

EVIL WOMAN? SHE-DEVIL? MONSTER?

A study on the cultural context of the snake with a woman's head in the iconography of the Fall



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Abstract

This thesis will interpret the snake with a woman's head in Western iconography of the Fall in its wider cultural context between the 12th and 17th century. During the 12th century this motif was introduced in the textual tradition and from the 13th century onwards it was incorporated in art. It quickly gained popularity and from the 14th century onwards this type of snake became more dominant in the visual tradition than its 'naturalistic/dragonesque' counterpart. Peter Comestor's "similia similibus applaudunt," from his *Historia Scholastica libri Genesis* (c. 1173) is often perceived as the main reason for the incorporation of the snake with a woman's head in the iconography of the Fall. This would reduce the snake's role merely to emphasise Eve's gender. In this thesis I will show that this is just a part of the snake's role, and that the iconography embodies much more. I examine the snake's connection with Eve and the Fall, its theological, encyclopaedical and iconographical tradition, its possible link to the Jewish legends of Lilith and how it is related to the changing attitudes toward women. I will discuss that the textual tradition is not all-determining and that different cultural, visual and historical phenomena have influenced the snake with a woman's head. It will strengthen the scholarly consensus that the snake should be interpreted as a misogynous motif and questions arguments against Lilith's influence. I will also combine the snake itself, its encyclopaedical counterpart, the dracontopede, and the realm of the hybrid monsters. Within this thesis the importance of the viewers of the iconography is being stressed and the significance of their status and gender are being described. In other words, I will look at the snake with a woman's head in the iconography of the Fall from a wider cultural context than has been done up until now.

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1. Introduction

During the 13th century, an important change in the iconography of the Fall took place. Apart from the standard serpent, a new type of Edenic tempter was introduced: the snake with the head or the upper body of a woman. This motif quickly gained popularity and during the 14th century it even seems to have been favoured above the ‘naturalistic/dragonesque’ serpent. Although the reason for the introduction of the snake with a woman’s head is not entirely clear, most scholars consider the sentence “similia similibus applaudunt” from Peter Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica libri Genesis* (c. 1173) as its starting point.¹ In this sentence Comestor states that Eve would be more easily tempted by a creature that looked like herself, a woman, than by a serpent since “like attracts like.”

This explanation for the snake with a woman’s head is often seen as the only reason for her inclusion in the iconography of the Fall. By making the Edenic tempter female, the focus on Eve’s gender is emphasized. The fact that the snake often mirrors Eve’s face increases this focus even more. This interpretation is also given in the current exhibition *Body Language: the Body in Medieval Art* (Utrecht, Museum Catharijneconvent, September 25, 2020 – January 17, 2021).² But is this the only purpose of the snake with a woman’s head, or does this type of serpent also embody something itself? This is what I would like to examine in this thesis.

The appearance of new iconographical motifs is often perceived as “indications of shifts in social or economic organizations, and in ideological values.”³ Ideological values are the values that are held unconsciously or without questioning. Culture can be seen as the unconscious distributor of ideological values.⁴ In order to understand a new iconographical motif it is necessary to look at its broader cultural context, in this case: iconographical- and textual traditions, theological views, the encyclopaedic and monster tradition, perspectives on gender, and stories and legends. This means that even though Comestor’s comment has been important for the introduction of the snake with a woman’s head in the iconography of the

¹ Nona C. Flores, “‘Effigies Amicitiae ... Veritas Inimicitiae’ Antifeminism in the Iconography of the Woman-headed serpent in Medieval and Renaissance Art and Literature,” in *Animals in the Middle Ages: a book of Essays*, edited by Nona C. Flores, (New York [etc.]: Garland Publishing Inc., 1996), 167, 168, 170-73; John K. Bonnell, “The Serpent with a Human Head in Art and in Mystery Play,” *American Journal of Archaeology* vol. 21, no. 3 (1917), 257-58.

² Wendelien van Welie-Vink, *Body Language: The Body in Medieval Art* (Rotterdam: Nai010 Publisher, 2020), 114.

³ Jonathan J. G. Alexander, “Iconography and Ideology. Uncovering Social Meanings in Western Medieval Christian Art,” *Studies in Iconography* vol. 15 (1993), 13.

⁴ Alexander, “Iconography and Ideology,” 9.

Fall, it does not necessarily provide a full explanation for why it was introduced and how it developed. Hence in this thesis I shall look at the snake with a woman's head in the iconography of the Fall from a wider cultural context.

After its first appearance in the 13th century, the snake with a woman's head continued to appear in the iconography of the Fall until the beginning of the 17th century. Next to this type of Edenic tempter, the 'naturalistic/dragonesque' serpent continued to exist in the iconography of the Fall. The snake with a woman's head therefore did not replace the 'regular' serpent, but co-existed with it. The 'naturalistic/dragonesque' serpent became the dominant type again at the end of the 17th century. Perhaps the snake with a woman's head almost entirely disappeared as a result of "the shift from the medieval interest in nature as a source of moral allegory and symbol to the modern concern with nature as an exact science."⁵

In this thesis the main question will be:

"How can the iconographic motif of the snake with a woman's head in Western Iconography of the Fall be interpreted in its cultural context between the 12th and 17th century?"

The thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter will deal with Eve and the serpent. Here, I shall explore how Christian theological traditions of Eve are reflected in the iconography of the Fall. I shall focus on the relationship between Eve and the snake and whether it changes after the introduction of the snake with a woman's head in the visual tradition. In the second chapter, I will discuss the snake with a woman's head in its theological, encyclopaedical and iconographical tradition. I will examine whether Comestor could have influenced the artistic, theological and encyclopaedical tradition and if Comestor himself may have been influenced by already existing textual and visual sources. I will also look at the connection between the textual and visual tradition. In the third chapter, I will deal with Lilith in Jewish and Christian traditions. From the 10th century onwards, the Jewish she-demon Lilith has been regarded as Adam's first wife and might thus be an interesting creature to discuss in relation to the snake with a woman's head.⁶ I will explore whether these legends could have influenced the Christian textual and visual tradition, how Lilith has been depicted and if she had a link with the serpent. In the fourth chapter, I will examine the broader context

⁵ Flores, "'Effigies Amicitiae ... Veritas Inimicitiae,'" 174.

⁶ Joseph Dan, "Samael, Lilith, and the Concept of Evil in Early Kabbalah," *AJS Review* 5 (1980), 19,20; Deborah J. Grenn, "Lilith's Fire: Examining Original Sources of Power Re-defining Sacred Texts as Transformative Theological Practice," *Feminist Theology* 16(1) (2007), 37, 39-40; Woiciech Kosior, "A Tale of Two Sisters: The Image of Eve in Early Rabbinic Literature and Its Influence on the Portrayal of Lilith in the Alphabet of Ben Sira," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues* no 32 (2018), 112, 116, 117, 121.

of the iconography and study its recipients, views on hybrid monsters, and the important social and cultural perceptions of women between the 12th and 17th century.

1.1 Sources

To study the snake with a woman's head in its cultural context, I will need to combine various disciplines as history of art, history, theology, literary studies, and gender studies. This implies that I shall use a variety of sources. For this thesis I use both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources can be divided into visual sources and textual sources.

1.1.1 Primary sources: Visual sources

The visual sources I will use are primarily depictions of the Fall from Western Europe produced in the period from the 12th to the 17th century. I decided to start already in the 12th century because I wish to look at what the iconography of the Fall looked like just before the introduction of the snake with a woman's head. I end with the 17th century as the snake with a woman's head seems to almost disappear from this century onwards. As it is impossible to look at all the produced art works from this period, I have made a selection of works I believe to be relevant to this study. The criteria for this selection were that the images had to include both Eve and the snake, that the art works were free from any damage that could hinder the interpretation and that it included a wide variety of media. This means I will use depictions of the Fall in illuminated manuscripts, but also on altarpieces, sculpture, metalwork and stained glass.

Apart from depictions of the Fall I will use images of the snake with a woman's head and other hybrid female creatures from bestiaries and encyclopaedias as well as on capital sculpture from the same period of time. I will use images of Lilith from as early as 2000 B.C.E. up until the 19th century. I have changed the timeframe in regards to Lilith as this is needed to illustrate her ongoing visual tradition which encompass a longer time span than the snake with a woman's head. In addition I will use images of witches from the 15th up until the 17th century. I use these images to illustrate the changing attitudes towards women from the 15th century onwards, and to show how the attitude towards sexuality had a role in this. To collect visual material I will use the Princeton Index of Medieval Art and various museum and library databases such as the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Bibliothèque nationale de France, the

British Library, the Rijksmuseum, Staedel museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Also Google Arts and Culture have been consulted. Some of my visual material derive from secondary sources such as the books *Animals of the Middle Ages: a Book of Essays* (1996, edited by Nona C. Flores) and *The Book of Lilith* (1986, written by Barbara Black Koltuv).

1.1.2 Primary sources: Textual sources

The textual sources I will study consist of theological works, entries from encyclopaedias, excerpts from the Jewish Midrash, Talmud and Kabbalah, medieval law and treatises on witchcraft from as early as the 3rd century C.E. up until the 17th century. The time frame I use for the textual sources is different than the one I use for the visual sources, as I also wanted to include the Church Fathers, the Midrash and Talmud and *Liber Monstrorum* (late 7th, early 8th century). The inclusion of these sources is important as they are relevant for my argument on the perspectives of women, on Lilith, and on the snake with a woman's head in the encyclopaedical tradition. All these texts either contain information about the snake with a woman's head, about attitudes towards women, or about Lilith. Some texts encompass all of them.

I am able to access most of these texts through secondary literature. These often give the excerpts I need both in their original language and their translation. Examples of these secondary sources are the books *Eve & Adam: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender* (1999, edited by Kirsten E. Kvam, Linda S. Schearing and Valarie H. Ziegler), *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-manuscript* (1995, edited by Andy Orchard) and *Animals and Otherness in the Middle Ages: perspectives across disciplines* (2013, edited by Francisco de Asís García García, Mónica Ann Walker Vadillo and María Victoria Chico Picara). Examples of useful articles are *The Serpent with a Human Head in Art and in Mystery Play* (1917, written by John K. Bonnell) and *The Metamorphoses of the Eden Serpent during the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (1972, written by Henry Ansgar Kelly).

Some texts are not available in the secondary literature. For these, I have to rely on published (critical) editions. For Jacob van Maerlant's *Der naturen bloeme* (1271-72) and *Rijmbijbel* (1271-72) I used the publications provided by the Digitale Bibliotheek voor Nederlandse Letteren, and for Bonaventure's *Commentaria in librum secundum sententiarum* (1250-51) I used a critical edition from 1882 published in Quaracchi (Firenze) by the fathers of Collegii S. Bonaventurae. For the *Hortus sanitatis* (1491), published by Jacob Meyenbach I

was not able to find an edition that suited my needs. I therefore looked for a manuscript containing this text and transcribed it myself. This manuscript, Inc. 3.A.1.8, held by the Library of the University of Cambridge, had been produced in the same year as the *Hortus sanitatis* first came out and thus it fitted perfectly.

I study most of the texts in their original language, which is either Latin or Middle-Dutch. For the sources in Hebrew I need to use translations as I am not able to understand it otherwise. Fortunately, these are well accessible.

1.1.3 Secondary sources

I use most secondary sources to get access to my primary sources. I do, however, also use them to interpret them. I studied iconographical handbooks, secondary literature on the dracontopede, on Eve, on the perspectives of women during the Middle Ages, on Lilith, on monsters, on witches and on literary texts presenting (snake-)women. Examples of these are Louis Réau's *Iconographie de L'Art Chrétien* (1956), Hans Martin von Erffa's *Ikonologie der Genesis* (1989) and Engelbert Kirschbaum's (ed.) *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* (1994); Jean M. Higgins's "The Myth of Eve: The Temptress" (1976); Frances Gussenhoven's "The Serpent with a Matron's face: Medieval Iconography of Satan in the Garden of Eden" (2001) and Boria Sax's *Imaginary Animals: The Monstrous, the Wondrous and the Human* (2013); Shulamith Shahar's *The Fourth Estate: A History of Women in the Middle Ages* (2003) and Christa Grössinger's *Picturing Women in late Medieval and Renaissance Art* (1997); Joseph Dan's "Samael, Lilith, and the Concept of Evil in Early Kabbalah" (1980) and Raphael Patai and William G. Dever's *Hebrew Goddess* (1990); Lydia Zeldenrust's "Wanneer een ridder en drakenvrouw ontmoet. Middeleeuwse ideeën over mens, dier en het hybride monster." (2012); Charles Zika's *The Appearance of Witchcraft: print and visual culture in sixteenth-century Europe* (2007); and David J. Rothenberg's "Introduction: Devotion to the Virgin and Earthly love" in *The Flower of Paradise: Marian Devotion and Secular Song in Medieval and Renaissance Music* (ed. David J. Rothenberg, 2011).

These secondary sources belong to the disciplines of art history, history, theology, literary studies, gender studies and theatre studies. Together with the primary sources I use these studies to construct an understanding of the cultural context in which the snake with a woman's head emerges and develops. The secondary literature provides me with critical, sometimes opposing views on matters as the snake with a woman's head itself, but also on Lilith and the (theological) perspectives on women.

1.2 Methodology

In order to study the snake with a woman's head in the iconography of the Fall in its cultural context, I will need an interdisciplinary approach combining the primary sources with studies in the fields of art history, history, theology, literary studies, gender studies, and theatre studies. The main method is qualitative, comparative analysis. I study each of my primary sources in their own context and then compare them with each other and with my findings from secondary literature. To analyse my primary sources I use three relevant methods: Panofsky's iconography and "iconology," the word and image approach, and textual analysis. These three methods have in common that they study both the content and the context of the sources. This is necessary to answer the main question of this thesis as it is not only important to fully understand what the artworks and the textual sources embody themselves, but also to understand their connection to each other and the ways in which they can be perceived in a wider historical and cultural context.

1.2.1 Panofsky's iconography and 'iconology'

In his book *Studies in Iconology. Humanistic Themes In the Art of Renaissance* (1939), art historian Erwin Panofsky describes a theoretical framework for the study of iconography. With iconography Panofsky means "the branch of the history of art which concerns itself with the subject matter or meaning of works of art, as opposed to their form."⁷ In this book Panofsky divides iconography into three steps: the pre-iconographical description, the iconographical analysis in the narrower sense of the word, and the iconographical interpretation in a deeper sense. During the pre-iconographical description the art historian needs to describe what he sees without connecting any deeper meaning to it. This is what Panofsky calls the "primary" or "natural" subject matter, which is either factual (a hat, a bird, a house) or expressional (a happy woman, a sad man, a homely interior). The only knowledge one should have to make a pre-iconographical description is that of practical experience.

The second step, the iconographical analysis in the narrower sense of the word, tries to give what Panofsky calls the "secondary" or "conventional" subject matter. For example, it is known that a man dressed in a furry tunic with a circle of light around his head is often interpreted as St. John the Baptist, or that a man holding a key is often interpreted as St. Peter.

⁷ Erwin Panofsky, "Introductory," in *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes In the Art of Renaissance*, ed. Erwin Panofsky (Oxford [etc.]: Westview Press, 1972), 3.

In the process of the iconographical analysis it is possible to deduct the conscious intention of the artist and to determine the subject that is represented. To be able to make an iconographical analysis in the narrower sense, the art historian has to have knowledge of literary sources and be familiar with specific themes and concepts.

At the last step, the iconographical interpretation in a deeper sense, the art historian tries to find the intrinsic meaning or content of the work. This level of interpretation tries to find the “underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion – unconsciously qualified by one personality and condensed into one work.” In other words, it tries to decipher the context in which the work of art is produced. To be able to do this an art historian will need to have a “synthetic intuition,” which means he needs to be familiar with the tendencies of the human mind, which he will need to condition with personal psychology and “weltanschauung.”⁸

Since the realm of interpretation can be perceived as quite subjective, Panofsky designed a corrective principle called “history of tradition.” To control the first step one should check with the “history of styles”, which shows how certain objects and events were expressed by forms under different historical conditions. One should check if his interpretation is correct within the “history of styles.” The “history of types” is a way to check the second step. The “history of types” shows how certain themes and concepts were expressed by objects and events under different historical conditions. The last step can be controlled by using the “history of cultural symptoms” or “symbols” in general. These show how certain essential tendencies of the human mind were expressed by specific themes and concepts under different historical conditions.⁹

The method and theoretical framework of Panofsky have been heavily criticized, especially the last step which Panofsky called “iconology”. The main criticism is that although Panofsky suggests to parallel medieval art to other cultural and historical phenomena in this last step, he often just “left the matter there.”¹⁰ Too often in Panofsky’s studies and in the works of those who use his theoretical framework the true meaning of an artwork is only

⁸ Panofsky, “Introductory,” 5-8, 14-15.

⁹ Panofsky, “Introductory,” 15-16.

¹⁰ Alexander, “Iconography and Ideology,” 7-8.

being sought and found in a contemporary textual source. Questions on other cultural relevant phenomena are not taken into account.¹¹

Furthermore the use of the texts themselves is not problematized. By ignoring questions such as who read them, how they were used and to what genres they belonged, the reception history is not taken into account. Interestingly enough this is also quite often the case with the art works themselves; their reception history is not deemed interesting or necessary enough to be researched.¹² This is probably a result of the greater focus on the second step, the iconographical analysis in the narrower sense of the word, than on the third step, 'iconology'. Other comments are that Panofsky's iconography and 'iconology' do not give enough credits to form and style, and that it does not problematize interpretation enough, as it is not sure if someone nowadays perceives a work of art in the same way someone from the past did.¹³ Some scholars also perceive the term 'hidden symbolism,' which Panofsky introduces in his book *Early Netherlandish Painting. Its Origin and Character* (1953), as problematic, because for whom is it hiding and why?¹⁴ This idea could result in overinterpreting, as one does not know if the artist depicted something with a reason or just to fill up the space. These points of critique are very important and I will, of course, consider them while using the method in this thesis. When using Panofsky's iconography and 'iconology,' I will make sure to not get stuck in step two, and make step three, the 'iconology,' my main focus.

Of almost all the artworks I will study, the iconography in general is quite clear. Most artworks I use depict the Fall of Mankind, and more specifically the moment that Eve is tempted by the snake. But whilst the general iconography and its meaning of this is quite clear, the incorporation of the snake with a woman's head is not. It is here where the theoretical framework of Panofsky comes in useful. The first two steps, the pre-iconographical description and the iconographical analysis in the narrower sense of the word, are manageable. It is possible to describe the "primary" or "natural" meaning of the works – naked woman seems to be talking to a half snake, half woman which hangs in a tree – as well

¹¹ Alexander, "Iconography and Ideology," 8; Paul van den Akker, "Erfgenamen van Plinius en Pausanias: twintig eeuwen kunstgeschiedschrijving," in *Manieren van kijken: Inleiding kunstgeschiedenis [2]*, ed. Mieke Rijnders and Patricia van Ulzen (Heerlen: Open Universiteit, 2010), 130-132; Keith Moxey, "Panofsky's Concept of 'Iconology' and the Problem of Interpretation in the History of Art," *New Literary History* vol. 17, no. 2 (1986), 266, 271.

¹² Alexander, "Iconography and Ideology," 8; Moxey, "Panofsky's Concept of 'Iconology'," 271.

¹³ Van den Akker, "Erfgenamen van Plinius en Pausanias," 127, 132; Moxey, "Panofsky's Concept of 'Iconology'," 265-266.

¹⁴ Alexander, "Iconography and Iconology," 8.

as to deduct the “secondary” or “conventional” subject matter – Eve tempted by a snake with a woman’s head. The why, the intrinsic meaning, however is difficult to answer just by studying the artworks themselves. It is here that the other sources become important. The iconography of Lilith, other hybrid creatures with a female head, and of the encyclopaedical variant of the snake with a woman’s head all need to be considered as possible iconographical influence. The textual primary sources can tell much about perspectives on Eve, the snake, Lilith, and women in general. The places in which the iconography could be seen, and the way ideas from textual sources were distributed are also important to know. This will provide more insights in the snake with a woman’s head and could help me to study the ‘hidden ideologies’ contained in the art works.

1.2.2 The word and image approach

The word and image approach was introduced during the eighties of the last century. It is within this approach that the art historians specialized in medieval art and the scholars on manuscript illumination “have shifted from more exclusive and iconographical analyses to more extensive attention to the semiotics of representation of image reception with social (e.g. interpretive communities) and material (e.g. the whole book) contexts.”¹⁵ In other words, art historians studying medieval illuminations went from a disciplinary approach to an interdisciplinary approach, extending their focus to the context of a work of art. One of the main objectives is that miniatures not only reflect the text they accompany, but also create their own visual ‘text’ which both relates to and is distinct from the accompanying text. The miniature therefore creates an extra layer of reception. An art historian using the word and image approach links images to matters such as daily life, politics, intellectual and local history, theology and iconography, thereby trying to place the image in its context as much as possible.¹⁶

Although the word and image approach is often used for illustrated manuscripts, I think it is applicable to all images. Biblical images on, for example, altarpieces often also illustrate a specific passage from the Bible, without the actual text being present. The word and image approach could be very useful in this thesis, not only because I use many illuminated manuscripts, but also because of the great emphasis on culture and reception. The extra layer of reception within the iconography of the snake with a woman’s head, could

¹⁵ Richard K. Emmerson, “Middle English Literature and Illustrated manuscripts. New approaches to the Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary,” *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* vol. 105, no. 1 (2006), 131.

¹⁶ Emmerson, “Middle English Literature,” 132, 135.

reveal ideological values specific to the culture in which the snake with a woman's head became popular. One of the dangers of this method is overinterpreting, as not every depicted detail is necessarily an indication of an extra layer of reception. It is important, just as in Panofsky's method, to retain focus.

1.2.3 Textual analysis

Textual analysis is the method used to deduct the meaning of a text; it will be used to study the primary textual sources. Within this method, a text is studied in three different areas: in its rhetorical context, in its specific textual characteristics, and in its wider context. Questions such as who wrote/published the text, what were the author's intentions, and who were the intended audience are asked when discussing the rhetorical context. The specific textual characteristics are the topics or issues that are being addressed within the text, how the audience is addressed, what the main claim of the text is, what the explanation for this claim is, and what the nature of this explanation is. When studying its wider context the relationship between different texts are discussed.¹⁷ It provides a useful method, both to study the primary texts in their own context and to study them in relation to each other.

This method is, like any other, not without criticism. The first comment is that this method can only ever be an interpretation as a researcher will always read the text with her own perspectives in mind. Another criticism is that if conducted in isolation, texts become all that matters and constitute the only focus of the research. The first comment cannot be countered as it is true that a text can never be fully understood as its interpretations will always be subjected to social and cultural influences. The only thing a historian can do is to acknowledge this and reflect on one's own perspectives.¹⁸ The second criticism will not be a problem in this research as I do not intend to use this method in isolation. I shall combine the textual analysis of the textual primary sources with the iconographical interpretation of the visual primary sources. The word and image approach is a great bridge between the method of textual analysis and Panofsky's iconography and 'iconology.'

¹⁷ Sharon Lockyer, "Textual Analysis," in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. Lisa M. Given (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.: 2008), 865.

¹⁸ Lockyer, "Textual Analysis," 865-66.

1.3 Historiography

As this research examines the motif of the snake with a woman's head in its wide cultural context, it fits in with different historiographies. I intend to discuss the snake with a woman's head in roughly four areas: its relation with Eve, its relation with various textual traditions, its relation with Lilith and its relation with women. In this paragraph I give a brief overview of the states of historiography within these four areas. I will also place myself within these traditions.

In her essay "'Effigies Amicitiae ... Veritas Inimicitiae' Antifeminism in the Iconography of the Woman-headed serpent in Medieval and Renaissance Art and Literature," historian and art historian Nona C. Flores puts great emphasis on the fact that Eve and the snake with a woman's head are virtually doppelgänger.¹⁹ As religion scholar Jean M. Higgins points out in her article "The Myth of Eve: The Temptress" (1976), Eve was perceived as a temptress in theological commentaries, especially from the 12th century onwards. She tempted Adam with her "wicked persuasion" and therefore brought sin into the world. According to these commentaries the expulsion from paradise was thus the fault of the first woman.²⁰ The fact that the face of the snake with a woman's head mirrors that of Eve only increases this idea that Eve is to blame for everything.²¹

An old, but still relevant study is the article "The Serpent with a Human Head in Art and in Mystery Play" by theatre historian John K. Bonnell (1917). He tries to find an explanation for why the iconography of the snake with a woman's head was incorporated in art. According to Bonnell, artists were not learned enough to have just copied the idea from the textual tradition; he therefore looked at mystery plays for an explanation. He discussed that play writers, on the contrary, were sufficiently literary and used Comestor and his following in their plays to make the scene of the Fall of Mankind more lively. Thanks to Comestor's theological view, instead of having a fake snake on stage, a real human could dress up and play the Edenic tempter. This meant that the snake could talk, which would make up for a much more interesting setting. It is this incorporation of a half human, half snake in mystery plays which, according to Bonnell, inspired artists. The artist saw the real life Snake with a woman's head and copied it in their art. Bonnell states that this would also

¹⁹ Flores, "'Effigies Amicitiae ... Veritas Inimicitiae'," 179, 181-82.

²⁰ Jean M. Higgins, "The Myth of Eve: The Temptress," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* vol. 44, no. 4 (1976), 640, 42, 44.

²¹ Flores, "'Effigies Amicitiae ... Veritas Inimicitiae'," 179-180.

explain the existence of both the Snake with a woman's head type of Edenic tempter and the snake type, since not all artist were familiar with these kind of mystery plays.²²

With his article "The Metamorphoses of the Eden Serpent during the Middle Ages and Renaissance" (1972), linguist Henry Ansgar Kelly adds the argument that although the idea of the snake with a woman's head disappears from the theological texts in the 14th century, it existed for another three centuries in the iconographical tradition. Unfortunately, he does not explain why this could be.²³ According to literary scholar Boria Sax in *Imaginary Animals. The Monstrous, the Wondrous and the Human* (2013) the appearance of the snake with a woman's head in the textual tradition had to do with 11th century misogynistic sermons and tracts which describe Eve, and all women by association, as snake-like or bestial. Sax did not explain to what extent this influenced the textual tradition.²⁴ Flores also studies the iconography of the snake with a woman's head in the textual tradition, and sees mainly the woman-unfriendly tone of these texts as the message one should read in this iconography.²⁵

The suggestion that there is a link between the Jewish Lilith, Adam's first wife, and the snake with a woman's head does not entirely comes out of the blue. As literary scholar Louis H. Feldman states in his essay "Hebrew Traditions in Peter Comestor's 'Historia Scholastica': I. Genesis" (1993), Comestor was heavily influenced by Jewish theology. According to Feldman, Comestor must have known Jewish interpretations and stories through at least four written sources and most probably also through oral communication. Therefore, some scholars see Lilith as the possible influence, and sometimes even see her as the snake with a woman's head. Art historian Hans Martin von Erffa suggests in his *Ikonomie der Genesis* that there might be a reflection of the legends of Lilith in the iconography of the snake with a woman's head.²⁶ Art historian Jeffrey M. Hoffeld argues in his article "Adam's Two Wives" (1968) that the snake with a woman's head is not just a woman, but in fact represents Lilith. He tries to prove this by discussing the connection between Adam and Lilith, Lilith and Eve and the snake and Mary.²⁷ Bonnell and Kelly, however, do not agree

²² Bonnell, "The Serpent with a Human Head," 263, 278, 280, 290.

²³ Henry Ansgar Kelly, "The Metamorphoses of the Eden Serpent during the Middle Ages and Renaissance," *Viator* v. 2 (1972), 326.

²⁴ Boria Sax. *Imaginary Animals. The Monstrous, the Wondrous and the Human* (London: Reaktion Books, limited, 2013), 25-26.

²⁵ Flores, "'Effigies Amicitiae ... Veritas Inimicitiae,'" 183-84.

²⁶ Hans Martin von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis. Die Christlichen Bildthemen aus dem alten Testament und ihre Quellen (ersten Band)* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1989), 173.

²⁷ J. M. Hoffeld, "Adam's two wives," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* Vol. 26, No. 10 (1968), 430-34, 436-38.

with Lilith as the snake with a woman's head. According to Bonnell Lilith was not regarded serpentine during the Middle Ages and thus could not be linked to the Edenic tempter.²⁸ Kelly repeats this and states that Hoffeld does not show any proof for the link between the snake and Lilith.²⁹ Von Erffa suggests a reflection of Lilith in the snake with a woman's head, but at the same time states that when Comestor mentions Lilith, he does not mention her in connection to the Edenic tempter, or even in connection to the Fall.³⁰ A good illustration of this discussion can be found in the Princeton Index of Medieval Art, as in some cases the snake with a woman's head had been labelled as Lilith in the older catalogues.

Some scholars look at the role of snake with a woman's head in the Fall of Mankind more specifically from a gender perspective. These perspectives can mainly be found in the texts of Flores and Sax. Flores states that this iconography emphasizes the role of women in the Fall of Mankind. By making the snake female and, often, visually the same as Eve, this iconography emphasizes Eve's fault. As a result, since Eve was often regarded as the prototype of women, the blame did not only fall on Eve, but on all women. Flores considers this iconography as a warning against women, who were considered to be dangerous and should thus be handled with care by men. Flores argues that this anti-women perspective is the reason for why Comestor's description became so popular and created such a big following, since in his time, misogyny was a major part of the society.³¹ According to Sax, one could see the snake with a woman's head as the representation of the idea that women were understood to be closer to nature than men. During the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, nature was perceived as something dangerous, wild and uncontrollable. Connecting this with women meant seeing them the same way. This fed the misogynous perspective of that time.³²

In this thesis, I will build upon this research. Although almost all authors try to place the iconography of the snake with a woman's head in a cultural context, I think that some pieces are still missing. Apart from focussing solely on the snake, its relation with Eve, the theological tradition, Lilith and women, I also wish to dedicate more research to the dracontopede, the encyclopaedical variant of the snake with a woman's head, and on the medieval recipients of the iconography. I wish to re-open the discussion about the possible

²⁸ Bonnell, "The Serpent with a Human Head," 290.

