 b. Sic, immo subtilius  
Intrat et suavius  
Transit Dei filius  
Per aulam virgineam.<sup>25</sup>

### 15th century hymns

From the 15th century we have documented the following 18 hymns, including 4 by the famous hymnographer Ulrich Stöcklins von Rottach, the abbot of Wessobrunn between 1438 and 1443:

*Hymnus 600. Laudes Mariae* praises the Virgin Mary with several figures, including a glass window irradiated by the sun:

<sup>24</sup> *Hymnus 121. Super Ave Maria*. AHMA 30, 234.

<sup>25</sup> *Hymnus 85. De Beata Maria V*. AHMA 37, 81.

You are a fountain, a garden, a London plane,  
 An exalted cedar,  
 You are a palm, you are an olive tree,  
 A planted cypress,  
 The most chosen myrrh,  
 An inflamed tree:  
 You are a glass window  
 Irradiated by the Sun.

Tu fons, hortus, platanus,  
 cedrus exaltata,  
 tu palma, tu olea,  
 cypressus plantata,  
 myrrha electissima,  
 arbor inflammata;  
 tu fenestra vitrea  
 sole radiata.<sup>26</sup>

*Hymnus 399. Oratio super Ave Maria* sings Mary's virginal divine motherhood with the metaphor above, pointing out:

With you the Son of God,  
 who dedicated you  
 and entered you  
 Like the sunbeam on glass,

Tecum Dei filius,  
 qui te dedicavit  
 et ut vitrum radius  
 solis subintravit,

He dwelt in you as his own  
 After assuming the flesh,  
 And he united us to himself  
 Through you.

Carne sumpta propius  
 te inhabitavit  
 et nos sibi propius  
 per te copulavit.<sup>27</sup>

*Hymnus 13. De conceptione Beatae Mariae Virginis. In 2. Nocturno. Antiphonae* exalts the supernatural prodigies of God the Son's conception and birth, through the metaphor at hand, by indicating:

Just as glass is not damaged  
 By the sun that penetrates it,  
 Thus it is believed that [Mary] was left un-  
 harmed  
 After and before childbirth;  
 This blessed little maiden  
 Begot God,  
 And fed with her milk  
 Whom feeds all beings.

Ut vitrum non laeditur  
 sole penetrante,  
 Sic illaesa creditur,  
 Post partum et ante;  
 Felix haec puellula  
 Deum generavit  
 Et pascentem omnia  
 Sua lacte pavit.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Hymnus 600. Laudes Mariae.* Mone, 411.

<sup>27</sup> *Hymnus 399. Oratio super Ave Maria.* Mone, 104.

<sup>28</sup> *Hymnus 13. De conceptione BMV. In 2. Nocturno. Antiphonae.* AHMA 5, 52.

*Hymnus 94. Acrostichon super “Ave Maria”* exalts Christ’s supernatural birth from Mary’s virginal womb, whom he identifies with a luminous star unscathed by lightning, through these rhymes:

37. This very clear star,  
Whom the ray of light does not violate,  
And shines with a very pure light,  
And shines more clearly than glass,  
Signifies you more truly,  
Virgin always the most chaste,  
Whom the son does not rape  
When born from you, the purest.

37. Ista stella clarissima,  
Quam non violat radius,  
Luce nitens purissima,  
Crystallo fulgens clarius,  
Te significat verius,  
Virgo semper castissima,  
Quam non violat filius  
Nascens ex te, purissima.<sup>29</sup>

*Hymnus 19. In Conceptione Beatae Mariae Virginis. Ad Laudes* sings the mother of the Savior in these terms:

2. What the sad Eve took from us  
Your goodness granted to us,  
You have been made the window of heaven  
To lead us to heaven.

2. Quod Eva tristis abstulit  
Tua bonitas contulit,  
Ut nos coelo reduceres,  
Coeli fenestra facta es.<sup>30</sup>

*Hymnus 130. De Nominibus Beatae Mariae Virginis* exalts the mother of God with several metaphors, stating:

Hail palm, flower, violet  
Lily, window, school,  
You the only great one, say prayers  
To your Son in our favor.

10. Salve, palma, flos, viola,  
Lilium, fenestra, schola,  
Funde preces, magna sola,  
Pro nobis ad filium.<sup>31</sup>

*Hymnus 74. De Beata Maria Virgine* glorifies Christ’s virginal mother through the figure being studied, in these stanzas:

2a. Just as glass is not damaged  
With Sun’s rays, neither  
The mother’s chastity [is damaged] by her son.

2a. Ut vitrum solis radio  
Non laeditur, nec filio  
Matris castimonia.

<sup>29</sup> *Hymnus 94. Acrostichon super “Ave Maria.”* AHMA 15, 119.

<sup>30</sup> *Hymnus 19. In Conceptione BMV. Ad Laudes.* AHMA 19, 23.

<sup>31</sup> *Hymnus 130. De Nominibus BMV.* AHMA 31, 132.

2b. Let everybody sing her  
Praises and proclamations from the heart,  
with the voice, as much as you want with reality.

2b. Decantate omnes ei  
Corde, voce, quamvis rei,  
Laudes et praeconia.<sup>32</sup>

*Hymnus 137. De beata Maria Virgine* requests the saving protection of God's mother, designating her as the heaven's window:

28. Window of heaven,  
Allow us to avoid  
The camps of hell,  
Leading us to heaven.

28. Caeli fenestra,  
Inferni castra  
Da evitare  
Ducens ad astra.<sup>33</sup>

*Hymnus 74. Ad singula membra Beatae Mariae Virginis* glorifies the mother of the Savior for her virginal birth, assimilated to the unbroken glass by the sunbeam, in these rhymes:

6. Blessed woman in labor  
Without the virginal gate  
From your belly would be opened,  
Like the sun doesn't open  
The glass when the ray  
Comes from within.

6. Benedicta pariens  
Ventrīs nec aperiens  
Virginalē ostium,  
Sicut sol non aperit  
Vitrum, quando exserit  
Ab introrsum radium.<sup>34</sup>

*Hymnus 275. (1.) De Beata Maria Virgine* glorifies Mary for having virginally conceived the Son of God, comparing her with other phenomena of inviolability, including that of the glass by a ray:

6a. The flower springs from the stem  
Leaving its splendor unharmed,  
The crystal shines  
Like fire without losing  
its whiteness, but shining  
admirably.

6a. Ex virga flos pullulat  
illaeso nitore,  
Scintillat igniculum  
crystallus candore  
Non remisso, sed nitente  
solito de more.

