Mary’s Nativity, Fulbert of Chartres, and the Stirps Jesse: Liturgical Innovation circa 1000 and Its Afterlife

By Margot Fassler

The ways in which liturgical practices changed and the degree to which the arts were affected by the transformation of liturgical materials are complex subjects. The study of those topics is even more vexed by the fact that significant shifts in liturgical taste in the Latin Middle Ages are, in general, poorly described and little understood. Even when such shifts are identified, too rarely are they related to developments in other spheres of action, their force and significance commonly remaining unconsidered. Yet liturgical practice, the arts, theology, and understandings of history were profoundly interrelated in the Middle Ages, especially in the centuries from the Carolingian period to the middle of the thirteenth century, when, I will argue, the interrelatedness began to break down.

Interaction between liturgical change and the perception of the past is too complicated a subject for a single paper. But it is possible to outline some of the watersheds in the process of change, and to demonstrate how a single image that...
defines the passage of time, and the sense of a particular character within time, evolved against a liturgical backdrop. In the evolution of the liturgical materials from which the Stirps Jesse was made, the sense of the past was transformed as well. The Virgin Mary acquired festal benchmarks for her life in the Roman rite of the seventh century; an actual life’s story appeared in the West somewhat later; the incorporation of this vita into the liturgy began right away but took a long time to become generally widespread. The transformation in the celebration of Mary’s nature and character from around the year 1000 occurred in the midst of the most extraordinary proliferation of new saints’ lives and histories associated with them that the Western world had ever seen, or was to see again. In the space of a century cults of early Christian saints, often with readapted or newly created deeds, spread in northern Europe and thereby changed the general understanding of history in fundamental ways. The first framework for this transformation of the past was the liturgy of the Roman rite; from the late twelfth century forward, interest in miraculous deeds and events allowed at least some of the saints, and most particularly the Virgin Mary, to be viewed outside of the liturgical framework; some of these alternative circumstances would be hospitable to the survival of liturgical veneration and others, ultimately, not.

The multivalent Stirps Jesse image seems to spring fully formed from exegetical heads in the early decades of the twelfth century. Abbot Suger’s famous descrip-

2 For background to the term “Tree of Jesse,” a term not used in the Middle Ages, see Charles E. Scillia’s excellent study “The Textual and Figurative Sources of the ‘Stirps Jesse’ in the First Half of the Twelfth Century with Special Reference to the Rhine-Meuse Area,” Ph.D. dissertation, Bryn Mawr College (1977), pp. 4–36, which includes his valuable notes. Note 11 suggests that the term “Tree of Jesse” is a terminological conflation originating in the 1733–36 edition of Du Cange’s Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis, s.v. “Jesse.” It is clear that although the Stirps Jesse was often depicted as a tree in the Middle Ages, it was not commonly called one.

3 For an excellent introduction to recent writings on lives of the saints, see “Reading Hagiography,” the opening chapter of Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, Writing Faith: Text, Sign, and History in the Miracles of Sainte Foy (Chicago, 1999), pp. 1–21. The present study offers a corollary, and could be called “Hearing Hagiography,” emphasizing as it does that much of what we understand as read was actually known primarily in a musical context and in liturgical rendering. This is especially true of many vitae written around 1000, conceived as they were as materials for newly instituted liturgical offices.

4 Scillia acknowledged that the liturgical work of Fulbert of Chartres was the context within which the Marian Stirps Jesse would blossom (p. 54), but neither he nor other scholars have looked closely at Fulbert’s motivations, as disclosed in his writings for the Feast of Mary’s Nativity, or considered fully the force that the liturgical performances of these texts and chants had on the creation of a complex and synthetic image.

tion, precisely dated to 1144, refers to the image as if it were a well-known quantity: "Moreover, we caused to be painted, by the exquisite hands of many masters from different regions, a splendid variety of new windows, both below and above; from the first one which begins [the series] with the Stirps Jesse in the chevet of the church to that which is installed above the principal door in the church's entrance." Yet Stirps Jesse, like so many complex images appearing first in the very late eleventh or early twelfth century, was the product of generations of liturgical innovation and long-standing traditions of scriptural and liturgical commentary. At the time of Suger, then, although the image itself was quite new, the materials from which it was made were not. The stages of liturgical change studied through the development of this single image are useful guides for considering the central Middle Ages in general, and they are directly related to the way history was perceived and the passage of time described during this period. This example can be evaluated in the future as parallel situations are brought forth, particularly regarding the rise of the Virgin's cult in the central Middle Ages and the influence the magnification of this cult was to have on the arts and on religious sensibilities, especially, although certainly not exclusively, from the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries.⁴

⁴ Watson's *Early Iconography* was intended to refute Emile Mâle's pronouncement that Abbot Suger was the inventor of the Jesse Tree. Watson collected many examples of the image that either predated or were contemporary with the Stirps Jesse window at St.-Denis. Suger's description, found in his *Liber de rebus in administratione sua gestis*, has been much discussed by art historians, but the window to which it refers—clearly very like the twelfth-century lancet window at Chartres—is heavily restored.

⁷ "Vitrearum etiam nouarum praeclaram varietatem, ab ea prima quae incipit a Stirps Jesse in capite ecclesiae, usque ad eam quae superest principali portae in introitu ecclesiae, tam superius quam inferius, magistrorum multorum de diversis nationibus manu exquisita, depingi fecimus": Erwin Panofsky, ed. and trans., *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and Its Art Treasures*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, N.J., 1979), pp. 72–74. Panofsky translates "Stirps Jesse" as "Tree of Jesse."

There were no Marian feasts in Rome in the early seventh century, although feasts commemorating events in the life of the Virgin were well established in the East by this time, both in Jerusalem and in Constantinople. In the East Luke's account of Christ's infancy narrative found strong parallels with the life of Mary, for the apocryphal life of the Virgin, the second-century *Proto-Evangelium of James*, was well known and highly respected in many regions. Its influence can be seen to underlie the senses of several Marian feasts. However, these detailed legends of Mary's life, which established Mary's Davidic lineage and various aspects of her character, were not part of the Roman complex of liturgical or hagiographical materials in circulation at the time the first Marian feasts were imported from the East into Rome in the seventh century.

Mary had been venerated in Rome, not by specific feasts dedicated to her, but rather through the Annunciation themes connected with the week before Christmas, on the ember days of that week—Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday—which were days of fasting and of special solemnity. Marian emphasis in the liturgy...
around the time of Christmas, however, had a place in the East from the early fifth century and made its way not only into the Roman liturgy, as on the Advent ember days, but into other Western liturgical practices as well: in Ravenna an early collection of Marian texts for Advent shows dependence upon sermons by the fifth-century preacher Petrus Chrysologus; in Spain the Virgin was venerated on December 18, a week before Christmas; the Bobbio Missal, a Gallican hybrid, has a feast of Marian character for the Vigil of Christmas, in addition to the Gallican feast for the Virgin celebrated on January 18. Themes of prophecy, lineage, and Annunciation were emphasized in the pre-Christmas season in several early Western liturgical traditions through readings from Isaiah and through selected sermons for Advent that appear in the homiliary of Alan of Farfa and other early homiliaries. It is to be noted, however, that the Marian emphasis on January 1 often claimed by modern scholars for the first layers of Roman Gospel texts is now thought to be a later development.

When Roman liturgists, operating under Eastern influence, brought Marian feasts into their liturgy in the mid-seventh century, they turned to the feasts of ember weeks for liturgical texts and festal understanding. This can be demonstrated particularly in regard to the Gospel text for the Feast of Mary’s Nativity, September 8. Once the Gospel of a feast was set, so, too, was the character of the feast; therefore to identify the Gospel of a given feast is a crucial first step in understanding its liturgy. The list below contains the Gospel texts for all four

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14 For inventories of these sources, see Réginald Grégoire, Homiliaires liturgiques médiévaux: Analyse de manuscrits (Spoleto, 1980), pp. 72–73.

15 Jacques-Marie Guilmard has argued that there was no Marian feast in Rome on January 1 in the seventh century, despite frequent arguments to the contrary. See his “Une antique fête mariale au 1er janvier dans la ville de Rome?” Ecclesia orans 11 (1994), 25–67. In this paper Guilmard takes on a substantial literature, including Bernard Botte, “La première fête mariale de la liturgie romaine,” Ephemeres liturgicae 47 (1933), 425–30; several works by Antoine Chavasse, of which the most detailed and representative is his long discussion of Marian feasts in Rome found in Le sacramentaire gélasien (Vaticanus Reginensis 316): Sacramentaire presbytéral en usage dans les titres romains au VIIe siècle (Strasbourg, 1958), esp. pp. 375–402; and Georges Frénaud, “Le culte de Notre Dame dans l’ancienne liturgie latine,” in Maria (see above, n. 8), 6:157–211. Guilmard argues that the Marian emphasis on January 1 developed north of the Alps in the eighth century and subsequently made its way to Rome.

16 Pope Sergius I (687–701) established solemn processions in the city of Rome for all four Marian feasts; thus it is known that they existed by his time but not, as one sometimes reads in the literature, that he created any of the feasts himself. That happened before his pontificate. Sergius was born in Palermo to a Syrian family from Antioch; he is known both as a restorer of churches and as a musician, with interest in liturgical reform and embellishment. See the Liber pontificalis, ed. Louis Duchesne, rev. ed. (Paris, 1955–57), 1:376, for the passage regarding the processions.

17 Series of Gospel texts for several stages of liturgical development in the Roman rite may be found in Theodor Klauser, Das römische Capitulare Evangeliorum: Texte und Untersuchungen zu seiner ältesten Geschichte (Münster in Westfalen, 1935). Klauser’s earliest series of texts dates from around
seventh-century Marian feasts in Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Rome; the Gospel texts for the Advent ember days in Rome are also given. For feasts such as the Annunciation and the Purification, whose primary action was described in the Bible, the choice of the Gospel reading (although not its specific verses) was evident. This was not the case, however, for the Nativity of the Virgin or for the Assumption, neither of which is described in the canonical Gospels:

Assumption of the Virgin Mary (August 15):
- Rome, mid-seventh century: Not Observed

Nativity of the Virgin Mary (September 8):
- Jerusalem: Luke 11.27–32 (as on August 13)
- Rome, mid-seventh century: Not Observed

Purification of the Virgin Mary (February 2, in the West):
- Rome, mid-seventh century: Not Observed

Annunciation of the Virgin Mary (March 25):
- Jerusalem: Luke 1.26–38
- Rome, mid-seventh century: Not Observed

Advent Ember Days in Rome, mid-seventh and mid-eighth centuries:
- Wednesday: Luke 1.26–38
- Friday: Luke 1.39–47
- Saturday: Luke 3.1–6

Clearly, when specific feasts consecrated to the Virgin did come into Rome during the seventh century, Gospel readings already established in celebration of Mary were borrowed for two of them, the Annunciation pericope being that first assigned to Ember Wednesday, and the Gospel for the Feast of Mary's Nativity that for Ember Friday. The reading for the Assumption, however, the story of Martha and Mary from Luke 10, was not found as a Gospel pericope in seventh-

645 and is "purely Roman"; that is, the texts were apparently compiled without substantial influence from liturgical developments north of the Alps.

century Rome. Its use for the new feast of the Assumption suggests a borrowing from the liturgical practices of Byzantium, where the text was well established for this feast. Although the Gospel for the Purification was not borrowed from pre-Christmas and Christmas feasts, its initial set of prayer texts was an adaptation of material found there; thus the Purification, too, witnesses to the pattern described above for Mary's Nativity and the Annunciation.

THE FEAST OF MARY'S NATIVITY IN THE NORTH AROUND THE YEAR 800

The Gospels for the Nativity of Mary, the Annunciation, the Purification, and the Assumption as listed above were widely accepted by the mid-eighth century; this was true in Rome and also north of the Alps, where the Roman rite was introduced in the course of the eighth and early ninth century. Yet Carolingian liturgists were not content with the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin as they had received it earlier from Rome. During the late eighth and early ninth centuries the feast was transformed, and in a major way: the Gospel of the feast was changed from the story of the Visitation as found in Luke to the genealogy of the Lord, as found in Matt. 1.1–18. The reasons for the change must have been related to the nature of the Virgin's cult in the late eighth century, and a closer look at other developments surrounding the feast (as described below) will suggest that the transformation was indeed part of this larger picture. Carolingian reformers expended great energy on Marian feasts at this time: new liturgical texts and sermons were composed for the Assumption; new prayer texts more directly specific to the feast were written for the Purification; the emphasis upon January 1 as a feast for the Virgin developed as well. The guiding idea behind these changes was to make Marian feasts more calendrically specific and more closely related to

19 Several chant texts were borrowed from the East for Roman Marian feasts. For discussion of some of these pieces, see Henri Barré, "Antennes et répons de la Vierge," Marianum 29 (1967), 149–254.

20 The status of the Purification in the Vatican manuscript, Reg. lat. 316, the Old Gelasian Sacramentary, suggests recent establishment. Bernard Moreton observes in The Eighth-Century Gelasian Sacramentaries: A Study in Traditions (Louvain, 1976), p. 122, "The prayers for this feast in Reg. 316 are all drawn from the Christmas collections: the secret and post-communion are to be found in this context in Veronense, and the collect is markedly similar to the collect of the vigil mass of Christmas in the Gregorians. This suggests that the observance of the feast was relatively new in the 'old' Gelasian tradition, so that it had not acquired any prayer-collection of its own by the time of the redaction of the Sacramentaries."


22 See n. 15 above.
the developing historical character of the Virgin, while maintaining a biblical framework for her person as well.

The shift of the Gospel of the Feast of Mary's Nativity to Matt. 1.1–18 changed the feast dramatically, placing the emphasis on genealogy and lineage, suggesting that Mary was herself descended from David, and superimposing a Christmas sense. The Matthean genealogy was intoned around Christmas in many places, often as part of the first vespers or matins service. In twelfth-century Chartres, for example, there was a procession after the ninth responsory of Christmas matins, and Matt. 1.1–18 was intoned from the rood screen (the jubé) just before the singing of Te deum laudamus.23 The Epistle for the Feast of Mary’s Nativity, standardized in Carolingian liturgies at this time as well, was Ecclus. 24.16–22, which describes the flowering vine of Wisdom and which offers the verdant arboreal imagery seized upon by designers of Stirps Jesse images in the twelfth century.24

The Feast of Mary's Nativity, as it developed in Carolingian hands, drew these two scriptural texts together, proclaiming them in a Marian context and providing the raw materials for later exegetical understanding and visual exploration.25 The place of the Matthean genealogy on Mary’s birthday called for greater understanding of Mary’s place within this genetic tree, the vine of Wisdom described in the Epistle.