²⁹ Kelly, "The Metamorphoses of the Eden Serpent," 302.

³⁰ Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 173.

³¹ Flores, "'Effigies Amicitiae ... Veritas Inimicitiae'," 167, 169, 170, 172, 179, 181, 183, 187.

³² Sax, *Imaginary Animals*, 25-26.

influence of Lilith, as I have my reservations about the arguments against her influence. With these different thematical approaches I start my search for the interpretation of the snake with a woman's head in its wider cultural context.

2. Eve and the iconography of the Fall

(1) Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

(2) The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,

(3) but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

(4) “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman.

(5) “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

(6) When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

(7) Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.³³

This passage from Genesis 3, known as the Fall, has been illustrated many times throughout the centuries. According to art historians Herbert Schade and Hans Martin von Erffa it is the most illustrated scene from the old Testament, and started to appear in art as early as the beginning of the third century on the wall paintings of catacombs and in the reliefs of sarcophagi (for example fig. 1 and 2).³⁴ Later, images of the Fall could be found in illustrated Bibles, as well as on altarpieces, in theological manuscripts, in medieval literature, on wall paintings, stained glass, on metalwork and in freestanding and architectural sculpture. Not all these images are a direct reflection of the text from Genesis 3, in many depictions contemporary artistic and cultural phenomena can be perceived. In this chapter I will look at

³³ Gen. 3:1-7.

³⁴ Herbert Schade, “Adam und Eva,” in *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie, erster Band Allgemeine Ikonographie A – Ezechiel*, ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum (Freiburg [etc.]: Herder, 1994), 54; Von Erffa, *Ikonologie der Genesis*, 178.

how the iconography of the Fall has changed from the 12th till the end of the 17th century, and at the various theological interpretations of Eve and the Fall.

2.1 The iconography of the Fall

The scene of the Fall is the oldest illustration of the Old Testament found in Christian art. The earliest depiction can be traced back to the third, and maybe even the second century C.E.³⁵ In the text of Genesis 3 the key components are: the snake, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (from now on the tree of knowledge), Eve and Adam, the conversation between Eve and the snake, taking/eating the fruit, and the covering of their nudity with fig leaves. These key components are all present in the iconography of the Fall. In Genesis 3:1-7 the conversation between Eve and the snake is the most important; therefore the iconography of the Fall emphasizes the contact between Eve and the snake. The form of this contact can, however, vary. Eye contact between Eve and the snake is most common. Other forms that are also often depicted is the snake whispering in Eve's ear or giving Eve some fruit from the tree.³⁶

2.1.1 composition

The composition used to depict the Fall is either symmetrical or asymmetrical. The symmetrical composition is the oldest, and probably descends from older, pagan iconography as for example the iconography of the snake around the tree of the Hesperides (fig. 3).³⁷ In the symmetrical composition the tree of knowledge is placed in the center, often with the snake curled up into it, flanked by Eve and Adam. Usually Adam is placed on the right side of the tree, but there are also examples where Eve is placed on that side (fig. 4).³⁸

In the asymmetrical composition the tree of knowledge is not in the middle of the composition, but on the side. Eve and Adam stand either both on the same side of the tree, or

³⁵ Schade, "Adam und Eva," 54; Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 178; Louis Réau, *Iconographie de L'Art Chrétien. Tome II Iconographie de la Bible I Ancien Testament* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956), 83.

³⁶ Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 184.

³⁷ James Hall, *Hall's Iconografisch Handboek: Onderwerpen, Symbolen en motieven in de beeldende kunst*, trans. Theo Veenhof (Leiden: Primavera Pers, 2011), 6; Réau, *Iconographie de L'Art Chrétien*, 83; Schade, "Adam und Eva," 54-56; Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 179-180.

³⁸ This might have something to do with the dexter and sinister side, but since it is the tree they flank I am not completely sure if this would be the case. It could, however, be that dexter was always considered the more important side (and thus that it did not matter what they were flanking), and that therefore Adam was placed on the dexter side, since he was a man and thus considered more important.

one of them is left out of the composition (fig. 5 and 6). Examples for the asymmetrical composition probably also derive from older, pagan iconography, or maybe originates from now lost, but in many details verifiable, illustrations of manuscripts containing the Old Testament from before Christianity.³⁹ In the Early and High Middle Ages the composition used was often symmetrical; during the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance more examples of the asymmetrical composition can be found. Still, the symmetrical composition remained the dominant type.⁴⁰

2.1.2 The tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the snake

Since the Bible did not mention what kind of tree the tree of knowledge was, theologians and artists were left to their own imagination. The image of the tree thus differs in various times and cultures. In the earliest depictions, such as those on the reliefs of sarcophagi, the tree of knowledge can be identified as a fig tree (fig. 7).⁴¹ This identification with a fig tree is mainly because after the Fall Adam and Eve covered themselves with fig leaves, but also in Adam Legends from the 1st century C.E. the fig tree is being mentioned as the tree of knowledge.⁴²

Around the same time the tree of knowledge was depicted as a fig tree, it sometimes was shown as a vine (fig. 8). The vine brought men misfortune, as the story of Noah's drunkenness proved. But even though the identification of a vine as the tree of knowledge offered typological opportunities (the blood of Christ and the vine), the fig tree remained the dominant type for the tree of knowledge in the earlier depictions.⁴³

Only after the 4th century the apple tree became identified as the tree of knowledge. This idea originated from Gaul, a region in which apples were more common than figs. Perhaps the idea of the apple tree as the tree of knowledge originates in pagan mythology, since in the legends of the Hesperides apples also played a big role.⁴⁴ The identification as an apple tree can also originate from the wordplay of the Latin word *mālum* (apple) and the word *mālum* (evil). Although the identification of the tree of knowledge as a fig tree remained

³⁹ Schade, "Adam und Eva," 54-56; Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 179-180.

⁴⁰ Schade, "Adam und Eva," 54-56.

⁴¹ Johanna Flemming, "Baum, Bäume," in *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie, erster Band Allgemeine Ikonographie A-Ezechiel*, ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum (Freiburg [etc.]: Herder, 1994), 264

⁴² Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 120

⁴³ Flemming, "Baum, Bäume," 264; Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 120-121.

⁴⁴ The iconography of this legend also seems to have influenced the symmetrical composition of the Fall; it will thus not be too big of a leap to suggest that it might also have had some influence in the introduction of the apple tree as the tree of knowledge.

important, during the High and Late Middle Ages the apple tree became the most popular type (fig. 9). During this later period the tree of knowledge sometimes also became a citrus tree with either lemons or oranges, or a cherry tree.⁴⁵

Not only time played a part in the identification of the tree of knowledge, but also geography and culture. The tree of knowledge in the Byzantine and Italian tradition was often considered to be an orange or a fig tree, in France tradition it was regularly an apple tree, and in Judeo-rabbinic tradition it was usually a vine. This was probably the result of the natural environment, as for example Israelites probably did not know apples that well while the French were not that familiar with figs.⁴⁶

The snake and the tree of knowledge are inseparable, since it is because of the snake that mankind touched the tree and sinned. From the text of Genesis 3 it is not clear where the snake is actually placed in the tree, but in most depictions the snake is curled around the tree-trunk. From this position it can either look down onto Eve or reach to the fruit hanging in the tree. As is mentioned in the Bible, the snake had been known as an upright creature before the Fall happened. Therefore in some depictions the snake is placed upright next to the tree of knowledge, either in the place where Adam normally stands or beside Eve (fig. 10). The two main ways of depicting the snake is either a 'naturalistic/dragonesque' type of serpent or as a snake with a woman's head. (fig. 11 and 12).⁴⁷ In the next chapter I will examine the second category in more detail.

2.1.3 Adam and Eve and their nudity

Apart from the tree of knowledge and the snake, Adam and Eve are also key elements in the iconography of the Fall. Without the first humans, no sin. Their nudity is an important feature. Only after they committed the first sin did Adam and Eve become aware of their nudity and did they cover themselves with fig leaves. In the iconography, these two moments in time are often combined. Eve and Adam are already wearing their fig leaf coverings even before they have sinned (fig. 13 and 14). This could be perceived as a portent of what is about to happen, but also as a way to emphasis on their shame and sin.⁴⁸ In the Early and High Middle Ages images exist in which the private parts of the first humans are not covered, but

⁴⁵ Flemming, "Baum, Bäume," 265; Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 121-122.

⁴⁶ Réau, *Iconographie de L'Art Chrétien*, 85.

⁴⁷ Wolfgang Kemp, "Schlange, Schlangen," in *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie, vierter Band Allgemeine Ikonographie Saba, Königin von – Zypresse Nachträge*, ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum (Freiburg [etc.]: Herder, 1994), 75-76; Réau, *Iconographie de L'Art Chrétien*, 84; Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 171.

⁴⁸ Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 183.

in these cases the private parts are often not explicitly depicted either (fig. 15 and 16). This probably meant to reflect a lack of shame, as before the sin Eve and Adam were innocent and childlike.⁴⁹ During the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance artists and commissioners became interested in depicting the explicit nakedness of Eve and Adam and really distinguished between the bodies of man and woman. It is also during this period that an explicit link between the nakedness of the first human's sexuality could be perceived in art.⁵⁰

2.1.4 Interaction

Apart from their nakedness, the interaction between Adam and Eve, and between Eve or Adam and the snake is interesting. The main interaction between Eve and Adam in the iconography of the Fall is that they may look at each other while Eve gives Adam the fruit from the tree (fig. 17). This kind of interaction is a reflection of the type that is described in Genesis 3. Sometimes Eve only gives Adam the fruit and does not look at him although he does look at her (fig. 18), while in other depictions there is no contact between them at all (fig. 24). An interesting variant of interaction between Adam and Eve is the iconography in which Adam wards off Eve, a variant that probably originates from a Rabbinic source. In this source Eve tries to convince Adam, out of jealousy, to participate in her sin (fig. 7). Eve thinks that after eating the fruit she will die and thus leave Adam alone in Paradise. She was afraid that God would create a new woman for him, which she would hate, and so she tried to include him in the act, even after his initial opposition.

A second interesting variant that was common in the iconography of the Fall between the 12th and the 16th century, is the variant in which Adam reaches for his throat after eating from the fruit, often while Eve (and sometimes also the snake) watch him (fig. 19). This motif originates from the Adam legends and is a visual representation of Adam choking in the fruit which gets stuck in his throat (which is the creation myth of the Adam's apple in the throats of men).⁵¹

⁴⁹ Van Welie-Vink, *Body Language*, 153. In first instance I thought this to be an indication of shame for depicting private parts in a Christian context, but this is incompatible with the fact that in some cases Eve and Adam's genitals are depicted. Interpreting the not depicting of the private parts as a way artists communicated the lack of shame, is thus more probable.

⁵⁰ Schade, "Adam und Eva," 53-56; Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 180-181; Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago [etc.]: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 201, 246, 294-295, 298, 413-414.

⁵¹ Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 182-183.

The snake mainly interacts with Eve, although there are depictions in which the snake is focused on Adam (fig. 20). The contact between the snake and Eve varies. It sometimes looks like they are talking (when Eve seems to make speaking gestures with her arms), sometimes the snake seems to whisper in Eve's ear, and sometimes they seem to just stare at each other (fig. 21, 22 and 23). An interesting interaction that also appears in the iconography is the snake giving Eve the fruit from the tree (fig. 24). This is not a reflection of Genesis 3, but it is used frequently in depictions of the Fall.⁵² The type of fruit that Eve receives, picks, or gives to Adam differs. This relates to the fact that the identification of the tree of knowledge varied, and changed over time. The fruit is often related to the type of tree that was depicted. Thus it could be a fig, grapes, an apple, a lemon, an orange, or a cherry. Just as the identification changed from fig tree or vine to apple tree, the identification of the fruit changed as well. However, an artist could also show a fig tree with an apple as fruit (fig. 68).⁵³

2.1.5 Typology

Theological typologies have always influenced the iconography of the Fall: events, persons and statements from the Old Testament are seen as prefigurations of events, persons and statements from the New Testament. According to the typologies, the temptation of Eve can be seen as the prefiguration of Gabriel's annunciation of Mary, as Eve brought sin into the world and Mary saved the world from sin, thus being the 'second Eve' (fig. 25). Another argument for this is that the first word of Angel Gabriel's greeting to Mary, "Ave Maria," turned around is "Eva". At the same time a parallel between Adam and Christ has been drawn. With Adam's sin death came into the world, and with Christ's death the opportunity for a life after death became possible again.⁵⁴

Another typology is that the temptation of Eve functioned as a prefiguration of the temptation of Christ, in which Eve failed and Christ overcame temptation.⁵⁵ This typology resulted in representations of the Fall on a hill. This linked the Fall to the third temptation of Christ by the Devil (fig. 26). For this third temptation the devil takes Christ to a very high point, which Matthew calls a very high mountain. The hill on which the Fall took place was thus the same hill Christ stood on. Next to a parallel with Eve's temptation the representation

⁵² Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 183-184.

⁵³ Flemming, "Baum, Bäume," 264-265; Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 120-122.

⁵⁴ Rom. 5:12-21; Réau, *Iconographie de L'Art Chrétien*, 83; Schade, "Adam und Eva," 43, 44; Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 163, 168.

⁵⁵ Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 167.

of the Fall on a hill could also be a reference to Golgotha, the mountain on which Christ has been crucified in order to purify humanity of sin. This means that the hill on which the Fall took place could be seen as a portent of the resolution of sin. This iconographical variant can mainly be found in earlier depictions of the Fall.⁵⁶

There are also non-Biblical parallels that have influenced the iconography of the Fall, such as the parallel between Eve and Pandora. The Christian writers Tertullian (c. 155 - c. 240), Origen (c. 184 - c. 253), and Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 329 - 390) drew this parallel between the chest of Pandora, that unleashed all the terror and evil into the world, and the tree of knowledge. Both women went against their command and thus brought evil, death and terror into the world. Especially in later art works this parallel becomes more prevalent, although it is more a parallel in content than in visual elements.⁵⁷

2.1.6 Visual variants

Apart from the main iconographical elements there are some other interesting visual variants that are worth mentioning. One of these iconographical variants is the incorporation of a monkey in the depictions of the Fall during the late Middle Ages (fig. 27). A monkey in the Middle Ages was often seen as a representation of sin, but in the iconography of the Fall his meaning can be deducted more precisely. A monkey was seen as an animal that wanted to mimic humans and in the story of the Fall the humans wanted to mimic God (as in knowing good and evil, and being like God). This is the sin of *Superbia*, the sin of vanity and “self-love.” The monkey is thus a visual representation of the sin of *Superbia*.⁵⁸

Another remarkable visual variant is the incorporation of the personification of death in the iconography of the Fall. The artist Hans Baldung Grien (c. 1484 - 1545) introduced this morbid iconography, and even sometimes replaced Adam with the personification of death. In his view death was the exact result of the Fall, because when the first humans sinned death came into the world.⁵⁹ According to Hans Baldung Grien sin could be equated to sexuality, mainly to female sexuality, as is shown in his painting *Eve, the Serpent, and Death* (c. 1530)

⁵⁶ Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 183.

⁵⁷ Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture*, 335; Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 176-177.

⁵⁸ Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 183; Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture*, 180-181.

⁵⁹ Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 183; Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture*, 180-181, 274-275.

(fig. 28). In this painting a powerful and sensual Eve holds the tail of the snake (which is placed quite an insinuating place), while Adam is the personification of death.⁶⁰

2.2 Chronology

The depiction of Eve and her conversation with the snake in the iconography of the Fall has known quite some changes over time. In this part I will discuss chronologically how the depiction has changed over a period of five centuries, starting in the 12th century. For this analysis I used over a hundred depictions of the Fall produced in the Western world (e.g. France, England, Belgium, Italy, Germany etc.). To find these images I mainly used the Princeton Index of Medieval Art, but also museum websites, as for example those of the Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam) and the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna), as well as Google Arts and Culture were used. I also consulted secondary literature containing many images of the Fall, such as Joseph Leo Koerner's *The Moment of Self-portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (1993) and Josef Kirchner's *Die Darstellung des ersten Menschenpaares in der Bildenden Kunst: von der ältesten Zeit bis auf unsere Tage* (1903). When using the (online) databases I mainly used the search terms "Fall of Man" and "Eve, tempted by the snake." To give a clear overview I only used artworks in which the scene of the Fall was clearly visible, which means that damaged artworks were not consulted. Furthermore both the snake and Eve needed to be in the depiction. To make this analysis I used the timeframe 1100 to 1600, which I divided into periods of 50 years.

In my analysis, I mainly focus on how Eve has been depicted and how her contact with the snake can best be described. I make a differentiation between 'real' contact and 'one-sided' contact. With 'real' contact I mean a form of contact in which both parties, in this case Eve and the snake, actively take part, for example when they are depicted having a conversation (shown with open mouths and/or with hand gestures that suggest a conversation) or if they are depicted as looking at each other. With 'one-sided' contact I mean that either the snake or Eve is trying to make contact with the other, while the other is not paying attention. I will also discuss what kind of snake is depicted, the 'naturalistic/dragonesque' serpent type, or the snake with a woman's head. I decided to divide this analysis into two parts, 1100-1350 and 1350-1600, because the way Eve is being portrayed changes drastically around 1350.

⁶⁰ Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture*, 294-295, 298, 413-414; Réau, *Iconographie de L'Art Chrétien*, 83; Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 180, 182

From a human without any specific female features, she becomes a very feminine. It is also during this period that the use of the snake with a woman's head becomes the dominant type of Edenic tempter, although this iconographical type had been introduced earlier.

2.2.1 1100 – 1350

In 12th century images of the Fall, Eve does not differ much from Adam. Their bodies are often exactly the same, not showing any sex-specific features (fig. 29). Sometimes Eve has breasts, but often these are only indicated and not prominent (fig. 30). Adam and Eve's genitals are often covered, either by leaves or by their hands. In the images where they are not covered, however, it becomes clear that the private parts of both Adam and Eve are not painted at all (fig. 15). As stated earlier this could be a way the artist wanted to communicate the innocence of Adam and Eve before the Fall.⁶¹ Often Eve wears her hair loose, but in some representations it has been covered up or tied back (fig. 31). During 12th century the iconography of the Fall does not yet show the snake with a woman's head, so all the kind of serpents Eve comes in contact with are of the 'naturalistic/dragonesque' serpent type. The type of contact Eve has with the serpent varies between 'one-sided' contact, such as the snake whispering in Eve's ear or giving her the fruit from the tree, while Eve looks somewhere else (fig. 32 and 33), and 'real' contact, such as a conversation, gazing at each other, and the snake giving her the fruit and whispering in her ear, while Eve is looking at it or listening to it (fig. 34, 35, 36 and 37). It seems that there is an emphasis on 'real' contact between the serpent and Eve.

In the 13th century this emphasis on 'real' contact continues, such as a conversation, gazing at each other and the snake whispering in Eve's ear or giving her the fruit, while Eve pays attention (fig. 38, 39 and 40). However, more 'one-sided' contact is noticeable. Examples of this 'one-sided' contact are that the snake looks at Eve or that it gives her the fruit of the tree, while Eve is not paying attention to it (fig. 41). During the first half of the 13th century the snake with a woman's head is introduced in the iconography of the Fall (fig. 42). Nevertheless, this type is not immediately popular and the 'naturalistic/dragonesque' type of serpent remains still dominant. During this period Eve is depicted both with and without female forms, but if she has been depicted with them they are not very prominent (fig. 43 and 44). She wears her hair mostly loose and her genitals are sometimes covered and sometimes

⁶¹ Van Welie-Vink, *Body Language*, 153.

uncovered. But again, when they are uncovered, the artist did not depict them explicitly (fig. 45).

In the first half of 14th century, Eve is depicted in the same way as in the 13th century: both with and without female forms and she wears her hair loose (fig. 46 and 47). Her private parts are sometimes covered and sometimes not, but genitals are never explicitly depicted (fig. 48). During this period the contact between the snake and Eve is mostly ‘real’ contact (fig. 49 and 50).

2.2.2 1350-1600

During the second half of the 14th century ‘real’ contact remains the most prominent form of contact (fig. 51). A new form of contact is introduced in which the snake and Eve are looking in the same direction, often at Adam, as if they form some sort of team (fig. 52). The ‘one-sided’ contact that does occur in this period, consists of both the snake who looks at Eve, while Eve is looking somewhere else, and Eve looking at the snake while the snake is looking somewhere else (fig. 53). During the 14th century the snake with a woman’s head is depicted more often as the Edenic tempter (fig. 54).

In the second half of the 14th century the depictions of Eve become more female-like, which means that she is more often portrayed with female forms as breasts or a specific type of belly that differs from Adam’s (fig. 55). This depiction of female forms becomes more frequent, a development that is also perceivable in the first half of the 15th century. During this period Eve is usually depicted with female forms (fig. 56). In this period the private parts of both Eve and Adam are occasionally depicted (fig. 57).⁶² The contact between the serpent and Eve is mostly ‘real’ contact, such as gazing at each other, a conversation, and the snake giving Eve the fruit while Eve looks at it (fig. 58, 59 and 60). Both the ‘naturalistic/dragonesque’ type and the snake with a woman’s head are depicted in these scenes.

In the second half of the 15th century this ‘real’ contact shifts to more ‘one-sided’ contact. For example the snake looks at Eve or gives her the fruit, while Eve seems not to pay attention to it, or Eve looks at the snake while the snake is looking somewhere else (fig. 61,

⁶² According to Art historian Wendelien van Welie this is often an indication that a point is being made. Whatever this is about depends on the image’s context, but it’s usually not very positive and often marks sin and guilt (Van Welie-Vink, *Body Language*, 155).

62 and 63). During this period Eve is exclusively depicted with female forms (fig. 64), which makes the focus on her body becoming more prominent.

In the 16th century this focus is developed even more, and one cannot deny that Eve's female body is a very important part of the depiction; her hair also becomes a focal point. Although in all the previous centuries Eve wore her hair often loose, it is now that her hair reacts to its depicted environment: it blows in the wind, and both Adam and Eve touch it (fig. 65 and 66). Apart from an example of increasing naturalism, this could also be seen as a new symbolic feature, reflecting the connotation of luxuriant hair with sexuality and sin. Although nudity in Medieval art can have both positive and negative connotations, representing either innocence and love or vanity and sexuality, it is obvious that Eve's nudity is negative.⁶³ This is because the great emphasis on her female forms in combination with the story, rather indicates vanity, sin and sexuality more than innocence. Both 'real' and 'one-sided' contact between Eve and the snake could be perceived in the beginning of the 16th century (fig. 67, 68, and 69), but in the second half it becomes more 'one-sided' (fig. 70). The snake is depicted as both the snake with a woman's head and the 'naturalistic/dragonesque' serpent type, but it appears that the snake with a woman's head has become more popular (fig. 71, 72 and 73).

When I evaluated the iconographical changes in all the images, three things caught my attention. The first one is the shift from an Eve without any sex-specific features to a very feminine looking Eve. There is a slow development perceivable in which Eve's female body becomes more and more important. During the second half of the 15th- and the entire 16th century, one can even say that Eve's female body is one of the most prominent features in the depictions of the Fall. The second thing that caught my attention is that when this focus on Eve's female body became more important, the contact between Eve and the snake got less attention. A shift from 'real' to 'one-sided' contact or even to no contact at all, can be noticed as some sort of counterreaction to the shift from Eve without sex-specific features to a feminine looking Eve. The last thing that caught my attention is that the introduction of the snake with a woman's head as the Edenic tempter, did not change the forms of contact much. The only new change in contact I have noticed is that in some depictions Eve and the snake

⁶³ Martine Meuwese, "De magie van de Liefde. De Liebeszauber uit Leipzig onder de loep," *Madoc* 33, no. 2 (2019), 71-72.

look in the same direction, as if they form some sort of team. I had expected that the contact between the snake and Eve would have gotten a new impulse since I thought it to be less complicated to illustrate contact between two women than between a woman and a snake, as a talking human seems to be easier to depict than a talking animal.

2.3 Theology of the Fall: Commentaries on Eve

Commentaries and interpretations of Eve and the story of the Fall are as old as Christendom itself. Most of these commentaries and interpretations follow the same sort of trend and contain elements that keep occurring. It is interesting that in most commentaries and interpretations Eve is the prototype of women, which means that characteristics attributed to Eve were also attributed to women in general. The main elements these commentaries discuss are whether Eve was equal to Adam or not, if she was the main causer of the Fall, and how her sexuality had influenced the Fall.

Almost all Church Fathers describe Eve as the causer of sin and as unequal to Adam. For example, in his *Apology to Autolycus* (late 100s CE), Theophilus states that Eve was the author of sin and in his *On the Apparel of Woman* (c. 202 CE), Tertullian tells that it was woman's sex that brought sin in the world and thereby necessitated the death of God's son. In the same text Tertullian blames women for the ways they tempt men, referring to how Eve tempted Adam. Likewise, Augustine (354 - 430 CE) emphasized Eve as a temptress in his *De genesi ad litteram* (begun c. 401 CE). In book XI, chapter 30 he discusses how Eve convinced Adam to eat the fruit by using "perhaps some persuasive words which Scripture does not record but leaves to our intelligence to supply." Moreover, he refers to Eve as the one that introduced sin to mankind.⁶⁴

The idea that Eve tempted Adam into sin was one of the reasons why she was considered as unequal to Adam. As John Chrysostom (c. 347 - 407 CE) states in his *Homily 26 on I Corinthians*, "Eve was first equal in honour, until she misused her power and ruined everything."⁶⁵ Another reason given for Eve's inferiority was the way she was created. The Bible presents two creation myths. The first can be found in Genesis 1:26-28 and the second in Genesis 2:7 and 2:21-23. In the first creation myth God created both man and woman

⁶⁴ Kirsten E. Kvam, Linda S. Schearing and Valarie H. Ziegler. *Eve & Adam: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender* (Bloomington [etc.]: Indiana University Press, 1999), 129, 131-132, 148, 151.

⁶⁵ Kvam, Schearing and Ziegler, *Eve & Adam*, 113.

simultaneously and both in his image; in the second God first created Adam by forming him from dust into his own image, and only moments later he created Eve from one of Adam's ribs.⁶⁶ In the orthodox vision of Christianity, the second creation myth was seen as the real version and the first as some sort of metaphorical one. Augustine explained it in the sense that the creation in Genesis 1 described the creation in terms of potential and causal principles and the creation in Genesis 2 as the moment where God brings these potentials into visible forms.⁶⁷

With the emphasis on the creation in Genesis 2 it was made possible to interpret the relationship between Adam and Eve in a hierarchical way, which is visible in for example Ambrose's (339 - 397 CE) text *Paradise* (c. 375 CE). The man was created first and after the image of God, while the woman was "merely" formed from man's rib. It was therefore the man who was perceived to be as superior. Apart from these two reasons, Eve was also seen as inferior because she was deceived by the snake. She was seen as "the weaker sex," "the weaker vessel" and as "less rational and more prone to evil." On the other hand this is sometimes described as the reason why the snake chose to talk to Eve instead of Adam, which means that her presupposed weakness is both the reason for Eve's inferiority and the reason why she was deceived.⁶⁸

One exception to the vision that Eve was inferior can be found in the text *Anagogicarum contemplationum* (c. 150 - 250 CE), which was thought to be written by Anastasius Sinaita (630-701 CE). In this text Adam, not Eve, is described as being the weaker partner. Anastasius writes that Eve was stronger because she argued with the snake and ate only after she was convinced. Besides this, she had only heard of God's command from Adam, so she could never be sure if it was not just a fantasy of Adam. Adam, on the other hand, just took the fruit and ate it without any questions or resistance, thus being the weaker one. A text such as this is rare and there are no other examples of such an argument in early orthodoxy. Still it is interesting to see, that although the thought of inequality was dominant, other voices did exist. An opinion such as this, however, did not create much support. A reason for this could be the fact that Anastasius Sinaita was part of Eastern Orthodox tradition and not, as the other authors described here, of Western Orthodox tradition. Still, it is not really clear whether this text is by Anastasius Sinaita, since the text seems to be written

⁶⁶Gen. 1:26-28; Gen. 2:7; Gen. 2:21-23.

⁶⁷ Kvam, Schearing and Ziegler, *Eve & Adam*, 112, 148.