<sup>32</sup> *Hymnus 74. De Beata Maria V. AHMA 37, 75.*

<sup>33</sup> *Hymnus 137. De beata Maria V. AHMA 45, 114.*

<sup>34</sup> *Hymnus 74. Ad singula membra B. Mariae V. AHMA 46, 118.*

6b. The ray enters the glass  
And the glass is not violated;  
Thus the most chaste [Mary]  
Is fertilized by the Word  
Leaving immaculate  
The primeval flower of chastity.

6b. Intrat vitrum radius  
et non violatur  
Vitrum; sic castissima  
verbo fecundatur  
Illibato castitatis  
primitivo flore.<sup>35</sup>

*Hymnus 55. De Compassione Beatae Mariae Virginis. Ad parvas Horas* sings the mother of the Redeemer, designating her as the window and door of heaven:

2. What the sad Eve took from us  
Your germ returned to us,  
Let the weak enter like stars,  
You have been made the window of heaven.

2. Quod Eva tristis abstulit,  
Hoc germen tuum reddidit,  
Intrent ut astra flebiles,  
Caeli fenestra facta es.

3. You have been made the gate of heaven  
For the death of your son,  
To which the men  
Of this sad exile recur.

3. Tu porta caeli facta es  
Per mortem tui filii,  
Ad quam recurrunt homines  
Huius tristis exsilii.<sup>36</sup>

*Hymnus 273. De Beata Maria Virgine* exalts the mother of Christ for her virginal divine motherhood, comparing her with several metaphors:

3. Just as the dew descends on [Gideon's] fleece  
And the sun illuminates the glass  
And leaves it unharmed,

3. Ros in vellus ut descendit,  
Sicut vitrum sol accendit  
Et transit innoxius,

3. Thus the Father's power covers with its shadow  
And that way fertilizes the mother's womb,  
And even more gloriously.

4. Sic obumbrat virtus patris,  
Sic fecundat sinum matris,  
Immo gloriosius.<sup>37</sup>

*Hymnus 276. De Beata Maria Virgine* sings the mother of God for her virginal motherhood through this subtle analogy:

<sup>35</sup> *Hymnus 275. (1.) De Beata Maria V.* AHMA 48, 263.

<sup>36</sup> *Hymnus 55. De Compassione Beatae M. V. Ad parvas Horas.* AHMA 52, 59.

<sup>37</sup> *Hymnus 273. De Beata Maria V.* AHMA 54, 415.

10. Just as glass admits the sun.  
Thus the Virgin admits a son,  
That produced a light weight  
Like the star [produced] the ray.

10. Ut admittit vitrum solem,  
Sic admittit virgo prolem,  
Quae effudit levem molem  
Sicut sidus radium.<sup>38</sup>

The following four hymns were written by the German hymnographer Ulrich Stöcklins von Rottach (Udalrichus Wessofontanus), the abbot of Wessobrunn. In *Hymnus 24. Centimonium Beatae Virginis. Secunda Pars. Caput tertium* he carols Mary qualifying her with the symbol at hand, stating:

112. You are the window of heaven  
For which the sun of justice  
Shone to the world,  
that absorbed  
The darkness of crime,  
with which he hid  
From the first time  
in which Adam collapsed.

112. Coeli fenestra es,  
per quam resplenduit  
Mundo justitiae  
sol, qui absorbuit,  
Delicti tenebras,  
quibus delituit  
A primo tempore,  
quo Adam corruit.<sup>39</sup>

In *Hymnus 25. Laudatorium Beatae Virginis Mariae. Pars Quinta. Ad Sextam*, III Ulrich Stöcklins von Rottach requests the saving protection of God's mother, qualifying her with the metaphor above:

149. Rejoice, Golden Virgin,  
sign of mercy  
And glass window,  
in which the sun of divinity  
Came in, remove the errors  
Of our blindness  
With carnal guilt  
Of ugliness.

149. Gaude, virgo aurea,  
Signum pietatis,  
Ac fenestra vitrea,  
Qua sol deitatis  
Intravit, erronea  
Nostrae caecitatis  
Auferas cum carnea  
Culpa foeditatis.<sup>40</sup>

En *Hymnus XV. Psalterium "Hymnarius Beatae Mariae Virginis". Quinquagena I*, Ulrich Stöcklins von Rottach requires the redeeming help of the mother of God, whom he designates with the symbol above:

<sup>38</sup> *Hymnus 276. De Beata Maria V.* AHMA 54, 415.

<sup>39</sup> Udalrichus Wessofontanus, *Hymnus 24. Centimonium Beatae Virginis. Secunda Pars. Caput tertium.* AHMA 6, 81.

<sup>40</sup> Udalrichus Wessofontanus, *Hymnus 25. Laudatorium B. V.M. Pars Quinta. Ad Sextam*, III. AHMA 6, 102.



12. Hail, oh vehicle  
O window of light,  
That eliminates the scandal  
And all the annoying things,  
Help your servant  
that remains in the foreground  
And after this time  
Take it from the house.

12. Ave, o vehiculum  
Aut lucis fenestra,  
Quae depellit scandalum  
Cunctaque molesta,  
Iuva tuum famulum  
Stantem in palaestra  
Ac post illud saeculum  
Ab hoedis sequestra.<sup>41</sup>

Finally, in *Hymnus XVI. Psalterium "Theotoca". Quinquagena II* Ulrich Stöcklins von Rottach asks for the saving intercession of Mary, whom he exalts with several symbols, including a glass window irradiated by the sun:

86. Hail, house of gold,  
Walled city,  
You are a glass window  
Radiated by the sun,  
Make my carnal vices  
be eliminated,  
So that the mind always  
Be elevated to the things of heaven.

86. Ave, domus aurea  
Civitas murata,  
Tu fenestra vitrea  
Sole radiata,  
Mea, fac, sint carnea  
Vitia sublata,  
Ut mens ad aetherea  
Semper sit levata.<sup>42</sup>

At the end of our research on the texts of Church Fathers, theologians, and liturgical hymnographers we can infer a substantial concordance among them. Everybody entitles the Virgin Mary with the *fenestra coeli* metaphor, as they designate her through several rhetorical expressions, such as "the window of heaven," "the crystal-clear window," "the crystalline window radiated by the Sun," "the window of heaven through which the Sun of justice shone in this world," and other similar analogies. Thus, considering all these Marian metaphors, we can easily recognize the significance of the ray of light passing through a window we will see in the eleven paintings of the *Annunciation* to be analyzed below.

---

<sup>41</sup> Udalrichus Wessofontanus, *Hymnus XV. Psalterium "Hymnarius BMV." Quinquagena I.* AHMA 38, 197.

<sup>42</sup> Udalrichus Wessofontanus, *Hymnus XVI. Psalterium "Theotoca". Quinquagena II.* AHMA 38, 221.

