176 Incarnation (*Incarnacio*)

What kind and how much an effect God has on human nature is evident by his incarnation. Where in Prov. 8[:31] it is said, “My delights were to be with the children of men.” For where according to Macrobius, *Super Sompnium Scipionis*, book one,[[1]](#endnote-1) nine months are allotted for the offspring remaining in the maternal womb. Christ however remained in the maternal womb for ten months minus five days, just as it is evident from the computations from the day of his conception which was 8 Kalends of April (March 25th) up to the day of his nativity which was 8 Kalends of January (December 25th).

Again, noble men do not consider that they have eaten well if they only had domesticated fare unless they feed upon birds which have been captured by fowling or hunting. Thus, Isaac ordered his son that he should bring him something from hunting, Gen. 27[:4]. Thus God having in heaven angels like domestics does not consider he has delights until they descend to fowling and hunting men with the Apostle saying, Heb. 2[:16]: “For nowhere doth he take hold of the angels: but of the seed of Abraham he takes hold.” Therefore, although angels permit themselves to be adored by men before the incarnation, such as Abraham, Gen. 18[:2] and by Lot Gen. 19[:1]. After the incarnation however they do not permit this, Apo. 19[:10] and 22[:9], where the angel said to the one wishing to adore him: “See thou do it not.”

Thus, God the Father did as the prudent man toward the nefarious ones that that he divides them, contracts marriages from one part between the son and the daughter of another, and thus he draws that whole part to himself. Thus, God seeing humankind confederated with the devil married his son with human nature, Matt. 22[:2]: “The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son.” Wherefore the servant of Abraham said figuratively, Gen. 24[:43]: “The virgin, that shall come out to draw water,” for herself and others she is the one the Lord has prepared for the son of my lord. This is the Virgin Mary who first drew grace from the font of wisdom.

¶ Examples can be adduced for finding the possibility of the incarnation of Christ without the seed of its species. And God made the perfect woman from the rib of man why therefore could he not make a man from the blood of a woman by the working of the Holy Spirit.

¶ Again, according to Aristotle, book 1, *De animalibus,[[2]](#endnote-2)* and according to Pliny book 13,[[3]](#endnote-3) the female palm tree of itself is sterile, but if it grows next to the male palm conceives only by the fragrance and becomes fertile.

Again, the male oyster only by the dew of heaven conceives the pearl according to that one, book 16, c. 4.[[4]](#endnote-4)

Again, according to Ambrose in his *Hexameron*, book 5, c. 41,[[5]](#endnote-5) the vulture gives birth without the male.

¶ Again, when the lightning dissolves the sword in the sheath with the latter remaining whole.

¶ Again, with the glass remaining whole the sun passes through with its colored ray. Wherefore a certain verse:[[6]](#endnote-6) The light of the sun does not know how to violate the glass, Neither the glass by the sun, nor the virgin having given birth by her offspring. Wherefore Chrysostom, the first *Homilia*,[[7]](#endnote-7) does the conception of the woman pertain to the man because it happens when man or the woman conceives, but beyond doubt not when the man wants but when God wants the woman to conceive.

¶ Why therefore is it marvelous if God wishes this woman to bring forth an offspring without a man? It is read in the *Speculum Historiale*,[[8]](#endnote-8) that when a certain Saracen had at his home a beautiful image of the Blessed Mary and he marveled how a virgin could bear a child. Suddenly the carnal breast of the image began to increase which seeing the Saracen was baptized.

Again, one worm is born from earthly matters without any sexual intercourse. Therefore, Christ is said to be that worm which gnawed the ivy vine under whose shadow Jonas [4:7] rested when, namely, he took away the shadow of the law under which Judea rested and gave pardon to the penitent people.

1. Macrobius, *Commentariorum in Somnium Scipionis* (ed. Franciscus Eyssenhardt), section 6: humano partui frequentiorem usum nouem mensium.

<https://la.wikisource.org/wiki/Commentariorum_in_Somnium_Scipionis#Sectio_VI>

Cf. Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* 1.6.14 trans. William Harris Stahl (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1952), p. 102: Nature, in accordance with a definite numerical rhythm, has established the normal term of nine months for human births. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Aristotle, *On Plants* 1.6 821a17-24 (Barnes 2:1259): The male is distinguished from the female because the leaves of the former grow first, and they are smaller than those of the female; they are also distinguished by their sweet scent. Sometimes all these characteristics are present, sometimes only some of them. It may happen that the wind may carry some of the sweet scent of the male to the female, and then the fruit ripens, just as when the leaves of the male plant are suspended from the female. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 13.7.34-35 (LCL 370:118-119): For the rest, it is stated that in a palm-grove of natural growth the female trees do not produce if there are no males, and that each male tree is surrounded by several females with more attractive foliage that bend and bow towards him; while the male bristling with leaves erected impregnates the rest of them by his exhalation and by the mere sight of him, and also by his pollen; and that when the male tree is felled the females afterwards in their widowhood become barren. And so fully is their sexual union understood that mankind has actually devised a method of impregnating them by means of the flower and down collected from the males, and indeed sometimes by merely sprinkling their pollen on the females. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 9.54.107 (LCL 353:234-235): has ubi genitalis anni stimulavit hora,pandentes se quadam oscitatione impleri roscido conceptu tradunt, gravidas postea eniti, partumque concharum esse margaritas, pro qualitate roris accepti:

 when stimulated by the generative season of the year gape open as it were and are filled with dewy pregnancy, and subsequently when heavy are delivered, and the offspring of the shells are pearls that correspond to the quality of the dew received. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Ambrose, *Hexameron* 5.20.64 (PL 14:233): Diximus de viduitate avium, eamque ab illis primum exortam esse virtutem: nunc de integritate [Col.0233C] dicamus, quae in pluribus quidem avibus ita esse asseveratur, ut possit etiam in vulturibus deprehendi. Negantur enim vultures indulgere concubitu, et conjugali quodam usu nuptialisque copulae sorte misceri, atque ita sine ullo masculorum concipere semine, et sine conjunctione generare, natosque ex his in multam aetatem longaevitate procedere; ut usque ad centum annos vitae eorum series producatur, nec facile eos angusti aevi finis excipiat. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Cf. Andrew Breeze, “The Blessed Virgin and the Sunbeam Through Glass,” *Celtica* 23 (1999), 19-29, p. 22: Lumine solari nescit vitrum violari, Nec vitrum sole, nec virgo puerpera prole [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum,* Homilia 1 ex capite 1.19, (PG 56:633): Numquid ad virum pertinet ipsa conceptio mulieris? Nam si conceptio mulieris pertinet semper ad verum, sine dubio quando vult vir, tunc conciperet et mulier: nunc autem non quando vult vir, tunc concipit mulier, sed quando vult Deus. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum historiale* 7.119 (1624, p. 266a): Saracenus quidam habebat imaginem Beatae Virginis in tabula depictam, cui assidue, et humiliter supplicabat, valde secum admirans, et pertractans, quomodo contigisse potuerit, vt virgo pareret, et filium lactaret. Dum autem hoc cogitaret ad excutiendam de corde eius dubietatem incarnationis Christi, et confirmandam partus virginei veritatem, subito caeperunt de pectore illius imaginis carnae mamillae erumpere, et ex ipsis oleum coepit emanare. Quod videns ille Saracenus, credidit in Deum, et sanctam Matrem eius, et baptizatus est. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)