⁶⁸ Kvam, Schearing and Ziegler, *Eve & Adam*, 112-113, 136, 138-139, 141, 144; Higgins, "The Myth of Eve," 643.

approximately four centuries before he lived, and in his exegesis of Genesis 3:1-6 he emphasizes a contrary vision on women. It is therefore not evident if this text needs to be perceived in the eastern tradition or not.⁶⁹

The ideas of inequality and Eve as the causer of sin continued to be dominant in the commentaries and interpretations of Eve and the Fall, also in those contemporary with the studied images of this thesis. Especially during this period Eve the temptress became an important motif. Comestor states, for example, that Eve convinced Adam probably by “addressing him first with persuasive words which Moses omits for the sake of brevity.” Female authors such as Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179) and Heloise (c. 1100-1164) state how Adam was deceived and how terrible it was to be born as a woman since “it was the first woman in the beginning who lured man from Paradise.” According to Jacques de Vitry (1165/1180-1240) Eve could not rest until she got Adam banished from Paradise and Bonaventura (1221-1274) seemed to know that Eve used “wicked persuasion” and “corrupted her husband.” Statements equal to this are also found in texts by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), in the late Medieval witch-hunters’ manual *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487) and even in texts by the reformer Martin Luther (1483-1546).⁷⁰ In these later sources Eve was also often perceived as unequal to Adam. To quote Comestor, Eve had “less foresight and was ‘wax to be twisted into vice’.”⁷¹

Eve’s sexuality already played a role in the commentaries of the Church Fathers, who seemed to see lust and sexuality linked to women and thus linked to the Fall. Augustine even stated that lust became part of sexuality after the Fall. They see lust and sexuality both as the cause and the result of the Fall. Chrysostom even believed that without the Fall humans would procreate in a different way, and that intercourse would not have been necessary. By linking women to sexual desire, the Church Fathers came close to despising women.⁷² Also in later sources after the Church Fathers lust was seen as both the cause and the consequence of the Fall. Comestor describes a loss of sexual innocence caused by the first sin. Especially during the Renaissance the Fall had been interpreted as “a seduction and succumbing of lust and carnality.”⁷³ Eve represented the carnal side of man and Adam the spiritual side, an

⁶⁹ Jean M. Higgins, “Anastasio Sinaita and the superiority of the Woman,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* vol. 97, no. 2 (1978): 254-255.

⁷⁰ Higgins, “The Myth of Eve,” 640, 642, 644.

⁷¹ Peter Comestor, *commentary on Genesis 3:1*, quoted in Flores, “‘Effigies Amicitiae ... Veritas Inimicitiae’,” 168.

⁷² Kvam, Scheuring and Ziegler, *Eve & Adam*, 113,148.

⁷³ Flores, “‘Effigies Amicitiae ... Veritas Inimicitiae’,” 173-174, 187.

interpretation that only became prominent during the Renaissance. The *Malleus Maleficarum* is a good example of how Eve's lust and sexuality was projected onto all women, as it connects women to sexual independence and lustful female witches.⁷⁴

2.4 Conclusion

Within the iconography of the Fall an evolution in perception took place during the period of the 12th to the 17th century. In the beginning, from late antiquity to the Early and High Middle Ages, it functioned mostly as a warning or a moralizing lesson. The Fall brought death into the world, thus sin had to be connected with death. The iconography and the story also functioned as a reminder of the curses of God, in which the woman was commanded to always obey her husband.⁷⁵ The shift from "just" the representation of the key factors in the story, to a greater emphasis on the human body brought along with it a shift in perception. Increasingly, the Fall became linked to sexuality, especially female sexuality. During the late Middle Ages Eve's body became one of the key factors of the iconography. This in combination with the popularity of the snake with a woman's head as the Edenic tempter could have altered the message. The Fall still functioned as a warning, but not as a warning against sin, but rather against women.

To some extent the same kind of evolution can be found in the theology of the Fall. The Church Fathers already considered Eve as a temptress, but it was only later that this aspect became more important. The emphasis on (female) sexuality is present in theological texts from as early as late Antiquity till the late Middle Ages and Renaissance. It is therefore interesting that the incorporation of female sexuality in the iconography of the Fall only started around 1350. From the theological tradition it becomes clear that Eve's qualities are often linked to women in general. Thus, it is probable that the iconography does not only represent Eve but also other women. The question remains which role the snake with a woman's head had within these interpretations. During the first half of the 13th century, this type of Edenic tempter was introduced in the iconography of the Fall, not long after Comestor mentioned it in his *Historia Scholastica* (c. 1173). In chapter 3 I will examine

⁷⁴ Christopher S. Mackay and Heinrich Institoris, *The Hammer of the Witches. A Complete Translation of the Malleus Maleficarum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁷⁵ Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 181.

where the snake with a woman's head comes from, what it could embody and what its connection to the female sex exactly is.

3. The snake with a woman's head and the iconography of the Fall

Because [Lucifer] was afraid of being found out by the man, he approached the woman, who had less foresight and was “wax to be twisted into vice” and this by means of the serpent; for the serpent at that time was erect like a man, since it was laid prostrate when it was cursed; and even now the pareas is said to be erect when it moves. He also chose a certain kind of serpent, as Bede says, which had the countenance of a virgin, because like favours like; and he moved its tongue to speak, though it knew nothing itself, just as he speaks through the frenzied and possessed.⁷⁶

From the beginning of the 13th century a new type of Edenic tempter emerges in the iconography of the Fall: a serpent with the body of a snake, but with the head, and sometimes even the upper body, of a woman. The reason for the introduction of this type of snake is often ascribed to the passage above, which is from Comestor's *Historia Scholastica libri Genesis* (c. 1173). He was the first author to describe the snake with a head of a woman as the Edenic tempter. In this chapter I will not only examine how Comestor's passage influenced the artistic, theological, and encyclopaedical tradition, but also how Comestor himself may have been influenced by already existing textual and visual sources. I will also discuss the key components of the iconography of the snake with a woman's head and the relationship between the textual and visual tradition.

3.1 The textual tradition: The theological tradition

Even though Comestor's snake with a woman's head influenced the arts and later texts greatly, it did not find much support in the theological tradition. Already in the first half of the 14th century the influential Franciscan teacher Nicholas of Lyra (1270-1349) deemed the idea of the existence of such a type of serpent unbelievable.⁷⁷ In his *Historia Scholastica libri Genesis* Comestor ascribes the idea of the snake with a woman's head to Bede. There are, however, no known texts of Bede that mention a snake with a woman's head. Bonnell, as well as those who repeat him (e.g. Kelly and Gherard Jaritz) suggest that maybe Comestor only

⁷⁶ Flores, “‘Effigies Amicitiae ... Veritas Inimicitiae,’” 168.

⁷⁷ Kelly, “The Metamorphoses of the Eden Serpent,” 326.

referred to the clause “elegit quoddam genus serpentis,” which indeed agrees with Bede’s explanation that the devil used the snake merely as an instrument, and that it was not wise in itself. Another suggestion Bonnell gives is that Comestor had misread a passage of Bede.⁷⁸ Still, it could also have been a way for Comestor to give his claim more authority. Comestor quoted many authorities throughout his *Historia Scholastica*, which made his text together with the Vulgate the main source for Bible studies during the Middle Ages.⁷⁹ It should thus not be a surprise if Comestor used Bede to make the description of the snake with a woman’s head more trustworthy.

Examples of theological texts and treatises that mention Comestor’s type of Edenic tempter are Bonaventure’s *Commentaria in librum secundum sententiarum* (Paris, 1250-1251), Jacob van Maerlant’s adaptation of *Historia Scholastica*, nowadays called the *Rijmbijbel* (Damme, 1271), and *Speculum humanae salvationis* (Southern Germany or Northern Italy, c. 1324). I will examine these texts together with Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica* and will try to find descriptions of the link between the snake with a woman’s head and the Fall, its appearance, its qualities and to what extent these descriptions tell us something about women in general.

3.1.1 Peter Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica libri Genesis* (c. 1173)

Timens vero deprehendi a viro, mulierem minus providam et certam in vitium flecti aggressus est, et hoc per serpentem, quia tunc serpens erectus est ut homo, quia in maledictione prostratus est, et adhuc, ut tradunt, phareas erectus incedit. Elegit etiam quoddam genus serpentis, ut ait Beda, virgineum vultum habens, quia similia similibus applaudant, et movit ad loquendum linguam ejus, tamen nescientes sicut et per fanaticos et energumenos loquitur.⁸⁰

In Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica* the devil is the main reason for the incorporation of the snake with a woman’s head in the Fall. The devil chose this type of snake because of its appearance. As he was afraid to approach the man, he approached the woman, since he believed she would not as easily detect him,, “Timens vero deprehendi a viro, mulierem.”

⁷⁸ Bonnell, “The Serpent with a Human Head,” 257, 258.

⁷⁹ Timothy Jackson and Nigel F. Palmer (ed.), *Die Vermittlung Geistlicher inhalte im Mittelalter*, ed. (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer Verlag, 1996), 154-55, 165.

⁸⁰ Flores, “‘Effigies amicitiae ... veritas inimicitiae’,” 168. This is the Latin version of the translated quote at the beginning of the chapter.

Considering “like favours like”, “*similia similibus applaudant*,” the devil chose a snake that had the face of a maiden. As already stated, Comestor quotes Bede, “*ut ait Beda*,” as the source for the information about the appearance of the snake. Apart from looking like a woman, the snake also walks and stands upright as a human, “*erectus est ut homo*.” Noteworthy is the fact that Comestor refers to the snake as having the face of a maiden, thus a virgin.

Because the snake with a woman’s head is only the instrument of the devil, “*et movit ad loquendum linguam ejus, tamen nescientes sicut et per fanaticos et energumenos loquitur*,” it has not got any qualities of its own. This means that although the snake with a woman’s head has a female face, it is not considered to be a woman and is thus not ascribed certain female features.⁸¹ Comestor does describe certain aspects of womanhood in this passage, for example that women have less foresight, “*minus providam*,” and that they are easier to be twisted into vice, “*certam in vitium flecti aggressus est*.” These aspects, however, only apply to Eve, and indirectly to women in general, but not to the snake.

3.1.2 Bonaventure’s *Commentaria in librum secundum sententiarum* (1250-51)

Ad illud de maiori affabilitate iam patet responsio. Verum est enim, quod si fuisset in effigie humana. affabilior fuisset; sed divina providentia non debuit hoc permittere, sed cautelam diaboli debuit temperare; et ideo concessum est sibi corpus serpentis, quod tamen habebat faciem virginis, sicut dicit Beda, et reliquum corpus erat serpentis, ut sic ex una parte posset latere, ex altera deprehendi.⁸²

In Bonaventure’s text the devil is also responsible for the snake with a woman’s head at the Fall, only in a different way than in Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica*. In this fragment Bonaventure explains that the devil wanted to tempt man whilst being disguised as a man since that would make the temptation easier, “*Verum est enim, quod si fuisset in effigie humana affabilior fuisset*.” But holy providence, “*divina providentia*,” prevented this by letting the devil only use a snake with a woman’s head, instead of a whole human.

Bonaventure’s snake with a woman’s head is described in the same way as Comestor’s, as a

⁸¹ This is interesting since many female-hybrids are considered to be woman (albeit only half). Why there is such a heavy emphasis on the appearance of the snake, but no elaboration on why specifically a snake with a female-face instead of a human-face is something to bear in mind.

⁸² Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum magistri petri lombardi* (Florence: Ad claras Aquas (Quaracchi): Ex typographia Colegii S. Bonaventurae, 1882), 495.

snake with the head of a virgin, but he also mentions that the devil made the snake only show its upper body to Eve and hid its tail, “ut sic ex una parte posset latere, ex altera deprehendi.”

Bonaventura also refers to Bede, “sicut dicit Beda,” when talking about the appearance of the snake, showing the influence of Comestor. Just as in Comestor’s text the snake does not have any qualities of its own. From Bonaventure’s description it becomes clear that he also perceives the snake with a woman’s head as merely the channel of the devil and not as a creature with its own personality. The snake is not seen as an autonomous female creature and does not have any female characteristics. Bonaventure, as opposed to Comestor, does not talk about aspects of womanhood in this passage.

3.1.3 Jacob van Maerlant’s Rijmbijbel (1271-72)

Omme dat soe cranker was van liue
metten serpente heuet hiit bestaen
want dat soe plach doe sonder waen
up ende neder recht te gane
recht na des menschen ghedane
beda scriuet die clerc was diere
het was een serpens maniere
Gheansicht also joncvrouwe
vte hem sprac die onghetrouwe
also hi nu doet wildit weeten
vte dien die hi heuet beseeten.⁸³

Since the *Rijmbijbel* is the Dutch adaptation of Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica*, it does not differ much from the original version. Just as Comestor, Maerlant describes the Devil as being the reason for the snake with a woman’s head at the Fall. However, in contrast

⁸³ “Rijmbijbel (1983) – Jacob van Maerlant, nr. 16 en 17,” DBNL, Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren, accessed June 15, 2020, https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/maer002mgys01_01/maer002mgys01_01_0001.php#1.

to Comestor, he does not explain why it mattered to the devil that the snake was half snake, half woman. Maerlant describes the snake as having the face of a maiden, “Gheansicht also joncvrouwe,” and as walking and standing upright as a human “up ende neder recht te gane, recht na des menschen ghedane.” Just as Comestor and Bonaventure, Maerlant refers to Bede when talking about the snake’s appearance: “Beda scriuet.”

Maerlant also describes the snake with a woman’s head as merely the channel through which the devil speaks, “vte hem sprac die onghetrouwe.” This means that also in the *Rijmbijbel* the snake with a woman’s head does not get any qualities of its own. Maerlant does not ascribe female characteristics to either the snake itself or to women in general, another point in which his adaptation differs from the original *Historia Scholastica*.

3.1.4 Speculum humanae salvationis (c. 1324)

Quapropter diabolus, homini invidens, sibi insidiatur

Et ad praecepti transgressionem ipsum inducere nitebatur:

Quoddam ergo genus serpentis sibi diabolus eligebat.

Qui tunc erectus gradiebatur et caput virgineum habebat:

In hunc fraudulosus deceptor mille artifex intrabat,

Et per os eius loquens, verba deceptorum mulieri enarrabat.

Tentavit autem mulierem tanquam minus providam,

Reputans prudentem et cautum esse virum Adam.

Accessit autem ad mulierem solam, sine viro existentem,

Quia solum facilius decepit diabolus, quam socios habentem.⁸⁴

In the *Speculum humanae salvationis* the Devil is also described as the main reason for the snake with a woman’s head in the Fall, “diabolus eligebat.” Just as in Bonaventure and Maerlant the reason why the snake’s appearance mattered is not spelled out. The snake is described as having the head of a maiden and as walking upright, “erectus gradiebatur et

⁸⁴ Bonnell, “The Serpent with a Human Head,” 259.

caput virgineum habebat.” The *Speculum humanae salvationis* is the only text that does not mention Bede.

Just as in the abovementioned texts the snake with a woman’s head does not have any qualities of its own. How the devil used the snake as his instrument is described in more detail than in the other three texts. The *Speculum humanae salvationis* tells how the Devil enters the snake and talks to the woman from its mouth, “In hunc fraudulosus deceptor mille artifex intrabat. Et per os eius loquens, verba deceptorum mulieri enarrabat.” Probably because of this the snake with a woman’s head is not perceived as a ‘real’ woman, and thus does not have any female characteristics of its own. The *Speculum humanae salvationis* resembles the *Historia Scholastica* in the way it describes female characteristics. These characteristics are linked to Eve and to women in general, but not to the snake. One of the characteristics it describes is that women have less foresight, “minus providam.”

Although there are some variations, the four texts about the snake mentioned above are quite alike: the snake with a woman’s head has the face of a maiden and walks upright. An important aspect to remember is that in all these four texts the snake with a woman’s head is not being perceived as a woman, only as the devil’s trickery. When negative qualities are ascribed to Eve and/or to women in general, they are not linked to the snake. This is interesting since the snake with a woman’s head could be perceived as a female hybrid, meaning it must at least be considered half woman. It is intriguing that there is no attention for this in the theological texts. Another important element is the fact that the snake has the face of a maiden, which indicates that the woman presumably is young. This might be a reflection of Eve, who is also considered to be young and a virgin. However, it might also embody something else. Were only younger women considered to be tempting or evil? Through comparing this detail with the encyclopaedical- and the visual tradition I will try to answer this question.

3.2 The textual tradition: The Encyclopaedical tradition

Apart from the theological tradition, it is important to consider that the snake with a woman’s head was generally accepted as a real type of serpent in the Medieval encyclopaedical tradition. In this tradition Comestor influenced the way these creatures were

perceived. Descriptions of the snake with a human head can be found as early as the late 7th-till the, early 8th century, and probably existed even before this period as the source from the late 7th and, early 8th century refers to (older) Greek sources. The encyclopaedias and bestiaries continued to mention the snake with a human head up until the beginning of the 17th century, when Edward Topsell declared the idea nonsense in his *History of Serpents* (1608).⁸⁵ In the encyclopaedical tradition the snake with a woman's head, sometimes described as a snake with a human head, is called dracontopede. As early as the beginning of the 13th century dracontopede was sometimes spelled as draconcopede, making it a direct translation of dragonfoot.⁸⁶

In this section I will discuss the following seven encyclopaedical entries, *Liber monstrorum* (late 7th, early 8th century, England), Thomas of Cantimpré's *Liber de natura rerum* (c. 1220-1230, Southern parts of the Low Countries), Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum naturale* (c. 1235-1264, Northern France), Albertus Magnus's *De animalibus* (after 1238, Germany), Jacob van Maerlant's *Der naturen bloeme* (1271-72, Damme), Konrad von Megenberg's *Das Buch der Natur* (1349-50, Germany), and Jakob Meydenbach's *Hortus sanitatis* (1491, Mainz). I will look at these entries in the same way I looked at the religious texts: trying to deduct the reasons they give for the snake with a woman's head, how they describe its appearance and its qualities, and if any connections to women in general are made.

3.2.1 *Liber monstrorum* (late 7th, early 8th century)

Ferunt fabulae Graecorum homines immensis corporibus fuisse et in tanta mole tamen humano generi similes, nisi quod caudas draconum habuerunt unde et Graece dracontopodes dicebantur.⁸⁷

During the Middle Ages the *Liber monstrorum* had been ascribed to Adhelm (639-709), the English Abbot of Malmesbury and Bishop of Sherborne. Although it could have been written by Adhelm, unfortunately, there is no solid evidence about who the author was.

⁸⁵ Flores, "Effigies amicitiae ... veritas inimicitiae," 190.

⁸⁶ Gherard Jaritz, "Draconcopedes, or, the faces of Devilish Virgins," in *Animals and Otherness in the Middle Ages. Perspectives across disciplines*, ed. Francisco de Asís García García, Mónica Ann Walker Vadillo and María Victoria Chico Picara (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013), 87.

⁸⁷ Andy Orchard, "*Liber monstrorum*: Latin Text," in *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-Manuscript*, ed. Andy Orchard (Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 1995), 284.

In the *Liber monstrorum* the dracontopede is described as a creature that was already known to the Greek, “Ferunt fabulae Graecorum.” Its appearance is very similar to the snake with a woman’s head in the theological tradition, but its body is being described as huge, “homines immensis corporibus fuisse,” probably referring to giants. The dracontopede had the head and upper body of a huge human or giant and the tail of a dragon, “humano generi similes, nisi quod caudas draconum habuerunt.” The dracontopede in the *Liber Monstrorum* is not only partly a woman, but could also be male. No qualities are ascribed to the dracontopede. Comestor could have got inspiration for the appearance of the snake with a woman’s head from this entry in *Liber Monstrorum*. This, however, cannot be known for sure.

3.2.2 Thomas of Cantimpré’s Liber de natura rerum (c. 1220-1230)

De dracontopedius. Dracontepedes serpentes sunt, ut referente Adelino philosopho Greci dicunt, magni atque potentes. Hii facies habent virgineas faciebus similes humanis, sed in draconum corpus desinunt. De hoc genere serpentis credi potest fuisse serpentem, quo in malum suum et nostrum prima mater nostra Eva decepta fuit. Dicit enim Beda, quod serpens ille, quo usus est dyabolus in deceptione primorum parentum habuerit vultum virgineum. Sumpsit autem corpus serpentis dyabolus non sicut sumit anima corpus, sed sicut indumentum homo: non enim unum fuerunt dyabolus et serpens. Sumpsit, inquam, coniungendo vel potius applicando sibi faciemque serpentis virgineam demonstravit tantummodo femine, ut forma consimili alliceretur: omne enim animal, sicut dicit sapiens, diligit simile sibi. Partem vero reliquam corporis serpenti similem arborum frondibus occultavit.⁸⁸

Thomas of Cantimpré’s *Liber de natura rerum* offers an interesting combination of the encyclopaedical and theological tradition. Cantimpré refers to Adhelm by mentioning his name and by stating that according to him the dracontopede was already known to the Greek and that it was large and powerful, “ut referente Adelino philosopho Greci dicunt, magni atque potentes.” His description of the dracontopede’s appearance demonstrates the influence of the theological tradition, as his dracontopede is not only half-human with a tail of a dragon, but it also has the face of a virgin, “facies habent virgineas.” Cantimpré follows the theological interpretation of the dracontopede, seeing it as the possible Edenic tempter.

⁸⁸ Jaritz, “Draconcopedes, or, the faces of Devilish Virgins,” 86.

His description is a direct reflection of Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*. First of all, Cantimpré refers to Bede, "dicit enim Beda," and secondly he explains that the devil chose the snake with the countenance of a virgin because it looked like Eve, "ut forma consimili alliceretur." Especially the latter strongly suggests a reflection of Comestor since none of the other theological texts provides this explanation for the appearance of the snake. Cantimpré describes how the dracontopede hid its serpentine tail behind the fruits of the trees, "partem vero reliquam corporis occultavit," something Bonaventure also mentioned in his text. Bonaventure, however, could not have influenced Cantimpré's entry as his *Commentaria in librum secundum sententiarum* has only been written about two decades later. It is thus more probable that Cantimpré's entry has influenced Bonaventure's. This is interesting because it shows that there must have been some sort of exchange between the encyclopaedical and theological tradition, which is another reason to consider that Comestor knew about the dracontopede. After his theological explanation Cantimpré continues in an encyclopaedical fashion questioning how a snake could utter human words. Although he presents the snake as female-headed, no other notion on gender is made.

3.2.3 Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum naturale* (c. 1235-1264)

Draconopedes serpentes magni sunt, et potentes, facies virgineas habentes humanis similes, in draconum corpus desinentes. Credibile est huius generis illum fuisse, per quem diabolus Euam decepit, quia (sicut dicit Beda) virgineum vultum habuit. Huic etiam diabolus se coniungens vel applicans ut consimili forma mulierem alliceret, faciem ei tantum ostendit, et reliquam partem corporis arborum frondibus occultavit.⁸⁹

In the *Speculum naturale* again a combination of the encyclopaedical and theological tradition can be perceived. Vincent of Beauvais does not refer to *Liber monstrorum* but he does describe the dracontopede as being big and mighty, "dracontopedes serpentes magni sunt, et potentes." Like the description in *Liber de natura rerum* Beauvais's dracontopede is not just a human with the tail of a dragon, but specifically a maiden, "facies virgineas habentes." He refers to Bede, "sicut dicit Beda," and uses the theological interpretation of the dracontopede as the Edenic tempter, chosen by the devil because of its appearance. Beauvais also seems to use Comestor's explanation that the female-headed serpent would tempt Eve more easily because like attracts like, "Huic etiam diabolus se coniungens vel applicans ut consimili forma mulierem

⁸⁹ Bonnell, "The Serpent with a Human Head," 258.

alliceret.” Furthermore he uses Cantimpre’s idea that the snake only showed its face and hid the dragon-like lower part of its body behind the fruits of the tree, “faciem ei tantum ostendit, et reliquaam partem corporis arborum frondibus occultavit.” It could be that Beauvais refers to Comestor directly, but it is also probable that he used Cantimpré for the theological explanation. Again, no notions on the gender of the snake can be found.

3.2.4 Jacob van Maerlant’s *Der naturen bloeme* (1271-72)

Draconcopes es een serpent, Als Adelinus wel bekent, Staerc ende groet, ende sonder waen.

Int anschijn als die maghet ghedaen; Ende nederwaert ghelijc den draken. Wi wanen dies in waren saken, Dat serpent was aldus ghedaen, Daer die duvel hadde mede bevaen.

Onser eerster moeder Even, Als wi noch lesen in brieven; Want Beda seghet sonder waen, Dat dat serpent was ghedaen Int anschijn ghelijc der maghet.

Ende hadde der vrouwen so belaghet, Dat si niet dant anschijn en sach, Want tander lijf bedect lach Met loveren ende met risen mede; Ende die viant sprac daer ter stede

Uten serpente ende loech, Also dat hise bedroech. Noch hebbewi alle daer of we. Hier gaet uut D ende volghet naer E.⁹⁰

Der naturen bloeme is Maerlant’s Middle Dutch adaptation of Cantimprè’s *Liber de natura rerum*. Maerlant describes the dracontopede in the sixth book called *Dat seste boec van serpenten*. Since it is an adaptation of Cantimpré’s text it is very similar to *Liber de natura rerum*. He mentions Adhelm, “Als Adelinus wel bekent,” and describes the dracontopede as both big and strong, “staerc ende groet.” He also refers to Bede, “Beda seghet,” and uses the same theological notions Cantimpré used. Maerlant describes how the dracontopede was used by the devil and that it looked like Eve, “Int anschijn ghelijc der maghet,” as well as that the snake hid the lower part of its body, “Want tander lijf bedect lach Met loveren ende risen mede.” Different from Cantimpré, Maerlant does not end with the

⁹⁰ “De naturen bloeme (1878) – Jacob van Maerlant, 407-429,” DBNL, Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren, accessed August 3, 2020, https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/maer002mgys01_01/maer002mgys01_01_0001.php#1.

encyclopaedical question of how the snake could utter human words. Again, no attention is being given to the gender aspects of the snake with a woman's head and/or Eve.

3.2.5 Albertus Magnus's *De animalibus* (after 1238)

Draconcopedes dicunt Graeci serpentem magnum de ordine tertio et genere draconum, quem dicunt vultum virgineum imberbis hominis habere; et talem serpentem a fide dignis audivi interfectum esse in silva Germaniae et diu monstratum, nostris temporibus omnibus volentibus eum videre donec computruit.⁹¹

Albertus Magnus's *De animalibus* is different from the last three texts in that he does seem to refer back to *Liber monstrorum*, "dicunt Graeci," but does not seem to incorporate the theological interpretation, except from the fact that his dracontopede has the face of a virgin, "vultum virgineum." This is interesting since he seems to have known and used Cantimprè's *liber de natura rerum*.⁹² In his text Albertus describes the dracontopede as being big, "serpentem magnum." He discusses how he has heard that a dracontopede was slain in a German wood and that it had laid there to be seen until it had decomposed, "audivi interfectum esse in silva Germaniae et diu monstratum, nostris temporibus omnibus volentibus eum videre donec computruit." Just as the other texts Magnus does not go into any gender-specific characteristic of the snake with a woman's head.

3.2.6 Konrad von Megenberg's *Das Buch der Natur* (1349-50)

Von dem drachenkopp.

Draconcopes haizt ain drachenkopp und ist ain slang in

Kriechenlant gar grôz und mähtig, sam Adelînus spricht.

Diu slang hât ainr junkfrawen antlütz geleich ainem

menschen, aber daz ander tail irs leibes geleicht ainem

drachen. Nu sprechent die maister, daz diu slang derlai sei

gewesen, diu Evam betrog in dem paradîs, wan Beda spricht,

⁹¹ Kelly, "The Metamorphoses of the Eden Serpent," 323.

⁹² "Albertus Magnus, On Animals: A Medieval Summa Zoologica," The Ohio State University Press, accessed August 14, 2020, <https://ohiostatepress.org/books/titles/9780814213599.html>.

daz diu selb slang ain junkfrawenantlütz hab gehabt, dar
umb, daz si mit gleicher gestalt Evam zämt und zuolocket,
wan der mensch und ain iegleich tier nimt seins geleichz und
ist lustig gegen im. Diu selb slang, dô si Evam betrog, zaigt
ir neur das haupt und verparg daz ander tail under der paum
pleter und buschen. ...⁹³

In *Das Buch der Natur* it becomes clear that not incorporating the theological interpretation was an exception only made by Albertus Magnus, as Konrad von Megenberg uses Cantimpré's format again, combining both the encyclopaedical and theological tradition. Megenberg refers to Adhelm when discussing the dracontopede as being big and mighty, "grôz und mähtig, sam Adelînus spricht," and as creatures from Greece, "in Kriechenlant." He also refers to the masters, probably meaning the theologians, discussing how they state that the dracontopede was the snake that tempted Eve, "Nu sprechent die maister, daz diu slang derlai sei gewesen, diu Evam betrog in dem Paradîs." Megenberg mentions Bede specifically as one of these masters, "wan Beda spricht."

Megenberg describes the dracontopede as a serpent with the face of a virgin and the body of a dragon, "diu slang hât ainr junkfrawen antlütz geleich ainem menschen, aber da zander tail irs leibens geleicht aimen drachen." Just as Cantimpré and Comestor, Megenberg discusses that Eve was more easily tempted by the dracontopede because its face looked like hers, "daz si mit gleicher gestalt Evam." He also described that the snake showed only its face and hid its dragon-like body behind the leaves of the tree, "zaigt ir neur das haupt und verparg daz ander tail under der paum pleter und buschen." No references to gender are made in *Das Buch der Natur*.

3.2.7 Jakob Meydenbach's Hortus sanitatis (1491)

Draconcopedes. Ex libro de natura rerum:

Draconcopedes serpentes sunt magni et potentes,

⁹³ Jaritz, "Draconcopedes or, the faces of Devilish Virgins," 87.

facies virgineas habentes humanis similes, in
draconum corpus desinentes. Credibile est huius
generis illum fuisse per quem dyabolus Euam deceptit:
quia (sicut dicit Beda) virgineum vultum habuit.
Huic etiam dyabolus se coniungens vel applicans ut
consimili forma mulierem alliceret. Faciem ei tantum
ostendit et reliquam partem corporis arborum
frondibus occultavit. ...⁹⁴

Although Comestor's description of the Edenic tempter as the snake with a woman's head lost credibility in the theological tradition around the 14th century, it was still quite influential in the encyclopaedical tradition of that time. For example in the *Hortus sanitatis*, generally ascribed to be published by the German Jakob Meydenbach (active as printer in Mainz 1491-95). This natural history encyclopaedia had a practical function. Apart from providing information about the natural world, it often also provided information on how certain plants and animals could be used to cure diseases.⁹⁵ The dracontopede has an entry too.