Around the same time that the Gospel for the Feast of Mary’s Nativity was changed another shift began that would have dramatic effects on the Mariology of the Middle Ages: after a long period of neglect, the Proto-Evangelium of James was rediscovered in the West.26 The earliest Latin version of this second-century

24 From the Douay-Reims translation: “And I took root in an honourable people, and in the portion of my God his inheritance, and my abode is in the full assembly of saints. I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus, and as a cypress tree on mount Sion. I was exalted like a palm tree in Cades, and as a rose plant in Jericho: As a fair olive tree in the plains, and as a plane tree by the water in the streets, was I exalted. I gave a sweet smell like cinnamon, and aromatical balm: I yielded a sweet odour like the best myrrh: And I perfumed my dwelling as storax, and galbanum, and onyx, and aloes, and as the frankincense not cut, and my odour is as the purest balm. I have stretched out my branches as the turpentine tree, and my branches are of honour and grace.” Several medieval liturgical and devotional texts play with this imagery, e.g., the Sigillum Beatae Mariae, PL 172:497–99. See discussion in Scillia, “Textual and Figurative Sources” (above, n. 2), pp. 44–45. Rupert of Deutz calls Mary the arbor pulcherrima in his De sancta Trinitate et operibus eius 15 (In Leviticum 2.37), ed. Hrabanus Haacke, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, 22 (Turnhout, 1972), p. 902 (= PL 167:827).
26 Jan Gijssel, ed., Pseudo-Matthaei Evangelium: Textus et commentarius (hereafter Pseudo-Matthew) (Turnhout, 1997), in Libri de nativitate Mariae, Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum, 9. See Amann, ed., Le Protévangile, pp. 138–76, and Pseudo-Matthew, pp. 7–10, on the rediscovery of the text in the West. Other early Western authors besides Jerome (for whom see below) knew of the legends in the Proto-Evangelium, demonstrating that it circulated in one form or another in Latin at an early stage. Hilary of Poitiers, who wrote his influential commentary on the Gospel of Matthew before his exile in the early 350s, referred to materials in the Proto-Evangelium; Augustine, in his treatise against Faustus the Manichaean, offered his evaluation of legends in the Proto-Evangelium: see his Contra Faustum 1.23. The Proto-Evangelium was banned in the so-called Decretum Gela-
text is now thought to have originated in the first quarter of the eighth century, but at whose hands, or from what center, remains unknown.\textsuperscript{27} The original text circulated with a short prologue attributing the work to James.\textsuperscript{28} Even before the year 800, however, the \textit{Proto-Evangelium} had been reworked into a new version, a version that came to circulate with a title attributing it to the evangelist Matthew and its translation from Hebrew into Latin to Jerome.\textsuperscript{29} This new work, the so-called \textit{Pseudo-Matthew}, appears in the early ninth century but in a form that suggests eighth-century origins.\textsuperscript{30} Montpellier, Bibliothèque de la Faculté de médecine, 55 (from the region of Metz, c. 800), is a “legendary,” a book containing lives of the saints, compiled as a repository for liturgical and devotional readings.\textsuperscript{31} This source contains two adaptations of infancy Gospels of particular interest. One is a version of portions of the \textit{Proto-Evangelium}; the other is a mixed text that includes passages from an earlier version of the \textit{Proto-Evangelium} alongside

\textit{sianum}, a document now thought to have been written in the early sixth century, with the point of origin still debated. For discussion and bibliography, see \textit{Pseudo-Matthew}, pp. 5 and 84.\textsuperscript{27} The Latin text was established from various fragments by Constantin von Tischendorf in his \textit{De evangeliorum apocryphorum origine et usu} (The Hague, 1851) and subsequently reprinted, with a French translation, by Amann in \textit{Le Proteuangile}, pp. 272–339; for an English translation, see Elliott, \textit{The Apocryphal New Testament}, pp. 91–99. For discussion of dating and authorship, see Jean-Daniel Kaestli, “\textit{Le Proteuangile de Jacques en Latin: Etat de la question et perspectives nouvelles},” \textit{Revue d'histoire théologique} 26 (1996), 41–102; and \textit{Pseudo-Matthew}, pp. 4–6. For movement of Greek texts from East to West in general, see A. Siegmund, \textit{Die Überlieferung der griechischen christlichen Literatur in der lateinischen Kirche bis zum zwölften Jahrhundert}, Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Benediktiner-Akademie 5 (Munich, 1949).\textsuperscript{28} The preface, which continued the original tradition of attributing the work to James, “son of Joseph, who has written all these things having seen them with his own eyes, manifesting the plenitude of the twelve tribes of Israel,” distinguishes manuscript family P in Gijsel’s edition. Hrotsvit of Gandersheim, in her poem on the Virgin Mary, follows this tradition. See J. Gijsel, “Zu welcher Textfamille des Pseudo-Matthäus gehört die Quelle von Hrotsvits Maria?” \textit{Classica et mediaevalia} 32 (1979–80), 279–88. For discussion of the poem \textit{Maria}, see Monique Goullet, “Hrotsvita de Gandersheim, \textit{Maria},” in \textit{Maria: Le culte de la Vierge} (above, n. 8), pp. 441–70.\textsuperscript{29} See \textit{Pseudo-Matthew}, pp. 8–85. The attribution to James was long a difficulty. The real Jerome railed against the idea advanced in the \textit{Proto-Evangelium} that Joseph had a marriage prior to his to Mary, that he had children from that union who were the brothers of Jesus, and that one of these was James the Lesser, sometimes claimed as the author of the treatise. (This figure is not to be confused, although he often was, with James the Greater, the brother of John the Evangelist: see Amann, \textit{Le Proteuangile}, p. 144. James of Compostela was also often conflated with James the Greater, less often with James the Lesser; this explains the association of Marian legends from the treatise with the city of Compostela.) Jerome’s argument is made in his treatise \textit{Against Helvidius} 19 (composed about 383), a work that was influential throughout the Middle Ages, along with its companion piece, \textit{Against Jovinian} (composed about 393). For their influence on attitudes toward virginity, see Ph. Delhaye, “Le dossier antimatrimonial de \textit{l’Adversus Jovinianum} et son influence sur quelques écrits latins au XIIe siècle,” \textit{Mediaeval Studies} 13 (1951), 65–86; and Peter Brown, \textit{The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity} (New York, 1988), where the importance of ceremonies for the consecration of virgins and ideals of virginity in the late-antique period are described.\textsuperscript{30} For the differences between the \textit{Proto-Evangelium} and \textit{Pseudo-Matthew}, see \textit{Pseudo-Matthew}, pp. 7–15.\textsuperscript{31} For bibliography on the various kinds of books recording saints’ lives and the passions of the martyrs, and the evolution of more narrowly liturgical books from these collections, see Jacques Dubois and Jean-Loup Lemaître, \textit{Sources et méthodes de l’hagiographie médiévale} (Paris, 1993).
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passages from *Pseudo-Matthew*. This second fragment also contains passages taken from the Vulgate Gospels of Matthew and Luke. London, British Library, Add. 11880 (c. 820), is a legendary from the episcopal scriptorium of Ratisbon. In this source *Pseudo-Matthew* is found on fols. 215r–231r, for use in conjunction with the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin.

Thus around the year 800 attempts were made to extend the Gospel accounts of Christ’s infancy with legends from the tradition of the *Proto-Evangelium* and to place the text in the context of the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. Liturgists were attempting to draw the two texts together. We find discussions in the commentaries on Matthew by Rabanus Maurus and Paschasius Radbertus that would serve to strengthen the connection for learned monastic audiences, emphasizing as these authors do that Matthew was a Jew of the tribe of Levi who wrote his Gospel in Hebrew. Clearly, the idea that Matthew wrote texts about the Virgin Mary was promoted in the ninth century, and it was directly and deliberately supported by the change of the Gospel text for the Feast of Mary’s Nativity and the acceptance of *Pseudo-Matthew*. Liturgy, theology, and exegesis worked together to offer Mary’s life story legitimacy among thinkers suspicious of allegory and apocryphal legends.

The connection between the evangelist Matthew and Mary’s *vita* was strengthened by the addition of two letters to the opening of *Pseudo-Matthew* at around this same time. The first is written as if from two bishops, Chromatius of Aquileia and Heliodorus, actual contemporaries of Jerome to whom he dedicated his translation of Tobias. In the second letter Pseudo-Jerome justifies his translation of an apocryphal work on the ground that it is useful in the combatting of heretical views, especially those of the Manichean Leucius, who was involved in transcribing a version of the Virgin’s life. There is an irony to the involvement of Pseudo-

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33 The fragment is on fols. 179v–182v and has been edited by E. De Strycker in “Une ancienne version latine du Protévangile de Jacques avec des extraits de la Vulgate de Matthieu 1–2 et Luc 1–2,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 83 (1965), 365–410; for discussion, see *Pseudo-Matthew*, pp. 16–17.

34 See *Pseudo-Matthew*, pp. 118–19.

35 See, for example, the prologue to Rabanus’s commentary, PL 107:731.

36 The most notable controversy in the ninth century concerning the use of nonscriptural texts in the liturgy centered on the activities of Agobard of Lyons, and especially his vicious attacks upon Amalarius of Metz.


38 Chromatius wrote a commentary on Matthew’s Gospel: *Chromatii Aquileiensis Opera*, ed. R. Etaix and L. Lemarié, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 9A (Turnhout, 1974), pp. 184–498. This fact, and the connection with Jerome (who dedicated other works to him as well), lent authority to the fabricated letter.

39 Leucius was also credited with apocryphal acts of the apostles, for which see Eric Junod and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, “L’histoire des actes apocryphes des apôtres du 3e au 9e siècle: Le cas des Actes de Jean,” *Cahiers de la Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 7 (1982), 1–152, esp. pp. 137–43.
Jerome in the reception of the texts of the Proto-Evangelium in the West: Jerome’s intense dislike for the text was a major reason why it did not circulate widely in the West in earlier centuries.40

The goal of linking Pseudo-Matthew to the Feast of Mary’s Nativity was achieved in Chartres before the year 1000, as can be seen in the tenth-century homiliary of St. Père of Chartres, Chartres, Bibliothèque Municipale, 25.41 This source was burned along with hundreds of other liturgical manuscripts in the fire of May 26, 1944, which all but destroyed the municipal library of Chartres and its magnificent collection of almost one thousand medieval manuscripts.42 Henri Barré was able to construct an inventory of MS 25 from the numbers of sermons it contained, some printed tables of contents, and comparison with like manuscripts.43 It contained Matt. 1.1–18 and readings from Pseudo-Matthew as readings for the Feast of Mary’s Nativity. This was the tradition received by Fulbert, bishop of Chartres, in the early eleventh century.

MARY AND THE PEACE MOVEMENT: A NEW LIFE OF THE VIRGIN FROM C. 1000

The tenth and eleventh centuries witnessed the transformation of Carolingian liturgical materials through the creation of substantial numbers of new pieces for the Mass and, to an even greater degree, for the Divine Office. A great period of liturgical expansion took place in the decades on either side of the year 1000, as the Peace Movement called historians, liturgists, and composers to the service of the cults of the saints.44 The saints offered protection; they required care and

40 See n. 29 above.
41 For a newly revised list of Chartres liturgical manuscripts, see Fassler, Making History: The Liturgical Framework of Time and Cult of the Virgin at Chartres (forthcoming). Fundamental to the study of Chartres liturgical manuscripts is Yves Delaporte’s edition of the thirteenth-century Chartres ordinal, a book very close to the twelfth-century Ordo veridicus, which survives in Delaporte’s handwritten copy. See Delaporte, L’ordinaire chartrain, pp. 203–13; and Fassler, “Liturgy and Sacred History in the Twelfth-Century Typanma at Chartres,” Art Bulletin 75 (1993), 499–520. Several of the sources are also discussed in Jan van der Meulen, with Rudiger Hoyer and Deborah Cole, Chartres Sources and Literary Interpretation: A Critical Bibliography (Boston, 1989); this mammoth compendium is the place to begin for research into Chartres liturgy, ecclesial history, and the liturgical arts.
43 See his Les homélaires carolingiens de l’école d’Auxerre: Authenticité, inventaire, tableaux comparatifs, initia, Studi e Testi 225 (Vatican City, 1962), pp. 17–25. The Feast of Mary’s Nativity is listed on p. 22. See further C. Lambot, “Sermon inédit de saint Augustin pour une fête de martyrs dans un homiliaire de type ancien,” Revue bénédictine 68 (1958), 187–99. A microfilm of MS 25, made after the fire, is difficult to use: the very ink was singed from the pages, and so even the filmed fragments are bare of copy in most places.
44 For a collection of papers and editions of documents concerning the Peace Movement, see Thomas Head and Richard Landes, eds., The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000 (Ithaca, N.Y., 1992). A useful review of the scholarship on the subject is found in Frederick S. Paxton’s essay, “History, Historians, and the Peace of God,” ibid., pp. 21–40. The essay closes with a plea for further study of the complexities of this historical movement and the many forces that had a share in shaping it. For more recent bibliography and a detailed look at the political situation in the area around Poitiers c. 1000, see Thomas Head, “The Development of the Peace of God in Aquitaine (970–1005),” Speculum 74 (1999), 656–86.
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memoria in return. Every fresh altar stone demanded an appropriate space, a set of relics, a vita, and a newly composed or readapted office for the saint honored. This was a significant period not only for the composition of chants for the office but also for the creation of new sequences and tropes for the liturgy of the Mass; many newly ordered collections of these pieces were produced as the works were codified, and these newer genres became ever more widely accepted. The early eleventh century was also a time of change and renewal in the hymn repertory and of rethinking how hymns were used in the curricula of monastic schools as well as within the liturgy.