#### 4. Mary symbolized as *fenestra coeli* in some medieval and Renaissance paintings of the Annunciation

As we have seen so far, for more than a thousand years (4th–15th centuries) many Church Fathers, theologians, and hymnographers symbolically identified the Virgin Mary as a window of heaven, especially for her virginal divine motherhood: as well as the ray of light enters and leaves through the window glasses without breaking or staining them, God the Son enters through the womb of Mary when he is conceived, and leaves it when is given birth, without destroying or staining her virginity.

Now, because it is in the Annunciation to Mary that God the Son's human conception/incarnation in Mary's womb becomes real, it is not surprising to see some symbolization of the Virgin as *fenestra coeli* in several artistic representations of this crucial episode. Thus, we will now analyze eleven European paintings of the *Annunciation* from the 14th–15th centuries in which a ray of light passes through a window before reaching Mary.



Fig. 1. Pietro Lorenzetti, *The Annunciation*, c. 1320 (Pieve di Santa Maria Arezzo)

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pietro\\_Lorenzetti\\_Pieve\\_di\\_santa\\_Maria\\_Arezzo\\_Annunciation.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pietro_Lorenzetti_Pieve_di_santa_Maria_Arezzo_Annunciation.jpg) (Access: May 3, 2025).

Pietro Lorenzetti (1280–1348) sets *The Annunciation*, c. 1320 (Fig. 1) –a panel that crowns the *Polittico di Santa Maria della Pieve* in Arezzo– in a narrow room where the Virgin is seated in prayer, and an adjacent enclosure, where Gabriel

is kneeling. Both express their dialogue with serene gestures. In the left arch God appears aniconically as a hand that blesses, while sending towards Mary a ray of light. It is interesting to highlight that this ray passes through a window before reaching the Virgin's head. Undoubtedly, Pietro Lorenzetti, perhaps instructed by some ecclesiastic, has included this symptomatic detail to symbolize the virginal mother of God as *fenestra coeli*, with all the doctrinal meanings we explained before.



Fig. 2. Master of the Madonna Strauss, *The Annunciation*, c. 1390–1395 (Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence)

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maestro\\_della\\_madonna\\_strauss\\_annunciazione,\\_1390s.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maestro_della_madonna_strauss_annunciazione,_1390s.jpg) (Access: May 3, 2025).

The Master of the Madonna Strauss (active c. 1385–1415) stages his *Annunciation*, c. 1390–1395, from the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence (Fig. 2) in a schematic Mary's home, synthesized in a cubic room. The archangel, genuflected outside the house holding a symbolic lily stem (Salvador-González 2013, 183–222; 2014, 75–96; 2016b, 117–144), points his right hand upwards to bless the Virgin and indicate the celestial source of his announcement. Mary interrupts the lecture of the book she holds, in whose open pages you can read Isaiah's prophecy *Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium* (Is 7:14). She raises the right hand to her chest in an attitude of restraint and obedience. Meanwhile, her swollen belly shows the instant God the Son's human conception at the very moment in which she accepts as a Lord's slave (*ancilla Domini*) God the Father's project to make her engender his divine Son incarnate. Thus, the Most High, shaped as a minuscule figure in the upper left corner of the panel, irradiates towards the

Virgin the fertilizer ray of light (symbol of God the Son) conveying the Holy Spirit's dove in its wake.

Moreover, it is crucial to highlight the expressive detail that this ray emanated by the Almighty passes through a round opening or “window”, placed –against all functional logic – in the entablature. Thus, the intellectual author of this painting has settled this artificial “window” in such an illogical situation with a thoughtful purpose: to turn it into a symbol able to visualize the Mariological and Christological meanings underlying the *fenestra coeli* metaphor, according to the fact that the ray of light passes through the glass window without breaking or staining it. However, the commentators we know on this painting (Schulz 2018, 216, 220) do not mention this “window” crossed by the ray.



Fig. 3. Gentile da Fabriano, *The Annunciation*, c. 1423–1425 (Pinacoteca Vaticana)

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gentile\\_da\\_Fabriano\\_-\\_Annunciation\\_-\\_WGA08546.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gentile_da_Fabriano_-_Annunciation_-_WGA08546.jpg) (Access: May 3, 2025).

Gentile da Fabriano (1370–1427) presents *The Annunciation*, c. 1423–1425, from the Pinacoteca Vaticana (Fig. 3) inside a synthetic cubic abode. Just finishing his fly after entering the door, Gabriel begins to kneel before the Virgin. Seated on a throne-like chair, Mary manifests her consent to the divine project with the sentence *Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum [tuum]* (Lc 1:38), that one can read in the prayer book open on the bench. Meanwhile, she embraces her swelling womb, which clearly shows that she is already pregnant of God the Son incarnate. This Christ's virginal conception is suggested by the ray of light that God the Father, in the upper left corner, radiates towards Mary's womb after passing across the circular window placed over the entrance door.



Now, no commentator we know of this *Annunciation* (Micheletti 1976; de Marchi 2006; Hodne 2015; Schulz 2018, 216, 220) notice the Mariological and Christological significances of this ray passing throughout the window glasses.



Fig. 4. Robert Campin, *The Annunciation*, 1425, central panel of the *Mérode Altarpiece*, 1425–1430 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Source: [https://es.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Robert\\_Campin\\_-\\_L%27\\_Annonciation\\_-\\_1425.jpg](https://es.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Robert_Campin_-_L%27_Annonciation_-_1425.jpg) (Access: May 3, 2025).

Robert Campin (c. 1375–1444) sets *The Annunciation* – the central panel of the *Mérode Altarpiece*, 1425–30, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Fig. 4) – inside the living room of a bourgeois house. Seated on the floor, immersed in the meditation on a book, the Virgin looks unaware of the arrival of the archangel, genuflecting before her.

Some objects of the furniture in this room – a vase with lilies, a cauldron with water, a tidy towel, and chandeliers – hide specific symbolisms that some commentators (Panofsky 1966, vol. I, 129, 133, 142, 164–166, 173, 222) explained. Nevertheless, we are interested in highlighting the theological symbolism of the ray of light that passes across the glasses of the round window before falling upon Mary.

Contrary to the conventional narrative structure of the *Annunciation*, Robert Campin preferred in this painting to place in the wake of the ray not the usual Holy Spirit's dove but a tiny figure of a Christ child, who, carrying a cross on his shoulder (Robb 1936, 480–526), flies over the Virgin, as if to enter through her ear.



Fig. 5. Jan van Eyck, *The Annunciation in a church*, c. 1434 (The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC)

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annunciation\\_\(van\\_Eyck,\\_Washington\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annunciation_(van_Eyck,_Washington)) (Access: May 3, 2025).