In the dracontopede's entry Cantimpré's *Liber de natura rerum* is mentioned, "ex libro de natura rerum," and seems to be used throughout this text. The dracontopede is described as big and mighty, "magni et potest," and as having the face of a human virgin and the body of a dragon, "facies virgineas habent humanis similes, in draconum corpus desinentes." Meydenbach refers to Bede, "sicut dicit Beda," and states that the dracontopede was the snake the devil chose to deceive Eve with because its face was similar to hers, "ut consimili forma mulierem alliceret." The *Hortus sanitatis* also discusses that the snake showed its face, but hid its body, "Faciem ei tantum ostendit et reliquam partem corporis arborum frondibus occultavit."

⁹⁴ Jartiz, "Draconcopedes or, the faces of Devilish Virgins," 86.

⁹⁵ Sir David Attenborough, "Ortus sanitatis (Inc.3.A.1.8[37])," University of Cambridge Digital Library, accessed August 14, 2020, <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/PR-INC-00003-A-00001-00008-00037/1>.

Meydenbach ends the entry with a discussion about the snake and the devil and seems to mention Balaam, the three headed demon that also has the tail of a serpent, “sicut alina balaam hoc fuit diabolicum.”⁹⁶ No reference to gender and/or gender characteristics can be found in the *Hortus sanitatis*.

When comparing the abovementioned texts it can be concluded that in most encyclopaedical entries a combination of the theological and encyclopaedical tradition can be perceived. This exchange/combination is especially apparent in Cantimpré’s *Liber de natura rerum*, as it exhibits influence of Comestor. Cantimpré’s text, in its turn, seems to have influenced Bonaventure. A few key components keep returning: the dracontopede is described as big and tough, having the face of a virgin, often looking like Eve, and showing its face while hiding its tail. It is interesting that even though these texts describe the dracontopede as having the face of a maiden, they do not elaborate on its gender or on its, apparently, young and virginal status.

3.3 The iconography

The snake with a woman’s head found its way into the iconographical tradition quite quickly. From the beginning of the 13th century onwards, depictions of this type of Edenic tempter can be found. They illustrate some of the abovementioned theological treatises and entries of encyclopaedias and bestiaries, but were also present in various other contexts that do not record the snake with a woman’s face. This shows, in combination with the many different ways the snake with a woman’s head has been depicted, a form of artistic freedom. It also indicates that this type of Edenic tempter had become so popular that it was used outside of its original textual context. In this part I first will discuss the general iconography of the snake with a woman’s head, and then dive deeper into its reflection of the textual tradition.

3.3.1 Face of a maiden or a married woman?

Among the many forms and variants the snake with a woman’s head takes, two main forms can be distinguished. The snake has either just the head of a woman or both the head

⁹⁶ *Ortus sanitatis*, folio 269v, manuscript, Mainz, Jacob Meydenbach, 1491, University of Cambridge Digital Library, *Treasures of the library*, Inc.3.A.1.8[370], <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/PR-INC-00003-A-00001-00008-00037/1>, accessed August 14, 2020.

and the upper body of a woman (fig. 74 and 75). When the snake has both the head and upper body of a woman, its body evolves just like Eve's body over time. During the 13th century, and even the beginning of the 14th century, the upper body of the snake does not show any sex-specific body features such as breasts (fig. 76), but after this period the snake becomes more explicitly feminine. During the 16th century the snake with a woman's head has full breasts, just like Eve during this period (fig. 14). It seems that this emphasis on female nudity has a more negative than positive connotation.

In many images the snake's face mirrors Eve's (fig. 54), which makes it look like Eve is talking to herself. This could be a representation of Comestor's "like favours like," but it could also be seen as a way the iconography equates Eve to the snake. Eve seems to be tempted by herself, which would make her sin even worse, and could put an emphasis on the supposed deceitfulness of women.⁹⁷ By making the snake look like Eve the female gender is emphasised.

The way the snake with a woman's head wears its hair is important as hair has been used as an indicator of sex and even of 'marital status' in medieval art.⁹⁸ In the textual tradition the snake with a woman's head was considered to be a maiden, but the many different hairstyles of the snake in the iconographical tradition seem to suggest a different perspective. In some images the snake has been hatted, veiled, and coiffed or wears its hair in a luxuriant hair style, while in others it wears its hair down (fig. 77, 78 and 79). Sometimes it wears a crown (fig. 80). In his article "The serpent with a Matron's face: Medieval Iconography of Satan in the Garden of Eden" (2001), Frances Gussenhoven discusses why some snakes wear their hair loose and others have it covered. The ones that wear their hair loose represent virgins and those that have their hair covered represent married women. His conclusion is that the incorporation of the married women represents a change in the attitude towards women and marriage during the 12th and 13th centuries, probably as the result of the Gregorian reform.⁹⁹

Although I am not sure if the Gregorian reform can be seen as the only causer for the incorporation of different kind of women in the iconography, I do agree with Gussenhoven's conclusion. This means that I agree with the idea that the iconography of the snake with a

⁹⁷ Flores, "Effigies Amicitiae ... Veritas Inimicitiae," 179-181.

⁹⁸ Frances Gussenhoven, "The Serpent with a Matron's face: Medieval Iconography of Satan in the Garden of Eden," *European Medieval Drama* v. 4 (2001), 208, 213, 229-230.

⁹⁹ Gussenhoven, "The Serpent with a Matron's face," 208, 213, 229-230.

woman's head shows women of different marital statuses, which contradicts the textual tradition. The inclusion of married women in the iconography changes its message. Not only young, virginal women are seen as dangerous, deceitful, and temptresses, but also 'older,' married women. Thus by representing different hairstyles the different kind of women from medieval society are represented. This connects the entire female sex to the Edenic tempter with all the negative implications it entails. The iconography was not only visible in the private sphere, but also in the public space, meaning that every layer of the society could have known it. This widespread familiarity with and the usage of the iconography reveals a changing attitude towards women.

The hair dress of the snake with a woman's head is also important as hair was seen as an essential female trait, and as something that reflected the inner state of a woman.¹⁰⁰ This resulted in many moralistic and didactic literature on the subject during the Middle Ages. Especially coiffed hairstyles of married women were criticized. Male critics ridiculed the excessiveness and size these hairstyles took. A good example of one of these hairstyles are 'cornettes' (fig. 61), in which women wore their hair in horns next to their heads. The main points of critique were that these 'horns' were too big, were a sign of vanity, and made women look like horned beasts.¹⁰¹ Hair dress of married women was considered to be a symbol of a wife's submission to her husband.¹⁰² The wearing of hair according to the latest fashion trends was thus considered a sin. It did not only embody the sin of vanity, but also the sin of disobedience. The 'cornettes' are particularly interesting in the connection to sin, as the 'horns' could easily be linked to the horns of the devil. Next to fashionable hair dress the snake with a woman's head sometimes wears a crown. A crown is the symbol of earthly power and wealth. According to amongst others Sax, the crown could embody the dreams of power the devil promised Eve.¹⁰³ Yet in the context of sin it could also be another symbol of disobedience, a form of independence. The different hairstyles therefore did not only reflect the snake's marital status, but in some cases also functioned as a symbol of vanity, disobedience, and power hunger, sins associated with women during the Middle Ages.

¹⁰⁰ Roberta Milliken, "Part One: Contexts," in *Ambiguous Locks: An Iconology of Hair in Medieval Art and Literature*, ed. Roberta Milliken (Jefferson [etc.]: McFarland & Company Inc. Publishers, 2012), 11.

¹⁰¹ Mireille Madou, "Cornes et cornettes," in *Flanders in a European Perspective: Manuscript illumination around 1400 in Flanders and Abroad (Proceedings of the International Colloquium Leuven, 7-10 September 1993)* ed. Maurits Smeyer and Bert Cardon (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1995), 417, 418.

¹⁰² Gussenhoven, "The Serpent with a Matron's face," 221.

¹⁰³ Sax, *Imaginary Animals*, 26.

3.3.2 Erect like a man

According to the theological tradition the devil chose the snake with a woman's head not only because it looked like Eve, but also because it was erect like a man. The encyclopaedical tradition, in turn, did not mention this erect state and it also was not that much present in the iconography. There are examples of the snake standing upright next to the tree, but in most depictions of the Fall the snake with a woman's head is curled around the tree, just as its 'naturalistic' counterpart (fig. 81 and 82). This was the main way of depicting the 'naturalistic/dragonesque' serpent, which apparently remained popular. In some instances the tree of knowledge is not present. In these images Eve and the snake are having the conversation, either as an image in a series or beneath the enthroned Mary with child (fig. 83). Also in these images the snake is not necessarily erect.

3.3.3 A serpent with the tail of a dragon

In most theological and encyclopaedic texts the snake with a woman's head is described as a serpent with the tail of a dragon, but how does one visualise the tail of a dragon? Is it the same as that of a serpent? Within the encyclopaedical tradition dragons were often categorized under the serpents, which suggest that they were seen much in the same way. In the iconography of the snake with a woman's head two main body types can be perceived, that of a 'naturalistic' snake and that of a hybrid creature, which could have many forms. A few examples of this hybrid body type are a snake having the body of a bird (wings and feathers) (fig. 84), the body and feet of a dragon-like creature (fig. 85), having the body of a bird (wings and or feathers), with the tail and feet of a dragon/serpent (fig. 86), having the body of a dragon/serpent, but the feet of a bird (fig. 87) and having the body of a dragon/serpent but with wings (fig. 88).

The 'naturalistic' snake body is probably just a continuation of the way the Edenic tempter was portrayed in the iconography of the Fall. The hybrid body types, however, probably rely on multiple, older iconographies and/or textual descriptions. The three main iconographies that could have influenced these hybrid body types, are those of the siren, the scorpion and the sphinx. The siren is half-woman, half bird, although sometimes she is half-woman, half-fish as *Liber monstrorum* describes the siren in this way. Both forms existed simultaneously and also depictions of sirens as bird-like creatures with a serpent/fish-like tail

are not uncommon (fig. 89).¹⁰⁴ The siren seems to have influenced the snakes with bird-like bodies.

The iconography of the maiden-faced scorpion with its lumpy tail that ends in a sting, might also have influenced the iconography of the snake with a woman's head (fig. 90). Lastly the iconography of the sphinx might have had some influence on the hybrid body types of the snake with a woman's head. The ancient stories about this creature did probably not receive any attention in the Western Middle Ages, but somehow its image made it to a capital in the crypt of the duomo in Modena (Italy) during the early 12th century (fig. 91). Whether or not it had been identified as a sphinx during that time, its wings and snake-like tail could have been a possible influence.¹⁰⁵ Interestingly the sphinx also seems to wear its hair covered, like some of the snakes in the iconography of the Fall.

3.4 Text and image

In the previous part I have discussed the iconography of the snake with a woman's head in the more general sense. Now I wish to look at the interplay between the textual and iconographical tradition more specifically, by means of examining the images that illustrate the passages on the snake with a woman's head. I will do so by studying one example from the theological tradition, the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, and one example from the encyclopaedical tradition, *Der naturen bloeme*, but I'll start with a closer look at the text that introduced this type of snake as the Edenic tempter: Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*. It is striking that manuscripts containing Comestor's text seem to have no illustrations of the snake with a woman's head. This text is not illuminated elaborately at all. The most common illumination I could find in Comestor's text is a column illumination containing God's creation of the world in seven days (fig. 92). I have not come across illustrations of the Fall, let alone images of the snake with a woman's head.¹⁰⁶ This is interesting because that could mean that Comestor's text only could have influenced the iconographical tradition via a textual, indirect way.

¹⁰⁴ Kelly, "The Metamorphoses of the Eden Serpent," 311; Flores "'Effigies Amicitiae ... Veritas Inimicitiae'," 173.

¹⁰⁵ Kelly, "The Metamorphoses of the Eden Serpent," 313-314.

¹⁰⁶ I have not been able to check all manuscripts that contain the *Historia Scholastica libri genesis*, so please do correct me if you find a manuscript that does contain such an image.

3.4.1 *Speculum humanae salvationis*

To study the interplay between text and image within the theological tradition I chose four manuscripts containing the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, M.140 (New York, The Morgan Library), Ms. 10.8 (Toledo, Biblioteca del Cabildo), M. 766 (New York, The Morgan Library) and Harley 4996 (London, The British Library). All four manuscripts were produced in the 14th century, but all come from different regions. Manuscript 10.8 was produced around 1320-1340 in Bologna, making it the oldest manuscript of the four. Manuscript Harley 4996 was made in the 2nd or 3rd quarter of the 14th century in the Alsace, Germany. Manuscript M.140 has also been produced in Germany around 1350-1400, probably in Nuremberg. Manuscript M.766, the youngest of the four, was made around 1400 and originates from Yorkshire.

The snake with a woman's head in the Toledo manuscript looks like a hybrid creature. It has the head of a woman, a very long neck, a bird-like body with dragon-like feet and a serpent's tail. It looks down at Eve and has loose hanging hair. The tree of knowledge is not present in this illustration, but there are some text scrolls, indicating a conversation. These scrolls represent parts of Genesis 3:1, and 3:3-5. The snake says "Cur praecepit vobis dominus ut non comederitis. Nequaquam moriemini sed eritis sicut dii scientes bonum et malum" and Eve responds with "Ne forte moriamur," showing the conversation between the snake and Eve as written down in the Old Testament (fig. 93).¹⁰⁷

The snake in manuscript Harley 4996 has the head of a woman and the body of a snake (fig. 79). It is not curled up in the tree, but stands next to it, on the other side as Eve. The faces of Eve and the snake do look quite similar, but the snake's hair is far more luxuriant than Eve's. The snake has braided hair and seems to wear a diadem. Again there is some text incorporated in the image, indicating a conversation. The conversation is similar to the one in the Toledo manuscript, but leaves out the "Ne forte moriamur."¹⁰⁸ The snake in manuscript M.140 is a hybrid creature again. It has the head and arms of a woman, the body and wings of a bird, and the feet and tail of a dragon. The faces of Eve and the snake are similar and both wear their hair loose. The snake with a woman's head seems to be flying on the other side of

¹⁰⁷ Snake: "Why orders the Lord that you should [not eat from this tree]. By no means you will die, but you will be like Gods knowing good and evil."

Eve: "To prevent us from accidentally dying."

¹⁰⁸ Lines linked to the serpent: "Nequaquam moriemini sed eritis sicut dii scientes bona et mala."

Lines linked to Eve, although in the Bible they are linked to the snake: "Cur praecepit vobis dominus dicens. Quaecumque hora comederitis et..."

the tree as Eve. Again there is text. A text scroll next to the snake repeats the second part of the text uttered by the snake in the Toledo manuscript, Eve does not have text (fig. 94).¹⁰⁹ The snake in manuscript M.766 is also a hybrid creature. It has the head of a woman, the body and tail of a dragon-like creature and the feet of a bird. Its face looks like the face of Eve and both women wear their hair loose. Via text scrolls, which contain roughly the same text as the Toledo manuscript, a conversation has been indicated (fig. 87).¹¹⁰

None of the snakes from these four manuscripts look like each other, probably reflecting the influence of their provenance. In the *Speculum humanae salvationis* the snake with a woman's head is described as a snake with the head of a maiden and as walking upright. The latter reflects well in the images, since none of the snakes is curled up in the tree, but all stand erect. Not all snakes, however, seem to have a head of a maiden. In manuscript Harley 4996 the snake wears a luxuriant hairstyle while Eve wears her hair loose. This probably reflects the status of a married woman. Besides this it is interesting that there are so many different kind of body-types, as the texts only mentions a serpent. This could reflect the influence of iconographies of other creatures with a woman's head, especially the iconography of the siren. Two of the four depictions here illustrate a creature that has both bird wings and a tail of a snake, which resonate with the iconography of the siren.

The fact that in three of the four images the faces of the snake and Eve look alike is interesting, since this is not mentioned in the text. The only explanation can be found in Comestor's text and in its repetition in the encyclopaedical tradition, which states that the devil chose this snake because it looked like Eve. Depicting Eve and the snake alike thus must have been influenced by this passage, either directly or indirectly via for example the encyclopaedical entries. It is also intriguing that the lines in the text scrolls do not reflect the text of *Speculum humanae salvationis* itself, but the text from Genesis. Although the *Speculum humanae salvationis* describes the interaction between Eve and the snake, the text of Genesis is not mentioned. By incorporating the Genesis passages anyway, the artists/art commissioners gave the illustrations an extra layer of interpretation and put an extra emphasis on the persuasive words the serpent uttered. Even though all the illustrations follow the few

¹⁰⁹ Serpent: "Nequaquam moriemini sed eritis sicut dii scientes bonum et malum."

¹¹⁰ Serpent: "Cur praecepit vobis deus ut non comederitis de ligno hoc. Nequaquam moriemini et eritis sicut dii scientes bonum."

Eve: "Ne forte moriamur."

descriptive features from the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, they also show a variety of different influences.

3.4.2 *Der naturen bloeme*

To make a similar analysis for the encyclopaedical tradition I chose images of the dracontopede in four manuscripts containing Jacob van Maerlant's *der naturen bloeme*. The oldest manuscript I use is Add. MS 11390, which was produced c. 1300-1325 in the Netherlands (London, British Library), and of which its illustrations were added after c. 1340. Manuscript KA 16 originates from the region of Utrecht, and dates from c. 1340-1350 (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek). Manuscript BPL 14 A was also made in Utrecht around 1350-75 (Leiden, Leiden University Library). The youngest manuscript I use is 76 E 4 from c. 1450-1500, which is a direct copy in both word and image of KA 16 and originates from either Utrecht or the region of Flanders (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek).

The snake with a woman's head in manuscript Add MS 11390 has the head of maiden with loose, curly hair. She has the body, tail and wings of a dragon (fig. 95). In manuscript KA 16 the snake also has the body and tail of a dragon, but does not have wings. It has the head of a woman and its hair is braided (fig. 96). In manuscript BPL 14 A the snake has the wings of a dragon again. Its head looks very similar to the one in manuscript KA 16, with its braided hair (fig. 97). The snake in manuscript 76 E 4 does not have wings, and only the body and tail of a dragon. It seems to wear its hair loose and short (fig. 98).¹¹¹ In both manuscript KA 16 and 76 E 4 the snake with a woman's head is flanked by a tree, but these are probably only markers of background and not a reference to the tree of knowledge. Especially considering the other illustrated creatures in these manuscripts are also accompanied with trees.

In Maerlant's entry of the dracontopedes he describes the serpent as big and strong, with the head of a virgin and the body of a dragon. He also states that it looked like Eve and that the serpent hid its lower part of its body behind the fruits of the tree. If this description is compared with the images it becomes clear that some elements were visualised, whilst others not. All four images show a dragon with a woman's head, two with wings, two without, which is not specified by Maerlant's entry. The dracontopedes with braided hair in

¹¹¹ This is quite interesting as hair was being used as the indicator of sex in Medieval iconography. Short hair stood for male, and long hair for female. The fact that this dracontopede thus has short hair, seems to suggest that it should be considered male. This is in contradiction with the actual text and even with the whole iconographical tradition. Why it looks this way is thus unclear.

Manuscript KA 16 and BPL 14 A seem to not follow Maerlant's description as these hairstyles probably indicate married women instead of maidens. Since these illustrations only depict the dracontopedes as animals, without their role in the Fall, the theological implications are not represented. Influences from for example the iconography of the siren cannot be found in these images.

3.5 Conclusion

Although Comestor was not the first to discuss a snake with a human head, he was the first to combine the idea of a snake with a woman's head and the Edenic tempter. Whilst Comestor's idea was deemed untrue as early as the beginning of the 14th century in the theological tradition, it continued to exist in both the encyclopaedical and visual tradition up until the beginning of the 17th century. As the theological and encyclopaedical tradition exchanged information, it might be possible to suggest that Comestor knew the dracontopede, and had taken it as an example for his Edenic tempter.

While discussing both the textual and visual tradition of the snake with a woman's head it became apparent that although they are similar, they also differ in many ways. In both the theological and encyclopaedical tradition the snake with a woman's head seems to not have been rendered fully 'woman,' as it was perceived as merely the instrument of the devil, and not as an autonomous creature with its own qualities. Nevertheless, in both traditions an emphasis had been put on the fact that the snake had the head of a maiden, which seems to suggest that the Edenic tempter needed to be regarded as a young, virginal woman. When these two contradictory ideas are being combined it seems to propose that young women should be seen as the instruments of the devil. In this way the textual tradition of the snake with a woman's head could function as a warning against young women.

As shown the visual tradition does not seem to provide the same picture. By means of different hairstyles, different marital statuses are represented in the images of the snake with a woman's head. In the iconographical tradition the Edenic tempter is thus not only a maiden, but also a married woman. This contradicts the supposed message of the textual tradition, resulting in the extension of the warning against young women to all women in medieval society. Next to marital status, these different hairstyles functioned as symbols for the sins of vanity, disobedience and power hunger, which strengthens this warning even more.

The fact that the manuscripts containing Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* do not portray the snake with a woman's head means that his text could only have influenced the visual tradition in an indirect way. This implies other influences besides the textual tradition. The different hybrid body types of the Edenic tempter are perfect examples of these other influences. Iconographies of other hybrid creatures as those of the siren, scorpion and sphinx affected these different body types heavily and maybe even influenced the hatted snake.

This chapter showed how the theological and encyclopaedical tradition exchanged information and how this related to the iconographical tradition. It showed how Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* influenced the textual and visual tradition and how other iconographies could have done the same. In the next chapter I will examine whether the Jewish legends of Lilith, the first wife of Adam, also could have influenced either Comestor or the artistic tradition surrounding the snake with a woman's head.

4. The snake with a woman's head and Lilith

When God created His world and created Adam, He saw that Adam was alone, and He immediately created a woman from earth, like him, for him, and named her Lilith. He brought her to Adam, and they immediately began to fight: Adam said, "You shall lie below," and Lilith said, "You shall lie below, for we are equal and both of us were [created] from earth." They did not listen to each other. When Lilith saw the state of things, she uttered the Holy Name and flew into the air and fled.¹¹²

In this chapter I shall study the snake with a woman's head in relation to the Jewish tradition of Lilith. In this tradition Lilith has been seen as, amongst other things, the first wife of Adam, a night demon, a child killer and a dangerous, sexually active woman. The quote above is the first part of the most detailed description given of her in the text called *Alfa Beta diBen Sira* (c. 800s-900s). It is generally believed that the snake with a woman's head only existed in Christian iconography, but there might have been some Jewish influence as Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* reflects a substantial influence by Jewish traditions and legends. While doing my preliminary research I tried to search Lilith in the online database The Princeton Index of Medieval Art. This resulted in 62 records which all included the snake with a woman's head. Each of the 62 records had the same subject note, "this subject was sometimes catalogued as 'Lilith' in the old Index database."¹¹³

Although there are a few studies considering Lilith as an important figure in interpreting the snake with a woman's head, quite a few scholars, just like The Index of Medieval Art, dismiss the legends of Lilith as possible influence.¹¹⁴ They argue that there is no evidence that Lilith was regarded serpentine during the Middle Ages, and thus she could not be seen as the serpent with a woman's head.¹¹⁵ They also state that Comestor mentions Lilith in a different context than the snake with a woman's head in his *Historia Scholastica*, and conclude that therefore no connection between the two can exist.¹¹⁶ Even though these are good arguments, I do have some reservations. In this chapter I will look at the Hebrew

¹¹² Scheuring and Ziegler, *Eve & Adam*, 204.

¹¹³ "Lilith," Search Works of Art, The Index of Medieval Art, accessed January 4, 2021, <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/SearchWorksOfArt.action#searchResults>.

¹¹⁴ For example Hoffeld, "Adam's two wives."

¹¹⁵ Kelly, "The Metamorphoses of the Eden Serpent," 302.

¹¹⁶ Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 173.

influence in the *Historia Scholastica*, the textual tradition of Lilith, and at the way she is represented in the visual tradition.

4.1 Hebrew influence in the *Historia Scholastica*

In his *Historia Scholastica* Comestor mentions many Hebrew traditions and interpretations. It thus becomes clear that he had considerable knowledge of these topics. The quality of this knowledge as well as the way he obtained it is, however, unclear. Although Comestor uses many quotations, he does not always refer to his exact sources, and if he does it is not always trustworthy.¹¹⁷ In the scholarship on the Jewish sources of *Historia Scholastica* four authorities are considered as his main sources: Josephus (c. 37 -100 C.E.), the earlier Church Fathers, especially Jerome (c. 347-420), Hugh of St. Victor (c. 1096-1141), and Andrew of St. Victor (died 1175).¹¹⁸

Comestor used Josephus' *Antiquitates Iudaicae* (c. 93-94 C.E.) mainly as a source for very specific information such as etymologies, geographical and chronological data, and detailed explanations for obscure passages. He mainly used Jerome's Vulgate translation as a source for spellings and meanings, for information on the transmission of the text and for Haggadic information. Although he borrowed information from both these authors almost in the same quantity, Comestor acknowledges Josephus more than Jerome in his references. Comestor used the work of Hugh of St. Victor considerably less than that of Josephus and Jerome. He used Hugh's Bible Commentary as a source for detailed information on Haggadic materials he could not find in the works by the other two authors. His debt to Andrew of St. Victor is again larger; Comestor used his Bible Commentary especially for Midrashic material. This included rabbinic biblical exegesis, which Comestor used to prove for example, that in the beginning God created both man and woman, and not a single hermaphrodite.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Something his Bede reference illustrates well; Esra Shereshevsky, "Hebrew Traditions in Peter Comestor's 'Historia Scholastica': I. Genesis," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* vol. 59, no. 4 (1969), 289.

¹¹⁸ Louis H. Feldman, "The Jewish Sources of Peter Comestor's Commentary on Genesis in his *Historia Scholastica*," in *Begegnungen zwischen Christentum und Judentum in Antike und Mittelalter. Festschrift für Heinz Schreckenberg*, ed. Dietrich-Alex Koch and Hermann Lichtenberger (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 94, 96, 97.

¹¹⁹ Feldman, "The Jewish Sources of Peter Comestor," 98-114; Haim Weiss, "Midrash," in *Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore and Traditions*, ed. Raphael Patai and Haya Bar-Itzhak (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012), 364.

Apart from the textual sources it has also been stressed by various scholars that Comestor gained a lot of knowledge through oral communication, especially during the time he lived and worked in Troyes, his native city. During the 11th and 12th century Troyes was considered a centre of learning, both for Christians and Jews. In this city lived the well-learned Rabbi Rashi (1040-1105) who is known for his comprehensive commentary on the Talmud and the Tanakh. His pupil and grandson Rabbenu Tam also stayed in Troyes and became the highest rabbinical authority of his time, during the same time Comestor lived and taught in the city.¹²⁰

The Jewish quarter was in close proximity to the abbey of Saint Loup and the Cathedral of Saint Pierre and saint Paul, where Comestor taught for forty years.¹²¹ During the 12th century the Jews lived on generally friendly terms with the Christians in the North-eastern parts of France. It is therefore quite believable that there was some sort of exchange between Comestor, other Christian scholars and the Jewish scholars. It could also be that Comestor learned about Jewish traditions from Jews that converted to Christianity. Phrases as “narrant hebraei,” “tradunt,” and “alli dicunt,” are considered to refer to these oral sources.¹²²

4.2 Lilith

Since many Hebrew traditions influenced Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica*, it is not a big leap to consider the Jewish legends of Lilith in regard to the snake with a woman’s head. Although Lilith has taken many forms over time, she is most commonly known as the first wife of Adam and as a she-demon. The earliest mention of Lilith is found in the Sumerian king list from c. 2400 B.C.E., which states that the father of the great hero Gilgamesh was a Lilu-demon. Lilu was one of the four demons that belonged to a “vampire or incubisuccubae class” of the Mesopotamian belief system.¹²³ The other demons were Lilitu (Lilith), a she-demon, Ardat Lili (Lilith’s handmaid), another she-demon, and Irdu Lili, the male counterpart of Ardat Lili. Although they were originally storm-demons, they were later regarded as night-demons. In Sumerian legend Lilith was regarded as a beautiful maiden, but at the same time

¹²⁰ Sheresheysky, “Hebrew Traditions in Peter Comestor,” 270.

¹²¹ Feldman, “The Jewish Sources of Peter Comestor,” 95; Sheresheysky, “Hebrew Traditions in Peter Comestor,” 270.

¹²² Sheresheysky, “Hebrew Traditions in Peter Comestor,” 270, 289.

¹²³ Raphael Patai and William G. Dever, “Lilith,” in *Hebrew Goddess*, ed. Raphael Patai and William G. Dever (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 221.

as a harlot and a vampire. She could not bear children and would never let the lovers she chose go.

Lilith is also mentioned in the Bible, but only once in Isaiah 34:14:

And desert creatures will meet with hyenas

And goat-demons will call out to each other

There also Lilith will settle and find for itself a resting place.¹²⁴

In this passage of the Bible Lilith is seen as a night demon, which does reflect her Sumerian origin. The fact that she is mentioned in the Bible means that Lilith was known to the Jews for at least as long as the Hebrew Bible existed, but most probably even before that time. Hence it is not a surprise she began to play a role in the Jewish tradition.