Just as many saints were being discovered or restored, and as the composition of new saints' lives was playing a central part in the intellectual and artistic fervor of the times, a new life was created for the Virgin Mary. The Libellus de nativitate Sanctae Mariae, once thought to have been composed in the late ninth century, has now been dated to around the year 1000 by Rita Beyers, the scholar who has prepared the work's first critical edition. She states that the earliest sure testimony

45 Rodulfus Glaber has the discovery of large numbers of relics follow directly on the heels of the campaign for new church building. Of course, the two went together: "When the whole world was, as we have said, clothed in a white mantle of new churches, a little later, in the eighth year after the millennium of the Savior's Incarnation, the relics of many saints were revealed by various signs where they had long lain hidden. It was as though they had been waiting for a brilliant resurrection and were now by God's permission revealed to the gaze of the faithful; certainly they brought much comfort to men's minds"; Rodulfus Glaber, The Five Books of the Histories, ed. and trans. John France (Oxford, 1989), 3.6.19, p. 127. New discoveries of the relics upon which cults were based, and the effects these elevations of cult had upon architecture, are discussed in Werner Jacobsen, "Saints' Tombs in Frankish Church Architecture," Speculum 72 (1997), 1107–43. On later Marian cults and miracles and their impact upon church architecture, see Christian Sapin, "L'origine des rotondes mariales des IXe–Xle siècles et le cas de Saint-Germain-d'Auxerre"; Eric Palazzo, "Marie et l'élaboration d'un espace ecclésial au haut moyen âge"; and Gabriela Signori, "La bienheureuse polysémie miracles et pèlerinages à la Vierge: Pouvoir thaumaturgique et modèles pastoraux (Xe–Xle siècles)," all in Marie: Le culte de la Vierge (above, n. 8), pp. 295–312, 313–25, and 591–617, respectively.


to its existence is that of Bishop Fulbert of Chartres, as cited in his sermon *Approbate consuetudinis*, a work to be discussed in some detail below. A prologue and a different letter, this written as if by Jerome in response to a modified letter from the bishops of Aquileia, circulated with the *Libellus*. Here "Jerome" claims that the *Pseudo-Evangelium* is filled with falsehoods and that it was written by the heretic Seleucus, who also wrote "passions" of the apostles. Yet this "Jerome" from c. 1000 was willing to translate the work from the Hebrew, knowing that some of it was false and some not, and that it appeared to have incorporated earlier work by Matthew. He comments that although many events reported in the work are doubtful, yet they cannot be completely rejected: for people to think that God can bring forth miracles of the sort described in the treatise does no harm.

Beyers outlines the ways in which the *Libellus* is to be distinguished from its source, *Pseudo-Matthew*; her sketch points out the liturgical ideals held by Bishop Fulbert, who was apparently a contemporary of the person who wrote this new life of the Virgin. Indeed, it would be tempting to suggest that the work is by Fulbert himself. Although there is no hard evidence for this, the interplay between the treatise, the letter that forms its preface, and the sermons attributed to Fulbert suggests powerful affinities. Both the treatise and Fulbert's sermons are representative not only of shifting liturgical tastes but also of a Mariological dimension of the Peace Movement. Drawing on Beyers's comments on the *Libellus*, I note that the editor was bold, and took great liberties with the tradition of *Pseudo-Matthew*; he excised material concerning the infancy of Christ and concentrated rather upon the birth and early life of the Virgin; he chose episodes carefully, leaving out the most controversial and anecdotal; he reinforced the scriptural roots of the work.

The once accepted earlier dating is based on interpretations of a passage in Hincmar of Reims. In "L'homelie du pseudo-Jerome sur l'Assomption et l'Evangile de la Nativité de Marie d'après une lettre inédite d'Hincmar," Revue bénédictine 46 (1934), 265–82, C. Lambot argued that Hincmar's defense of certain texts referred to the *Libellus* and that thus it must date from before the letter, which was written in 868–69. Hincmar also stated that the pseudo-Hieronymian letters prefacing the text were by Paschasius Radbertus, as was the famous treatise written for the Assumption, *Cogitisme*, also written as if by Jerome. Rita Beyers and Jan Gijsel believe that Hincmar's reference is rather to a version of *Pseudo-Matthew* and that there is no proof from this passage that Hincmar knew the *Libellus* at all. See J. Gijsel in Analecta Bollandiana 87 (1969), 504–5; and *Libellus*, pp. 28–32. Beyers and Gijsel do not question the attribution of the letters and the treatise *Cogitisme* to Paschasius Radbertus.

For evaluation of the passage from the *Libellus* that Fulbert cites in *Approbate consuetudinis*, see Beyers's edition, pp. 140–46. For discussion of authenticity regarding *Approbate* and other sermons attributed to Fulbert, see J. M. Canal, "Los sermons marianos de San Fulberto de Chartres († 1028)," Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale 29 (1962) 33–51, which forms the introduction to his edition of these texts, "Texto crítico de algunos sermons marianos de San Fulberto de Chartres o a él atribuibles," ibid., 30 (1963), 55–87; see also Canal's additional note, ibid., pp. 329–33. Canal's work, his choice of sources, and his evaluations of authenticity have been sharply criticized by Henri Barré: see "Pro Fulberto," ibid., 31 (1964), 324–30. Yet another apparent reference to the *Libellus* is found in a second sermon frequently attributed to Fulbert (and used for the octave of Mary's Nativity at Chartres): see Canal's edition of *Mutuae dilectionis*, in "Texto crítico," esp. p. 64.


See *Libellus*, pp. 20–21.
whenever possible and used language to strengthen the biblical character of the contents; and, lastly, he wrote in a more learned style than the author of *Pseudo-Matthew*.

The compiler of the *Libellus de nativitate Sanctae Mariae* was a scholar well versed in theology and exegesis and endowed with literary talent. His goals were to legitimize the legends found in *Pseudo-Matthew* and to streamline the materials it contained, focusing it more intensely upon the Virgin. The Mary he presents grows naturally from the character found in the New Testament, as further fleshed out in the second century. “From the beginning the emphasis is placed on her perpetual virginity and upon her royal descent from the family of David, upon her birth at Nazareth, and upon her youth spent in the Temple of Jerusalem.” Mary’s conception parallels the miraculous story of the conception of John the Baptist, and this provides further biblical roots for the legend of her origins. Fulbert of Chartres was to champion this work, and to link his own writings to it, but in understated ways that would make his liturgical decisions acceptable to his contemporaries and to the generations after him. Mary would have a life filled with miracles paralleling those of the life of the Messiah; this life would reshape her and her importance as the greatest of Christian saints. Western perceptions of the seminal first century of the common era changed significantly through this development, and the Mariology of the central Middle Ages depended upon it.

This new focus on Mary’s life was yet another way of contextualizing the cults of the many first-century saints as they developed north of the Alps in the medieval period. Through the lives of these saints, and particularly of Mary, Europe was peopled by figures from the Holy Land.

**The Life of the Virgin in Fulbert’s Sermon for Mary’s Nativity**

Fulbert was bishop of Chartres from 1006 until his death in 1028. Little is known of his early life. His student Adelman of Liège provided sufficient details in a biographical poem to connect him with Reims at a time that would have made

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53 Around the year 1000 cults of first-century saints from the Holy Land sharply increased in number north of the Alps as many churches and regions claimed apostolic associations to increase their stature. A team of scholars is now editing the works of Ademar of Chabannes, a contemporary of Bishop Fulbert, another figure exemplifying the tenor of the times. Ademar wrote histories and elevated the cult of St. Martial as an apostle, for which purpose he composed chants and other liturgical materials. For further discussion, see Richard Landes, *Relics, Apocalypse, and the Deceits of History: Ademar of Chabannes, 989–1034* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995); and James Grier, “‘Ecce sanctum quem deus elegit Marcialem apostolum’: Ademar of Chabannes and the Tropes for the Feast of Saint Martial,” in *Beyond the Moon: Festschrift Luther Dittmer*, ed. Bryan Gillingham and Paul Merkley (Ottawa, 1990), pp. 28–74.

54 For an evaluation of St. Denis legends and their retranslations into other guises, see the forthcoming study by Tova Leigh Choate, “Cultivating Sainthood: Borrowed Images in the Liturgy of St. Chéron, Martyr of Chartres.”
him a student of the renowned Gerbert of Aurillac. Fulbert’s justly famous letters record events from the early and last years of his tenure (most letters from the years between 1008 and 1019 having been lost); they show him to have been a man with close ties to several regions in Francia. He was a master of canon law, frequently consulted for his knowledge of medicine, and famed as a teacher of the liberal arts. Fear of ambush and of deceit punctuates his constant efforts at calming down the small-scale, but seriously dangerous, military maneuvers that threatened continually to ravage his diocese. There is nothing particularly out of the ordinary in this sketch of the most famous of the Peace Movement bishops, until the single event occurred that refocused his energies.

In 1020, on the eve of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, who was the patron saint of Chartres cathedral, the tenth-century church building began to burn. As the story has it, the fire raged all during the feast day itself and into the morning.

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55 For the evidence of Adelman, see Frederick Behrends, ed., The Letters and Poems of Fulbert of Chartres (Oxford, 1976), p. xvi n; for an edition of the poem, see J. Havet, “Poème rythmique d’Adelman de Liège,” in Notices et documents publiés pour la Société de l’histoire de France à l’occasion du cinquantième anniversaire de sa fondation (Paris, 1884), pp. 71–73. The only full-length study of Fulbert’s life in its historical setting remains C. Pfister, De Fulberti Carnotensis episcopi vita et operibus (Nancy, 1885); updated by P. Viard, “Fulbert of Chartres,” in Dictionnaire de spiritualité 5 (Paris, 1964), cols. 1605–11; L. C. MacKinney, Bishop Fulbert and Education at the School of Chartres (Notre Dame, 1957); and by the introductory material in Behrends. The scant evidence advanced in these works is drawn from Fulbert's letters, autobiographical poems, epitaphs, and notices in chronicles and necrologies. The nonliturgical poems are edited and translated by Behrends, pp. 242–45; his obituary and epitaph are contained in appendix A, p. 272. If Fulbert did study with Gerbert, he could have learned from him about cultic practices in a region of France important in the development of the Peace Movement. (For a discussion of saints in Aurillac, representative of the cults in the Auvergne, see Christian Lauranson-Rosaz, “Peace from the Mountains: The Auvergnat Origins of the Peace of God,” in Head and Landes, The Peace of God, pp. 104–34.)

56 Whether in his youth or later, Fulbert came to know Aquitaine and the Auvergne. He was a close ally of Duke William V of Aquitaine, related to the house of Chartres/Blois through his mother, Emma. Duke William was a first cousin to Fulbert’s major supporter, Count Odo II of Chartres/Blois. Count Odo’s wife, Ermengarde, was the daughter of Robert, count of Auvergne. For discussion of the house of Chartres/Blois, see Léonce Lex, Eudes, comte de Blois . . . et Thibaud son frère (Troyes, 1892); and Fassler, Making History.

57 Fulbert is pictured teaching in an eleventh-century manuscript, now Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Lat. 14272, which represents the texts and subjects taught in his school. The illuminations were added after the manuscript was brought to St. Emmeram in Regensburg. It was apparently transported there by one of Fulbert’s students, the monk Hartwic, who became abbot of St. Emmeram. For further commentary on the illumination within the letter O (fol. 4r) see G. Swarzenski, Die Regensburger Buchmalerei des X. und XI. Jahrhunderts (Leipzig, 1901; repr. Stuttgart, 1969), pp. 56–60 and plate 10. The inscription reads “Domnus Fulbertus episcopus,” as stated in Florentine Mütherich et al., Regensburger Buchmalerei: Von frühkarolingischer Zeit bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters (Munich, 1987), p. 35.

58 Fulbert’s fame in the eleventh century is attested by Rodulfus Glaber, who uses him to characterize the finest of the age: “As 1033, the year of the millennium of the Passion of Christ approached, many men famous in the Roman world, veritable standard-bearers of the holy faith, ended their lives. Amongst them were Benedict, the universal pope, Robert, king of the Franks (to whose death we have already referred), and that incomparable bishop and wisest of men, Fulbert of Chartres”: Histories 4.4.9, pp. 184–87.
thereafter (from September seventh, through the eighth, and into the ninth). There is no mention in Fulbert's writings of Chartres's greatest relic, the chemise Mary wore when giving birth, but it was certainly there by his lifetime. The Norman Dudo of St. Quentin, who is thought to have written his history in the first decade of the eleventh century, told the story of the siege of Chartres in 911 and of the relic's saving power as wielded in the hands of a bishop: "[S]uddenly, bishop Walter charged out of the city robed as if to celebrate mass, and bearing the cross and the tunic of the Holy Virgin Mary in his hands, with the clergy and the citizens following behind, attended by 'steel-clad squadrons' he struck the backs of the pagans with spears and swords. And seeing that he was standing between two armies, and that he himself was not winning, and that his men were growing fewer, Rollo 'passed through the midst' of those armies, and began to withdraw from them, lest he be 'seized by untimely death.'"

Fulbert's epitaph in the necrology of the cathedral emphasizes his efforts at rebuilding the church: "III Idus Aprilis [10 April]. Beloved by God and people, our father, of good memory, Fulbert, bishop of this holy seat, outstanding light given by God to the world, sustainer of the poor, consoler of the desolate, restrainer of predators and robbers, a man most eloquent and wise equally in divine matters as in the liberal arts, who for the restoring of this holy temple, which he himself began to rebuild from the foundations after the fire, contributed the best part of his own gold and silver, and illuminated this place with rays of discipline and wisdom, and did many good things for his clergy": E. de Lépinois and Lucien Merlet, Cartulaire de Notre-Dame de Chartres, 3 vols. (Chartres, 1865), 3:85. See also Behrends, Letters and Poems, pp. xliii–xliv and 272. The words are ascribed to Fulbert's student, the master musician Sigo.

A list of five major fires in Chartres is found in the life of St. Aniane, believed to have been written around 1138. René Merlet corrected what he believed were blatant mistakes in dating, but the extent to which the report of the fire of 1020 is accurate has been a subject of dispute by architectural historians. The passage in question reads as follows: "The third [fire occurred] in 1020, the fourteenth year of the episcopate of Fulbert. This time, the cathedral was not only damaged by the flames, but was ruined from the top to the foundations. Fulbert then devoted his genius, his activity, and his money to the reconstruction from the foundations; he made it of an astonishing beauty and grandeur, and he left it a little less than finished when he died." See René Merlet and Jules Alexandre Clerval, eds., Un manuscrit chartrois du XIe siècle (Chartres, 1893), pp. 56–57. For the original text, transcribed from Chartrois sources from the twelfth through the fourteenth century, see Alexandre Clerval, "Translationes S. Aniani Carnotensis episcopi annis 1136 et 1264 factae," Analecta Bollandiana 7 (1888), 321–35.

See Yves Delaporte, Le voile de Notre-Dame (Chartres, 1927), for a seminal discussion of the relic. Further information, especially regarding manifestations of the relic in the liturgy and art of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, can be found in Fassler, Making History. Cloth relics and cloth wrappings in medieval reliquaries are discussed in Anna Muthesius, "Silks and Saints: The Rider and Peacock Silks from the Relics of St Cuthbert," in St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200, ed. Gerald Bonner, David Rollason, and Clare Stancliffe (Woodbridge, Suff., 1989), pp. 343–66.