Now, no commentator we know on this *Mérode Altarpiece* (Friedländer 1967 [1924]; Schapiro 1945, 181–187; Panofsky 1966, vol. I, 129, 133, 136, 164–166, 235, 255; Davies 1972; Lane 1984; Jacobson 2002, Ridderbos 2004, 19) interpreted in its Mariological and Christological meanings this ray passing through the window glasses.

Jan van Eyck (c. 1390–1441) features *The Annunciation in a church*, c. 1434, from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC (Fig. 5), inside a monumental cathedral, whose stylistic contrasts and architectural elements have been interpreted by Panofsky (1966, vol. I, 59, 137–139, 147–148, 182, 252, 305). Inside its central nave Gabriel, covered by a gold brocade cope and pointing upwards with his right hand to indicate the source of his celestial message, greets the Virgin with the praise *Ave gra[tia] plena*, inscribed in a line exiting from his mouth towards her. Mary manifests her consent to the divine project by the sentence *Ecce ancilla D[omi]ni*, written in another line – inverted from right to left and from top to bottom – leaving her mouth towards the archangel.

It is important to highlight the ray of light that, passing through a stained-glass window on the left side falls upon Mary's head. Panofsky has partly interpreted this circumstance, silenced by many commentators on this painting (Robb 1936, 480–526; Friedländer

1967, vol. 2; Harbison 1991; Simpson 2007). Thus, after reiterating the importance of light in the religious scenes of the Flemish primitives, Panofsky (1966, vol. I, 147–148) points out that in this *Annunciation* the natural light, coming from the left side of Mary, differs from the ray of divine light, which falls on the Virgin from her right side. Nevertheless, even after having intuited the crucial dissimilarity between these two rays of light, Panofsky does not justify through Christian primary sources the Mariological and Christological meanings of what he calls “the Light Divine.”

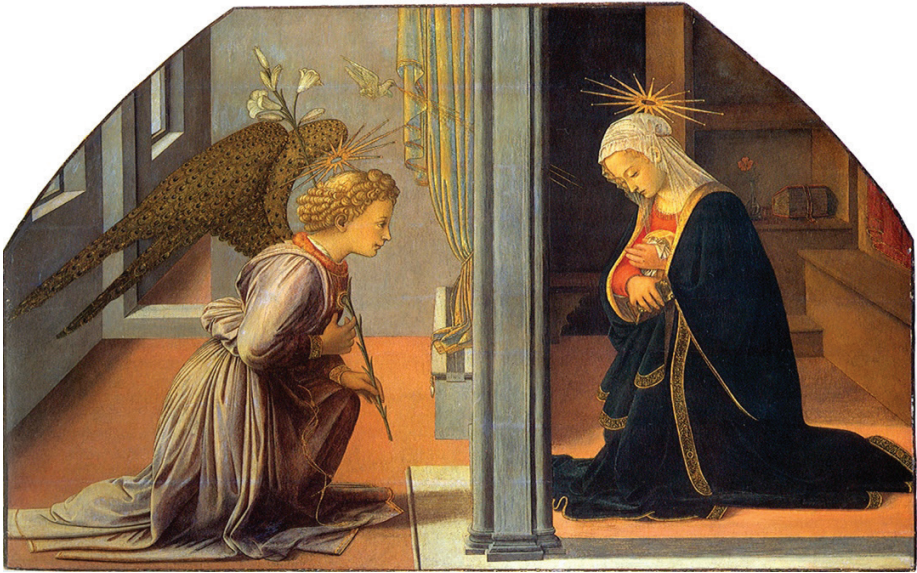


Fig. 6. Fra Filippo Lippi, *The Annunciation*, c. 1435–1440 (The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC)

Source: <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.12133.html> (Access: May 3, 2025).

Fra Filippo Lippi (1406–1469) stages almost symmetrically *The Annunciation*, 1435–1440, from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC (Fig. 6), corresponding the volumes of both protagonists in parallel with the architectural settings, balancing all these elements around the central pillar in the forefront. Kneeling respectfully with a stem of lilies in his left hand, the archangel announces the divine project to Mary, who exhibits her unrestricted agreement to it, bowing humbly the head and crossing the arms over the chest. Though invisible, God the Father shows his crucial intervention through the heavenly ray of light that, coming down from the left with the flying Holy Spirit, passes



across the crystals of the first side-wall window, before reaching Mary. Thus, we can reasonably conjecture that Fra Filippo Lippi, as a cult priest and Carmelitan monk knowing well the patristic, theological, and liturgical tradition on the matter, wanted to introduce here this ray of light passing through the crystals of a window to symbolize the mother of God as *fenestra coeli*.

Rogier van der Weyden (1399/1400–1464) sets *The Annunciation*, the left panel of the *St. Columba Altarpiece*, c. 1455, from the Alte Pinakothek in Munich (Fig. 7),



Fig. 7. Rogier van der Weyden, *The Annunciation*, left panel of the *St. Columba Altarpiece*, c. 1455 (Alte Pinakothek, Munich)

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint\\_Columba\\_Altarpiece](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Columba_Altarpiece) (Access: May 3, 2025).

in a sumptuous living room, unusually concentrated in a symbolic conjugal bed (Salvador-González 2019, 49–70; 2020b, 7–31; 2021a, pp. 77–93). In this bright environment, the still levitating archangel, covered by splendid white priestly garments, and carrying a herald's staff, lauds Mary with the salutation *Ave gratia plena Dominus tecum*, written in a golden line coming from his mouth towards her. Kneeling in a prie-dieu before an open prayer book, the Virgin turns her face towards Gabriel while extending her right hand over the book (in a sign of oath) to express her unlimited obedience to the Almighty's plan announced by Gabriel.

A large ray of light passes through the first stained-glass window on the left over the door and reaches Mary. Thus, it seems obvious that the intellectual author of this painting – maybe a cleric who instructed van der Weyden – knows the crucial dogmatic significance of this beam of light crossing a window, according to the Mariam symbol *fenestra coeli* explained above. Nevertheless, most commentators we know of this



*Columba Annunciation* (Friedländer 1967, vol. 2, 72; Davies 1972; Delenda 1987; Philippot 1994, 40; Châtelet 1999a, 112–117; Châtelet 1999b, 195–200; Dhanens, and Dijkstra 1999, 350; De Vos 1999; Bernard Ridderbos 2004, 36–42; Kemperdick 2000; Kemperdick, and Sandber 2009, 96, 100–101; Campbell, and van der Stock 2009; Campbell, ed. 2015) omitted to refer to this symbol. On the other hand, when commenting on this painting of van der Weyden, Panofsky (1966, vol. I, 286–288), mentions the window only as an element of the composition, lacking any dogmatic symbolism.<sup>43</sup>



Fig. 8. Fra Filippo Lippi, *The Annunciation*, c. 1467–1469 (Cathedral of Spoleto)

Source: [https://www.wga.hu/support/viewer\\_m/z.html](https://www.wga.hu/support/viewer_m/z.html) (Access: May 3, 2025).