4.2.1 Lilith in the Talmud and the Midrashic tradition

The first written accounts of Lilith in the Jewish tradition can be found in the Talmud. Two comments have been made on her appearance, both from c. 450-550 C.E.:

“Lilith is a demoness who has a human face and has wings.”¹²⁵

“Lilith has long hair.”¹²⁶

Other comments mention that she is a night demon who is a danger to men that sleep alone. She is also mentioned as one of the beings Adam begot through spontaneous emission of seed in his 130 years of isolation.¹²⁷ Even though Lilith is mentioned as a result of Adam’s spontaneous emission in the Talmudic literature, it is only until the Middle Ages that Lilith is connected to Adam intimately. Already in the Talmudic and Midrashic tradition Jewish

¹²⁴ Isa. 34:14.

¹²⁵ “B. Nid. 24b and Rashi, *ibid*,” in *Gates to the Old City: A Book of Jewish Legends*, ed. Raphael Patai (Northvale [etc.]: Jason Aronson Inc., 1988), 184.

¹²⁶ “B. Er. 100b,” in *Gates to the Old City*, 184.

¹²⁷ Raphael Patai, *Gates to the Old City: A Book of Jewish Legends* (Northvale [etc.]: Jason Aronson Inc., 1988), 184-185.

interpreters struggled with the discrepancies of the two creation myths in Genesis 1 and 2.¹²⁸ Unlike the orthodox Christians, the Jews read these two creation myths in a literal rather than a metaphorical manner. One of the suggestions they offered was that there were originally two Eves, but that Adam was disgusted by the first Eve's creation. Thus God removed her, and made the second Eve, the one he created from Adam's rib. During the Middle Ages the interpreters combined the tradition of the two Eves with the story of the demon Lilith, and made Lilith the first wife of Adam.¹²⁹ The first, and most detailed story of Lilith as Adam's first wife is the *Alfa Beta diBen Sira* (c. 800s-900s) of which the first part has been quoted at the beginning of this chapter:

When God created His world and created Adam, He saw that Adam was alone, and He immediately created a woman from earth, like him, for him, and named her Lilith. He brought her to Adam, and they immediately began to fight: Adam said, "You shall lie below," and Lilith said, "You shall lie below, for we are equal and both of us were [created] from earth."

They did not listen to each other. When Lilith saw the state of things, she uttered the Holy Name and flew into the air and fled. Adam immediately stood in prayer before God and said: "Master of the universe, see that the woman you gave me has already fled away." God immediately sent three angels [Senoy, Sansenoy, and Semangelof] and told them: "Go and fetch Lilith; if she agrees to come, bring her, and if she does not, bring her by force." The three angels went immediately and caught up with her in the [Red] Sea, at the place where the Egyptians were destined to die. They seized her and told her:

"If you agree to come with us, come, and if not, we shall drown you in the sea." She answered: "Darlings, I know myself that God created me only to afflict babies with fatal disease when they are eight days old; I shall have permission to harm them from their birth to the eighth day and no longer; when it is a male baby, but when it is a female baby, I shall have permission for twelve days." The angels would not leave her alone, until she swore by God's name that wherever she would see them or their

¹²⁸ Kvam, Schearing and Ziegler, *Eve & Adam*, 162.

¹²⁹ Kvam, Schearing and Ziegler, *Eve & Adam*, 162.

names in an amulet, she would not possess the baby [bearing it]. They then left her immediately. This is [the story of] Lilith who afflicts babies with disease.¹³⁰

From the *Alpha Beta* it becomes clear that Lilith was created equal to Adam, as Adam's first wife. As she was equal she did not want to be subservient to him. This caused her to flee, which eventually led her to become the night demon and baby-killer she was in the Talmudic and Midrashic tradition.

4.2.2 Lilith in the Historia Scholastica

Lilith is present in Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*, but when referring to Lilith Comestor does not connect her to the snake with a woman's head, or even to the Fall. He discusses her in his commentary on the creation of Eve, where he mentions that the Jews erroneously saw the creation in Genesis 1:27 as the proof of the creation of another woman. According to him they see the adverb "nunc" in the phrase "Hoc nunc os ex ossibus meis, et caro de carne mea," which Adam says in the Bible, as meaning "this woman (Eve) is made from my flesh, but there was another woman first who was made of earth like me." Comestor does not agree with this Jewish belief of the first woman.¹³¹ Although Comestor does not connect Lilith to the snake with a woman's head, his comment on the legend of Lilith shows that he had been familiar with it. This means that Comestor and probably also other scholars of his time were acquainted with the Midrashic and Talmudic traditions. By mentioning the legend of the first woman in his *Historia Scholastica*, Lilith also became known to a larger audience.

4.2.3 The Zohar and Lilith

From the *Alfa Beta* onwards Lilith began to play a bigger role in Jewish tradition. The *Zohar* (1270-1300), the basic and most influential Kabbalistic work of the 13th century, refers to Lilith quite a lot, although not always in the same fashion as the *Alfa Beta*. The *Zohar* would not have been able to influence Comestor, as it has been written almost a century later than his *Historia Scholastica*. In certain parts of the *Zohar* Lilith is, just as in the *Alfa Beta*, Adam's first wife, while in other parts she has been created together with Samael.¹³² Samael

¹³⁰ Kvam, Scheuring and Ziegler, *Eve & Adam*, 204.

¹³¹ Virginia Tuttle, "Lilith in Bosch's 'Garden of Earthly Delights'," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* Vol. 15, no. 2 (1985), 126.

¹³² Patai, *Gates to the Old City*, 453-469.

is one of the most important characters in Jewish demonology and is considered to have been present in Paradise during the first sin. He is often identified as Satan, and some stories tell that he disguised himself as the snake that tempted Eve.¹³³ Some passages tell how Lilith and Samael were created at the same time as Eve and Adam and were just like them created in androgynous form: Eve and Adam on the “good” side, and Lilith and Samael on the “evil” side.

In Kabbalistic tradition Lilith has been described in different roles: as a seducer of men, the queen of Hell, mother of demons, the destroyer, the child killer and even as God’s consort. In some legends she began as Adam’s first wife, in others as Samael’s. Sometimes she starts out as Adam’s first wife and later marries Samael. Other stories even speak of two Liliths, an older and a younger one.¹³⁴ Although there are some differences in the tradition surrounding Lilith, the she-demon who was Adam’s first wife and later marries Samael might be an interesting figure to look at when interpreting the snake with a woman’s head in (the iconography of) the Fall.¹³⁵

4.2.4 Serpent Lilith

As already mentioned some scholars dismiss Lilith as a possible influence for the snake with a woman’s head, because, according to them, Lilith has not been regarded serpentine during the Middle Ages. This is, however, simply not correct. In the *Zohar*, Lilith is called a serpent:

The male is called Samael, and his female [Lilith] is always comprised in him. Just as it is in the Side of Holiness, so it is in the Other [Evil] Side: male and female are contained in one another. The female of Samael is the Serpent, called Woman of Harlotry, End of All Flesh, End of the Days.¹³⁶

It is true that this text cannot have influenced Comestor, but this should not matter that much in regard to the iconographical tradition, which has been influenced by much more than

¹³³ Idit Pintel Ginsberg, “Samael,” in *Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore and Traditions*, ed. Raphael Patai and Haya Bar-Itzhak (Ablington: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012), 463.

¹³⁴ Patai, *Gates to the Old City*, 453-469.

¹³⁵ Dan, “Samael, Lilith, and the Concept of Evil in Early Kabbalah,” 22-23.

¹³⁶ “*Zohar, Sitre Tora*, 1:148a-b,” in *Gates to the Old City*, 461.

just the *Historia Scholastica*. And even though the *Zohar* is a Jewish text, Christians, especially Christian scholars, were familiar with it. It even began to play a bigger part during the late Middle Ages. It is therefore possible that this important work has influenced certain Christian scholars, art patrons and artists.¹³⁷ Although a bit late for the iconography of the snake with a woman's head, a Kabbalistic treatise from 1648, the *Bacharach*, '*Emeq haMelekh*, even insinuates that it was Lilith, in the form of the snake that tempted Eve: "And the Serpent, the Woman of Harlotry, incited and seduced Eve through the husks of Light which in itself is holiness..." And albeit this has only been written down in the 17th century, it is probable that this idea has been around ever since Lilith was compared to a serpent in the *Zohar*, and maybe even before this.

4.3 The iconographical tradition

Although Lilith has a substantial part in Jewish textual tradition, she seems not that much present in the visual tradition. This has probably something to do with the second commandment in Exodus 20:4 and its repeating in Deuteronomy 4:16-19, which prohibits figurative art. This prohibition was generally taken quite seriously by Jews.¹³⁸ Still the visual representation of Lilith is a long-standing one, with examples from as early as 2000 B.C.E. up until the present day.

Some of the earliest depictions of Lilith have been found in the era of Mesopotamia, for example on a Babylonian terra cotta relief from c. 2000 B.C.E. and a 7th century B.C.E. tablet found at Arslan Tash in Northern Syria (fig. 99 and 100). The Babylonian terra cotta relief shows Lilith as being a naked woman with the wings and feet of a bird. She wears her hair in a specific type of hat. She is flanked by two owls and stands on two lions. At the Arslan Tash tablet Lilith is depicted as a sphinx. She has a female head with long hair, wings, and the body of a lion. Both representations are not of the Jewish Lilith, but of her predecessor.

From the early Middle Ages only the Aramaic incantation bowls from Nippur in Babylonia give a visual representation of Lilith. In bowl B9013 (fig. 101) Lilith is depicted in the centre. She is surrounded by a spell for a man and a woman against Liliths (demons). In this image Lilith is naked. Her genitals are emphasized by means of showing her pubic hair.

¹³⁷ Tuttle, "Lilith in Bosch," 124-125.

¹³⁸ Kim Ragetli, "Geen gezicht: Een opmerkelijk iconografisch verschijnsel," *Madoc* 23, no. 2 (2009), 75, 82, 86.

Although her body is voluptuous, her arms are indicated only by fine lines. She wears her hair loose. This Lilith is the Hebrew Lilith, but only in her earliest form.

During the High Middle Ages and the Renaissance there seems to be some sort of gap as there are no indisputable images that depict Lilith. As my findings with The Princeton Index of Medieval Art suggest, the snake with a woman's head was previously perceived to be the continuation of Lilith. Some scholars still believe this, but others think this is not the case. There are two paintings that are proposed by scholars to depict Lilith: Filippino Lippi's *Adam* (1502) in the Strozzi chapel in Florence and Hieronymus Bosch's *paradise scene* (1503-1515) at the left wing of his *Garden of Earthly Delights* (fig. 102 and 103). Art historian Robin O'Bryan suggested the identification of Lilith for the snake with a woman's head in Lippi's *Adam*, because of her red hair¹³⁹, the way she is enticing Adam, and the scared child which might reflect her role as a child-killer.¹⁴⁰ Art historian Virginia Tuttle identifies the woman in the *paradise scene* of Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* as Lilith because of the strange pose of the female, that seems to indicate a creation independently and immediately following Adam's creation. Also the demonic beasts present in paradise contribute, according to her, to the identification of Lilith, referring to her identity as a she-demon.¹⁴¹ Although both of these images could present Lilith, they are not indisputable. But the visual representation of Lilith did not disappear.

Lilith makes a reappearance in the literature of the Romantic period, which caused her (re)appearance in art as well. Examples of this are Richard Westall's *Faust and Lilith* (1831), Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Lady Lilith* (1866-1868), and John Collier's *Lilith* (1887) (fig. 104, 105, 106). Richard Westfall's Lilith is depicted as a beautiful naked woman, with golden curly hair. She holds a white cloth which covers her private parts while it blows in a supposed wind. She is dancing with a fully dressed man, in this painting Faust, from Goethe's *Faust* (1808). Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Lilith is a woman at her toilet. She is combing her long, golden hair while sitting in a chair in quite a luxurious room. She is looking at herself in the mirror she holds in her left hand. She wears a white dress and has a red ribbon around her

¹³⁹ Red hair is often considered to be one of the visual signs Jews were depicted with. However, the question remains to what extent this is also the case for Lilith. The older depictions are not coloured, and although some of the snakes with a woman's head in my corpus have red hair (fig. 23 and 61), they are definitely a minority. I am thus afraid this assertion is not tenable.

¹⁴⁰ Robin O'Bryan, "Carnal Desire and Conflicted Sexual Identity in a 'Dominican' Chapel," in *Images of Sex and Desire in Renaissance Art and Historiography*, ed. Angeliki Pollali and Berthold Hub (New York: Routledge, 2017), 45, 47, 48.

¹⁴¹ Tuttle, "Lilith in Bosch," 123-124.

wrists. The dress does not cover her shoulders, leaving them bare. John Collier's Lilith is again a naked woman with long, golden hair. Instead of being inside or with human company, in this painting Lilith is alone in some sort of forest. A snake is wrapped around her body, covering her private parts, and laying its head on her shoulder. She lays her head on the snake's. This last depiction really visualizes the connection between Lilith and the snake. All these representations of Lilith show similarities with depictions of witches from the early 16th century, for example those of Hans Baldung Grien (fig. 107 and 108).

4.4 Conclusion

It is strange that Lilith seems to disappear from the visual tradition during the central and late Middle Ages, only to make her reappearance in Early Modern times. Although this could have several reasons, e.g. lack of interest in her or the Hebrew commandment not to depict figural forms, she was not forgotten as her popularity rose within the textual tradition. This makes me wonder if people during the Middle Ages may have perceived the snake with a woman's head as Lilith. Considering that the *Zohar* regarded Lilith as serpentine and taking into account that Early Modern representations of Lilith both textually and visually connected her with the snake, it is not unthinkable to see a possible influence of the legends of Lilith in the iconography of the snake with a woman's head.

Thus another question remains: how was the motif of the snake with a woman's head perceived by its medieval viewers. Did they see a possible representation of Lilith, or of an evil woman, or maybe just of the devil? Interpretations of the motif probably differed between the sexes or the several layers of the society. In the next chapter I wish to explore the aspect of reception of the snake with a woman's head its broader cultural context in more detail.

5. The snake with a woman's head and its reception

In the previous chapters I discussed to what extent the snake with a woman's head related to Eve, its textual tradition and other iconographies of hybrid creatures. I also showed its possible connection to the Jewish legends of Lilith. All these topics do, however, not necessarily indicate how the iconography was received by its recipients. To get an idea of this reception it is important to study who were the viewers of the iconography and which social and cultural tendencies influenced their interpretation. As the snake with a woman's head is a hybrid creature, this chapter will look into the perception of hybrids. Also the changing attitudes toward women will be studied, since the most important aspect of the Edenic tempter is the fact that it had a head of a woman, not just of a human. Hence this chapter will look at how certain cultural tendencies could have influenced the reception of the snake with a woman's head.

5.1 The viewers

Apart from its direct textual (biblical or encyclopaedical) context, the snake with a woman's head could also be found in other contexts. Various examples can be found in theological treatises, in Latin and vernacular stories, in sculpture, on altarpieces, on stained glass, in books of hours, psalters and bibles and on wall paintings. In the textual examples the snake with a woman's head is used in illustrations of the Fall, even though the text does not mention this type of Edenic tempter. All these objects reached specific types of viewers. The theological treatise, Latin and vernacular stories, book of hours, psalters and bibles were made for a select rich audience existing of both clergyman and the laity. The sculptural representations of the snake with a woman's head, on the other hand, reached just as the stained glass and mural paintings a much wider and diverse group of spectators, as these were often part of the public space.

The amount of representations of the snake with a woman's head in the iconography of the Fall outside its original textual context is immense. Its usage in all of the above mentioned contexts seems to show that the snake with a woman's head was known not only to a secluded audience, but to almost all layers of society. The popularity of this type of snake is intriguing, especially considering the fact that its credibility had already been questioned in the theological tradition as early as the first half of the 14th century. As the main feature of

this snake is its female head, an explanation for its popularity probably had something to do with this.

All spectators looked at the same motif: a snake with a woman's head, sometimes with the same face as Eve. But although everyone saw the same thing, everyone necessarily interpreted it the same way. The well-learned clerics interpreted it probably differently than the rich lay-people, or peasants etc. Apart from the viewer's place within the society, gender must also have influenced the interpretation.

5.2 Monsters

The snake with a woman's head is, as already stated in the introduction, a hybrid creature. Hybrid creatures were considered as monsters during the Middle Ages as they combined both human and animal elements. This reflected the problematic relationship between the animal and human world; a hybrid creature reflected both the 'same' and the 'other'.¹⁴² The snake with a woman's head was not the only hybrid creature with a female head, also the already mentioned sirens and scorpions were half animal, half woman.¹⁴³

During the Middle Ages a division was made between 'animal monsters' and 'human monsters'. Among the 'animal monsters' are unicorns and dragons (fig. 109), and among the 'human monsters' one can think of giants, and dwarfs (fig. 110). The 'human monsters' were often called the 'monstrous races,' but not all human monsters belonged to them. The snake with a woman's head was for example classified under the snakes and thus not under the 'monstrous races' in the encyclopaedical tradition, even though it clearly was partly human. This evoked the question if it should be considered as animal or as human. Within the Middle Ages this question was quite important as 'human monsters' were thought to really exist. Monsters played a huge role in medieval society, as almost everyone was at least a little familiar with them, wither through texts, oral stories, sermons, or through art in both the private and public space.

¹⁴² Lydia Zeldenrust, "Wanneer een ridder en drakenvrouw ontmoet. Middeleeuwse ideeën over mens, dier en het hybride monster," *Madoc* 26, no. 3 (2012), 170, 171.

¹⁴³ Flores, "'Effigies amicitiae ... veritas inimicitiae,'" 171-174.

5.2.1 Monsters in the medieval mind

During the Middle Ages ‘human monsters’ were perceived with an ambivalent attitude. They were strange, deformed and closely linked to animals, they were the ‘others.’ Still at the same time they were partly human and thus part of the ‘us.’ This was confusing and resulted in different explanation for the existing of these human monsters: human monsters were seen as products of the climate, as signs of God’s will, as cursed, and as a product of their character.¹⁴⁴ Of these explanations the one suggesting the human monsters to be part of God’s will, can be considered as the overarching one. According to Augustine, who himself did not believe in the existence of the ‘human monsters’, there could not be a mistake in God’s plan. He therefore suggested that the ‘human monsters’ should be perceived as natural and not as “contra naturam” (against nature).¹⁴⁵

The importance of the ‘human monsters’ as part of God’s plan is also visible in Bonaventure’s description of the snake with a woman’s head as the Edenic tempter. According to him the devil wanted to use a whole human to tempt man, as that would have made the process much easier, but holy providence, “divina providentia,” prevented this. It only let the devil use a half human, half snake.¹⁴⁶ In this passage, Bonaventure thus states that it was all part of God’s plan to let the first woman be tempted by a hybrid creature. One could ask if this means that only the snake part of the Edenic tempter was ‘bad’ or ‘devilish.’ I do, however, not think this would be the case, as the devil at first wanted to use a whole human, instead of a half human, which would mean that the entire human form should be considered to be ‘bad’ or ‘devilish.’ Besides the devil sometimes does use entire human beings to tempt people as he does frequently in for example chivalric tales.¹⁴⁷

5.2.2 Female monsters

The Edenic serpent was not the only creature with the head of a woman. The viper, siren and scorpion were also considered to be half-woman. The viper has been described as a

¹⁴⁴ Rudolf Simek, *Monster im Mittelalter. Die phantastische Welt der Wundervölker und Fabelwesen* (Köln [etc.]: Böhlau Verlag GmbH & Cie, 2015), 54; John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge [etc.]: Harvard University Press, 1981), 37-39, 42, 46, 47, 51, 52, 89, 96-100; Stephen T. Asma, “Do Monsters Have Souls?,” in *On monsters. An unnatural history of our worst fears* (New York [etc.]: Oxford University Press, 2009), 75, 76; Amber Verrycken, *De Middeleeuwse wereldverkenning* (Leuven [etc.]: Uitgeverij Acco, 1990), 100-105, 118-119; Debra Higgs Strickland, “Monsters and Christian Enemies,” *History Today* 50 (2000), 46, 50, 51.

¹⁴⁵ Asma, “Do Monsters Have Souls?,” 75, 76; Verrycken, *De Middeleeuwse wereldverkenning*, 105, 118; Strickland, “Monsters and Christian Enemies,” 46, 50, 51.

¹⁴⁶ Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum*, 495.

¹⁴⁷ Gussenhoven, “The Serpent with a Matron’s face,” 223.

serpent that was human to the waist in both the Latin versions of the *Physiologus* and the *Liber Monstrorum*. It has even been suggested that the viper was the kind of serpent that tempted Eve. One of the habits ascribed to a female viper is that she literally bites her husband's head off, something which has been linked to Eve's betrayal by medieval Bible commentators.¹⁴⁸

Sirens, as already stated, were also half woman, half animal (fig. 89). From antiquity onwards the siren was seen as half woman, half bird. During the 8th century, however, thanks to an entry of the *Liber Monstrorum*, the siren had sometimes been confused with a mermaid. This entry describes the siren as half woman, half fish, instead of half bird. Within the visual representation this sometimes resulted in a quite peculiar hybrid consisting of a female half with both bird wings and a fishtail. The siren was known for its seductive song which made the Church Fathers interpret them as symbols of deadly lust and deadly temptation. The song had even been connected by Bible commentators to the words the devil had uttered during the temptation. Sirens were seen as seducers to lust and symbols of the carnal pleasures of the world.¹⁴⁹

The scorpion is also often depicted as half woman (fig. 90). This representation derives from three possible sources. The first being the hellish locusts of Revelation 9 that looked like horses that have human faces, female-like long hair, lion teeth and golden crowns. The second source is the misreading of Solinus's description of the female scorpion. Solinus stated that they were "subtiliora sunt capita femina," (those with a feminine head are more subtle). Although Solinus did not mean that the female scorpion had the head of a human, it has been interpreted in this way. The third influence could be an early representation of the zodiacal sign of Scorpio, which had a female face, long hair and a double-barbed tail. The scorpion with a woman's head was seen as the visual representation of a deceiver, using its fair face to distract its target, whilst stinging it with its deadly tail. This idea made the scorpion the symbol of falsehood, hypocrisy and treachery. In his *De Universo* Rabanus Maurus (c. 786 – 856) even states that the scorpion signifies the devil or his ministers. Interestingly the scorpion with the head of a woman has been literally associated with women in general: for example in Ecclesiasticus 26:10 the scorpion is linked to a wicked woman.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Kelly, "The Metamorphoses," 307; Flores, "'Effigies Amicitiae ... Veritas Inimicitiae'," 171-172.

¹⁴⁹ Kelly, "The Metamorphoses," 311; Flores, "'Effigies Amicitiae ... Veritas Inimicitiae'," 173.

¹⁵⁰ Kelly, "The Metamorphoses," 312; Flores, "'Effigies Amicitiae ... Veritas Inimicitiae'," 172-173.

The iconographies of the viper, siren and scorpion were well known. Not only were they present in encyclopaedias and other manuscripts, they often decorated capitals and medieval maps. These capitals and maps were often part of the public space, meaning that not only a select group knew these creatures, but that also the common folk could be familiar with them.

5.2.3 Melusine and other dragon-women

The question about the humanity of these female monsters is most apparent in the chivalric tales on dragon-women that existed from the 13th century onwards. Just as the snake with a woman's head, these creatures were half woman, half dragon/snake. One of the most famous stories is that of Melusine written by Jean d'Arras (died 1394) in his *La noble histoire de Lusignan* (1393).¹⁵¹ In this story Melusine is the cursed daughter of King Elinas of Albany and the fairy queen Presine. Melusine had been cursed by her mother for locking up her father after he had betrayed her mother and sisters. Her curse meant that every Saturday she would turn into a snake (fig. 111). She could live a normal life only if she found a husband that agreed with not seeing her on Saturdays. While drifting through the woods she came across Raymond de Lusignan, who had just accidentally killed his uncle during the hunt. She promised to help him and make him a wealthy and important man if he decided to marry her on one condition: that he will never look at her on a Saturday. On this he agrees.¹⁵²

Melusine and Raymond's married life goes well for many years. Melusine gave birth to 10 children and made the Lusignans one of the most wealthy and powerful families in France. Raymond never broke his promise to leave her alone on Saturdays, until his brother, who was quite jealous, suggested she might be cheating on him every Saturday. Outraged as he was, he made a hole in her door in order to see her bathing. He was shocked by her appearance, as she was half dragon, half woman. He did not know if he should perceive her as human or as animal. When Melusine found out about his betrayal she jumped from the windowsill and turned into a full dragon, but not before she had declared she was the daughter of king Elinas and queen Presine and thus proving her humanity. All of Raymond's wealth and power gradually slipped away, and he lived the rest of his life as a hermit.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Zeldenrust, "Wanneer een ridder en drakenvrouw ontmoet," 172.

¹⁵² Jean d'Arras, Donald Maddox and Sara Strum-Maddox, *Melusine; Or The Noble History of Lusignan* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2012).

¹⁵³ Jean d'Arras, Maddox and Strum-Maddox, *Melusine*.

The question about the humanity of the hybrid creature in this story is most important. The humanity of Melusine constantly changes. In the beginning before she has been cursed, it was already a bit ambivalent, as she descended from a fairy. But after she was cursed it became even more ambivalent. Her marriage with Raymond gave her a chance to reclaim her humanity, but after his betrayal she had to give up her human part entirely.

These examples show that although these creatures were half woman, half animal there was not a single way to interpret them. This made them appalling in the medieval mind. Considering that these hybrids had the faces of women this is extra interesting. It is telling that each of these female monsters were often connected to vices, lust and/or were seen as cursed. Although monsters and hybrid creatures were often linked to negative ideas it is important to note that they are not merely monstrous creatures. They are half woman, which means that these vices and/or remarks on lust or being cursed also seem to be connected to women in the Middle Ages. This, combined with the apparent closeness to animals, outlines quite a negative perception of women. As the snake with a woman's head is also a hybrid these perceptions could have influenced its interpretation.

5.3 Woman's inferior status

Not only the way hybrid creatures were seen, but also cultural and social attitudes toward women could have influenced the interpretation of the snake with a woman's head. As seen in chapter 2 the theological tradition considered women as unequal to men in the commentaries on Eve. Eve had been created from Adam's rib because she was meant to be his helper, not his master nor his servant.¹⁵⁴ Although some authors perceived this as woman's primary virtue, for example Humbert de Romans (13th century), at the same time they believed it to be the reason why man had to be superior and dominant.¹⁵⁵ Also the idea that woman had brought sin into the world, was a reason in the theological tradition to disregard women. Eve had tempted Adam and thus had brought the downfall upon mankind.¹⁵⁶ Often it has been suggested that a woman's pride or vanity caused the Fall, but also her sexuality and lust have been seen as reasons.¹⁵⁷ As early as the Church Fathers this perception of Eve, and

¹⁵⁴ Kvam, Scheering and Ziegler, *Eve & Adam*, 112-113; Shulamith Shahar, *The Fourth Estate. A History of Women in the Middle Ages* (Cornwall: Taylor and Francis Group, 2003), 67.

¹⁵⁵ Shahar, *The Fourth Estate*, 68.

¹⁵⁶ Kvam, Scheering and Ziegler, *Eve & Adam*, 131-132.

¹⁵⁷ Flores, "'Effigies amicitiae ... veritas inimicitiae,'" 173-174, 177-180, 183, 185; Kvam, Scheering and Ziegler, *Eve & Adam*, 113, 148.

in association the entire female sex, resulted in a misogynistic representation of women in literature.

Although the misogynistic way of portraying women has not been newly introduced during the 12th century, it found a revival in theological treatises and other clerical texts during this time. One of the most probable explanation for the revival of these misogynistic texts is the Gregorian reform.¹⁵⁸ The Gregorian Reform started during the second half of the 11th century and its main focus was the moral integrity and independence of the clergy. One of the issues it deemed important was clerical celibacy. Although marriage and concubinage had already been forbidden for clerics by the council of Nicaea in 325 C.E., they were still quite customary among the lower ranks of the clergy.¹⁵⁹ The Gregorian reform thus started a campaign against marriage and concubinage among the clergy, which stretched far into the 13th century.¹⁶⁰

The growing influence of women in the church also could have given an impulse to the growing numbers of misogynistic texts. The number of women within the church grew, which inevitably led to more influence by women. Also the heretical pieties and mystical movements attracted many women, as for example the beguines that started to pop up everywhere in Europe as well as the Friends of God movement led by the Benedictine nun Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179). This growth in independence and influence of women distressed the clergy much, as it could have potentially be a threat to its patriarchal existence.¹⁶¹ For both these concerns and for the campaign against marriage and concubinage misogynistic texts and expressions could be considered as beneficial.

Whilst the misogynous way of portraying women was quite popular during the period between the 12th and 17th century, it was not the only way women were presented in literature. Another way could be found in both the Mariolatry and its secularized version of chivalric tales. From the early 13th century onwards Marian devotion became more elaborated. Private devotions and votive ceremonies, alongside the already existing liturgy, sprang up celebrating

¹⁵⁸ Michael W. Kaufman, "SPARE RIBS. The Conception of Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance," *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* vol 56, no 2 (1973), 142-143.

¹⁵⁹ "Gregorian Reform," Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed June 26, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Gregorian-Reform>.

¹⁶⁰ Judith M. Bennett, *Medieval Europe. A Short History, eleventh edition* (New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2011), 170-172.

¹⁶¹ Kaufman, "SPARE RIBS," 143.