Bishop Fulbert was confronted with an extraordinary set of circumstances: his church had burned on the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin, and the principal relic of that church was the birthing chemise of the Virgin, associated in Chartres with miraculous powers to save the city from war and destruction. Fulbert worked to heighten the power of the Virgin’s cult at Chartres by upgrading the very feast on which the church was destroyed, thus linking Mary, her relic, and his church in a fiery marriage that would capture the imaginations of Chartrains and pilgrims to Chartres for centuries after his liturgical innovation. The several sermons and chants he (or those in his entourage) wrote for the feast would become known throughout Europe, and they would also promote the relic of the chemise, associated as it was, and would be, with ideas of birth and of the Davidic lineage of Mary and her son. The cloth, with its exotic properties and the stories associated with it, came to represent the flesh upon which it was believed to have rested, not only in giving birth, but also at the Annunciation, on which feast one of the chants attributed to Fulbert and composed for the Nativity of the Virgin would be repeated at Chartres.

Of the several eleventh-century sermons written by Fulbert and his contemporaries for the Feast of Mary’s Nativity, one became the most famous: Approbat consuetudinis, a work always attributed to Fulbert in the sources, and by historians of the Middle Ages as well. A close reading of the work demonstrates that Fulbert’s goals in its creation were, indeed, very close to those of the compiler of the Libellus, as outlined above. Fulbert sought to dispel early problems over the legends in the Mary stories for the purpose of making them part of the liturgy of her nativity, the feast he worked to magnify.

He apparently wrote several sermons for this feast, probably because he wished to provide it with an octave’s worth of sermons and because he wanted to create a festive character distinct from that of the Assumption. In many regions chant texts for the Mass and Office for Mary’s Nativity were borrowed or readapted

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An engraving from 1697 by Nicholas de Larmessin illustrates the several local miracles associated with the chemise and their staying power in Chartrian history. The engraving is discussed at length in Fassler, Making History.

Regardless of what definitive pronouncements will one day be made about the authenticity of the sermons attributed to Fulbert (and this will not happen until a critical edition is prepared), there can be no doubt that a particular group of Marian sermons written in the eleventh century (and including all those works edited by Canal; see n. 49 above) was used for celebrating the Nativity of the Virgin and the octave of the feast at Notre Dame de Chartres and that by the late eleventh century these works formed the backbone of her veneration at Chartres.
works, merely taken from the Assumption liturgy. If Mary’s Nativity was to be special, serving as the patronal feast for the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Chartres, this would not be appropriate. Chartres celebrated the octave of the Assumption by the early eleventh century, and Fulbert’s evident goal was to make the Nativity of Mary an equally solemn feast with unique characteristics. *Approbate consuetudinis* reveals the intentions reflected in his other sermons, but it was this work that made Fulbert famous, from England to eastern Europe, in the decades after his death. Along with the chants to be discussed here (most importantly the responsory “Stirps Jesse”), it was a major source for the image bearing the name of the chant itself.

In contrast, a sermon for Mary’s Nativity by Fulbert’s contemporary, the Anglo-Saxon Aelfric, who struggled with similar problems regarding apocryphal material, did not rely upon or even mention the legends of Mary’s infancy. Aelfric was less scrupulous in regard to the Assumption, however, and shows himself here to be very like Fulbert in his goals and liturgical sensibilities, reflecting the liturgical ideals of the age. The sermons of Fulbert for Mary’s Nativity (and of Aelfric for the Assumption) recast Mary’s life to be in tune with the thousands of other saints’ lives being written at the time. Through hagiographical writings of this type, the Mother of God was becoming a medieval saint: the converging facets of her character as Theotokos and as a local cultic figure with an apocryphal life and numerous miracles explain the unique powers she exerted in the central Middle Ages.

*Approbate consuetudinis* is a carefully constructed work. It falls into clearly demarcated sections, each of which is worthy of discussion, although I will analyze closely only the opening in detail. This was the part most widely adapted for liturgical use and the section crucial for development of the *Stirps Jesse* motif. The sermon’s introduction, which has been much cited in the scholarly literature, has two goals: to herald the importance of the Feast of Mary’s Nativity and to justify the use within the liturgy of apocryphal Marian infancy legends, and other miracle legends associated with her. Fulbert claims that reasons for celebrating the feast with a solemnity matching that of “older” Marian celebrations have to do not only with the idea that she is the greatest of the saints, but also with *devotio fidelium*, with popular piety, a force demanding that the feast have priority:

The established custom among Christians is to observe the birthdays of the holy Fathers with careful attention, and then especially to recite aloud in church the virtues ascribed to them in writing for the praise of God, by whose gift they exist, and for the use of the little ones. Among all the saints, therefore, the memory of the most blessed Virgin is most often and most joyously celebrated, since she is believed to have found the most


67 See Fulton, “The Virgin Mary and the Song of Songs” (above, n. 8), pp. 179–89. Fulton compares the much-studied *Cogitis me* on the Assumption by Paschasius Radbertus to the sermon of Aelfric based on it, finding that whereas Paschasius’s work is “interrupted by doubts, digressions and exhortations,” Aelfric “condenses and reorganizes Paschasius’s arguments” (p. 185). Aelfric also briefly sums up two Marian miracles at the close of the sermon, one of which is that of Theophilus, highly favored by Fulbert as well.
favor with God. Hence, after certain other and older feasts were established in her honor, the devotion of the faithful was still not content without this day's solemn feast of her Nativity being added. And so particularly on this day it seemed that the book that was found written concerning her origin and life ought to be read in church, even though the Fathers did not decide to include it among the apocrypha. And since it seemed appropriate to great and wise men, let us—as we read certain other apocryphal texts that are not hostile to the faith—follow ecclesiastical usage with due respect.68

A famous likeness claimed in the twelfth century to be of Fulbert (Fig. I) shows him preaching to the people of Chartres. In the sermon he claimed to listen to them as well, and to advance the piety of the folk as a proper consideration in the designing of liturgies.69

Thus the opening of the sermon introduces the problematic legends of Mary's Nativity and with an immediate and unapologetic stroke legitimizes their use as office readings. Fulbert does not, as his Carolingian counterparts did, pretend to be Jerome (the letter accompanying the Libellus does this); he does not express serious doubts or caustic criticisms of Marian legends. The stories of Mary's birth are appropriate to her feast, and there is precedent for their liturgical use; the feast must be celebrated with appropriate attention rendered. For those liturgists who wished to have the legends and the feast function together, this sermon from a famous and well-respected churchman would have been most welcome.70

The sermon began to circulate in the course of the eleventh century, and early manuscripts of the Libellus were finding their ways into various centers at that time as well; the two became coordinated in the eleventh century, as we will see was the case in the Chartrain liturgy from the second half of the eleventh century.71

68 "Approbatae consuetudinis est apud xpistianos, sanctorum patrum dies natalitios obseruare di-
ligenter, et tunc praecipue uiurtes eorum, assignatas litteris, in aecclesia recitare al [sic] laudem dei, ex cuius munere sunt, et ad instrumenta minorum. Inter omnes autem sanctos, memoria beatissimae
uirginis eo frequentius agitur atque festiuius, quo maiorem graciem apud deum creditur inuenisse.
Unde post alia quaedam ipsius antiquiora sollemnia, non fuit contenta deuoitio fidelium, quin na-
titiatis eius solemne superadderet hodierum.

Hac itaque die peculiariter in aecclesia recitandus esse uideretur ille liber qui de ortu eius atque
uita scriptus inueniebatur, si non iudicassent eum patres inter apocrifa numerandum. At quoniam
magnis ac sapientibus uiris ita uiuis est, nos alia quaedam sed non aliena legentes, aecclesiasticum
morem debitis officiis exequamur". Canal, "Texto critico," p. 56.

69 The illumination is found in Chartres, Bibliothèque Municipale, nouv. acqu. 4, parts of which were
edited by Merlet and Clerval in Un manuscrit chartrain du XIe siècle. The evaluation made of this
manuscript by Merlet and Clerval has long colored the scholarship on the cult of the Virgin of Chartres.
In a forthcoming study Georges Bonnebas will challenge earlier opinions of the manuscript, arguing
that the eleventh-century illumination was not of Bishop Fulbert but rather of an abbot of St. Père of
Chartres and that the building depicted is the famous Benedictine Abbey of St. Père, not, as has been
so frequently argued, the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Chartres. In the twelfth century, according to
his argument, the illumination was claimed to be of Fulbert and became a key ingredient in the Fulbert
myth as it evolved at that time. Once Bonnebas's work is published, scholars will set to the task of
evaluating his controversial ideas. I am grateful to him for discussing his work with me before its
publication and realize that it may undergo transformation before appearing in print.

70 The pseudo-Hieronymian letter quoted above makes the point that apocryphal literature should
be respected if it is orthodox in its principles.

71 It must be noted that both Pseudo-Matthew and the Libellus circulated in the eleventh century,
although the newer work was the more popular of the two. The critical edition of Pseudo-Matthew
The next section of the sermon fuses three important themes. Mary’s role in the history of salvation was foretold by signs and prophecies in Scripture (canonical and apocryphal), and these needed to be fulfilled by her birth and its circumstances. The lineage of the human race had a particular cast of sin, the lust of the Fall, which blocked the coming of salvation; this sinful progression of events could be countered only by a particular type of human being, one who was humble in mind and unmarked by the sin of concupiscence: “A child prophetically ordained by her lineage, she shone forth, marked by the privilege of her virtues.” It is Mary’s chastity and utter goodness that block the accustomed flow of our human heritage and staunch the wound of sin; she provides “most pure flesh” for the Messiah, called in the fullness of time to become the throne of Wisdom and to consummate

contains a listing of manuscripts of both treatises in chronological order: for Pseudo-Matthew there is one source from around 800 (Montpellier 55 discussed above), eight manuscripts from the ninth century, three from the tenth, and seven from the eleventh; the Libellus has sixteen witnesses from the eleventh century, and twelve of these are from Francia. The greatest numbers of manuscripts in both cases, however, were copied in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.
David’s lineage. Mary’s flesh is suitable for three reasons: it is pure; its coming as the throne of the Messiah is foretold by the prophets; and its descent is appropriate to fulfill the prophecies. To give her being this position in the history of humankind helps explain the favor she won from theologians in the central and later Middle Ages:

The blessed mother of the Lord and ever virgin Mary, before she was to be born, was proclaimed by prophecies and pointed out by miracles. A child prophetically ordained by her lineage, she shone forth, marked by the privilege of her virtues. She brought forth a Savior by whom she has been glorified in heaven, yet she has never ceased to support those who are on earth. May the story follow this theme in its own order. Let us now recall one of the prophecies already mentioned, and then we can proceed in a few words. The Eternal One said to the Old One, God to the Serpent: “I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel” (Gen. 3.15).72

Brothers, what does “crush the head of the serpent” mean in this passage, unless it is to conquer the chief temptation of the Devil, that is, concupiscence, by resistance? If then we ask what woman could achieve a victory of that sort, surely one is not to be found in the lineage of human generation73 until her whom we are now celebrating, the holy of holies. And if we ask in what way even she could crush the head of the serpent, of course it is in this way, for she offered the sacrifice at once of both virginity and humility. By preserving her virginity she demonstrates that concupiscence of the flesh had been destroyed; by preserving her humility, which produces the poor in spirit, she demonstrates that concupiscence of the mind has been destroyed as well. And so with the chief temptation of the Devil conquered, she has crushed the vicious head through the action of the heel of virtue. Yet not by this action alone, but she has triumphed especially by this: the Wisdom of God, having been furnished with a body from her most pure flesh, conquers, reaching evil everywhere end to end mightily, and ordering all things sweetly (Wisd. of Sol. 8.1).

This then is the woman to whom the divine prophecy was pointing; when it intimated that she was to be born, it indicated that she would be born in a unique way.74

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72 Quotations from the Vulgate are taken from the Douay-Reims translation, first redacted by Gregory Martin (d. 1582) and other English scholars in exile in France at the close of the sixteenth century. The archaic language has been retained.
73 The phrase used by Fulbert, “linea generationis humanae,” is rare in medieval exegesis.
74 “Beata ergo domini mater et perpetua uirgo Maria, priusquam nasceretur, oraculis enunciata est, et designata miraculis. Nata uero, progenie diuinitus ordinata, privilegio uirtutum insignis enituit. Saluatorem edidit a quo glorificata in celo, nunquam terrigenis patrocinari desistit.”
In the next section Fulbert chooses two of the miracles he has referred to above, as he continues to expand upon themes of lineage. The compiler of *Libellus de nativitate Sanctae Mariæ* turned miracles into Scripture, as described above; in *Approbate* Fulbert works in a different way. He begins with events found in the Bible and recasts them to emphasize their miraculous aspects. Subsequently he omits discussion of the parallel events in the *Libellus*, allowing the Bible to proclaim the legends of Mary's birth indirectly. He chooses two biblical events or complexes of material and expands upon each of them: the flowering rod of Aaron and the messianic prophecies of Isaiah:

At the Lord's command a rod was taken by blessed Moses from each tribe of Israel, inscribed with the name of each, and then they were laid up in his tabernacle: on the following day, the rod belonging to Aaron was found to have budded, flowered, sprouted leaves, and produced almonds. The Lord, knowing this work of his to be part of a great mystery, ordered that the rod be preserved as a memorial (cf. Num. 17.1-10). The sons of Israel had been instructed by the presence of the rod to seek carefully what such a miraculous deed might signify; long after, proceeding to disclose this, blessed Isaiah said:

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root, and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him" (Isa. 11.1-2). At these words it is as if his hearers were to say, "O father Isaiah, you speak obscurely; we beg you, tell us this thing openly!" Isaiah then added an explanation and said: "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (Isa. 7.14). The Virgin's son, that is Emmanuel, Isaiah describes plainly: "For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace. His empire shall be multiplied, and there shall be no end of peace" (Isa. 9.6-7).

What God, then, pointed out by a miracle, this prophesying revealed from its secret counsels, and what the prophet celebrated in song, subsequently the conclusion of the matter confirmed. For just as that rod without a root, without any support of nature or artifice, bore fruit, so Mary the Virgin, without the act of marriage, brought forth a son, a son surely denoted by the flower and the fruit, by the flower in accord with beauty, by the fruit in accord with service. He is indeed "most beautiful above the sons of men" (Ps. 44.3), and the life-sustaining food not only of humans alone but also of angels. With the first section of this proposition briefly affirmed, we take up what follows.75

It is instructive to compare the mode of treating the miracle of Joseph’s flowering rod as found in *Approbate* with those of *Pseudo-Matthew* and the *Libellus*. Even brief analysis of this single event will demonstrate changes in treatment that are significant for the development of the image of the flowering rod and its theological and liturgical undergirdings. The miracle of Joseph’s rod appears in *Pseudo-Matthew* as a version of the tale from the *Proto-Evangelium* of James. In this story Mary, who has lived in the Temple since her infancy, must leave with the onset of puberty and the impurity caused by her menstrual cycle. The priest Abiathar announces that a husband is required for Mary, a man who will respect her vow of virginity. Lots are cast to determine from which tribe of Israel the man will come, and the cut falls to the tribe of Judah. Rods are collected from each man of Judah who is as yet unmarried, including the old man Joseph, and God commands that these be placed in the Holy of Holies, promising that the following morning a dove will fly from the rod of that man who is to marry the Virgin. Next morning, after each man has taken up his rod, nothing happens. The high priest enters into prayer, and an angel relates that the very smallest and most miserable of rods, that of Joseph, has been forgotten; it must be put with the others, and so it is. When Joseph then collects his rod, a dove, shining and beautiful, flies from it, straight through the Temple, and then heavenward.