Fra Filippo Lippi (1406–1469) structures *The Annunciation*, c. 1467–1469, frescoed in the apse of the Spoleto cathedral (Fig. 8), in the scenery of a Renaissance palace. Gabriel kneels in a respectful attitude in the external square holding a lily stem. Seated inside a room, Mary turns her face towards the archangel, raising her right hand in a gesture of accepting the Almighty's design. Levitating in the

<sup>43</sup> Panofsky 1966, vol. I, 287.

upper left sector of the scene, the Most High blesses the Virgin as the elected mother of God the Son, while sending towards her the beam of light.

It is vital here to underscore that this beam passes through a barred window before reaching Mary, a feature that illustrates the Mariological and Christological symbolisms we explained above. Now, the commentators we know on this Lippi fresco (Konody 1911, 33; Marchini 1975; Ruda 1993; Holmes 1999) ignore the dogmatic symbolisms of this ray of light passing through the glasses of a window in the scene of the Annunciation.



Fig. 9. Carlo Crivelli, *The Annunciation*, c. 1482 (Städel Museum, Panel of the *San Domenico di Camerino* Altarpiece)

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carlo\\_Crivelli\\_-\\_De\\_Annunciatie,\\_Gabri%C3%ABl\\_\(links\),\\_Maria\\_\(rechts\)\\_-\\_841,\\_841A\\_-\\_St%C3%A4del\\_Museum.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carlo_Crivelli_-_De_Annunciatie,_Gabri%C3%ABl_(links),_Maria_(rechts)_-_841,_841A_-_St%C3%A4del_Museum.jpg) (Access: May 3, 2025).

Due to spatial constraints, Carlo Crivelli (1435–1495) structured *The Annunciation*, c. 1482, from the Städel Museum in Frankfurt am Main, into two separate panels that were part of the *San Domenico di Camerino* Altarpiece (Fig. 9). On the left panel he depicts the Archangel on a city street kneeling as he blesses Mary. On the right panel Crivelli depicts the Virgin genuflecting in her room in

modest devotion, crossing her hands over her chest in a sign of obedience to the divine plan. We must underscore that the beam of light coming from heaven passes through a barred window before striking Mary's head. Undoubtedly, Crivelli, probably induced by some ecclesiastic, wanted to include this ray passing through the window to visualize the virginal mother of God as a symbolic *fenestra coeli*, with all the dogmatic meanings we explained.



Fig. 10. Vittore Carpaccio, *The Annunciation*, 1504 (Ca' d'Oro, Venice)

Source: [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vittore\\_carpaccio,\\_scuola\\_degli\\_albanesi,\\_annunciazione,\\_ca%27\\_d%27oro.jpg](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vittore_carpaccio,_scuola_degli_albanesi,_annunciazione,_ca%27_d%27oro.jpg) (Access: May 3, 2025).

Vittore Carpaccio (1465–1525) structured *The Annunciation*, 1504, from the Ca' d'Oro in Venice (Fig. 10), in a luxurious marble palace. Outside, in the symbolic *hortus conclusus*, Gabriel walks towards the Virgin while pointing his right index upwards, indicating the source of the message he is bringing her. Mary is kneeling before a lectern inside the room. It is crucial to underline that the fertilizing beam of light irradiated by God the Father in the upper left corner of the painting, passes through a window in Mary's house before falling on her head. It seems logical to assume that Carpaccio – by himself or by some scholar responsible for controlling the painting – included here the beam of rays passing through the window to visually illustrate the dogmatic meanings underlying the *fenestra coeli* trope as a metaphor for the virginal mother of God.





Fig. 11. León Picardo, *The Annunciation*, c. 1513 (Prado Museum, Madrid)

Source: [https://es.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Picardo\\_Anunciaci%C3%B3n.jpeg](https://es.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Picardo_Anunciaci%C3%B3n.jpeg) (Access: May 3, 2025).

León Picardo sets *The Annunciation*, c. 1513 – a panel from the altarpiece of the church of the monastery in Tamara de Campos (Palencia), today in the Prado Museum (Fig. 11) – in an austere room. Gabriel, grasping the herald's scepter and a twisting phylactery with the salutation *ave maria gracia [sic] plena dñs tecum*, genuflects before Mary, raising his right hand to bless her and reveal the source of his announcement. Kneeling in prayer with folded hands, Mary halts the lecture of the book open in front of her and turns slightly body and face towards Gabriel to dialogue with him.

It is important to emphasize here the beam of light that, conveying in its wake the Holy Spirit's dove, crosses a circular window before reaching the Virgin's head. Obviously, the intellectual author of this panel wants through this specific detail to highlight the Mariological and Christological meanings subjacent under the symbol of Mary as *fenestra coeli*.

## Conclusions

From the comparative analysis of texts and images studied in this article, we can extract the following results:

For more than a millennium (4th–15th centuries) many Church Fathers, theologians, and liturgical hymnographers agree in interpreting Mary's virginal divine motherhood, as well as Christ's supernatural conception and birth, through the metaphor of the ray of light passing through the glasses of a window without breaking or staining them: the ray of light symbolizes Christ, who identified himself as "the light of the world," while the window symbolizes Mary, who preserves her virginity when conceiving and giving birth to Christ.

According to the patristic, theological, and liturgical texts analyzed above, these metaphors signify Mary's virginal divine motherhood in its two vital moments: when she virginally conceives God the Son without manly intercourse, and when she gives birth to him, preserving her virginity. Thus, these texts metaphorically explain that God the Son enters Mary's womb when being conceived, and leaves it when giving birth, without destroying his mother's virginity, like the ray of light enters and leaves the glass of a window without breaking or staining it.

Setting in essential relation the patristic, theological, and hymnic texts and the eleven painted Annunciations analyzed here, we can confirm their essential relationship: the texts document and *explain* the artistic images; in turn, the paintings bring *visual shape* to the dogmatic meanings of those texts.

Therefore, some European painters of the 14th–15th centuries include in their *Annunciations* the detail of the ray emitted by God the Father passing across a window before reaching the Virgin. Thus, the window figured in these *Annunciations* symbolizes Mary as the intact *fenestra coeli*, with a double simultaneous Mariological and Christological projection: the Christological one stands since God the Son is the ray of light (being the divine *Lux mundi*) that passes across the window (Mary's uterus) when being conceived, and comes out of it (when being born) without breaking his mother's virginity; the Mariological projection stands since Mary is the heavenly window that allows the ray of the divine Sun to come in and out without her virginity being broken or stained.