“her life, miracles, and manifold of saintly attributes.”¹⁶² By establishing physical connections between Christ and Mary, the Virgin was perceived as being the co-Redemptrix. Her milk was linked to Christ’s blood which connected her to the blood-sacrifice of the crucifixion. Without Mary’s physical body Christ could not have existed. This put her central to the progress of the salvation of mankind. These connections as well as the miraculous stories about her life, made her unworldly and thus unattainable, making her the perfect object for devotion.¹⁶³

The chivalric tales of courtly love portrayed women in the same way as Mary within the Marian devotion; as being unattainable and perfect. These narrative texts in verse and prose were intended for an audience at court.¹⁶⁴ The origin of these kind of tales is disputable, some find it in the influence of Arabic and Latin love poetry whilst others consider it a reaction to the church’s ongoing campaign to regulate marriage.¹⁶⁵ In these text values of courtesy and courtliness are being described as well as the specific type of amorous relationship called ‘courtly love.’¹⁶⁶ In this type of relationship the woman is being placed above the man. It often is a type of adulterous love. In these kind of relationships the man is constantly doing his best to get the woman’s approval, making the woman unattainable.¹⁶⁷

An interesting parallel can be found between the two ways of perceiving women in medieval literature; both see women not as ‘real’ humans, or at least not in any way equal to men. Thus even the ‘positive’ way of perceiving women in literature can be seen as a way to emphasis on the inequality. While “Misogynous literature does not reflect inferiority,” in

¹⁶² David J. Rothenberg, “Introduction: Devotion to the Virgin and Earthly Love,” in *The Flower of Paradise: Marian Devotion and Secular Song in Medieval and Renaissance Music*, ed. David J. Rothenberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 14.

¹⁶³ Beth Williamson, “The Virgin Lactans as second Eve: Image of the ‘Salvatrrix’,” *Studies in Iconography* vol. 19 (1998), 108, 114.

¹⁶⁴ Rouben Cholakian, Deborah Nelson-Campbell, “Introduction,” in *The Legacy of Courtly Culture from Medieval to Contemporary Culture*, ed. Rouben Cholakian and Deborah Nelson-Campbell (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 4.

¹⁶⁵ Simon Gaunt, Robert E. Bjork (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: The Oxford University Press, 2010), “Fin’Amor,” <https://www-oxfordreference-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/view/10.1093/acref/9780198662624.001.0001/acref-9780198662624-e-2174?rskey=I9x1Xj&result=1>.

¹⁶⁶ Keith Busby, Robert E. Bjork (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: The Oxford University Press, 2010), “Romance, French,” <https://www-oxfordreference-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/view/10.1093/acref/9780198662624.001.0001/acref-9780198662624-e-5062?rskey=yWdpO8&result=1>.

¹⁶⁷ Henry Ansgar Kelly, Robert E. Bjork (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: The Oxford University Press, 2010), “Courtly love,” <https://www-oxfordreference-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/view/10.1093/acref/9780198662624.001.0001/acref-9780198662624-e-1597?rskey=vyxO2r&result=1>.

medieval law it is evident that women were perceived as inferior.¹⁶⁸ For example the English jurist Henry of Bracton stated that women should always obey their husband, as long as he did not let her do something that violated the Divine Law. Similar statements in Western and Central Europe can be found. Married women were perceived as minors, and although noblewomen could inherit a fief, they could only do so if there were no men in the direct family. Women that played an important part in the urban economy could enjoy only parts of the urban privileges because of their sex. Besides, wife-beating ‘within limits’ was generally recognized.¹⁶⁹

Although not every man took advantage of a woman’s legal inferior status, it was not seen as a discussion point. Even female writers, a phenomenon that at first seems to reflect equality, attest woman’s inferior status. For example Heloise (c. 1100-1164) affirms that it is terrible to be born as a woman as it was woman’s fault that sin was brought into the world.¹⁷⁰ Also Christine de Pizan (c. 1364-1430), known as the passionate opponent of misogyny and defender of the capacities and qualities of women, did not question this inequality.¹⁷¹ This is not something to accuse Heloise and Christine de Pizan of, as they lived in a society of which the social structure was believed to be ordained by God himself.¹⁷² The inferior status of women was nothing but a given in medieval society, a fact that was just part of life.

It is apparent that the church played a considerable part in promoting the inferior status of women. The church also shared these misogynous ideas with the public, not only via texts and treatises, but also through sermons.¹⁷³ Thus the oral tradition must have influenced the interpretation of the snake with a woman’s head.

5.4 Witches

During the 15th and 16th century the misogynous ways of perceiving women went even further, this time by establishing a direct link between women and the devil. The ‘witch’ was created. Before the 13th century magic and sorcery were not necessarily connected to diabolic

¹⁶⁸ Shahar, *The Fourth Estate*, 7.

¹⁶⁹ Shahar, *The Fourth Estate*, 89-92, 128, 175.

¹⁷⁰ Higgins, “The myth of Eve,” 642, 644.

¹⁷¹ Shahar, *The Fourth estate*, 168; Rosalind Brown-Grant, “Christine de Pizan. Feminist Linguist *avant la lettre*,” in *Christine de Pizan 2000: Studies on Christine de Pizan in Honour of Angus J. Kennedy*, ed. John Campbell and Nadia Margolis (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 2000), 65.

¹⁷² Charity Cannon Willard, *The Writings of Christine de Pizan* (New York: Persea Books, 1994), ix.

¹⁷³ Shahar, *The Fourth estate*, 88, 89, 227.

practices.¹⁷⁴ Up until this century the church even considered the people practising these crafts quite innocent and foolish, and as is stated in the *Canon Episcopi* (c. 906, the *canon Episcopi* is a passage from medieval canon law) thought them to be merely an illusion. But from the 13th century onwards this changed; magic and sorcery and those who said to practice it were more and more seen as diabolic.¹⁷⁵ ‘Witches’ were no illusion anymore, but were real. This idea had become accepted by clerics and fixed in canon law by the 14th century and by the 15th century the common folk and many scholars were convinced witches existed.¹⁷⁶

The *Malleus Maleficarum*, written by the Dominican Heinrich Kramer (c. 1430-1505), elaborated on this new concept of witches and witchcraft, emphasized its diabolic aspects and introduced the idea that witches were often only women.¹⁷⁷ The *Malleus Maleficarum* has been organised in the three different sections that were thought necessary for the practice of witchcraft: the sorcerer, the demon, and the permission of God. These sections describe how demons interact with humans and how they exchange information, why women are more often witches than men, and why God permits sorcery.¹⁷⁸ The only illustration of the *Malleus Maleficarum* was a decorative frontispiece without witches.¹⁷⁹

Among this new conception of witches and witchcraft, other new or popular ideas emerged in the late 15th- and 16th century. One of these ideas was the wild hunt, a folklore motif that already appeared in pre-Christian European folklore. The wild hunt can be described as a wild assembly of ghostly or supernatural hunters. In the *Canon Episcopi* the wild hunt was linked to witches. According to the text some women, deceived by demonic illusions, believed that they rode great distances on beasts at night in the company of the roman hunting goddess Diana, the roman princess of Judea Herodias, and other women. This connection between the witches and the wild hunt became popular and well-known during the late 15th- and 16th century.¹⁸⁰ Besides the wild hunt, a connection between the witches and

¹⁷⁴ Anita Obermeier, “Witches and the Myth of the Medieval *Burning Times*,” in *Misconceptions about the Middle Ages*, ed. Stephen Harris and Bryon L. Grigsby (New York: Routledge, 2008), 223.

¹⁷⁵ Renilde Vervoort, “*Vrouwen op den besem en derghelijck ghespoock*” *Pieter Bruegel en de Traditie van Hekserijvoorstellingen in de Nederlanden tussen 1450 en 1700* (Nijmegen: Stichting Nijmeegse Kunsthistorische Studies, 2011), 122-125.

¹⁷⁶ Obermeier, “Witches and the Myth of the Medieval *Burning Times*,” 220; Vervoort, “*Vrouwen op den besem en derghelijck ghespoock*,” 30.

¹⁷⁷ Bodo Brinkmann and Berthold Hinz, *Hexenlust und Sündenfall: die seltsamen Phantasien des Hans Baldung Grien* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof, 2007), 31-33.

¹⁷⁸ Mackay and Institoris, *The Hammer of the Witches*, 10, 12-16.

¹⁷⁹ Christa Grössinger, “The evil woman,” in *Picturing Women in late Medieval and Renaissance Art*, ed. Christa Grössinger (Manchester [etc.]: Manchester University Press, 1997), 132.

¹⁸⁰ Charles Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft: print and visual culture in sixteenth-century Europe* (New York [etc.]: Routledge, 2007), 77, 109, 214.

Pandora, the first human woman in the Greek mythology, had been made. This connection was established by the introduction of the cauldron as attribute of the witches. The cauldron of the witch was seen as Pandora's box, since both could unleash pain, trouble and chaos.¹⁸¹ Interestingly Eve has also been connected to Pandora.¹⁸²

This new conception of witches and witchcraft as had been introduced in the *Malleus Maleficarum* and the popular ideas of the connections between witches, the wild hunt, and Pandora were transmitted to the common folk by amongst others preachers and priests.¹⁸³ Why this new conception of witches and witchcraft and the popular ideas surrounding it became so well-known and accepted is not yet entirely clear. Some authors explain it by the period of religious turmoil during the late 15th century, in which the Reformation and counter-Reformation instigated increasing intolerance. In this period both the Catholics and the Protestants fought for what they believed was right. Witches and witchcraft were seen as diabolic, and therefore to fight them was yet another point to prove that their version of belief was right.¹⁸⁴ Others see it as the (indirect) effect of the misfortunes that befell Europe in the period between 1300 and 1500: the famines, plagues, economic crises, the never-ending wars and the papal schism. Again, others see it as the result of the increase of sexism during this period.¹⁸⁵

Whatever the reason, the new perceptions on witches and witchcraft did result in witch-hunts, which peaked during the 15th and 16th century. Sex played a big part in these witch-trials and women were more often persecuted than men. Apart from the *Malleus Maleficarum*, the main reasons for this new focus on sex were the clerical misogynous texts which emphasized women's weakness and corruptibility. These new perceptions not only influenced the image of the witch itself but also that of women in general. Women's established inferior position already affected their position in society, but after the development of the new conception of the witch they also became an object of persecution.¹⁸⁶

The iconography of the witch had also been influenced by these new perceptions and ideas. Instead of depicting witches as men or women during sabbat (fig. 6), they became more

¹⁸¹ Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft*, 77, 109, 214.

¹⁸² Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture*, 335; Von Erffa, *Ikonomie der Genesis*, 176-177.

¹⁸³ Brinkmann and Hinz, *Hexenlust und Sündenfall*, 31-33.

¹⁸⁴ Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate: Basque Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1980), 15.

¹⁸⁵ Obermeier, "Witches and the Myth of the Medieval Burning Times," 222.

¹⁸⁶ Shahar, *The Fourth Estate*, 280.

often only women, often young and naked, surrounded by cauldrons, goats or brooms and/or other kitchen implements (fig. 107 and 113). They often inhabited woods or deserted places. And although mostly older women were persecuted, the depicted witches were frequently beautiful young women.¹⁸⁷ They were depicted as tempting creatures and were often surrounded by symbols or animals of lust and sexuality as for example goats and cats. Sometimes the witches were depicted while roasting sausages, which was a reference to a passage in the *Malleus Maleficarum* referring to the idea that witches stole the private parts of men for their own pleasure (fig. 108). This shows the male fear of a sexually independent woman, especially considering that the phallus can be seen as the symbol of man power.¹⁸⁸ This iconography thus embodies a warning against tempting, sexual independent women.

5.4.1 The snake with a woman's head and the 'witch'

At the same time the new perceptions and iconography of the witch were developed, the iconography of the snake with a woman's head in the Fall changed as well. Both Eve and the snake became more feminine, with great emphasis on their breasts, hair and, in the case of Eve, genitals. The way they were depicted was quite similar to the witches. Although a new focus on naturalistic painting and the nude developed during this time, which absolutely influenced both iconographies, a clear distinction between the naturalistic, idealized nude, and the sexualized nude must be made.¹⁸⁹ As the first is mainly driven by interest in the human anatomy, the second often functioned as a way to affirm or propose way of perceiving women in society.

Of course, Eve and the snake with a woman's head were not considered to be witches, but many negative qualities ascribed to these witches were also ascribed to Eve. She was a temptress, sinful, lustful, disobedient and power-hungry. To some extent these features could be indirectly ascribed to the snake with a woman's head as the snake often mirrored Eve. It appears that Eve's negative qualities even became the new key elements in the story of the Fall. This is illustrated by the fact that during the 15th and 16th century the conversation between the snake and Eve became less important in the iconography, whilst the focus on their bodies increased. Although sex already played a role in the interpretation of the Fall, and

¹⁸⁷ Obermeier, "Witches and the Myth of the Medieval *Burning Times*," 224.

¹⁸⁸ Obermeier, "Witches and the Myth of the Medieval *Burning Times*," 225; Vervoort, "*Vrouwen op den besem en derghelijck ghespoock*," 159.

¹⁸⁹ Jean Sorabella, "The Nude in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance," Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, last modified January 2008, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/numr/hd_numr.htm.

became of increased importance after the introduction of the snake with a woman's head, during this period sex is being seen as the most important reason for the Fall of mankind.

A perfect example of this development is an illustration of Eve and Adam in conversation supposedly during the Fall, in the *Buch der heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* (after 1467), a treatise on alchemy and allegories (fig. 114).¹⁹⁰ In this image Eve, with long blond hair and a feminine body is talking to Adam. While she is talking the snake with a woman's head, who stands behind her, stabs Adam with a spear in the heart. The snake is wearing a crown, thus embodying the sins of vanity, pride and power hunger. The faces of Eve and the snake are alike. This image illustrates this chapter perfectly. As the attitudes toward women became increasingly hostile, up until the point where women were literary persecuted, men needed a reason for why these attitudes changed. This reason they found in the first woman, who they saw as the causer of all sin and terror. To put an extra emphasis on the idea that Eve was the prototype of all women, they made the Edenic tempter a woman that looked often like her. Both women teamed up to bring the downfall upon mankind, something this image portrays very literally by killing the man, symbolizing the danger women could cause.

5. 5 Conclusion

Many different cultural and social tendencies could have influenced the reception of the snake with a woman's head. Since the recipients of the iconography were so diverse, it is obvious that no one interpreted the motif in exactly the same way. Also the fact that this iconography was around for at least four centuries shows that many interpretations must have existed. Yet the importance of monsters and their symbolic values, as well as the changing attitudes toward women must, at least, have played a part. Both were known to all layers of society to some extent and thus must have influenced the reception of the snake with a woman's head. Next to class, sex must have played a role in the interpretation of the iconography. This chapter has shown that the inferior position of women was a given during the Middle Ages. Still, women probably saw the iconography of the snake with a woman's head differently than men did, as it illustrated a warning against themselves. This must have

¹⁹⁰ The tree of knowledge and the fruit are missing. It is therefore not entirely clear if this is an illustration of the Fall or not; "Buch der heiligen Dreifaltigkeit – BSB Cgm 598," OPACplus, accessed January 7, 2021, <https://opacplus.bsb-muenchen.de/title/BV022939359>.

absolutely influenced their interpretation, as these women knew themselves better than the distributors of this message did.¹⁹¹

The snake with a woman's head can be seen as the embodiment of the importance of hybrids in the medieval worldview, and of the changing attitudes toward women. The female monsters were often connected with lust, curses and vice or functioned as an illustration of the ambiguous humanity of these creatures. With the introduction of the new perception of witches and witchcraft in the first half of the 15th century, also women in general were more connected with lust, wickedness and sexuality. This seems to show in the iconographical tradition of the snake with a woman's head as both Eve and the snake became increasingly sexualized. These perceptions of women seem to have been known by every layer of society, either through textual and/or theological sources, sermons or through visual sources. Although it is impossible to know what an individual thought about the snake with a woman's head in the iconography of the Fall, it is clear that everyone could at least see a references to changing attitudes toward women.

The motif of the snake with a woman's head disappeared in the 17th century. As already stated in the introduction this might be "reflecting the shift from the medieval interest in nature as a source of moral allegory and symbol to the modern concern with nature as an exact science."¹⁹² Indeed this shift in interest can be found in the new focus on naturalistic painting and the nude during the Renaissance as well as in the fact that even the encyclopaedias stopped mentioning the snake with a woman's head because they believed it to be nonsense in the 17th century. And even though these encyclopaedias, as for example Edward Topsell's *History of Four-Footed Beasts and Serpents* (1658), did continue to mention dragons and creatures like the lamia (a cat-like creature with the face of a woman) and the mantichora (a lion with the face of a man), they approached them in a more scientific manner, whilst trying to include 'observational' details and experiments.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ This is my own interpretation and although I do not have any proof for it, it feels like common sense that these women did not accept the warning against themselves unquestioningly. Also the work of Christine de Pizan shows that, even though women did not question their legal unequal position, there were passionate opponents of misogyny and defenders of the capacities and qualities of women (Brown-Grant, "Christine de Pizan," 65).

¹⁹² Flores, "'Effigies Amicitiae ... Veritas Inimicitiae'," 174.

¹⁹³ "Topsell's History of Four-Footed Beasts and Serpents (1658)," Collections/Books, The Public Domain Review, accessed December 16, 2020, <https://publicdomainreview.org/collection/topsell-s-history-of-four-footed-beasts-and-serpents-1658/>.

6. Conclusion

In this thesis, I examined the cultural phenomena that could have influenced the use and interpretation of the iconographic motif of the snake with a woman's head in Western iconography of the Fall between the 12th and 17th century. I have looked at the relation between the snake and Eve in the changing iconography of the Fall, the significance of the textual tradition, the possible influence of the Jewish legends of Lilith and the importance of hybrid monsters and the changing attitudes toward women. It ends with the conclusion that although not everyone interpreted this iconography in the same way, general cultural tendencies played a huge role in the reception of the snake with a woman's head.

For this thesis I used three methodologies: Panofsky's iconography and 'iconology,' the word and image approach and textual analysis. The first and second method are the main methods for studying visual sources, and the third method is essential for understanding the impact of primary textual sources. For this research, the word and image approach turned out to be most useful as it appears that the snake with a woman's head in the iconography of Fall has revealed extra layers of reception, besides its textual reception in both religious and encyclopaedic texts. For example, without studying both traditions I would not have found out that while the textual tradition emphasized the virginal status of the snake with a woman's head, the iconographical tradition also included married women, thus extending its message to women from all strands of society.

By not only using the textual tradition, but also other visual sources and cultural phenomena, I tried not to fall into the criticism of "leaving the matter just there." I have tried to incorporate the reception history, and to problematize interpretation by stating that everyone could have viewed the snake with a woman's head differently, and that these interpretations are heavily influenced by one's status and sex. I have used the method of textual analysis to determine the main claims which the theological texts and the encyclopaedical entries made, and how these texts related to each other. Although the interpretation I made of these texts is still my own, I constructed it in relation to the iconography and other cultural and historical phenomena and, by doing so, provided it with a solid basis. While using these methods, I noticed that both the word and image approach and Panofsky's 'iconology' are quite similar, as both wish to construct the cultural and historical context of the image.

Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* is considered to be the most important source for the snake with a woman's head in both the textual and iconographical tradition of the Fall. Although Comestor was not the first to mention the snake with a human head, he was the first to link it with the Edenic tempter. For both the theological and encyclopaedical textual tradition, Comestor has been an influential author in a direct way. His Bede-reference is included in almost every text that was written after him, and the clause "similia similibus aplaudunt" was important in the encyclopaedical tradition. Even though Comestor's Edenic tempter had been popular for almost four decades, the theological tradition stopped mentioning it already in the first half of the 14th century. The encyclopaedical tradition continued to mention the dracontopede up until the 17th century. While comparing both textual traditions I noticed that some sort of exchange must have taken place between the theological and encyclopaedical tradition. This means that it is possible that Comestor knew the dracontopede, and might have used this creature as inspiration for his Edenic tempter.

The textual tradition seems to be the main reason for the incorporation of the snake with a woman's head in Western iconography of the Fall. The clause "similia similibus aplaudunt" seems to have been very important in the iconographical tradition as in many depictions, Eve and the snake look alike and/or look at each other. This is interesting, as Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* could only have influenced the iconography in an indirect way, since the manuscripts containing his texts do not provide illustrations of the snake with a woman's head. As the iconographical tradition developed over time, the textual tradition became less important. The many shapes that the snake with a woman's head took, and the fact that it is often portrayed as curled up in the tree instead of erect, show that the textual tradition did not have that much influence on the later iconographical tradition anymore.

Both the theological and encyclopaedical tradition seem to present a contradictory view on the snake with a woman's head: on the one hand in both traditions the snake is not considered to be a 'real' woman, but only the instrument of the devil, while on the other hand an emphasis is being placed on the fact that it has the head of a virgin. At least one thing is clear: the snake with a woman's head from the textual tradition has a virginal status. The iconographical tradition, however, puts forward a different message. By incorporating snakes with hatted, veiled, coiffed and fashionable hairstyles, the iconographical tradition also included married women. This means that in the iconographical tradition, the snake with a woman's head did not only embody young, virginal women, but also 'older' married women. As I concluded, the incorporation of the snake with a woman's head caused the message of

the iconography of the Fall to shift from a warning against sin, to a warning against women. By including not only young, virginal women, this message concerned all women from every strand of the society.

The similar appearance of Eve and the snake is important in this respect as it stresses the role of Eve, and by association the entire female sex, in the Fall. By making the snake look like Eve, it is almost as if Eve is being tempted by herself. As Eve, the first woman, is the prototype of women, this means that the emphasis is put on women as evil in general, making the Fall an example of female disobedience, rather than just of sin. Apart from representing the different marital statuses of women, the different hairstyles, such as the fashionable hair dress and the wearing of a crown, were also symbols of the sins of vanity, power hunger and disobedience. All these factors strengthen the idea that the iconography of the snake with a woman's head presented a warning against women.

A connection can be made between the revival of misogynous texts and the introduction of the snake with a woman's head, something which again strengthens the idea that it represented a warning against women. Apart from this, a connection can be seen between the changing appearance of both the snake and Eve, and the changing social and cultural perspectives on women. Eve and the snake develop from females without any sex-specific features to females with female forms. This development began in the second half of the 14th century and peaked in the 15th century. When this happened the female bodies of the snake and Eve became the main features of the Fall, instead of the conversation between them. This coincided with the introduction of a new type of witchcraft at the beginning of the 15th century, which regarded witches as almost solely women and connected them with the devil. Ideas around these new witches contained many references to sexual independence, disobedience and lust, for example the idea that witches stole penises and that they copulated with the devil. These ideas influenced the new iconography of the witches; they were often depicted as naked, young women, surrounded by symbols of lust and vice. Although both iconographical developments were influenced by the increased interest in naturalistic painting and the nude, it is apparent that in both cases the negative qualities associated with the female body were stressed instead of it presenting a tribute to the human anatomy. Both iconographies are important as they illustrate the increasingly hostile attitude toward women.

As my research revealed the hybrid nature of the snake with a woman's head should not be overlooked. The snake with a woman's head was not the only half woman, half animal, as the viper, siren, scorpion and the story of Melusine showed. All these female monsters

were considered examples of bad qualities, such as sin, lust, wickedness or being cursed. The story of Melusine illustrated the question on how to consider these hybrid creatures perfectly by questioning their humanity. This problematic status of being both human and animal made these monsters appalling in the medieval mind, which is interesting considering the fact they were not just half human, but half woman. As my research has shown the iconography of the snake with a woman's head has been influenced by the iconographies of these other female hybrids, thus creating a connection with them. This connection and the question about humanity made the hybrid nature of the snake attribute towards the misogynous interpretation of the snake with a woman's head. Therefore, the hybrid nature of the snake should be considered as more important than it has been up until now.

Next to these contributions to the general scholarly consensus of perceiving the snake with a woman's head as a misogynous motif, I have also tried to show the possible influence of the Jewish legends of Lilith. Although there is no iconographical proof that the snake with a woman's head is based on the iconography of Lilith, in this thesis I discussed some textual and cultural arguments that make it less feasible to exclude its influence completely. First of all there is the amount of Hebrew influences in Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*. Comestor acknowledged the existence of the legends of Lilith, but does not connect her to his snake with a woman's head. His acknowledgement does, however, show that Lilith must have been known at least by Christian scholars and thus that she was not merely known by Jewish people. In the studies on the snake with a woman's head Lilith is often dismissed as a possible influence because she was not regarded as serpentine during the Middle Ages. This statement is, however, not true as in the influential *Zohar* (1270-1300) Lilith is described as a serpent. Although this is about a century after Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*, this still could have influenced the iconography as the theological and encyclopaedical tradition were not all-determining. Moreover, there is a possibility that the connection between Lilith and the snake existed in an oral tradition before it was written down. Also in early modern textual and visual sources, Lilith is related to the snake, and sometimes even seen as the one that tempted Eve. Although these arguments do not provide solid proof for Lilith's influence, they do open the discussion again.

Using Panofsky's iconography and 'iconology,' the word and image approach and the textual analysis together was thus valuable, as it provided a well-rounded, interdisciplinary approach for the wider cultural context. The interpretation of the snake turned out to be more ambiguous and diverse than one would assume. In this thesis I have made the claim to

interpret the snake as a misogynous motif more thoroughly and showed its possible connection with the Jewish legends of Lilith. I confirmed already existing arguments and provided new insights by stressing the importance of the encyclopaedical tradition and other hybrid creatures as for example the role of the hybrid nature of the snake in the misogynous interpretation of the motif. Further research could focus on these new interpretations in more detail, especially in regards to the snake in its encyclopaedical context. Although this thesis has incorporated the dracontopede, this variant of the snake with a woman's head could be studied in more detail. Its Greek origin as well as its role within the natural world might be interesting topics to study and relate to the interpretations of the snake with a woman's head. Also Lilith's role in Christian text and images can be further explored.

The visual representation of the snake with a woman's head in the iconography of the Fall was seen by all layers of medieval society and by both sexes. This means that not one, but several interpretations must have existed. Still, as I tried to show, general cultural and social tendencies such as the changing attitudes toward women and the importance of hybrid creatures must have reached these various layers and must have influenced their interpretations. Yet other cultural phenomena, as the legends of Lilith could also have had some influence. The answer to the main question: "how can the iconographic motif of the snake with a woman's head in Western iconography of the Fall be interpreted in its cultural context between the 12th and 17th century?" is thus manifold. It depended on an individual's level of scholarship, status and sex, but also on one's cultural and social surroundings. In my research I have shown how these interact, and how an analysis of both social and cultural interaction can help in understanding the iconographic motif of the snake. Again, although a cleric interpreted the iconography of the snake with a woman's head in a slightly different way than the rich layman, peasant etc., at the same time they all saw the same thing: a woman attached to the Edenic tempter, the bringer of sin and death.

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Images

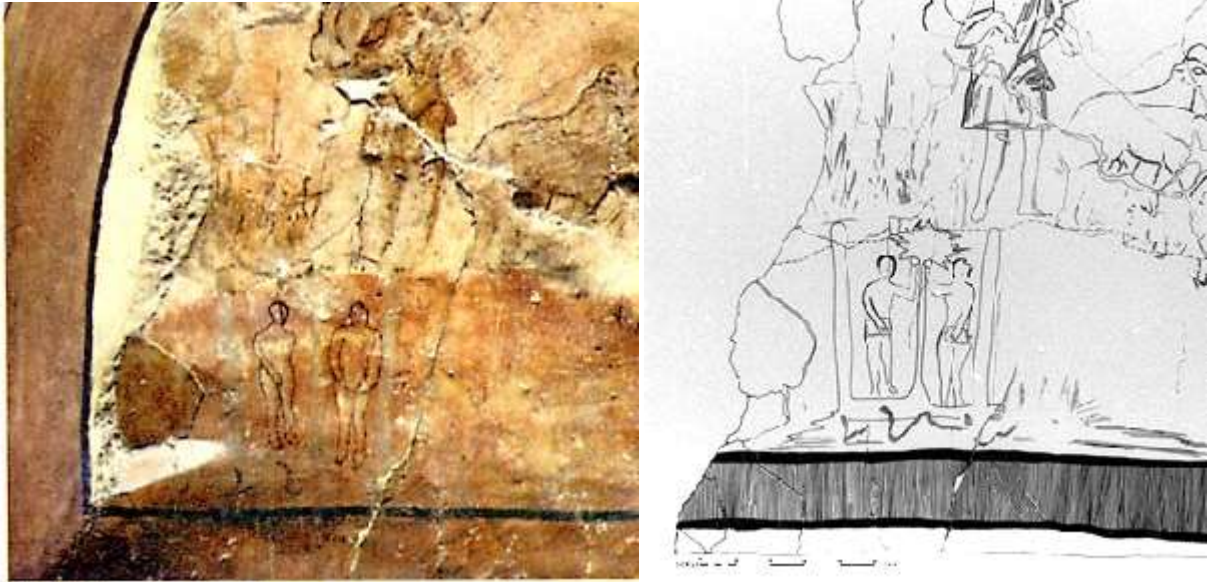


Figure 1 Detail of West-wall, catacomb Dura-Europos House church and reconstruction drawing, 240-249, fresco, Yale: Yale University Art Gallery, 63817 (Photo: The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=138A7063-10C1-4DBA-83D1-647F014D9705>, accessed June 1, 2020).



Figure 2 Putto and The Fall of Man, Fragment of Sarcophagus, 300-332, marble, sculpture, 27 cm. x 31 cm (fragment), Rome, Villa Albani, Repertorium I 0923 (Photo: The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=AB7D5840-C2D2-4598-910A-215FBF996205>, accessed June 1, 2020).



Figure 3 Hercules in the garden of the Hesperides, date unknown, stone (?) mosaic, 72,39 cm. x 49,53 cm., London: The British Museum, 1896,0619.1 (Photo: Trustees of the British Museum, accessed June 1, 2020).