Although the story as told in the *Libellus* parallels closely that of *Pseudo-Matthew*, the words of God to the high priest are expressed in radically different language, and they introduce other themes. In this treatise from c. 1000 is found reference to both Isa. 7 and 11: to the virgin who will give birth and to the flowering rod that will rise from the root of Jesse, with the spirit resting upon it, a spirit described in terms of its attributes, as in Isaiah. Whereas in *Pseudo-Matthew* the dove alone is the symbol of the blessed rod, in the *Libellus* the rod sprouts flowers as well as emitting the dove, making the parallel with Num. 17 much more powerful.

I have followed the edition of Gijsel for the text of *Pseudo-Matthew* and Amann’s copy of the *Libellus*, a text copied from the now-destroyed Chartres MS 162, which dated from the second half of the eleventh century. This source will be discussed again below.

The emphasis on the consecrated virgin relates to the religious climate of the early ninth century and provides *Pseudo-Matthew* with its powerful monastic flavor. There is another rod of Joseph, that alluded to in Heb. 11.21, where it is claimed that the patriarch blessed the tribes bowing in worship over his staff. Although this staff is not mentioned in Gen. 50, the passage from Hebrews that contains it was explored in the Middle Ages, especially by Rabanus Maurus, who mentions the passage in his commentaries upon Genesis, Ezechiel, Jeremiah, and Paul. The word for the tip of the patriarch’s staff, cacumen, is the same used for the tip of Joseph of Nazareth’s rod in the story of the emerging dove in *Pseudo-Matthew* 8.3 (p. 363) and *Libellus* 8.6 (pp. 311-13). Sophisticated medieval exegetes would have recognized the textual parallel.

Through the dove the author makes reference to the baptism of Christ, Mark 1.10.

"Et ceteri quidem orationi incubuerent, pontifex ad consulendum ex more accessit. Nec mora, cunctis audientibus de oraculo et propitiatorii loco uox facta est Isaiae uaticinio requirendum esse cui urgo commendari et desponsari deberet, Isaia dicere: 'Egredietur uirga de radice Jesse, et flos de radice eius ascendit et requiescat super eum spiritus domini, spiritus sapientiae et intellectus, spiritus consilii et fortitudinis, spiritus scientiae et pietatis, et replebit eum spiritus timoris domini.' Secundum hanc ergo prophetiam cunctos de domo et familia Davi nuptiis habiles non coniugatos uirgas suas ad altare allaturas, et cuiscumque post allationem uirgula florem germinasset et in cacumine eius..."
In a third stage of transformation Fulbert takes up the blended story from Num. 17 and Isa. 7 and 11 found in the Libellus, but he does so in a way that will prove important for subsequent developments in visual and dramatic depictions of the Stirps Jesse. Fulbert states that the story in Num. 17 must await the prophecies of Isaiah for explanation, and he addresses Isaiah as we find him called forth in the famous sermon for Advent/Christmas by the fifth-century Northern African Quodvultdeus. This work, which is the textual basis for the prophets plays of the Middle Ages, charges a long list of prophets to speak, and several of the prophets' messages are cited in the sermons collected at Chartres for the Feast of Mary's Nativity. The connections between Stirps Jesse imagery and the prophets plays have long been recognized, but the process by which this connection was established requires further exploration; the passage from Fulbert quoted above is surely an important piece of the puzzle.

Fulbert’s sermon persists in emphasizing the idea of line and lineage, creating a domino effect of events in time. One tile falls, then the next, until the last leans upon the Virgin’s foreordained and miraculous flesh, the coming of which has long been prophesied. In this work the coming of the Messiah is linked with the coming of the fleshly human throne that will bear the Wisdom of God.

Immediately after this section relating miracles in the Bible, Fulbert begins in quiet tones to outline the early life of the Virgin Mary as found in the Libellus. Acknowledging with “just as we read” that he quotes from the source defended earlier, he relates Mary’s lineage to what has just been brought forth from Scripture, for Mary was born of a father from Nazareth and a mother from Bethlehem, the towns designated by the prophets as those from which the Messiah would stem. He also mentions Abraham and David, thus making reference to Matt. 1.1, the first verse of the Gospel of the day, which opens as “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” The Libellus states that Mary was of the house of David, but nowhere does it refer to the Levites, although it is implicit in the imagery of the flowering rod. In Pseudo-Matthew Mary’s maternal grandfather is a high priest, and so a Levite, a descendant of Moses and


81 The sermon, Vos, inquam, convenio, is actually sections 11–18 of Quodvultdeus’s exhortative treatise Contra Judaeos, paganos et Arrianos, edited by René Braun among the works of Quodvultdeus in Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 60 (Turnhout, 1976), pp. 227–58, with the selected portion pp. 241–54.

82 Emile Mâle argued early in this century, “These examples will suffice, I believe, to demonstrate that there is a close connection between the Play of Prophets and the Tree of Jesse; both works came out of the same atmosphere. The Play of Prophets must have predated the Tree of Jesse by several years; consequently, since the earliest Prophets play, that of Limoges, seems to date from the late eleventh century, the conception of the Tree of Jesse must not go back beyond that date”: trans. as Religious Art in France: The Twelfth Century (Princeton, N.J., 1978), p. 175. For further explication of the connections between visualizations of the Jesse Tree and twelfth-century drama, see my forthcoming study in a volume edited by Nicholas Howe.

83 Medieval exegesis on this passage is abundant, and the tradition as found in the commentary of Rabanus Maurus and others would have been well known to Fulbert.
Aaron. This heritage is not mentioned in the *Libellus*, although Mary is raised in the Temple and is consecrated to God.\(^84\)

Fulbert is much more direct. According to him, Mary is the nexus into which twin strands of lineage flow, creating flesh from the root of David and the rod of Aaron. She “took her origin” from the royal stock of David and from the priestly lineage of the house of Levi, “at the same time,” for she “was about to bear the supreme King and Priest.”\(^85\) He describes Mary as *paritura*, “about to bear,” and this word, which will have a long history of meaning at Chartres, joins the idea of her flesh and the impending birth with the cloth of her birthing chemise, the sacred relic of Chartres.\(^86\) Fulbert’s cultic history embodies a particular Mary, the Mary of Incarnation and of impending birth. This is the figure who becomes the Virgin of Chartres in the generations immediately after Fulbert, defined by her relic in the context of liturgy, exegesis, and the arts, and the woman whose dual lineage—priestly and kingly—will form the fronds of the Jesse Tree:

The most blessed Virgin was born, just as we read, of a father from Nazareth and a mother from Bethlehem. The prophets did not leave unmentioned the towns destined for the birth and daily life of the Christ. She descended both from the root of that man with the faith of noble Abraham, to whose seed the blessings of all people had been promised from on high, and from the shoot of David, whom God, on account of the goodness known to him, exalted with surpassing praise, saying, “I have found a man according to my own heart” (Acts 13.22). From both the royal tribe and the priestly, at the same time, she took her origin, she who was about to bear the supreme King and Priest.\(^87\)

\(^84\) For conflicting views of Mary’s lineage, see the notes to relevant passages in *Pseudo-Matthew*, p. 286, and *Libellus*, p. 277. Mary’s cousin Elizabeth was “of the daughters of Aaron”: Luke 1.5. Rabanus Maurus, in his commentary on Matthew, speaks at length of Mary’s Davidic and royal lineage: PL 107:747–70.

\(^85\) The evaluation of political attitudes evinced in the *Stirps Jesse* is a subject of great importance, but outside the scope of this brief study. For detailed discussion of the theme in royal and noble ceremonial from the later Middle Ages, see Gordon Kipling, *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy, and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford, 1998), esp., pp. 63–71.

\(^86\) The political implications of Fulbert’s schema are profound and surely relate to contemporary understandings of kingship. Fulbert was a sometime adviser to King Robert the Pious, who may have been his schoolmate at Reims. In the early years of the eleventh century Robert was married to Bertha of Chartres and was stepfather to her sons, the counts of Chartres/Blois. Although the marriage was disallowed on grounds of consanguinity, Robert apparently always loved Bertha, even after his marriage to Constance of Aries. For discussion, see C. Pfister, *Etudes sur le règne de Robert le Pieux* (996–1031) (Paris, 1885); Lex, *Eudes, comte de Blois* (above, n. 56); and Fassler, *Making History*.

\(^87\) “Nata est igitur beatissima uirgo, sicut legimus, patre nazareno, matre bethleemita, quas urbes Xpisti natiuitati vel conversationi destinatas esse prophetae non tacuerant. Descendit autem ab radice illius fide praeclari Abrahae, cui superne promissa fuerat benedictio omnium gentium in semine suo, et ab styrpe Dauid quem deus, propter notam sibi probitatem, egregia laude sublimauit dicens: Inueni uirum secundum cor meum. De regali nempe tribu simul et sacerdotali duxit originem quae sumnum regem atque pontificem erat paritura”: Canal, “Texto crítico,” p. 58.

Chant texts, too, surely played a role in Fulbert’s work: a sequence attributed to Notker describes Mary as the *virga Jesse*, and several responsories for the Office of the Virgin, the precise dates of which are unknown, contain reference to the Davidic root of Mary’s lineage. For evaluation of *virga Jesse* imagery in Marian hymns, see Scilla, “Textual and Figurative Sources” (above, n. 2), pp. 46–49. Hymns and sequences for the Feast of Mary’s Nativity are the richest in the themes relating to *Stirps Jesse*, and many of these texts are collected, discussed, and translated into English in R. Todd Ridder, “Musical and Theological Patterns Involved in the Transmission of Mass Chants for the Five Oldest
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The author of the *Libellus* and Bishop Fulbert were not the first to join the imagery of the root of Jesse and the rod of Aaron and to make the Virgin Mary central to the fusion: this had happened in occasional exegetical and liturgical works predating them. Yet there is no source that was so widespread and that spoke with such authority as the commentary on Isaiah by Jerome. It has been demonstrated that exegetes concerned with the life of the Virgin, both from the Carolingian period and from around the year 1000, were particularly careful to link their works to Jerome in as many ways as possible, either through fabricated letters or by other means; Pseudo-Jerome’s pronouncement on the *Libellus*, written just at this time, was part of a long tradition. Fulbert was careful to employ key references

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88 *Some other works that fuse the imagery of the root of Jesse and the rod of Aaron are the early-fifth-century commentary on the Song of Songs by Apponius, a Syrian who wrote in Rome: Expositio in Canticum canticorum, ed. B. de Vregille and L. Neyrand, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 19 (Turnhout, 1986), 5.32, p. 130, “... sibi hunc lectulum de uirga quae egressa est de radice Jesse fabricavit in Virgine Maria” (“formed for himself in the Virgin Mary this bed from the rod that has sprung from the root of Jesse”). See also K. S. Frank, “Apponius, *Expositio in Canticum canticorum explanatio,” Vigilae Christianae 39 (1985), 370–83; and Clayton, *Cult* (above, n. 21), p. 228. The commentary of Apponius appeared in truncated form in a series of twelve sermons attributed to Jerome, but these are directly related to the Feast of the Assumption rather than to the Nativity of the Virgin. Another fifth-century exegete to make the connection was the aforementioned Quodvultdeus, in his *Liber missorum*, written when he was exiled in Naples: ed. Braun, 2.10, line 17. A sermon attributed to Caesarius of Arles, closely based upon a section of Origen’s commentary on Numbers, links the root of Jesse to the rod of Aaron but does not mention the Virgin Mary: see Sermon 111, ed. G. Morin, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 103 (Turnhout, 1953), pp. 460–61. The relevant sections of Origen are found in *Origène: Homélies sur les Nombres, 1: (I–X)*, ed. Louis Doutreleau, Sources Chrétiennes 415 (Paris, 1996), 9.7–9; for this text in particular, see 9.9.2, p. 262. *Legimus sanctum Moysen*, a sermon that Fulbert may have known, circulated widely in early homilies. *Legimus* is rich with the exegetical themes Fulbert prized; it was compiled from fifth-century North African sources for the Roman liturgy of Advent. Long attributed to St. Augustine, *Legimus sanctum Moysen* is a composite work: the first half is taken from a letter written in 437 by the African Antonius Honoratus, the rest from a pseudo-Augustian sermon *Sanctus hic*. For analysis and discussion, see Henri Barré, “Le sermon ‘Exhortatur’ est-il de saint Ildefons?” *Revue bénédictine* 58 (1957), 10–33. The sermon is printed among the works of Augustine in PL 39:2196–98: “Audiat Christianus quod non vult audire Judaeus aut Manichaeus; ut hic proficiat in fide redemptus, ille aut illus in partum.” The biblical texts cited are not from the Vulgate. Another sermon, *Ecce ex qua tribu nasciturus*, which frequently circulated with *Legimus* in early homilies, is edited among the works of Maximus of Turin, PL 57:845–48. The sermon emphasizes the Davidic lineage of Christ and connects it with the root of Jesse and the prophecies of Isaiah.

to Jerome’s commentary on Isaiah, and the term Stirps David, found in the passage from Approbate consuetudinis cited above, occurs in Jerome’s commentary as well. Clearly the learned members of Fulbert’s audience were meant to have Jerome’s words on Isa. 11 ringing in their ears, lending approval and authority to the sermon and providing a framework for its understanding. Fulbert’s sermon draws verdant branches for the Virginal trunk described by Jerome.

