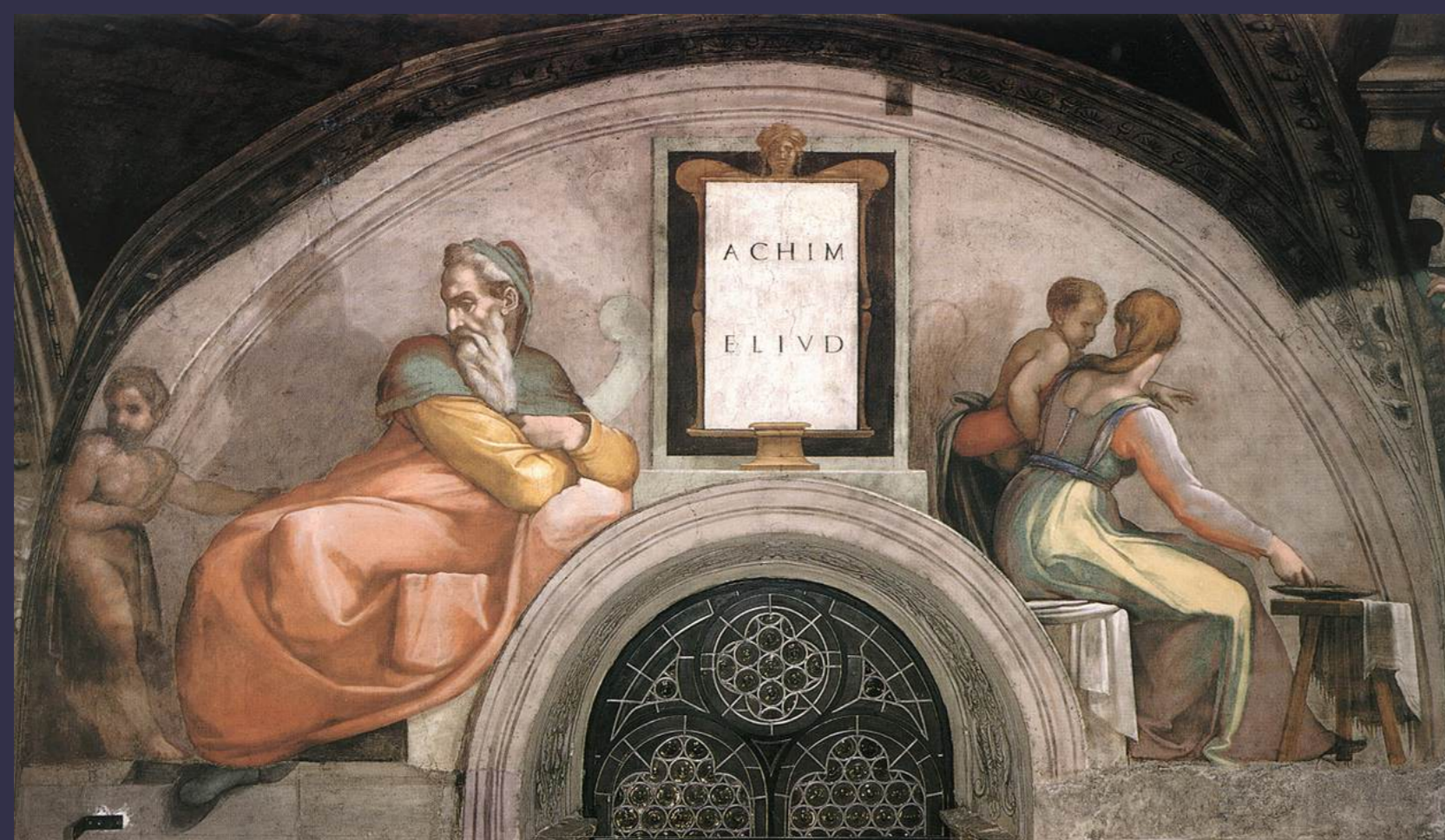


Lunettes from *The Ancestors of Christ*



The Ancestors of Christ is a program of frescoes painted by Michelangelo in 1511 in the lunettes of the Sistine Chapel. There are fourteen in all proceeding from the sacristy to the entrance in chronological order. Each one depicts a male and female pair with their names on a plaque between them in Latin.

Although the iconography in the frescoes is limited, and no figure can truly be connected to the names Michelangelo assigned to them, *The Ancestors of Christ* is still full of allegorical meaning.

Scholars have noted that the large number of frescoes draws attention to the chronological distance covered by Christ's ancestors. The program invites viewers to ponder the many generations that the human race had to live through without Christ's new covenant.

The expressions of the figures also invite consideration. Michelangelo emphasizes the maternity of the women commonly depicting them watching over children. They reflect the nature of Mary and her acceptance of motherhood.

Meanwhile, the men are seen lost in thought, distant, or even anguished. They reflect Joseph's mental state after learning of Mary's pregnancy before the angel Gabriel visited him.