Figure 4 The Fall, Peter of Poitiers, *Compendium historiae in genealogica Christi*, Ramsey (England) 1250-1299. New York: Morgan Library, M. 628, folio 2r. (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=F4C595A2-744E-4F3E-A786-227B744D5424>, accessed June 1, 2020).



Figure 5 Master of the Berswordt Altarpiece, *The Fall*, detail of the Bielefeld Neustädter Marienkirche Altarpiece, c. 1400, Painting on oak, 77469 (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=74186430-E0E5-41FE-A3DF-6952ABF79DFF>, accessed June 1, 2020).



Figure 6 Eve tempted by the snake, *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, Hector Mülich, Ausburg (Germany) 1450-1460. New York, Morgan Library, M. 782, folio 1r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=A7AC228C-B67B-4FF0-B390-DB05526B4B66>, accessed June 1, 2020).



Figure 7 Fig tree at the Fall, detail Sarcophagus, 333-365, marble, sculpture, 27 cm. x 217 cm. x 79 cm., Vatican City State: Museo Pio Cristiano, Repetorium I 0052 (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=F455594F-4902-4246-9D2E-5F83D5A30E26>, accessed June 1, 2020).



Figure 8 The Fall with a vine (?) tree, 300-399, Fresco, Nuova Cemetery, Via Latina, Rome (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=6DC83FC2-ACEF-4AE6-B8B7-B22C92F9F029>, accessed June 2, 2020).



Figure 9 The Fall with an apple tree, *Book of Hours*, Paris c. 1500. New York, Morgan Library, H. 5, folio 41r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=AB64D4AC-0E78-4052-AAF3-AB1BAA6EA946>, accessed June 2, 2020).



Figure 10 Hugo van der Goes, *The Fall, Snake standing upright, part of diptych*, after 1479, painting on oak, 322 cm. x 219 cm., Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, GG 5822a GG 954 (Google Arts & Culture <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/the-fall-of-man-and-the-lamentation-hugo-van-der-goes/YwF0m02NUM1SeA?hl=en>, accessed June 2, 2020).

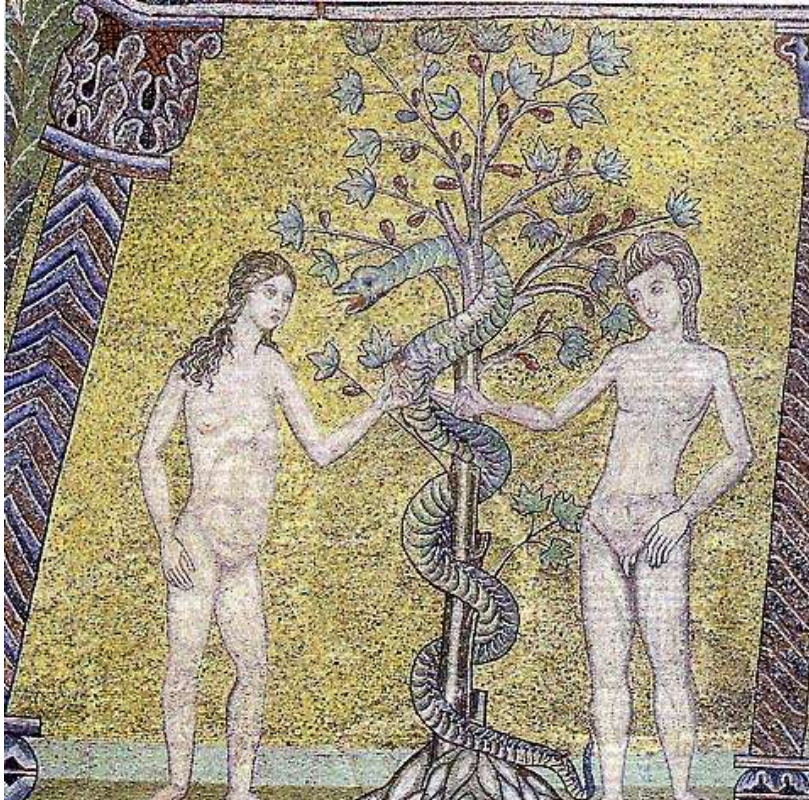


Figure 11 *The Fall*, detail of the dome mosaic, 1250-1299, mosaic, baptistry of San Giovanni, Florence (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=86A62A73-1E26-475D-8471-7A067BB4D07C>, accessed June 1, 2020).



Figure 12 *The Fall*, detail of portal, 1220-1230, sculpture, Amiens Cathedral, Amiens (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=D6BD8441-0976-49D0-8765-BD637079663F>, accessed June 2, 2020).

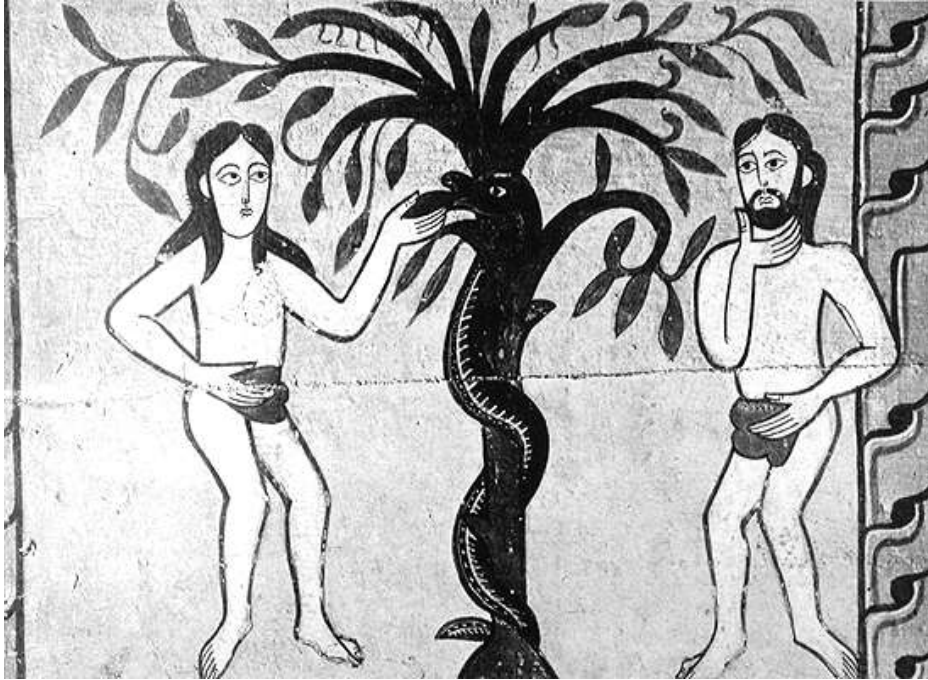


Figure 13 Detail *Sagàs Altar Frontal, the Fall*, 1180-1199, Antependium, Solsona, Diocesan and regional museum of Solsona, 11, 12 (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=DC9C8801-DAB9-4818-B3F0-F75B26B848F8>, accessed June 2, 2020).



Figure 14 The Fall with the private parts covered, *Prayer book*, Cornelia van Wulfschkercke, Bruges 1500-1524. Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garrett 63, folio 8r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=9C12A264-7905-4BED-92BB-01A373ECD0E4>, accessed June 2, 2020).



Figure 15 The Fall, with private parts uncovered, *Hunterian Psalter*, North England c. 1170. Glasgow, University of Glasgow Library, Hunter 229 Hunter U.3.2., folio 7v sect. 2 (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=F22E4202-12DB-4D15-859F-8C524AE60F07>, accessed June 2, 2020).



Figure 16 The Fall with private parts uncovered, detail miniature, *Psalter of Blanche of Castile*, Blanche Atelier, Paris 1220-1226. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 1186, folio 11v (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=CD06E6D2-D997-4A82-BF7A-9A32636EECCC>, accessed June 2, 2020).

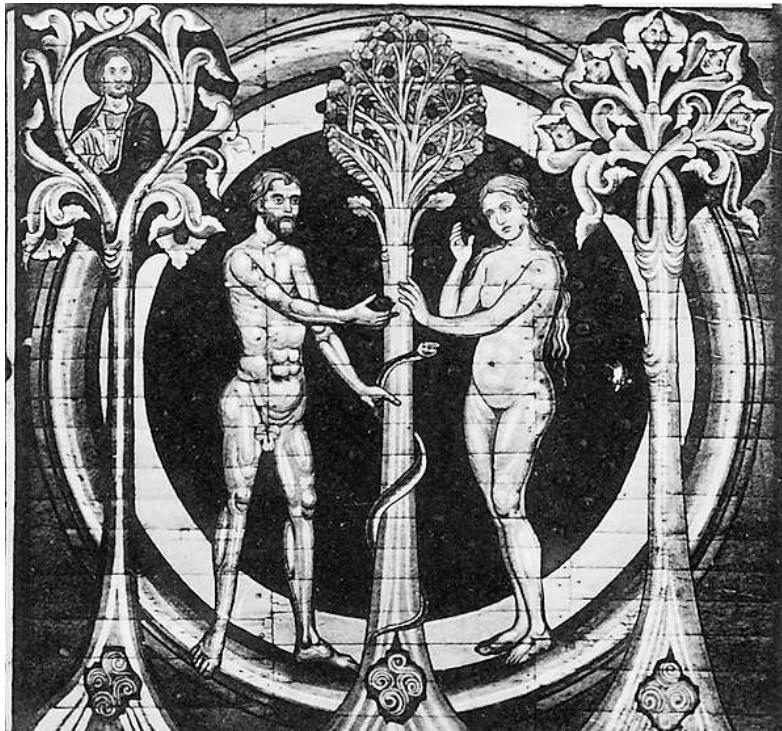


Figure 17 Eve gives Adam fruit while looking at him, detail ceiling, 1225-1249, Fresco on wood, Michaeliskirche, Hildesheim, 169000 (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=DF8BAD5-EE4A-4B8E-AB00-BDEEC107078A>, accessed June 3, 2020).



Figure 18 Eve gives Adam fruit from the tree, *Psalter*, Noyon, Picardy c. 1200. New York, Morgan Library, M. 338, folio 338 (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=6F3E3EC1-FB1F-4AD8-AE5D-FAB990CD1DC9>, accessed June 3, 2020).



Figure 19 Adam seems to be choking in the apple, detail margins, *Book of Hours*, Rouen c. 1490. New York, Morgan Library, M. 144, folio 23r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=173838FA-F4F1-42A7-A7EB-4C7398F8C468>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 20 Snake in contact with Adam, detail miniature, *Artois Psalter hours*, Arras 1246-1260. New York, Morgan Library, M. 730, folio 10r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=5FC834C4-9405-4C56-BF77-65ACEA8A95C8>, accessed June 3, 2020).



Figure 21 Eve in conversation with the snake, detail wall painting, 1180-1199, Fresco, 176424 (The Index of the Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=96D07D4C-1C81-46F4-88CF-C12FE947C27E>, accessed June 3, 2020).



Figure 22 Snake whispers in Eve's ear, detail margin, *Breviary*, Tuscany c. 1475. New York, Morgan Library, M. 799, folio 7v (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=AC2F914C-F4EA-4418-A838-1ADB1E415BE7>, accessed June 3, 2020).

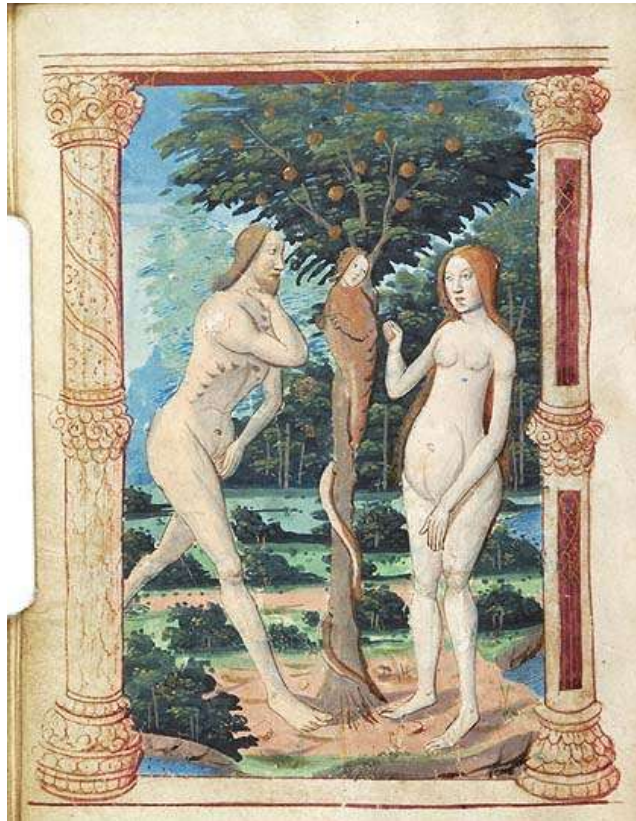


Figure 23 Eve and the snake looking at each other, *Book of hours*, Paris c. 1500. New York, Morgan Library, M. 197, folio 17v (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=4FA97DEF-0463-44AE-B9A2-8C3A99F4ABDA>, accessed June 3, 2020).



Figure 24 Eve gets apple from the snake, detail miniature, *Picture Bible*, Swabia, Germany 1380-1399. New York, Morgan Library, M. 268, folio 2v (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=0027AD7A-5ED1-4C3C-B0E1-FD90160E9212>, accessed June 3, 2020).



Figure 25 The Fall above the annunciation, *Book of hours*, Rouen, France c. 1500. New York, Morgan Library, M. 151, folio 22r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=F8CB7571-EBE2-4157-A2B6-4338AFA55FFE>, accessed June 3, 2020).



Figure 26 The Fall on a suggested hill, detail of Bernward doors, c. 1015, bronze, Hildesheim Cathedral, Hildesheim (Flickr, Petrus.agricola <https://www.flickr.com/photos/28433765@N07/with/3939884255/>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 27 Cornelis Cornelisz. Van Haarlem, *Monkey in the iconography of the Fall*, 1592, oil on canvas, 273 cm. x 220 cm., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, SK-A-129 (Rijksmuseum <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/SK-A-129>, accessed June 3, 2020).



Figure 28 Hans Baldung Grien, *Eve, the Serpent and Death*, 1510-1515, oil on panel, 64 cm. x 32,5 cm., National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 17011 (Web Gallery of Art <https://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/b/baldung/1/02eve.html>, accessed June 3, 2020).

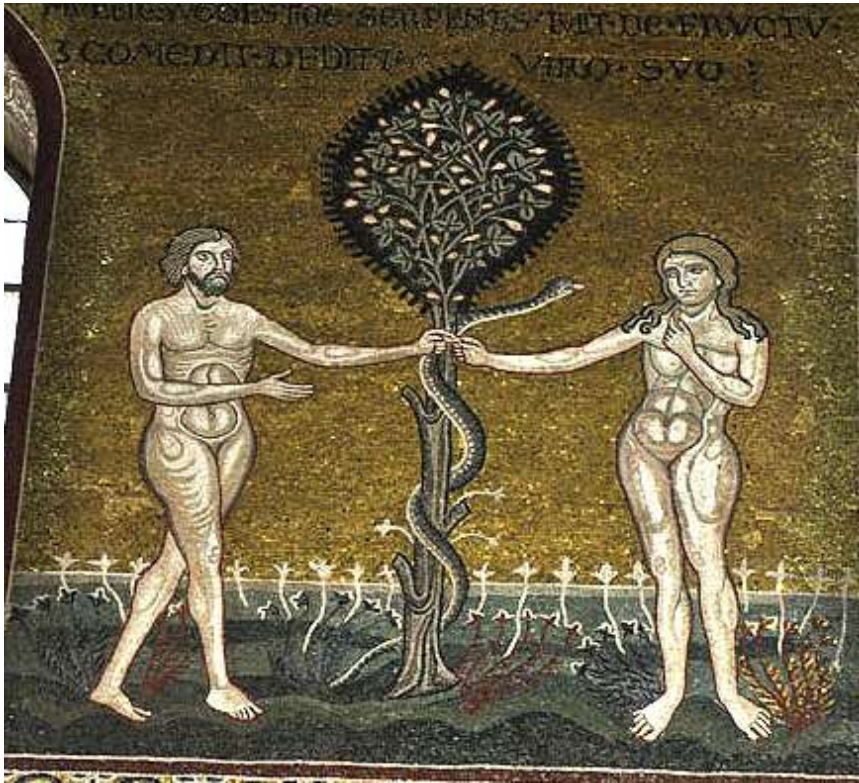


Figure 29 *The Fall with almost no sex-specific features, detail of a wall mosaic, 1180-1199, mosaic, Monreale, Palermo, 84840* (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=83AF4705-1C2A-4C12-8986-E0A0F804C33E>, accessed June 4, 2020).

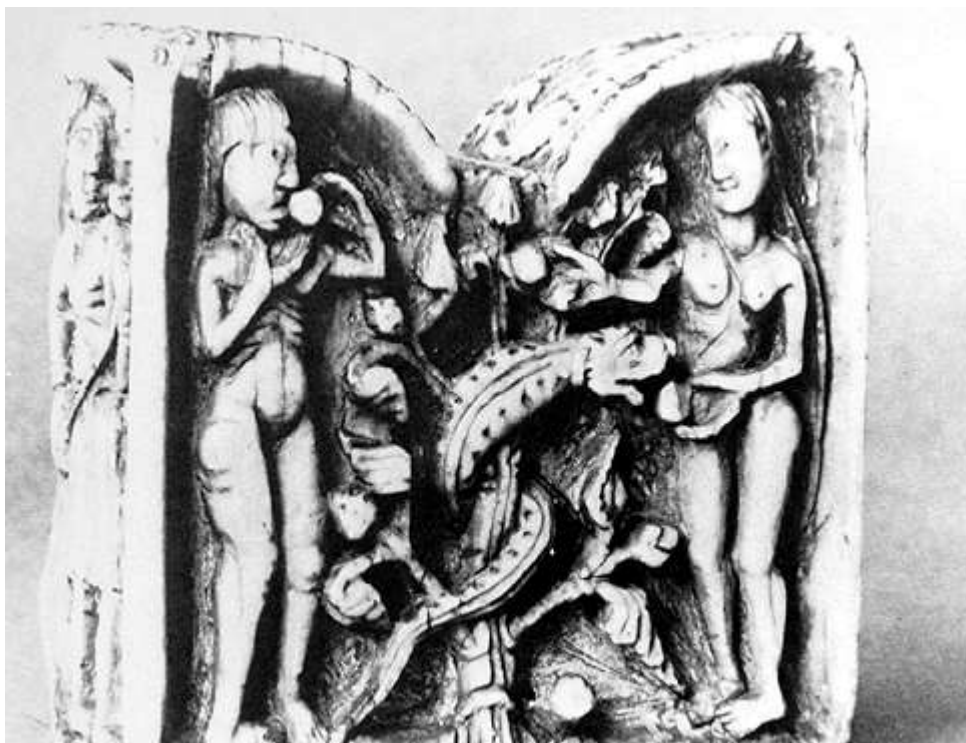


Figure 30 *The Fall in which Eve has breasts, detail of a chess piece, 1140-1160, ivory, h: 6,4 cm, Musée ou Louvre, Paris, OA 3297* (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=CD9F80C5-8262-40AF-8BA5-AB42F492C345>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 31 *The Fall in which Eve's hair seems to be covered*, detail of the pulpit, 1110-1120, stone sculpture, Saint Ambrogio, Milan, 178211 (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=07355E1C-5FB9-469C-95C4-C4DBFA373C47>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 32 Example of one-sided contact, snake whispers in Eve's ear, detail of a map, Beatus Liebanensis, *In Apocalipsin*, Santo Domingo de Silos, Castile (Spain) c. 1109. London, British Library, Add. 11695, folio 39v-40r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=CFD3E55A-A58D-48B8-84CA-919AD511C667>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 33 *The Fall*, example of one-sided contact, Eve receiving the apple of the snake, while looking somewhere else, detail of a portal, 1120-1123; 1138-1178, marble sculpture, Basilica di san zeno Maggiore, Verona, 135009 (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=22595B89-A1F4-4593-91DB-608B910D39C0>), accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 34 Example of “real” contact: the conversation, detail of miniature, *Bible of Santa Maria del Fiore*, Tuscany 1125-1149. Florence, Bilbioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Edili 125-126 I, folio 5v (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=1E186965-9EE1-4625-B5D4-0227D57835E5>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 35 Example of “real” contact (eye contact), detail miniature, *Psalter of Geoffrey Plantagenet*, Northern England 1190-1200. Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, B.P.L.76 A Lat. 76 A, folio 8v (The index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=FAC8C081-7F91-422C-BB61-3E77EF4CF4EA>, accessed June 4, 2020).

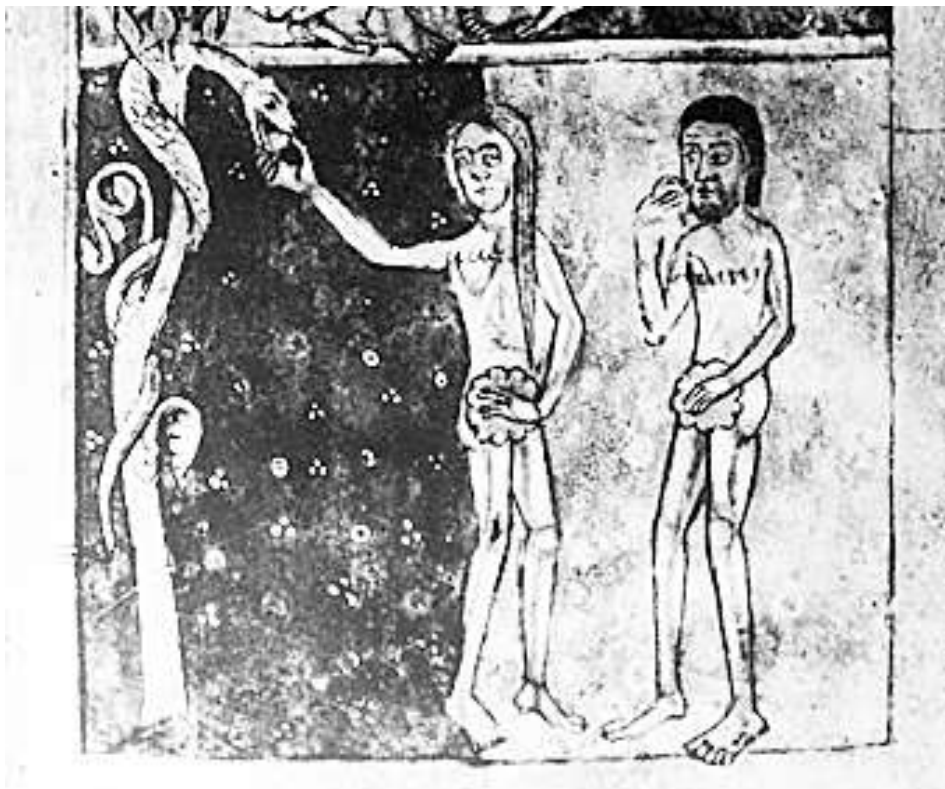


Figure 36 Example of “real” contact, Eve receives fruit from the snake while looking at it, detail miniature, *Psalter of Amiens Saint Fuscien*, Amiens (France) 1180-1199. Amiens, Bibliothèque d’Amiens Métropole, Bibliothèque municipale Louis Aragon, MS 19, folio 7r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=97C6069F-71E0-415C-A519-8895827FE265>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 37 *The Fall*, example of “real” contact, the conversation, detail of cross of Constantine, c. 1300, repoussé, silver, metal, gilt, San Giovanni in Laterano, Rome, 152314 (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=CC2804A5-B499-4E3C-A1B4-4175114E5D41>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 38 Example of “real” contact (eye contact), detail of miniature, *Psalter*, Paris (France) 1260-1270. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ser.nov.2611, folio 4r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=4A5C0153-EDE9-4C4F-8445-24F619BC3F12>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 39 Example of “real” contact, whispering, detail miniature, *Picture Bible-Vitae Sanctorum*, Abbey of Saint Bertin, Saint-Omer (France) 1200-1220. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 76 F 5, folio 2v (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=281AF3E9-60A9-4AC4-9BBF-FFB60EB8C762>, accessed June 4, 2020).

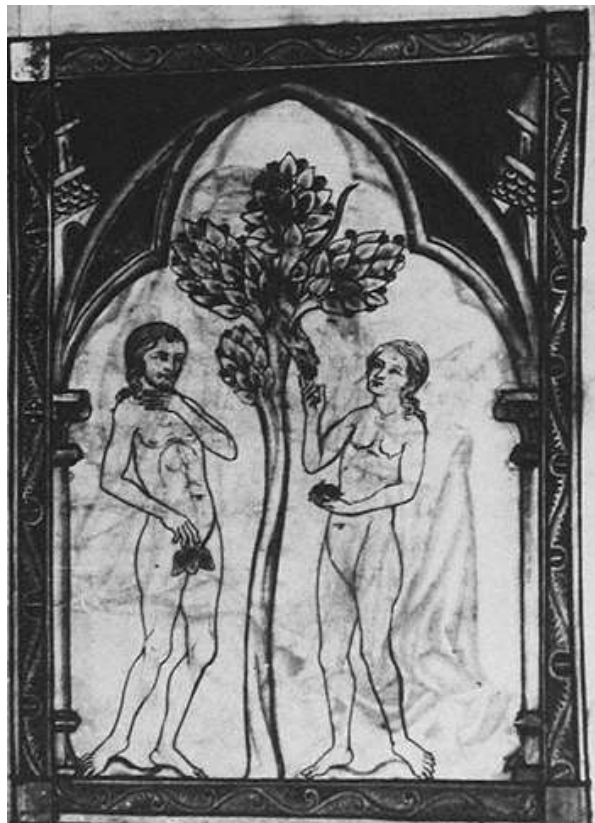


Figure 40 Example of “real” contact, Eve receiving fruit from the snake while making eye contact with it, *Lyre Abbey Psalter*, Normandy (France) 1290-1300. London, British Library, Add. 16975, folio 13r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=0969979E-67FC-4F30-A0E4-CB3C0FFB3CD2>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 41 Example of “one-sided” contact, Eve receives fruit from the snake, but looks at Adam, Peter of Poitiers, *Compendium Historiae in Genealogica Christi*, Picardy (France) 1280-1299. New York, Morgan Library, M. 367, recto (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=33F4C0B7-A966-47D8-A476-B6BA50598533>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 42 *The Fall with snake with a woman's head*, detail of cope of Daroca, c. 1300, linen, silver thread, pearl, gold thread, embroidery, silk, textile, Museo Arquelógico Nacional, Madrid, 52022 (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=7141709F-026B-45DB-90F9-93A5F187299F>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 43 The Fall without any sex-specific features, Beatus Liebanensis, *In Apocalipsin*, Castile (Spain) 1220. New York, Morgan Library, M. 429, folio 6v (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=79B88D7D-5C5A-4CEA-83BA-39FC2D3FB5D9>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 44 Example of the Fall in which the difference between the male and female body is noticeable, detail of wall painting, 1250-1299, fresco, Santa Maria in Vescovio church, Torri in Sabina, 119977 (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=2E9055BF-095B-41D2-8691-C15ED95B6CC8>, accessed June 4, 2020).

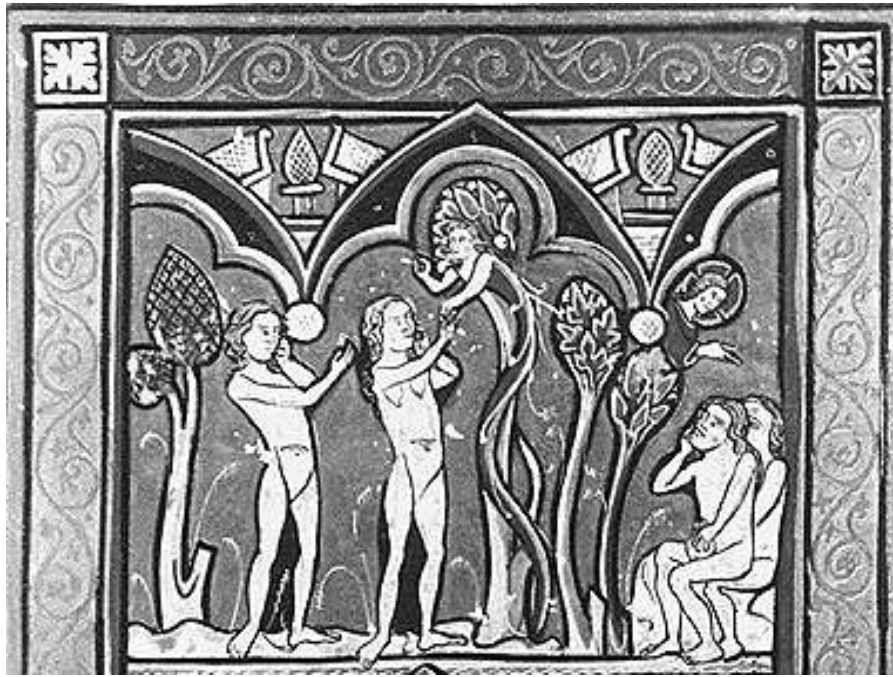


Figure 45 Example of the Fall in which the private parts are uncovered, *Psalter of Saint-Germain-en-Laye*, Paris (France), 1240-1250. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 10434, folio 10r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=AA5827E2-7C40-48F3-A1A3-1C5DE67A4437>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 46 Example of Eve without sex specific features, detail of capital, 1340-1360, stone sculpture, Malbork, 165757 (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=68B7C0A8-9059-4BC5-8BD2-2F2C52E8DF62>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 47 Eve with some sex-specific features, detail misericord, 1338-1348, wood sculpture, Ely cathedral, Ely, 129832 (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=2372A701-C811-4660-80AB-E3101B06CA4B>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 48 The Fall in which the private parts are uncovered, detail miniature, *Ramsey Psalter*, Ramsey Abbey, Ramsey (England) 1300-1310. New York, Morgan Library, M. 302, fol. 1r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=9061002F-11DF-49C5-871F-4AE682DDB126>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 49 Example of “real” contact, eye contact, detail miniature, *Holkham Bible Picture Book*, London (England) 1327-1335. London, British Library, Add. 47682, folio 4r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=C197A4F6-4B4C-4D58-828C-D37E6647BE62>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 50 Example of “real” contact, eye contact, detail stained glass window, c. 1340, stained glass, Tempe Saint-Étienne, Mulhouse, Alsace, Bay 102 (I) (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=F35D3BC9-760C-4347-9412-56E4DCA123C4>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 51 Example of “real” contact, the conversation, detail miniature, *Histoire Universelle*, France 1390-1400. New York, Morgan Library, M. 516, folio 13r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=84E7FDDA-7746-4668-BA0D-8A5D6A15BAF1>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 52 Eve and the snake both watch Adam in the same way, as a team?, *Christ-Herre Chronik*, Regensburg, Bavaria (Germany) c. 1360. New York, Morgan Library, M. 769, folio 13r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=0483030D-3CAE-403B-8A3C-0320058CF99A>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 53 Example “one-sided” contact, Eve looks at the snake, detail of wall painting, but the snake looks at Adam, 1350-1399, fresco, Sankt Georg, Rhäzüns, 159777 (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=87212AA3-8D01-4F37-BABF-119F0ECFC448>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 54 The Fall with a snake with a woman's head, detail of the Grabow Altar, 1379-1383, painting, Hamburg Kunsthalle, Hamburg, 500 (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=7219C110-A0FC-4669-9410-2B5C2A3FE06D>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 55 *The Fall, Eve with female features, detail tympanum, 1350-1399, stone sculpture, Freiburg minster, Freiburg im Breisgau, 136813* (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=8A24779E-AAA6-44BA-9D23-1293286B2D55>, accessed June 4, 2020).