The middle section of Fulbert’s sermon forms a long commentary on Ave Maris Stella, the hymn sung on the Feast of Mary’s Nativity. The end of the hymn is descriptive of Mary’s powers to guide and help shipwrecked sinners, and Fulbert’s closing discussion presents examples of this sort of help, but not as found in the Bible. At the close of the sermon Fulbert turns to those figures who inspired a prayer attributed to him in a twelfth-century source, to characters from miraculous legends demonstrating the power of the Virgin to inspire and intercede; he thus appeals to the Chartrain imagination of the early eleventh century through personal piety and the sense of a particular cult. Mary’s role as exemplum, then, leads to the saints who manifest the workings of her powers: first Basil and then, at greater length, Theophilus, whose miraculous encounter with the Virgin, Fulbert states, took place when Theophilus “confugit ad ecclesiam quamdam beatae Mariae matris memoriae dedicatam” (“took refuge in a church dedicated to the remembrance of blessed mother Mary”). Marian miracles of the sort that reveal the working of saints require a place (a church) and memoria (remembrance). Fulbert establishes an ecclesial setting for the miraculous and promotes the Virgin’s cult at Chartres in the process.

Fulbert ends his sermon with prayer itself. He urges people to come to Mary along with Theophilus, praising and blessing her, calling out the epithets that would be on the lips of pilgrims before and after him: “O Praeelecta! O Sancta! Venerabilis et imperiosa! O clemens et propitia Domina nostra” (“O chosen one! O holy one! Worthy of respect and mighty! O our clement and gracious lady”).

See Jerome, Commentariorum in Esaiam 4.11.1-3, pp. 147-49: “Vsque ad principium uisionis, uel ponderis Babylonis, quod uidit Esaias filius Amos, omnis haec prophetia de Christo est, quam per partes uolumus explanare, ne simul propos ita atque disserta lectoris confundat memoriam. Virgam et florem de radice lesse, ipsum Dominum Iudaei interpretantur, quod scilicet in uriga regnantis potestia, in flore pulchritudo monstratur. Nos autem urgam de radice lesse sanctam Mariam uirginem intelle- gamus, quae nullum habuit sibi fruticern cohaerentum; de qua et supra legimus: Ecce uirgo concipiet et pariet filium. Et florem Dominum Salvatorem, qui dicit in Cantico cantorum: Ego flos campi et lilium convallium . . . . Super hunc igitur florem, qui de trunco et de radice lesse per Mariam uirginem repente consurget, requiescet spiritus Domini, quia in ipso complacuit omnem plenitudinem diuinitatis habitaris corporalis; nequaquam per partes, ut in ceteris sanctis, sed iuxta euangelium quod Hebraeo sermone conscriptum legunt Nazaraei: Descendet super eum omnis fons Spiritus sancti . . . . Et hoc notandum quod spiritus Domini, sapientiae et intellectus, consilii et fortitudinis, et scientiae et pietatis et timoris Domini, id est, septenarius numerus, qui septem oculi in uno lapide dicuntur in Zacharia, requiescat super urgam et florem, qui de lesse, ac per hoc Daud stirpe surrexit.”

Fulbert’s prayer, the close of Approbate consuetudinis, and other Chartrain Marian sermons are fully discussed in Making History.

The cataloging and proclamation of Mary’s names as found in the sixth-century Akathistos hymn was established in the West by the time of Fulbert. For discussion, see especially Michel Huglo, “L’ancienne version latine de l’hymne Acathiste,” Le Musée 64 (1951), 27–61; G. G. Meersseman, Der Hymnos Akathistos im Abendland, 2 vols., Spicilegium Friburgense 2-3 (Fribourg, 1958 and 1960); and Fulton, “The Virgin Mary and the Song of Songs” (above, n. 8), pp. 312–19.
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Through this hagiographical section of the sermon, and the prayer that follows it, the popular piety of Marian legends and stories was offered a place in the heart of the Marian office liturgy, taking hold not only at Chartres but, in the century to follow Fulbert's death, in Marian liturgies throughout Europe. Fulbert's sermon is a striking break with many past Marian liturgical texts in the West and yet firmly rooted in the devotional mentality of the Peace Movement, which emphasized the miraculous, intervening powers of the saints. The miracles of the saints had been celebrated in office readings for centuries, the events of their *vita* accepted as proper for reading in church. The case had been otherwise with Mary. With his sermon Fulbert opened the door even wider to the hagiographical materials that would fill the liturgy in the centuries to follow.93

Fulbert's discussion of miracles, based on biblical stories and on a famous liturgical text, hail the lineage of the Virgin. His particular concentration upon ideas of birth and the transformation of time through her birth adds further emphasis not only to the Feast of Mary's Nativity and the importance of her flesh but also, by implication, to the cult of the robe she wore at the time of the Incarnation and while giving birth. Biblical and liturgical meanings are directly stated, and Fulbert shapes them to add weight to the cult of the Virgin as then developing in the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Chartres. Here, too, the cult as he remade it is very like the cults of those myriad local saints then finding homes in the cathedrals and monasteries of Europe, dependent upon place, upon history, and upon the presence of particular relics.

**MARY'S LIFE IN THE LITURGY FOR HER NATIVITY**

Fulbert's sermon was designed to be chanted in the context of a fully sung liturgy, as were a great number of short *vita* composed around the year 1000.94 Three Great Responsories were written at Chartres cathedral, apparently around this same time, to punctuate the sermon in the office of matins for the Feast of Mary's Nativity. They show up in an eleventh-century copy among the works of Fulbert found in France, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 14606, with contemporary neumes. These chants are well known today and have been much written about by scholars. Yet they have never been studied in the context of *Approbate consuetudinis*, although this is how they were known not only when Fulbert (or Fulbert and members of his school) most probably conceived of them but when they were sung in the Middle Ages, most notably at Chartres cathedral, and in other places as well.95 Fulbert wrote his sermon with the Office of Mary's Nativity

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93 See especially Rachel Fulton, ibid., for discussion of the Assumption liturgy and difficulties with apocryphal texts connected with its celebration.
94 A major problem with the study of hagiographic materials from the time of the Peace Movement is the failure to position them within their liturgical contexts. It should also be remembered that all readings in the office were intoned to simple formulas, and the verb *dicere* when found in ordinals, customaries, and other liturgical books does not mean merely "speak." It and similar verbs rather refer to the intoned speech that was employed for all liturgical readings in the Middle Ages.
95 See especially Delaporte's comments in appendix 6 of *Ordinaire chartrain* (above, n. 23), pp. 251–
in mind, and he would have realized the necessity of a short text that could be divided into at least six readings. He knew as well that the final two or three readings of matins would have been taken from the Gospel of the day, Matt. 1.1–18, and a traditional commentary upon the Gospel. As the plan of the cathedral (or secular) office on the following page demonstrates, a matins service consisted of three nocturns; each nocturn contained three Psalms with antiphons and three readings (or lessons), each of which was followed by a Great Responsory. The third Great Responsory of each nocturn was the major musical statement of that section, and the ninth and last responsory of the service as a whole was the culmination of a musical production extending over two hours on a major feast day. The three responsories attributed to Fulbert were sung at Chartres in these privileged positions: numbers 3 (to close the first nocturn), 6 (to close the second nocturn), and 9 (to close the final nocturn and the service).96

The outline provided here is dependent not only upon Chartrain ordinals but also upon Chartres MS 162 (see Fig. 2). This was a magnificent collection of readings and chants for the celebration of feasts of the Virgin of over 250 folios in length and forming the basic collection for the cult at Chartres cathedral.97 Although a compilation that reached its final form in the later eleventh century, it represents liturgical materials and strategies evolving from the time of Fulbert. Its central role as a guide for Chartrain Marian devotion can be demonstrated by its completeness and by the fact that it was kept up-to-date through the thirteenth century, when the Feast of St. Anne was added. The book was destroyed in the fire of 1944, but Yves Delaporte’s brief notes on the manuscript in the diocesan archives of Chartres allow for partial reconstruction and an understanding of how the text of Fulbert’s sermon Approbate was divided for its liturgical chanting on the Feast of Mary’s Nativity.98 Unfortunately Delaporte did not list the chant texts


96 At Chartres two responsories for Mary’s Nativity were adapted for the Assumption and offered in third and ninth position, underscoring the idea that the Nativity of the Virgin was of great importance in this church and reversing the more common practice of adapting Assumption texts and chants for the Nativity of the Virgin, a practice found at Chartres in the pre-Fulbertian layers of chant texts. See Delaporte’s edition of the Chartrain ordinal, p. 171, which demonstrates that the responsories “Stirps Jesse” and “Ad nutum Domini” were both sung for the Assumption and that an eleventh-century sermon sometimes attributed to Fulbert, Fratres karissimi, would be read at matins as well. The rubrics for the octave of the Feast of the Assumption show that the earlier material was still rendered, but throughout the week: the office readings during the week are from Paschadius Radbertus’s sermon Cogitis me; doubtless because of a perceived disjuncture, the responsories “Stirps Jesse” and “Ad nutum Domini” were not to be sung during the octave of the Assumption.

97 See Libellus, pp. 42–43.

98 According to Delaporte’s notes on Chartres 162, the Feast of Mary’s Nativity begins with Fulbert’s Approbatae consuetudinis and then continues with several other works, all of which are divided for reading in the office. The version of the Libellus included here is an early witness to the A family of sources, as established by Beyers. The sermons found in the manuscript for the Feast of Mary’s Nativity were arranged in the following order: (fol. 7r) Approbatæ consuetudinis; (fol. 18v) Mutuae dilectionis; (fol. 33r) Gloriosam sollenmitatem; (fol. 37r) Nativitatis gloriosae; (fol. 36r) Incipit Libellus de nativitate Sanctae Mariae; (fol. 70v) Adest nobis; (fol. 76v) Supplicationem; (fol. 78r) Fratres karissimi.
The Place of Fulbert's Approbate and Three Chartain Responsories in the Matins Service for Mary's Nativity as Sung at Chartres in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries (and Later)

Invitatory Antiphon: Adoremus Christum, with Ps. 94
Hymn: Ave Maris Stella

First Nocturn:
Three Psalms with antiphons
Reading 1: Approbate . . . patrocinari desistit.
  Responsory: Hodie nata est (6854)
Reading 2: Propositionem sequatur . . . singulariter intimabat.
  Responsory: Beatissime virginis (6184)
Reading 3: Expedito quam . . . ad portam quietis aeternae.
  Responsory: Hodie nata est (6854)

Second Nocturn:
Three Psalms with antiphons
Lesson 4: Hic si quis . . . salutis accipere.
  Responsory: Gloriosa (6781)
Lesson 5: Tali ergo . . . pacta cassare.
  Responsory: Nativitas tua (7119)
Lesson 6: His quoque . . . unus Deus in aeternum.
  Responsory: Ad natum Domini, nostrum ditantis honorem, Sicut spina rosam genuit iudea mariam. V. Ut uitem urtis operiret, gratia culpam (6024; repetition of the respond from Sicut spina rosam)

Third Nocturn:
Three Psalms with antiphons
Lessons consist of Matt. 1.1-18, divided into three sections, each of which was followed by a responsory.
Lesson 7
  Responsory: Corde et animo (6339)
Lesson 8
  Responsory: Nativitas gloriosa (7198)
Lesson 9
  Responsory: Solem iustitiae regem paritura supremum, Stella maria maris bodie processit ad ortum. V. Cernere divinum lumen gaudete, fideles (7677; repetition of the respond from Stella)

Chartrain responsories are in italics.
Responsory numbers are those found in René-Jean Hesbert, ed., Corpus antiphonalium officii, Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta, Series Maior, Fontes, 7-12 (Rome, 1963-79).

for the Marian feasts he examined in this source, and so these have been supplied from the first Chartrain ordinal; there is a possibility therefore that the order of chants above is not that followed originally.99

99 See Delaporte, Ordinaire chartrain, pp. 174-75, and his handwritten copy of Chateaudun 13,
But what was the original order? A stark question of this sort is not often appropriate for the working of medieval liturgical materials, especially as they leave the hands of their creators and, over a period of years, or of decades, become community property. Although it is clear that some materials were composed as sets, as parts of integral units, just as often a time of experimentation was required for the incorporation of other new works. Clearly this is what happened in Chartres as new liturgical materials were created and adapted for the Feast of Mary's Nativity. Chartres 162 presents a standardization of materials initially wrought in the first half of the eleventh century; it demonstrates that their organization and standardization had taken place by the late eleventh century. It is impossible, however, to examine the ways in which this happened, for, as is so often the case, the transitional materials themselves do not survive. It is precisely this kind of

which dates from the second half of the twelfth century; the manuscript cannot presently be located and so may be studied only in Delaporte's copy, found in the diocesan archives of Chartres. A sketch of the feast is also found in Bernard, “Les répons,” pp. 140–41.

An overview of the process of change in office lectionaries from the tenth through the thirteenth centuries can be found through the study of sources from Cluny, as usefully inventoried in Raymond Etaix, *Homélias patristiques latins: Recueil d'études de manuscrits médiévaux* (Paris, 1994), pp.
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liturgical experimentation, however, that was crucial for the development of strong local cults. In this case it not only increased the splendor of Marian veneration in Chartres but also spread the fame of Fulbert and Mary of Chartres through many and diverse regions of Europe.

Because the musical modes in which the three Chartrain responsories are written could be arranged numerically—mode 1 (for “Solem iusticiae”); mode 2 (for “Stirps Jesse”); mode 3 (for “Ad nutum Domini”—there have been questions about the manner in which they were sung in the Chartres Office for Mary’s Nativity, which is, as can be seen, not attentive to progressive modal ordering. It has even been suggested that failure to follow this supposed musical “plan” at Chartres indicates that the pieces are not of Chartrain origin. In actuality, however, the final ordering of the responsories at Chartres may well relate to meanings unfolding within the readings, and not to musical modes, as can be seen from consideration of the first and most widespread of these pieces, “Stirps Jesse,” and its position in the context of Approbate consuetudinis.

Discussion of the Stirps Jesse theme takes place in the first half of Fulbert’s sermon, and most prominently in the section of the sermon that is immediately followed by the responsory “Stirps Jesse” in the Chartrain liturgy, and in many other places as well. Through its liturgical location, the chant works as a pithy summary of the popular opening of the sermon, and chant and sermon were attributed for centuries to Fulbert. The respond’s opening section provides the Old Testament meaning: the shoot from Jesse produced a rod, and the rod produced a flower. The meanings of Num. 17 and Isa. 11 are thus fused into one statement, and the Spirit of Isa. 11 rests above the flower of Num. 17. The verse of the chant explains the Old Testament mystery in New Testament terms, with a play upon virga and virgo: the rod is the genetrix of God, and the flower is her Son. The Stirps David mentioned by Jerome and by Fulbert in their treatises here in the chant has become the Stirps Jesse (a term not found in the prose of either writer). It is this popular chant, “Stirps Jesse,” which spread throughout Europe in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, that gave the image its name in the twelfth century, a name well known by Suger.