We can infer that the artists who depicted in their *Annunciations* the ray of light passing through a window used this exceptional detail as a *visual metaphor* capable of illustrating the *textual metaphors* by which many Fathers, theologians,

and medieval hymnographers symbolized the Mariological and Christological meanings related to Mary's virginal divine motherhood, and God the Son's supernatural conception and birth from Mary's virginal womb.

Nonetheless, it is not necessary to suppose that every painter of those eleven *Annunciations* knew the dogmatic meanings of the ray of light passing through a window he was painting. Obviously, the Carmelite friar and priest Fra Filippo Lippi knew very well the theological contents of the metaphor of the ray of light passing through a window in his two *Annunciations* of Washington and the Spoleto Cathedral. On the contrary, regarding the other nine painters studied here we can advance two hypotheses that could explain their position: either they could have received from some priest or friar the pertinent instructions to set in their *Annunciations* a window crossed by the ray of light emitted by God the Father; or they could simply have "copied" or "paraphrased" the model of the ray of light crossing a window painted by a prestigious artist.

## References

### 1. Primary Sources

- AHMA 2. Dreves, G.M. 1888. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 2. *Hymnarius Moissiacensis*. Leipzig: Fues's Verlag (R. Reisland).
- AHMA 3. Dreves, G.M. 1888. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 3. *Conradus Gemnicensis. Konrad von Hainburb und seiner Nachahmer und Ulrichs von Wessobrunn, Reimgebete und Leselieder*. Leipzig: Fues's Verlag (R. Reisland).
- AHMA 5. Dreves, G.M. 1892. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 5. *Historiae rhythmicae. Liturgische Reimofficien des Mittelalters. Erste Folge. Aus Handschriften und Wiegendruckten*. Leipzig: Fues's Verlag (R. Reisland).
- AHMA 6. Dreves, G.M. 1889. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 6. *Udalricus Wessofontanus. Reimgebe und Leselieder mit Ausschuss der Psalterien*. Leipzig: Fues's Verlag (R. Reisland).
- AHMA 8. Dreves, G.M. 1890. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 6. *Sequentiae ineditae. Liturgische Prosen des Mittelalters aus Handschriften und Wiegenbrucken*. Erste Folge. Leipzig: Fues's Verlag (R. Reisland).
- AHMA 10. Dreves, G.M. 1891. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 10. *Sequentiae ineditae. Liturgische Prosen des Mittelalters aus Handschriften und Wiegenbrucken*. Dritte Folge. Leipzig: O. R. Reisland.

- AHMA 11. Dreves, G.M. 1891. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 11. *Hymni inediti. Liturgische Hymnen des Mittelalters aus Handschriften und Wiegendrucken*. Zweite Folge. Leipzig: O. R. Reisland.
- AHMA 14. Dreves, G.M. 1893. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 14. *Hymnarius Severinianus. Das Hymnar der Abtei S. Severin in Neapel nach den Codices Vaticanus 7172 und Parisinus 1092*, Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.
- AHMA 17. Dreves, G.M. 1894. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 17. *Hymnodia Hiberica. Liturgische Reimofficien aus Spanischen Brevieren*. Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.
- AHMA 19. Dreves, G.M. 1895. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 19. *Hymni inediti. Liturgische Hymnen des Mittelalters aus Handschriften und Wiegendrucken*. Vierte Folge Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.
- AHMA 20. Dreves, G.M. 1895. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 20. *Cantiones et Muteti. Lieder und Motetten des Mittelalters*. Erste Folge: *Cantiones natalitiae, Partheniae*, Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.
- AHMA 24. Dreves, G.M. 1896. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 24. *Historiae rhythmicae. Liturgische Reimofficien des Mittelalters*. Vierte Folge. *Aus Handschriften und Wiegendrucken*, Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.
- AHMA 30. Dreves, G.M. 1898. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 30. *Pia dictamina. Reimgebete und Leselieder des Mittelalters*. Dritte Folge: *Studen- und Glossen-Lieder*, Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.
- AHMA 31. Dreves, G.M. 1898. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 31. *Pia dictamina. Reimgebete und Leselieder des Mittelalters*. Vierte Folge. *Aus Handschriften und Wiegendrucken*, Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.
- AHMA 37. Dreves, G.M. 1901. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 37. *Sequentiae ineditae. Liturgische Prosen des Mittelalters aus Handschriften und Wiegenbrucken*. Fünfte Folge, Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.
- AHMA 38. Dreves, G.M. 1902. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 38. *Psalteria Wessofontana. Ulrich Stöcklins von Rottach siebzehn Reimpsalterien*, Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.
- AHMA 40. Dreves, G.M. 1902. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 40. *Sequentiae ineditae. Liturgische Prosen des Mittelalters aus Handschriften und Wiegenbrucken*. Siebente Folge, Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.
- AHMA 45a. Dreves, G.M. 1904. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 45a. *Cantiones et Muteti. Lieder und Motetten des Mittelalters*. Dritte Folge. *Cantiones variae Bohemicae, Suecicae*, Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.
- AHMA 46. Dreves, G.M. 1905. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 46. *Pia dictamina. Reimgebete und Leselieder der Mittelalters*. Siebente Folge. *Aus Handschriften und Wiegendrucken*, Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.
- AHMA 48. Dreves, G.M. 1905. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 48. *Hymnographie Latini. Lateinische Hymnendichter des Mittelalters*. Erste Folge, Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.

- AHMA 50. Dreves, G.M. 1907. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 50. *Hymnographi latini. Lateinische Hymnendichter des Mittelalters. Zweite Folge*, Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.
- AHMA 52. Dreves, G.M. 1909. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 52. *hesauri Hymnologici Hymnarium. Die Hymnen des Thesaurus Hymnologicus H. A. Daniels und anderer Hymnen-Ausgaben. II. Die Hymnen des 12.–16. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.
- AHMA 54. Blume, C. 1915. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 54. *Thesauri Hymnologici Prosarium. Liturgische Prosen des Übergangsstiles und der zweiten Epoche...* Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.
- Augustinus Hipponensis, *Sermo CXXII (a)*. In *Natali Domini*, VI (b). PL 39, 1991.
- Honorius Augustodiniensis, *Sigillum Beatae Mariae ubi exponuntur Cantica Canticorum*. PL 172, 503.
- Hymnus 8. De Beata Maria V. In 3. Nocturno. Antiphonae. AHMA 17, 36.
- Hymnus 13. De conceptione BMV. In 2. Nocturno. Antiphonae. AHMA 5, 52.
- Hymnus 14. De beata Maria V. In 1. Vesperis. Antiphonae. AHMA 24, 46.
- Hymnus 19. In Conceptione BMV. Ad Laudes. AHMA 19, 23.
- Hymnus 33. AHMA 20, 60.
- Hymnus 43. Hymnus de beata Maria. AHMA 2, 45.
- Hymnus 54. (39.) De Beata Maria V. AHMA 48, 52.
- Hymnus 55. De Compassione Beatae M. V. Ad parvas Horas. AHMA 52, 59.
- Hymnus 67. De beata Maria V. AHMA 8, 61.
- Hymnus 72. (7.) Hymnus Beatae Mariae. AHMA 50, 87.
- Hymnus 74. Ad singula membra B. Mariae V. AHMA 46, 118.
- Hymnus 74. De Beata Maria V. AHMA 37, 75.
- Hymnus 84. De Beata Maria V. AHMA 40, 90.
- Hymnus 85. De Beata Maria V. AHMA 37, 81.
- Hymnus 90. De Beata Maria V. AHMA 11, 57.
- Hymnus 94. Acrostichon super "Ave Maria". AHMA 15, 119.
- Hymnus 100. De Beata Maria V. AHMA 40, 102.
- Hymnus 105. De Beata Maria Virgine. AHMA 40, 105.
- Hymnus 110. Versus in honore sanctae Mariae. AHMA 46, 163.
- Hymnus 121. Super Ave Maria. AHMA 30, 234.
- Hymnus 130. De Nominibus BMV. AHMA 31, 132.
- Hymnus 131. Super Ave Maria. AHMA 30, 247.
- Hymnus 137. De beata Maria V. AHMA 45, 114.
- Hymnus 152. AHMA 20, 121.
- Hymnus 169. AHMA 20, 131.
- Hymnus 251. (2.) Prosa de Nativitate Domini. AHMA 48, 52. 234.
- Hymnus 259. De Beata Maria V. AHMA 54, 404.
- Hymnus 265. De Beata Maria V. AHMA 54, 409.
- Hymnus 273. De Beata Maria V. AHMA 54, 415.



- Hymnus 275. (1.) De Beata Maria V.* AHMA 48, 263.
- Hymnus 276. De Beata Maria V.* AHMA 54, 415.
- Hymnus 370. Sequentia de v. Maria.* Mone, 63.
- Hymnus 399. Oratio super Ave Maria.* Mone, 104.
- Hymnus 600. Laudes Mariae.* Mone, 411.
- Mone, F.J. *Hymni Latini Medii Aevi. Tomus Secundus. Hymni ad. B.V. Mariam.* Friburgi Brisgoviae, Sumptibus Herder, 1854. Quoted through the abbreviation Mone.
- Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Garnier, 1844–1864, 221 vols. Quoted through the abbreviation PL.
- Petrus Abelardus. *Sermo II. In Natali Domini.* PL 178, 393.
- Petrus Damianus, *Sermo XLVI. Homilia In Nativitate Beatissimae Virginis Mariae (VIII Sept.)*. PL 144, 753.
- Petrus Damianus, *Carmina et Preces. LXI. Rythmus de S. Maria virgine.* PL 145, 937.
- Petrus Damianus, *Opusc. X. De Horis Canonicis. Caput X. LXI. Rythmus de S. Maria virgine.* PL 145, 230.
- Udalrichus Wessofontanus, *Hymnus 24. Centimonium Beatae Virginis. Secunda Pars. Caput tertium.* AHMA 6, 81.
- Udalrichus Wessofontanus, *Hymnus 25. Laudatorium B.V.M. Pars Quinta. Ad Sextam, III.* AHMA 6, 102.
- Udalrichus Wessofontanus, *Hymnus XV. Psalterium "Hymnarius BMV". Quinquagena I.* AHMA 38, 197.
- Udalrichus Wessofontanus, *Hymnus XVI. Psalterium "Theotoca". Quinquagena II.* AHMA 38, 221.
- Venantius Fortunatus, *Miscellanea. Liber VIII. Caput IV. De Sancta Maria.* PL 88, 265.

## 2. Bibliography

- Campbell, Lorne, and Jan van der Stock. 2009. *Rogier van der Weyden 1400–1464. Master of passions*. Zwolle: Waanders / Leuven: Davidsfonds.
- Campbell, Lorne, ed. 2015. *Rogier Van Der Weyden y los reinos de la península Ibérica*. Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado.
- Châtelet, Albert. 1996. *Robert Campin, le maître de Flémalle. La fascination du quotidien*. Anvers: Fonds Mercator.
- Châtelet, Albert. 1999a. *Rogier van der Weyden (Rogier de la Pasture)*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Châtelet, Albert. 1999b. *Rogier van der Weyden. Problèmes de la vie et de l'œuvre*. Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg.
- Davies, Martin. 1972. *Rogier van der Weyden: An Essay, with a Critical Catalogue of Paintings Assigned to Him and to Robert Campin*. London: Phaidon.
- Delenda, Odile. 1987. *Rogier van der Weyden (Roger de Le Pasture)*. Paris: Cerf, Tricorne.

- De Marchi, Andrea. 2006. *Gentile da Fabriano. Un viaggio nella pittura italiana alla fine del gotico*. Milano: Federico Motta.
- de Patoul, Brigitte, and Roger van Schoute. 1994. *Les primitifs flamands et leur temps*. Bruxelles: La Renaissance du Livre.
- de Tolnay, Charles. 1939. *Le Maître de Flémalle et les frères Van Eyck*. Bruxelles: La Connaissance.
- De Vos, Dirk. 1999. *Rogier van der Weyden. L'œuvre complet*. Paris: Hazan.
- De Vos, Dirk. *Les primitifs flamands. Les chefs d'œuvre*. Bruges: Fonds Mercator, 2002.
- Dhanens, Elisabeth, and Jellie Dijkstra. 1999. *Rogier de le Pasture van der Weyden. Introduction à l'œuvre. Relecture des sources*. Tournai: La Renaissance du Livre.
- Dijkstra, Jellie. 1994. "Le Maître de Flémalle." In *Les primitifs flamands et leur temps*, edited by de Patoul, and van Schoute, 312–329. Bruxelles: La Renaissance du Livre.
- Friedländer, Max Julius. 1967 [1924]. *Early Netherlandish painting*. Vol. 2, *Rogier van der Weyden and the Master of Flemalle*. Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff.
- Grabar, André. 1979. *Les voies de la création en iconographie chrétienne: Antiquité et Moyen Âge*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Harbison, Craig. 1991. *Jan van Eyck. The Play of Realism*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Hodne, Lasse. 2015. "Light Symbolism in Gentile da Fabriano's Vatican Annunciation." *Eikón Imago* 6, n° 2: 33–50.
- Holmes, Megan. 1999. *Fra Filippo Lippi. The Carmelite Painter*. New Haven–London: Yale University Press.
- Jacobs, Lynn. 2002. *Opening Doors: The Early Netherlandish Triptych Reinterpreted*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Kemperdick, Stephan. 2000. *Rogier van der Weyden: Masters of Dutch Art*. London: Könemann.
- Kemperdick, Stephan, and Jochen Sandber. 2009. *The Master of Flémalle and Rogier van der Weyden*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz.
- Konody, Paul George. 1911. *Filippo Lippi*. London: T.C. and E. C. Jack/New York: F. A. Stokes.
- Lane, Barbara. 1984. *The Altar and the Altarpiece, Sacramental Themes in Early Netherlandish Painting*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Mâle, Émile. 1995. *L'art religieux de la fin du Moyen Âge en France. Étude sur l'iconographie du Moyen Âge et sur ses sources d'inspiration*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- Mâle, Émile. 1968 [1898]. *L'art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France. Étude sur les origines de l'iconographie du Moyen Âge et sur ses sources d'inspiration*. Paris: Armand Colin, 2 vols.
- Mâle, Émile. 1966 [1924]. *L'art religieux, du XIIe siècle en France. Étude sur les origines de l'iconographie du Moyen Âge*. Paris: A. Colin.
- Marchini, Giuseppe. 1975. *Filippo Lippi*. Milano: Electa.