The exquisite melody for the chant is unique, composed specifically for this text, which makes it stand out from the majority of earlier medieval responsory melodies, commonly adaptations of well-known formulaic patterns arranged in a

137-206. Regarding the Feast of Mary’s Nativity, it can be seen that sources from the tenth and early eleventh centuries take readings 1-8 from the Song of Songs 1.1–4 and 15, but all sources from the late eleventh century forward take them from Approbate consuetudinis. Subsequent readings are from Matt. 1.1–18, with commentary from Jerome on Matthew. The twelfth reading begins, “In Isaia legimus...” There were twelve readings at matins in the Benedictine office rather than the nine found in the cathedral office.

101 For an introduction to the subject of numerical ordering by the modes in Great Responsories and antiphons, see Richard Crocker, “Matins Antiphons at St. Denis,” Journal of the American Musicological Society 39 (1986), 441–90.

102 See, for example, Bernard, “Les répons,” p. 145, who poses the question.

103 Although all three of the Chartrain responsories traveled widely, “Stirps Jesse” was certainly the most popular of the three. It is found both east and west of the Rhine, in the British Isles, and Austria and eastern Europe. It is rare in Italy in the twelfth century, however.
Example 1. The responsory “Stirps Jesse” in one of the typical manners of medieval performance. On some feasts the respond would be repeated in full at the close. (Transcription from Delaporte, “Fulbert de Chartres et l’école chartraise”)
particular order according to mode. The musical style is typical of Great Responsories from around the year 1000, however. It is melismatic, with occasional dramatic leaps to punctuate the text and rapid runs through the range of the mode, as, for example, the lofty melodic arch of eius. Key words in the text are emphasized, and the music proclaims the sense units found in the text, with intense musical underscoring for the flower, who is Christ, and the eius, the “her” mentioned above. The verse and the Gloria of the chant are set to the same melody, a practice that was not uncommon at this time in northern France and that was especially favored by Fulbert and musicians in his school. All three of these responsories are composed in this manner, as are several of the responsories composed for the Office of St. Giles often attributed to the Chartrain school of Fulbert’s lifetime.

Manner of performance is particularly important for understanding this chant as a source for the visual depictions of the Stirps Jesse in the twelfth century. The chant is shown in Example 1 with the customary repetitions, and with the second half of the respond becoming a refrain for the chant as a whole. This repetition, which fuses successively different sections of the chant, allows for powerful linkage between the first part of the respond and the verse; the Holy Spirit comes to rest both upon the Old Testament figures and their Gospel counterparts, drawing them together through the musical rendering. The musical binding of the verse to the Gloria creates yet another kind of parallel, allowing the trinitarian blessing to find voice with the virginal rod and her flower. The singers of such a piece had much to contemplate, if prayerful reverie was desired at the end of Fulbert’s discussion of Mary’s lineage as found in Approbate consuetudinis. In the singing of the chant the rod that flowers becomes the Virgin, and the flower becomes her Son, through a linear imposition, which, by the use of a linking refrain, becomes more than juxtaposition.

The Visualization of Liturgical Themes in the Twelfth Century

The liturgical renovations of the tenth and eleventh centuries were transformed yet again by religious reformers of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, men who wished to explain the sacraments, to comment upon liturgical action, and to find new ways of translating and proclaiming the sacred mysteries and their complex modes of exegesis. The explosion of the visual, dramatic, and poetic arts characterizing the twelfth century was dependent upon the interaction of several earlier layers of liturgical understanding alluded to here, shaped both by the pedagogical fervor of the times and by the desire to strengthen civic and ecclesial identity through the display of local cults and customs. The liturgical chants of

104 For a brief introduction to this subject, see David Hiley, Western Plainchant: A Handbook (Bury St. Edmonds, 1993), pp. 69–76.
105 For a transcription of this office, see Merlet and Clerval, Un manuscrit chartrain (above, n. 60), pp. 213–24.
106 For detailed analysis of the ways the Gregorian reform movement shaped twelfth-century liturgical poetry, see Gothic Song (above, n. 1); study of the influence of the reform on visualization is found in Hélène Toubert, Un art dirigé: Réforme grégorienne et iconographie (Paris, 1990).
the liturgy, especially the most festively popular among them, had to be reinvented. Just as the Victorine sequences, for example, are translations into new poetic and musical materials of the liturgical alleluias, so, too, many of the most popular visual images are "resingings," in new media, of the texts of liturgical chants. The visual arts of the twelfth century are, in case after case, made out of songs: their audiences would not only have seen the liturgical resonances embodied within the visual arts—they would have "heard" them as well.

Thus, at the same time as there was movement toward greater brevity in the liturgy, there was a concomitant desire for deeper understanding of mystery and complexity, especially on the part of clerics, monks, and nuns and those responsible for their instruction. Liturgical scholars looked toward modes of explanation that would not diminish richness, and they created new liturgical genres, liturgical commentaries, and experiments in the visual arts, the sheer numbers of which are staggering. Hugh of St. Victor's wrestling with the ways in which the Ark of Noah can be visualized is but a single example of the belief in the importance of complex images and in their central role in teaching and exegesis.

The idea that lineage could be depicted in the form of a tree was already established by the late eleventh century. Those seeking to depict the genealogy of Christ led the way, placing the family stock at the bottom and making a trunk of Mary herself, who is the sprouting, blossoming rod. Early secular genealogical charts are not usually ordered in this fashion; instead the patriarch is at the top, and his familial tendrils spread out ever more thinly below his genetic stock. Sometimes family lineage was depicted using the Stirps Jesse image borrowed from religious iconography, but this is actually quite rare. The Stirps Jesse that evolved in the late eleventh and early twelfth century began as a religious image, and its roots are in the liturgical and exegetical materials studied here.


108 Hugh says at the close of his treatise On the Moral Ark of Noah: "And now, then, as we promised, we must put before you the pattern of our ark. Thus you may learn from an external form, which we have visibly depicted, what you ought to do inwardly, and when you have impressed the form of this pattern on your heart, you may rejoice that the house of God has been built in you," trans. a Religious of C.S.M.V. (New York, 1962), p. 153. The visualized patterns of Hugh of St. Victor are evaluated in a forthcoming book by Mary Carruthers and Jan Ziolkowski.


110 London, British Library, Add. 15603, fol. 93r, is one such exception, for the tree of the family, occupying the traditional triangular shape, is ornamented on its crown with a Jesse Tree, which occupies the entire top half of the page. For discussion and depiction, see Schadt, Die Darstellungen, p. 69 and plate 20.
Many Stirps Jesse images from the twelfth century can be seen as directly related to the liturgical materials used for the Feast of Mary's Nativity and, to a lesser degree, to those materials generated by Fulbert or at Chartres in particular. Another paper could be written on the way in which each family of "Jesse Trees" grows from or relates to the traditions described in this paper. I will discuss here only two aspects of that topic: images that relate by their positions within liturgical books, Bibles, or commentaries to the liturgical themes described above; and a smaller group of images associated directly with Fulbert and the myth of his creation of the Stirps Jesse through the sermons and chant described above.

During the last decades of the eleventh century, when the liturgical and exegetical materials described in this paper began to circulate widely, the first visual displays were created to depict the meanings of Fulbert's sermon, the chants associated with the sermon, and the scriptural texts related to the multifold significance of the blooming stalk of Davidic and Levitic heritage. In the most general sense the image relates to those figures in the Bible associated with the Feast of Mary's Nativity and with the readings for that feast, especially the Gospel of the Mass and office, Matt. 1.1-18, and its exegetical and liturgical contexts. A typical location for Stirps Jesse images, then, is the initial L for the word "liber," which opens the Gospel of Matthew. The reason is clear: this was the Gospel text for the Feast of Mary's Nativity, the day on which Fulbert's sermon was customarily read as a commentary on the Gospel and the day on which the responsory "Stirps Jesse" was sung. The prominence of Pseudo-Matthew in this tradition is also significant, the evangelist Matthew being associated with the apocryphal life of the Virgin, a life that emphasized her Davidic and priestly lineage as Fulbert did. The position of the Stirps Jesse within the tendrils of the L allowed the image to serve as a membrane joining the heritage of the Old Testament and its fulfillment in the Gospel.

Several examples found in Arthur Watson's collection of images of the Jesse Tree are illuminations for the opening of the Gospel book. The initial for the opening of the Book of Matthew in MS 10 of the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève (a twelfth-century Bible) depicts Matthew at the bottom, along with his standard allegorical symbol, an angelic or human figure. The elaborate L of the so-called Saint-Bertin Bible (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 16746) from the twelfth century also contains a representation of Matthew connected with a Stirps Jesse, this time in the person of the angel alone, who holds the word "Liber," the first word of his Gospel, and from whom emanates a scroll reading "Sic deus ex iesse uoluit carnaliter esse." The late-twelfth-century Trier Gospel Book, Trier, 113 For an introduction to the basic types of Jesse Trees and major iconographic motives, see Watson, Early Iconography (above, n. 5), pp. 163-71.

112 See above, n. 6. Although Watson's corrective to Mâle is well reasoned, he could have made an even stronger case by looking at the images within their contexts. I will address this subject at greater length in Making History.

113 Watson, Early Iconography, p. 112 (no plate).

114 Ibid., plate 23 (discussion, pp. 110-12) and the table of prophets, pp. 148-61. The source of "Sic deus ex iesse uoluit carnaliter esse" was not known to Watson. In fact, it appears in a collection of sayings found among the writings of the late-eleventh-century Hildebert of Lavardin, bishop of Le Mans; a variation of this dictum is found in the thirteenth-century Jesse Window of Le Mans cathedral as well. See PL 171:1282C.
Dombibliothek, 142, contains a Stirps Jesse at the beginning of Matthew; and the Stirps Jesse found in the Hortus deliciarum of Herrad of Hohenberg was arranged to form a kind of commentary upon Matt. 1.1–18. A magnificent thirteenth-century L from a now-destroyed Chartrain Bible, Q, demonstrates the abundantly peopled type of tree found in examples from the later Middle Ages and shows a later version of the Chartrain iconographic tradition (see Fig. 3).

Mary’s Nativity also served as a context for the image through direct association: images of Stirps Jesse are found decorating chants and prayers for this feast in missals, antiphoners, sacramentaries, and lectionaries. The G of “Gaudeamus,” often the introit of the Feast of Mary’s Nativity, is another location for the Stirps Jesse, as can be seen in the splendid tree found in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 833, fol. 220v, a twelfth-century missal from the Premonstratensian abbey of St. Stephen at Arne in Champagne. The well-known twelfth-century Antiphoner of St. Peter’s in Salzburg has a much-published Stirps Jesse ornamenting the Office for the Nativity of the Virgin. The F of the Marian prayer “Familiorum tuorum” became entwined with Stirps Jesse illuminations as well.

The major role that prophecies of Isaiah played in the development of the image, in apocryphal legends, in Fulbert’s sermon and chant texts, and in exegesis in general is reflected in the use of the Stirps Jesse to illuminate not only the Book of Isaiah but also Jerome’s commentary on Isaiah, with its vitally important “ur-description” of the image. The Marian “trunk” is first depicted in a famous and much-discussed illumination for Jerome’s commentary on Isaiah found in Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 129, fol. 4v. Once established, the Stirps Jesse also became prominent as a symbol for the opening of the Psalter, being found as part of the letter B of “Beatissimam.” The association surely relates to the text of the Psalm, which was understood as referring to the righteous (personified virtues are often depicted as part of Stirps Jesse images from the later twelfth century forward) and the Davidic and verdant lineage of Christ, who is the ultimate “righteous man.”

And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit, in due season. And his leaf shall not fall off: and all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper” (Ps. 1.3). The sense of the Stirps Jesse as both the tree of Mary’s lineage and the wood of the cross, a joining of Incarnational to Passion and Resurrection themes, was prominent in the twelfth and

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115 Watson, Early Iconography, p. 105 and plate 19.
116 See discussion ibid., pp. 134–37 and plate 32.
117 Salzburg, St. Peter’s Abbey, Cod. a xii, 7; see Die deutschen Handschriften des Mittelalters der Erzabtei St. Peter zu Salzburg, ed. and comp. Dagmar Kratochwill, Annemarie Muhlböck, Peter Wind, and Gerold Hayer (Vienna, 1982), p. 383. The illumination is discussed and depicted in Watson, Early Iconography, pp. 92–93 and plate 8.
118 At Chartres the prayer text is as follows: “Familiorum tuorum que cessimus domine delictis ignosce et qui tibi placere de actibus nostri non ualemus genitricis filii tui domini dei nostri intercessione saluemur.”
119 Opposite the figure of the Virgin is another illumination: Isaiah holds standing scrolls with the two texts championed by Jerome in his commentary and by Fulbert in Approbatum: “Egredietur uriga . . . spiritus Domini” and “Ecce urigo concipiet et pariet filium.” See Watson, Early Iconography, pp. 89–91 and plate 5.
120 There is a vast bibliography on the subject of illuminations of Psalters and their locations. For a useful introduction, see Bennett, “The Windmill Psalter” (above, n. 5).
The striking Stirps Jesse used as an illumination in a twelfth-century copy of Rabanus Maurus’s treatise on the praises of the cross embodies this statement with contextual eloquence; the stem of the trunk rising

from Jesse's loins contains the opening words of Fulbert's responsory, "Stirps Jesse," providing a reference to the liturgical chant and naming the image.\textsuperscript{122}

Fulbert's association with the developing image of the \textit{Stirps Jesse} was made in several ways in the twelfth century. The great mid-twelfth-century \textit{Stirps Jesse} window at Chartres cathedral, surely the most famous example of the image, proclaims by association the connection of the image with Fulbert and the Virgin's cult at Chartres.\textsuperscript{123} The entire west facade, of which the window is currently a part, was originally created as an addition to the eleventh-century cathedral that Fulbert had designed and began to construct from 1020 forward. The window is a manifestation of a local cult; it offered a "sounding" image to Chartrains, who surely would have known the famous sermon \textit{Approbate consuetudinis} and its accompanying chant, "Stirps Jesse," both of which were attributed throughout Europe to their celebrated bishop.\textsuperscript{124}

The origins and interdependencies of the glazed \textit{Stirps Jesse} at Chartres and the one at St.-Denis are subjects requiring further study, especially given the theses recently advanced by Patricia Stirnemann that Chartrain artists were hired to illuminate Parisian and other deluxe books in around 1140 and that Suger commissioned them to produce the most famous example of their work, a Bible now comprising Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 55 and 116.\textsuperscript{125} Stirnemann speculates that Suger may well have employed Chartrain artists for other projects as well. The style of painting found in the manuscripts is, Stirnemann says, not unlike that of the glazed windows of the west facade of Chartres cathedral.\textsuperscript{126} The capital frieze of the west portal of Chartres cathedral, with its reliance upon the apocryphal Marian legends given special prominence in Chartrain Marian liturgy, also relates to the emphasis developed in the glazing programs, and together these proclaim association with Fulbert and with the particular cult of the Virgin that he was, by the mid-twelfth century, fabled to have championed.\textsuperscript{127}

\textsuperscript{122} Watson, \textit{Early Iconography}, pp. 105–6 and plate 20. The source is Douai, Bibliothèque Municipale, 340, fol. 11r.

\textsuperscript{123} The window, along with its two companion lancets, is now dated to between 1145 and 1155. It has long been compared with the famous example at St.-Denis, where there has been heavy restoration. The identification of the prophets in the window and comparison of these characters with those in plays of the Prophets are supplied in Watson, \textit{Early Iconography}, pp. 148–49.

\textsuperscript{124} Chartrains were ever aware of the contributions of their famous bishop to the medieval chant repertory, and they knew the attribution of \textit{Approbate} as well. See the quotation from the fourteenth-century \textit{Vieille chronique} below, p. 434.

\textsuperscript{125} See her "Gilbert de la Porrée et les livres glosés à Laon, à Chartres et à Paris," in \textit{Monde médiéval} (above, n. 95), pp. 83–96.

\textsuperscript{126} At the end of her paper (p. 91), Stirnemann poses the following question regarding the connections between the twelfth-century iconographical programs of Chartres and St.-Denis: "La conception et même la construction de Chartres (si différents sur de nombreux points de celles de Saint-Denis), ne peuvent-elles pas être au moins en partie contemporaines de celles de l'abbaye sugérienne?" It is clear that the claim for the invention of the Jesse Tree in the twelfth century belonged to the Chartrains, and their reason for developing the image was primary to their sense of cult and of historical identity.

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Fulbert, nurturing father for the Feast of Mary’s Nativity, and associated with the particular character of the feast, was made part of the complex of imagery associated with the Stirps Jesse beyond the use of the image at Chartres. Sometimes the image ornaments the text of Approbate consuetudinis, as is the case in the twelfth-century illumination from the Legendary of Citeaux. The Stirps Jesse illuminating Rabanus Maurus’s treatise on the cross is but one of the so-called Jesse Trees incorporating quotations from the responsory attributed to Fulbert. The “Stirps Jesse” chant was clearly thought to be a proof text for the mystery expressed in the image, a liturgical “prophecy” with the authority of Scripture. The virtuous ideal described in the Speculum virginum, a twelfth-century treatise for the education of nuns, inspired an important tradition of paintings used for didactic purposes, and these often included a Stirps Jesse. The importance the image had for Hildegard of Bingen is doubtless related to her knowledge of this treatise (or at least to the particular monastic culture that gave it birth) and its iconography. The striking illuminations found in twelfth-century Speculum virginum treatises include some that refer to Fulbert of Chartres and the liturgical materials created by him for the Feast of Mary’s Nativity. One of these, a stray leaf now in Bonn, is one of the most brilliantly detailed examples from the period, its greenness and verdancy recalling the “veriditas” of Hildegard’s liturgical poetry and her theological writings. On the trunk of the tree leading from the root of Jesse are words from the text of Fulbert’s responsory, “Radix Jesse: virgo dei genitrix urga est” (see Fig. 4).

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128 Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 641, fol. 40v. See Watson, Early Iconography, pp. 90–92 and plate 5; and Charles Oursel, La miniature du XIIe siècle à l’abbaye de Citeaux d’après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Dijon (Dijon, 1926). Oursel provides a photograph of the illumination (plate 33) and brief discussion (p. 74). The very early dating (1120s) of the source provided by Oursel has been challenged. Neil Stratford, for example, puts the Cistercian manuscripts described by Oursel a few decades later. See his “A Romanesque Marble Altar-Frontal in Beaune and Some Citeaux Manuscripts,” in The Vanishing Past: Studies of Medieval Art, Liturgy and Metrology Presented to Christopher Hobler, ed. Alan Borg and Andrew Martinale (Oxford, 1981), pp. 223–39; and Yolanta Zaluska, “L’enluminure cistercienne au XIIe siècle,” in Bernard de Clairvaux: Histoire, mentalités, spiritualité, Colloque de Lyon-Citeaux-Dijon, Sources Chrétiennes 380 (Paris, 1992), pp. 271–85. A great supporter of Bernard of Clairvaux in the first half of the twelfth century was the scion of the house of Chartres/Blois/Meaux, Thibaut IV le Grand (also Thibaut II of Champagne). He reigned from 1102 to 1152 and was a major patron of the arts.

129 The treatise has been edited by Jutta Seyfarth, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, 5 (Turnhout, 1990), and her introduction places its composition in the second quarter of the twelfth century. There are several allusions to the Jesse Tree in the treatise; see Watson, “The Speculum Virginum” (above, n. 5). For discussion of the treatise and the culture of religious women in the period, see Morgan E. Powell, “The Mirror and the Woman: Instructions for Religious Women and the Emergence of Vernacular Poetics, 1120–1250,” Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University (1997).


131 Gerhurt Ladner discussed the image and its verdancy in several of his writings. See, for example, his “Medieval and Modern Understanding of Symbolism: A Comparison,” Speculum 54 (1979), 223–56.

132 See Watson, Early Iconography, pp. 132–33, for transcriptions of other texts found in the image.
(Reproduced by permission)
Some few depictions of the Stirps Jesse include Fulbert himself; the most famous of these is a late-twelfth-century ivory possibly from Bamberg (see Fig. 5). It presents many of the classic components of the image, but in an unusual guise. The root rises from a recumbent Jesse, but his eyes gaze upward at his lineage. Mary possesses a sinewy elegance, demonstrating an unusually energetic posture. As she grasps one branch of her heritage with her left hand, she holds onto both stems above her head with her right hand. The Christ Child, who appears to have just risen from her ample lap, gestures toward the two luxuriant branches from which he has been generated. Above his head are the commonly depicted seven doves representing the attributes of the Holy Spirit mentioned by Isaiah, emphasized by Jerome in his commentary and Fulbert in his sermon. The reference here is also to the dove that flew from the tip of Joseph’s rod and was yet another way of signifying the joining of Num. 17 and Isa. 11 within the flesh of the Virgin. As is the case in so many Stirps Jesse images, the entwined foliage depicts the two streams of Mary’s lineage, the priestly and the kingly, the one from Aaron and the tribe of Levi, the other from the house of David, making reference again to Num. 17 and Isa. 11, as drawn together by Fulbert in Approbate consuetudinis. Mary is labeled with the “Ecce ancilla” of the Annunciation scene, and this is also explained by Fulbert’s Approbate consuetudinis, which states that the lineage of sin is transformed by her humility. Isaiah, who stands at Mary’s right hand, holds a scroll with his prophecy (Isa. 11.1–2), and he gestures toward the Stirps Jesse as its fulfillment. Fulbert claimed that understanding the flowering rod of Aaron had to await the explanation of Isaiah, and so Fulbert himself stands to Mary’s left. He holds a scroll proclaiming the words of his responsory: “virga d(e)i geni-trix vi(r)go (es)t flos (filius eius).” Fulbert points to the tree as well, his figure offering a visually balanced counterpart for that of Isaiah.

Another example is found in the Stammheim Missal, now in the J. Paul Getty Museum. Here a prayer for the Feast of the Assumption, commonly adapted for the Nativity of the Virgin as well, has drawn the iconography customarily linked with Mary’s Nativity to the Assumption. Fulbert and Isaiah resemble each other, and they hold the same texts carried on scrolls in the Bamberg ivory. The twin branches rising from the head of Jesse split and support Mary’s body. (See Fig. 6.) Clearly the Stirps Jesse was well enough established by the third quarter of the twelfth century to be relocated from its customary function as an illumination for the Nativity of Mary to serve for another Marian feast. The twelfth-

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134 Jesse is commonly asleep, or even dead. This idea is explored in others of the sermons collected in Chartres MS 162.

135 The liturgical commentators from this period, men such as Honorius Augustodunensis and Johannes Beleth, are useful in exploring twelfth-century understandings of the Feast of Mary’s Nativity and her lineage.

136 The manuscript is the subject of a forthcoming monograph by Elizabeth C. Teviotdale, to be published by the J. Paul Getty Museum. Teviotdale dates the manuscript to the 1170s in accordance with other recent scholarship. I am grateful to her for discussing her work with me before its publication and for sharing portions of the text.

137 Fol. 146r. See Menke, “The Ratmann Sacramentary and the Stammheim Missal” (above, n. 5), ill. 63 and pp. 71–72.
century play *Ordo representationis Ađae* (commonly known as *The Play of Adam*) shows the power the image exerted; in this case it has moved from the liturgy and the visual arts to drama.\(^{138}\)

**CONCLUSION: THE PREDOMINANCE OF THE "MIRACULOUS"**

There has been much discussion of the medieval image called *Stirps Jesse*, its date, and its point of origin. Here I have not claimed to demonstrate when or where it came into existence—there was no single beginning for this image.\(^{139}\) What existed instead was a common set of circumstances that inspired

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\(^{139}\) As Arthur Watson said long ago in his seminal *Early Iconography*, “To fix precise dates for mediaeval representations of the Tree of Jesse is in the majority of cases impossible, and to arrange them as a sequence in an indisputable order of time is out of the question” (p. 83).
a variety of manifestations of the theme. Once a particular set of liturgical elements became popular and widespread, many renderings of a prevailing idea could and did evolve in the twelfth century, in place after place and in a variety of forms, circumstances, and media. Part of the reason this happened with popular medieval images was not only the profound richness of their liturgical roots, but also the
sense of history and of individuals associated with the materials. It is clear that many medievals believed Fulbert of Chartres, with the help of Isaiah and Jerome, was the “inventor” of the Stirps Jesse and that his responsory had given the image its name and defined its character. The relationship between the image and the Feast of Mary’s Nativity was also well known and powerfully established by the very rendering of Fulbert’s sermon and chants throughout Europe, a fame that only increased with the establishment of pilgrimage routes in the twelfth century, one of which stretched from Chartres to Compostela (and Fulbert was famed for his compositions in both places). Taken together, these materials support a myth of creation for the feast and for the image associated with it, and the entire enterprise was supported by the liturgy.

The twelfth century was that period in the history of the West when liturgical meanings were most carefully and dynamically made manifest in the visual arts. This was surely true in part because of the influence of new orders of Augustinians, who placed efficacious liturgical celebration and the promotion of liturgical understanding at the center of religious renewal. Their counterparts, the Cistercians, and their heirs, the friars, were, however, “liturgical minimalists” and “miracle maximalists” by comparison. It is no coincidence that the greatest collections of Marian legends in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were the work of Cistercians, Franciscans, and Dominicans, and not of Augustinians. If the twelfth century was a watershed, the thirteenth century was the time of triumph for miracles of the saints, especially through the ceremonial, art work, and preaching of the friars—the Franciscans and the Dominicans, in particular. The structure of the Dominican Jacobus de Voragine’s Golden Legend is instructive in this regard. In one sense, the work is a liturgical commentary, in the vein of the great writers in this tradition from the Middle Ages: Amalarius of Metz, Honorius Augustodunensis, Johannes Beleth, and, above all, Jacobus’s contemporary, William Durandus. But knowledge of miracle literature, both for the temporale and for the sanctorale, became prominent in Jacobus, and the explanation of liturgical texts receded into the background. Although Jacobus mentions Fulbert for his transmission of Theophilus’s legend, he does not associate him with the founding of the Feast of Mary’s Nativity. Rather Jacobus supplies a miracle story for the feast, one found already in the twelfth-century commentary of Beleth, a myth of feastly foundation quite different from that studied in this paper. The liturgy still matters in this tale, but, unlike the myth of foundation associated with Fulbert, specific liturgical texts are no longer crucial, and the feast is detached from its earlier context:

The day of the Blessed Virgin’s birth was unknown to the faithful for a long time. Then, as John Beleth tells it, there was a holy man, diligent in the practice of contemplation, who, every year on the eighth day of September, heard, as he prayed, the joyous choirs of angels chanting solemn paens. He devoutly prayed to know why he heard this annually on this day and on no other. He received a response from God, that on this day the glorious Virgin Mary had been born to the world, and that he should make this known to the children of Holy Church so that they might join the court of heaven in celebrating her birthday. He passed this knowledge on to the supreme pontiff and others, and they, fasting and praying and searching the Scriptures and ancient documents to
ascertain the truth, decreed that this day should be celebrated throughout the world in honor of holy Mary's birth.¹⁴⁰

The late-fourteenth-century *Vieille chronique*, a history of Chartres cathedral compiled by the canons of the city, shows a blending of traditions: the older sense of Fulbert as creator of liturgical materials is still prominent, but the Fulbert of miracles has waxed the more significant, his own person having become part of the legends and cultic veneration of the cathedral of Chartres. The image of Fulbert being nursed by the Virgin belongs to this new age and, unlike the *Stirps Jesse*, has lost its liturgical context, its exegetical complexities, and its song:

This man Fulbert, most outstanding in his life, the greatest doctor in the church, a mirror of the Christian faith, and particularly devoted to blessed Mary, composed many treatises and many elegant stories for her; above all that for her nativity, which begins "Approbate consuetudinis"; and he was the first to see that her nativity should be celebrated in Gallia. The blessed Virgin, to show special favor, visited him in person when he was ill, and bathed his tongue, then almost consumed with "sacred fire," with an infusion of her own breast milk; and so it happened that three drops of this milk remained on his face, and he collected these and placed them in a precious vase appropriate for them, and even now they are venerated in our church at certain times of the year.¹⁴¹


¹⁴¹ "Hic Fulbertus, gloriosus in vita sua, maximus doctor in ecleasia, speculum fidei christiane, devotissimus beate Marie, multos tractatus de ipsa et legendas multas eleganciores, utpote de Nativitate que incipit Approbate Consuetudinis, composuit; quam Nativitatem primus in Gallia celebravit. Ipsum beata Virgo, tanquam specialelumnum, in quadal legedim, personaliter visitavit et lingum ejus jam sacre igne pene consumptam lactis sui de mammilla recener extracti infusionem lavavit; unde accidit tres gutas dicti lactis super faciem remanisse, quas recogelit et in precioso vase ad hoc aptato reposuit, que usque ad presens, in ecleasia, certis temporibus, veneratur": *Cartulaire* (above, n. 59), 1:14. The reliquary containing the Virgin's breast milk was well known at Chartres in the later Middle Ages. The engraving of Nicholas de Larmessin mentioned above (n. 64) depicts the Virgin by the bedside of Bishop Fulbert.

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