- May, Louis-Philippe. 1954. "L'Annonciation d'Aix." *Provence historique*, tome 4, fascicule 16: 82–98.
- Micheletti, Emma, ed. 1976. *L'opera completa di Gentile da Fabriano*. Milano: Rizzoli.
- Nishino, Yoshiaki. 1999. "Le Triptyque de l'Annonciation d'Aix et son Programme iconographique." *Artibus et Historiae* 20, n° 39: 55–74.
- Panofsky, Erwin. 1966 [1953]. *Early Netherlandish Painting, Its origins and character*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2 vols.
- Philippot, Paul. 1994. *La peinture dans les anciens Pays-Bas: XVe–XVIIe siècles*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Réau, Louis. 1957. *Iconographie de l'art chrétien. Tome Second, Iconographie de la Bible. II, Nouveau Testament*. Paris: PUF.
- Ridderbos, Bernhard, Annes van Buren, and Henk van Veen, eds. 2004. *Early Netherlandish paintings: Rediscovery, reception and research*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Ridderbos, Bernhard. 2004. "Chapter I. Objects and Questions." In *Early Netherlandish paintings: Rediscovery, reception and research*, edited by Bernhard Ridderbos, van Annes van Buren, and Henk van Veen, 4–172. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Robb, David M. 1936. "The Iconography of the Annunciation in the Thirteenth and Fifteenth Centuries." *Art Bulletin* 18, n° 4: 480–526.
- Ruda, Jeffrey. 1993. *Fra Filippo Lippi: Life and Work with a complete catalogue*. London: Phaidon Press.
- Salvador-González, José María. 2013. "Flos de radice Iesse. A hermeneutic approach to the theme of the lily in the Spanish Gothic painting of The Annunciation from patristic and theological sources." *Eikón Imago* 2/2: 183–222.
- Salvador-González, José María. 2014. "Flos campi et lilium convallium. Third interpretation of the lily in the iconography of The Annunciation in Italian Trecento art from patristic and theological sources." *Eikón Imago* 3/1: 75–96.
- Salvador-González, José María. 2016a. "Per aurem intrat Christus in Mariam. An iconographic approach to the *conceptio per aurem* in Italian Trecento painting from patristic and theological sources." *De Medio Aevo* 5/1: 83–122.
- Salvador-González, José María. 2016b. "In virga Aaron Maria ostendebatur. A new interpretation of the stem of lilies in the Spanish Gothic Annunciation from patristic and theological sources." *De Medio Aevo* 5/2: 117–144.
- Salvador-González, José María. 2020a. "The symbol of light's ray in images of the Annunciation of the 14th and 15th centuries according to Greek Patrology." *História Revista* 25/3: 334–355.
- Salvador-González, José María. 2020b. "The temple in images of the Annunciation: a double dogmatic symbol according to the Latin theological tradition (6th–15th centuries)." *De Medio Aevo* 9: 56–68.

- Salvador-González, José María. 2020c. "Iconographic Interpretation of the Temple as a Theological Symbol in Images of the Annunciation of the 14th and 15th Centuries." *Fenestella. Inside Medieval Art* 1: 23–41.
- Salvador-González, José María. 2020d. "Greek Fathers' interpretations of *templum Dei* as a double theological metaphor (3rd–9th centuries)." *Volynskyi Blahovisnyk* 8: 127–145.
- Salvador-González, José María. 2021a. "Latin theological interpretations on *templum Dei*: A double Christological and Mariological symbol (6th–15th centuries)." *Teología y Vida* 62, n° 4: 525–553.
- Salvador-González, José María. 2021b. "Latin theological interpretations on *templum Dei* until the Second Council of Constantinople: a Mariological and Christological symbol." *Veritas. Revista de Filosofía y Teología* 49: 115–133.
- Salvador-González, José María. 2022a. "*Facta est Maria fenestra coeli*. The ray of light passing through a window in images of the Annunciation from the theological perspective." *Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia* 15/4: 39–85. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12775/BPTh.2022.018>.
- Salvador-González, José María, ed. 2022b. *Perspectivas sobre la Edad Media. Homenaje al Profesor D. Fernando de Olaguer-Feliú y Alonso*. Madrid: Síndéresis.
- Salvador-González, José María. 2022c. "El rayo de luz en imágenes de la Anunciación, símbolo de Dios Hijo encarnándose, según la tradición doctrinal latina." In *Perspectivas sobre la Edad Media. Homenaje al Profesor D. Fernando de Olaguer-Feliú y Alonso*, ed. Salvador-González, 13–65. Madrid: Síndéresis.
- Schapiro, Meyer. 1945. "'Muscipula Diaboli': The Symbolism of the Mérode Altarpiece." *The Art Bulletin* 27/3: 181–187.
- Schiller, Gertrude. 1980. *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*. Band 4,2, *Maria*. Gütersloh: Gütersloher VerlagHaus.
- Schulz, Vera-Simone. 2018. "Infiltrating Artifacts: The Impact of Islamic Art in Thirteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Florence and Pisa." *Konsthistorisktidskrift /Journal of Art History* 87/4: 214–233.
- Simpson, Amanda. 2007. *Van Eyck. The complete work*. London: Chaucer Press.
- Toscano, Giuseppe M. 1960. *Il pensiero cristiano nell'arte*. Bergamo: Istituto Italiano d'Arti Grafiche, 3 vols.,
- Trens, Manuel. 1947. *María. Iconografía de la Virgen en el arte español*. Madrid. Plus Ultra.