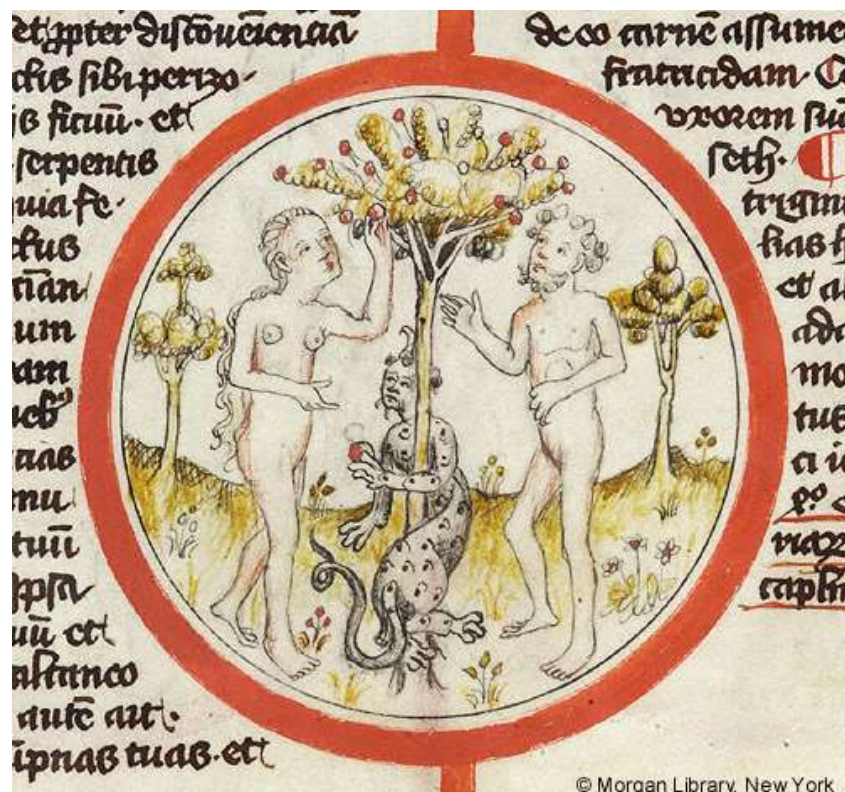


Figure 56 *The Fall with Eve with female features, Giovanni da Udine, Compilatio Historiarum Totius Bibliae et Historiarum Scholasticarum, Austria c. 1420. New York, Morgan Library, M. 192, folio 1v* (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=A1EDBDCF-43BA-4DBD-93A2-6CC0EE19F4C2>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 57 Lorenzo Ghiberti, *The Fall, private parts uncovered, detail of the east portal*, 1425-1452, bronze, gold, Baptistery San Giovanni, Florence (High Museum of Art http://www.culturekiosque.com/art/news/gates_of_paradise.html, accessed June 4, 2020).

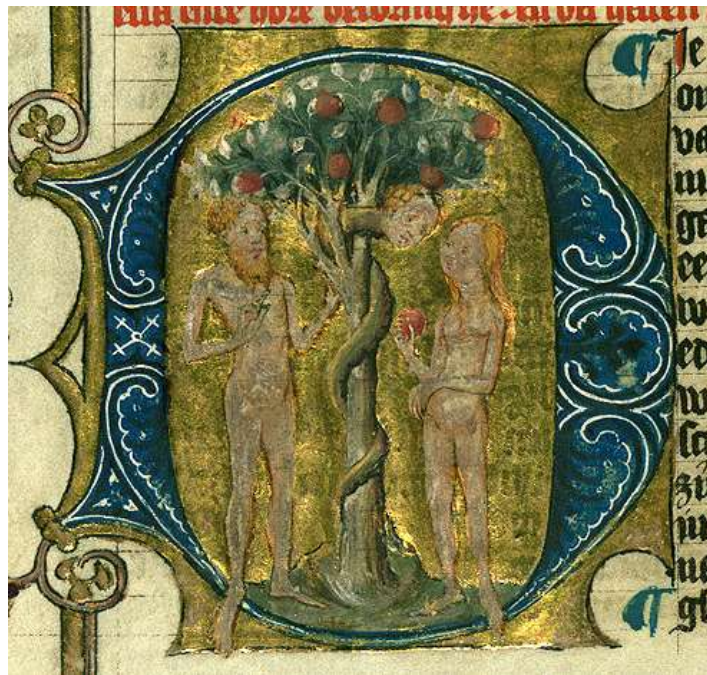


Figure 58 Example of “real” contact, eye contact, Dirc van Delft, *Tafel van den Kersten Ghelove (Winterstuc)*, Utrecht 1400-1404. Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, W. 171, folio 85v (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=6DA3180F-654C-4E6D-AA74-08FA78629BC5>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 59 Example of “real” contact, the conversation, detail margin, *Coëvity hours*, Paris c. 1443. Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, W. 82, folio 144v (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=CD9BA671-3F73-456F-8B7C-4EB3BFD33658>, accessed June 4, 2020).

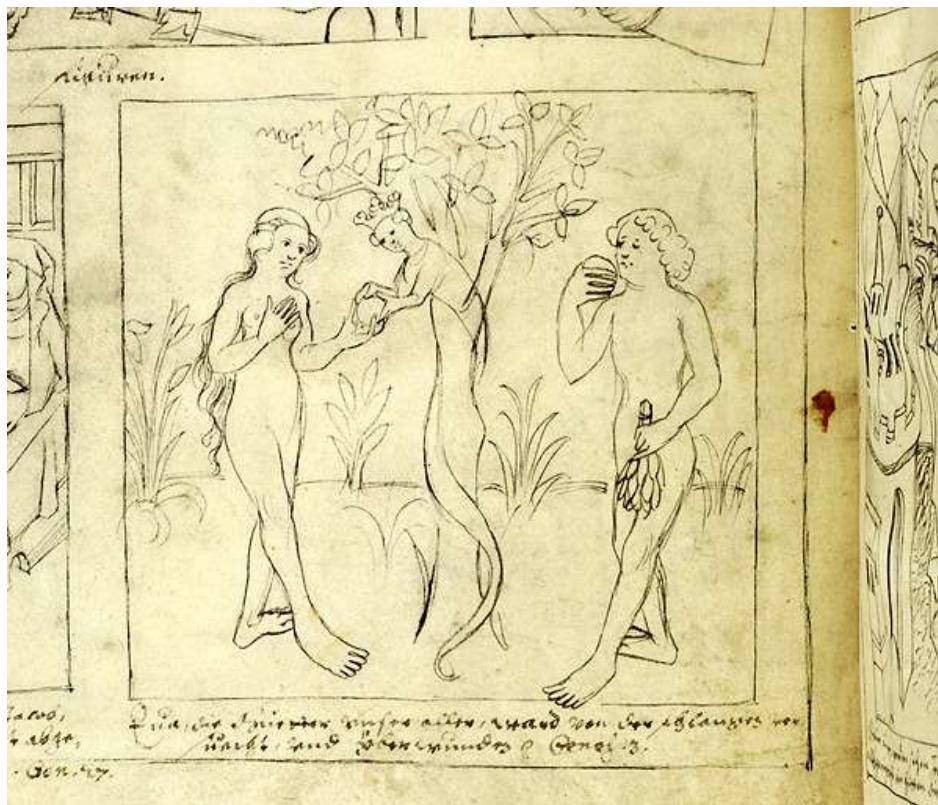


Figure 60 Example of “real” contact, Eve receives the apple of the snake, *Wiegel-Felix Biblia Pauperum*, Vienna (Austria) c. 1435. New York, Morgan Library, M. 230, folio 5v (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=61B26099-1470-4DA0-B48D-8DF5785D6C8C>, accessed June 4, 2020).

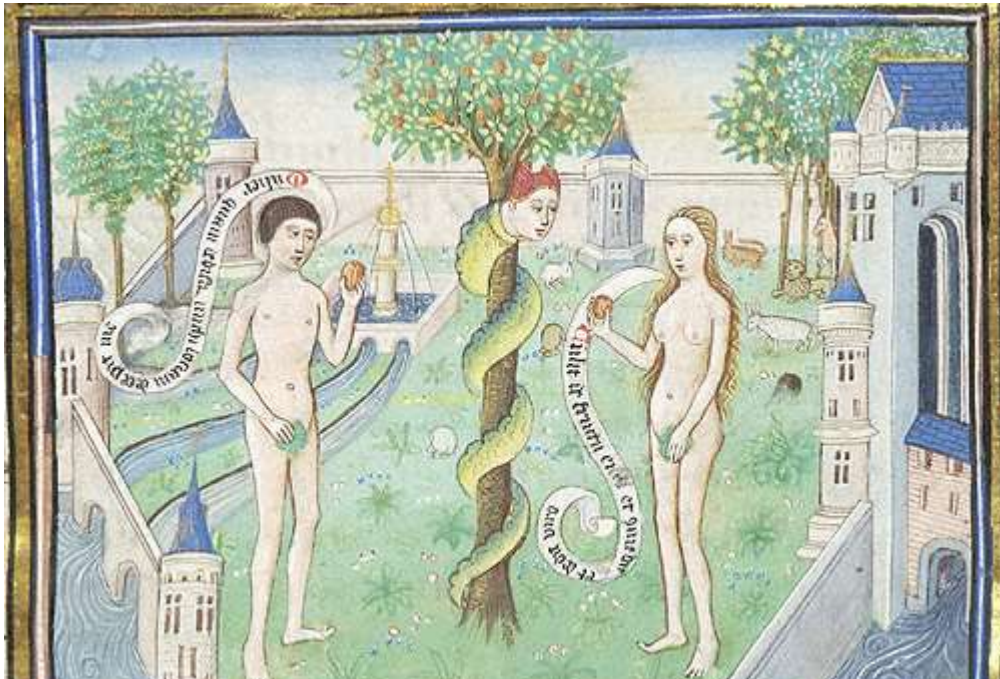


Figure 61 Example “one-sided” contact, Snake looks at Eve, while Eve is talking to Adam, Nicholas of Lyra, *Postillae Bibliae*, Bruges (Belgium) 1467. New York, Morgan Library, M. 535, folio 4v (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=00E9CC30-A491-4CF2-94EE-3B3557105EAE>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 62 Example of “one-sided” contact, the Snake gives Eve the fruit, while Eve is busy with others, and an example of a typology: Mary as the second Eve *Salzburger Missale*, Berthold Furtmeyer, Salzburg (Germany) c. 1470-1489. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 15710, folio 60v (Bayerische Landesbibliothek online <https://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/0004/bsb00045166/images/index.html?fip=193.174.98.30&seite=127&pdfseitentext=>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 63 Example of “One-sided” contact, Eve looks at the snake while the snake gives Adam the fruit, margins, *Book of Hours*, Flanders (Belgium) c. 1480. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, KOG 29, folio 121r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=65869E47-2B7E-4AE0-B3B3-632BBCA0C381>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 64 The Fall with Eve with female features, *Furtmeyr-Bible*, Berthold Furtmeyr, Sünching/Munich (Germany) 1465-70. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, BSB Cgm 8010a, Bl./S. 10 (Bayerische Landesbibliothek Online <https://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0004/bsb00045292/images/index.html?id=00045292&nativeno=10>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 65 Lucas Cranach Workshop, *The Fall: Eve, emphasis on hair*, 1520, oil painting, 73 cm. x 27,5 cm., Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna, 929b (Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien <https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/2648/?offset=8&lv=list>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 66 Albrecht Dürer, *The Fall, with an emphasis on Eve's hair*, c. 1510, woodcut, 12.7 cm. x 9,7 cm., The Metropolitan Museum, New York, 19.73.171 (The Metropolitan Museum <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/387388>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 67 Michelangelo, *The Fall*, example “real” contact, Eve receives fruit from the snake, detail of the *Sistine chapel*, 1508-12, Fresco, Cappella Sistina, Vatican (Web Gallery of Art https://www.wga.hu/html_m/m/michelan/3sistina/1genesis/4sin/04_3ce4.html, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 68 Albrecht Dürer, *Adam and Eve*, example of “real” contact, Eve receives the fruit from the snake while looking at it, 1504, copper engraving, 25.1 cm x 20 cm., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 19.73.1 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/336222>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 69 The Fall, example of “one-sided” contact, Snake looks at Eve, while Eve looks at Adam, Augustine, *Homiliae in Epistolam Sancti Johannis*, France 1540-1550. New York, Morgan Library, M. 1124, folio 1r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=37ADCABC-5FED-4325-AA2A-79F2557EA6CE>, accessed June 4, 2020).

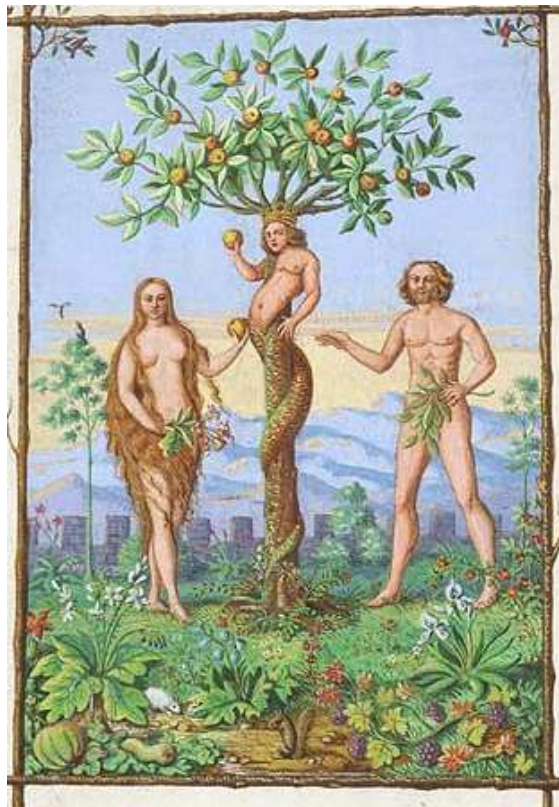


Figure 70 The Fall, example “one-sided” contact, Snake looks at Eve, while Eve looks at the apple, Otto von Passau, *Die Vierundzwanzig Alten, prologue*, Bavaria/Swabia (Germany) 1540-60. Princeton, Princeton University <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=95DB8498-9780-492A-ADA7-695BFC236786> Library, Garrett 134, folio 3v (The Index of Medieval Art, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 71 The Fall, example “one-sided” contact, The snake looks at Eve, but Eve is staring at Adam, *Tongerloo missal*, Flanders (Belgium) 1552. New York, Morgan Library, M. 983, folio 8r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=543B9A67-7A0A-4F91-A648-CCDFFD71AF44>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 72 Michael Coxcie, *The Fall*, with a “naturalistic” snake, c. 1550, painting on oak, 237 cm. x 87.5 cm., Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna, 1031 (Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, <https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/517/>, accessed June 4, 2020).



Figure 73 Titian, *The Fall of Man with a snake with a woman's head*, c. 1550, oil on canvas, 240 cm. x 186 cm., Museo del Prado, Madrid, P00429 (Wikimedia https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/42/Tizian_091.jpg, accessed June 4, 2020)



Figure 74 The snake with a woman's head, Jakob Meydenbach (?), *Ortus santiatis*, Mainz 1491. Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Inc. 3.A.1.8[37], folio 269r (University of Cambridge Digital Library, <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/PR-INC-00003-A-00001-00008-00037/541>).



Figure 75 Snake with a woman's head and upper body, 1300-1330, wall sculpture, Notre Dame Cathedral, Rouen (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=6EDD32EF-CC2C-45D7-99FD-782EFC4A67FE>, accessed June 26, 2020).

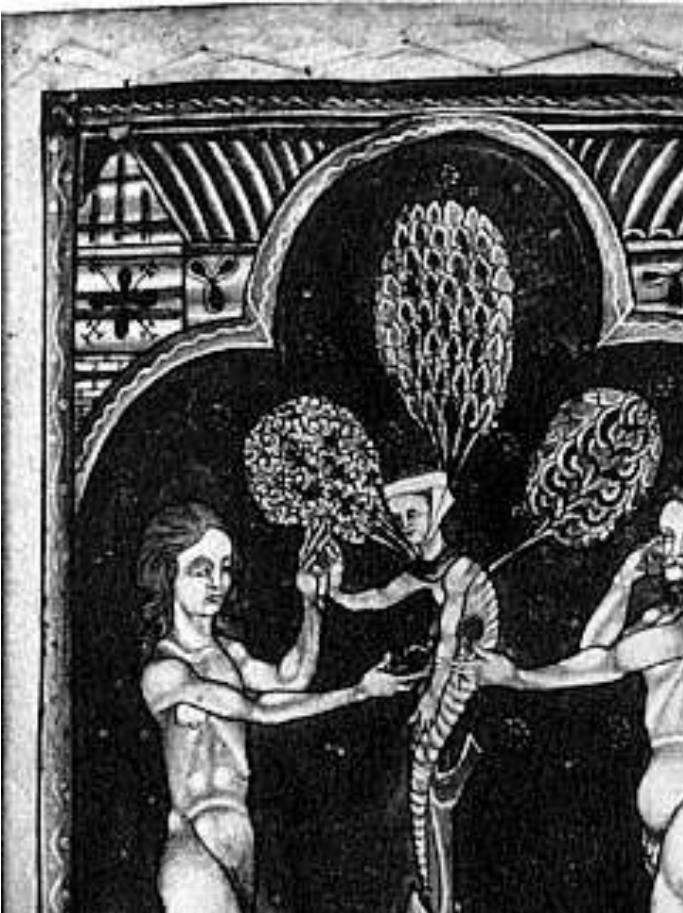


Figure 76 Snake with a woman's head and upper body, but without breasts, *Holland Psalter*, England 1270-1280. Cambridge, University of Cambridge, Saint John's College Library, K.26, folio 4r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=CDBD47EB-CE0A-4707-813C-DA55AB73EED8>, accessed June 26, 2020).



Figure 77 Snake with a woman's head with covered hair, *Glazier Bible*, Oxford c. 1265. New York, Morgan Library, G. 42, folio 6r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=19611BD2-3184-48C0-A3DE-C76912E546C1>, accessed June 26, 2020).



Figure 78 The snake with a woman's head, wearing her hair down, *concordantiae caritatis*, lower Austria c. 1350. Lilienfeld, Library of the Cistercian House, cod. 151, folio 2v (Gherard Jaritz, "Draconcopedes, or, the faces of Devilish Virgins," in *Animals and Otherness in the Middle Ages: perspectives across disciplines*, ed. Francisco de Asís García García, Mónica Ann Walker Vadillo and María Victoria Chico Picara (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013), 88).



Figure 79 The snake with a woman's head with an elaborate hairstyle, *Speculum humanae salvationis*, Germany/Alsace 2nd or 3rd quarter of the 14th century. London, The British Library, Harley 4996, f. 4v (The British Library <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=7917&CollID=8&NStart=4996>, accessed June 26, 2020).



Figure 80 Snake with a woman's head wearing a crown, c. 1480, wall painting, filial church of St. Nicholas, Klerant (Gherard Jaritz, "Draconopedes, or, the faces of Devilish Virgins," in *Animals and Otherness in the Middle Ages: perspectives across disciplines*, ed. Francisco de Asís García García, Mónica Ann Walker Vadillo and María Victoria Chico Picara (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013), 89).



Figure 81 The snake with a woman's head next to the tree, details of a stand, 1470-1480, boxwood sculpture, 8.9 x 12,4 x 8,6 cm., The Cloisters, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 55.116.2 (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=4F572FA7-2E6A-40BF-AB5E-F43706DB4D05>, accessed June 26, 2020).



Figure 82 Snake with a woman's head curled up in the tree, *Biblia pauperum*, Vienna 1330-1340. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 1198, folio 3v (Gherard Jaritz, "Draconopedes, or, the faces of Devilish Virgins," in *Animals and Otherness in the Middle Ages: perspectives across disciplines*, ed. Francisco de Asís García García, Mónica Ann Walker Vadillo and María Victoria Chico Picara (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013), 89).



Figure 83 Olivuccio di Ciccarello da Camerino, *Eve underneath the Virgin*, c. 1400, tempera and gold on wood, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Holden Collection, Cleveland, 1916.795 (Beth Williamson, "The Virgin Lactans as second Eve: Image of the 'Salvatricx'," *Studies in Iconography* vol. 19 (1998), 107).



Figure 84 The snake with a woman's head with a bird-like body, *Picture Bible of Saint Louis*, Northern France/Paris c. 1250. New York, Morgan Library, M. 638, folio 1v (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=1B853035-75D6-47B2-964F-6F82AB116059>, accessed June 26, 2020).



Figure 85 The snake with a woman's head with a dragon-like body, Thomas of Cantimpré, *Liber de natura rerum*, Abbaye de Saint-Amand c. 1280. Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale de Valenciennes, MS 0320, folio 13r (Médiathèque Simon Veil Valenciennes, https://patrimoine-numerique.ville-valenciennes.fr/ark:/29755/B_596066101_MS_0320/v0273.simple.selectedTab=toc, accessed August 23, 2020).



Figure 86 The snake with a woman's head with the body of a bird, but the tail and feet of a dragon/serpent, Peter of Poitiers, *Compendium Historiae in Genealogia Christi*, Amiens 1300-1310. New York, Morgan Library, M. 751, folio 1r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=9FEFCD9F-CA2E-475F-9066-8116F65DFA3A>, accessed June 26, 2020).



Figure 87 The snake with a woman's head with a dragon-like body and bird-like feet, *Speculum humanae salvationis*, Yorkshire c. 1400. New York, Morgan Library, M. 766, folio 23r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=5AC0822E-CD06-46EF-B09A-41BD696A265F>, accessed June 26, 2020).



Figure 88 The snake with a woman's head with a dragon-like body and the wings of a bird, *Speculum humanae salvationis*, Upper Austria (?) 1336. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. S.n. 2612, fol. 4r (Gherard Jaritz, "Draconopedes, or, the faces of Devilish Virgins," in *Animals and Otherness in the Middle Ages: perspectives across disciplines*, ed. Francisco de Asís García García, Mónica Ann Walker Vadillo and María Victoria Chico Picara (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013), 88).



Figure 89 Siren, detail capital of the arch in front of the south apse, early 12th century, sculpture, cathedral of Autun (*The Metamorphoses of the Eden Serpent during the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Henry Ansgar Kelly, Viator v.2, (1972), 328).



Figure 90 The virgin-headed scorpion, Konrad von Megenberg, *Das Buch der Natur*, Hagenau c. 1442-1448(?). Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, cod. Pal. Germ. 300, folio 211r (Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg <https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg300/0449/image>, accessed August 23, 2020).



Figure 91 Sphinx, detail capital, early 12th century, sculpture, Duomo of Modena (The Metamorphoses of the Eden Serpent during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, Henry Ansgar Kelly, Viator v.2 (1972), 328).



Figure 92 A column miniature containing God's creation in seven days, Peter Comestor, *Historia scholastica*, north-eastern France c. 1229. Yale, Beinecke Library, MS 214, folio 3r (Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library <https://brbl-zoom.library.yale.edu/viewer/1431123>, accessed August 23, 2020).



Figure 93 The Fall without the tree of knowledge, *Speculum humanae salvationis*, Bologna 1320-1340. Toledo, Biblioteca del Cabildo, 10.8, folio 4r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=F2B36158-568C-4D33-BC6B-1B47C6B10D82>, accessed June 26, 2020).



Figure 94 The snake with a woman's head, *Speculum humanae salvationis*, Franconia or Nuremberg 1380-1399. New York, Morgan Library, M 140, folio 4r (The Index of Medieval Art <https://theindex-princeton-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=BACC023B-7B9E-4E73-BD4A-5F64BD623C05>, accessed June 26, 2020).



Figure 95 Dracontopedes, Jacob van Maerlant, *Der naturen bloeme*, The Netherlands c. 1300-1325. London, The British Library, Add MS 11390, folio 64v (The British Library http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_11390_fs001r, accessed July 2, 2020).



Figure 96 Dracontopedes, Jacob van Maerlant, *Der naturen bloeme*, Utrecht c. 1340-1350. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, KA 16, folio 124v (Koninklijke Bibliotheek https://manuscripts.kb.nl/zoom/BYVANCKB%3Amimi_ka16%3A124v_min_a1, accessed July 2, 2020).



Figure 97 Dracontopedes, Jacob van Maerlant, *Der naturen bloeme*, Belgium or Flanders c. 1350-1375. Leiden, Leiden University Libraries, BPL 14 A, folio 102r (Leiden University Libraries <https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/view/item/1602752>, accessed July 2, 2020)



Figure 98 Dracontopedes, Jacob van Maerlant, *Der naturen bloeme*, Flanders or Utrecht c. 1450-1500. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 76 E 4, folio 83r (Koninklijke Bibliotheek https://manuscripts.kb.nl/zoom/BYVANCKB%3Amimi_76e4%3A083r_min_a1, accessed July 2, 2020)



Figure 99 Lilith, c. 2000 B.C.E., Sumerian terra cotta relief, Collection of Colonel Norman Colville, Cornwell (Photo: Wikimedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Burney_Relief_Babylon_-1800-1750.JPG, accessed September 26, 2020).



Figure 100 Lilith as sphinx(?), 7th century B.C.E., inscribed limestone, National museum of Aleppo, Aleppo (Photo: C.G. Häberl, "Arslan Tas Amulet NO. 1," unpublished paper, 1).



Figure 101 Aramaic incantation bowl with Lilith in the centre, 6th century C.E., ceramic and ink, Penn Museum, Philadelphia, B9013 (https://www.penn.museum/collections/object_images.php?irn=8794, accessed October 29, 2020).



Figure 102 Filippino Lippi, *Adam*, 1502, fresco, Basilica of Santa Maria Novella, Florence (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Filippino_Lippi-_Adam.JPG, accessed October 29, 2020).



Figure 103 Hieronymus Bosch, *Paradise scene, detail of the Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1490-1500, grisaille, oil on oak, Museo del Prado, Madrid (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:El_jard%C3%ADn_de_las_Delicias,_de_El_Bosco.jpg, accessed October 29, 2020).



Figure 104 Richard Westall, *Faust and Lilith*, 1831, oil on canvas, 284,4 cm. x 174 cm., private collection (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Richard_Westall_-_Faust_and_Lilith.jpg, accessed October 29, 2020).



Figure 105 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Lady Lilith*, 1866 (altered 1872-73), oil on canvas, 97,8 cm. x 85,1 cm., Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, 1935-29 (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lady-Lilith.jpg>, accessed October 29, 2020).



Figure 106 John Collier, *Lilith*, 1887, oil on canvas, The Atkinson Art Gallery, Southport, BOOA6:188 (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:John_Collier_-_Lilith.JPG, accessed October 29, 2020).



Figure 107 Hans Baldung Grien, *Two Witches*, 1523, mixed techniques on limewood, 65,3 cm. x 45,6 cm., Staedelmuseum, Frankfurt, 1123 (<https://sammlung.staedelmuseum.de/en/work/two-witches>, accessed October 29, 2020).



Figure 108 Hans Baldung Grien. *A group of female witches*, 1510, chiaroscuro woodcut, 36.6 cm. x 35.9 cm., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collectio n/search/336235>, accessed October 29, 2020).



Figure 109 An example of a dragon, Thomas de Cantimpré, *Liber de natura rerum*, Abbaye de Saint-Amand c. 1280. Valenciennes, Patrimoine Numérique, MS 0320, folio 134v (https://patrimoine-numerique.ville-valenciennes.fr/ark:/29755/B_596066101_MS_0320/v0270.thumbnail.selectedTab=record, accessed November 28, 2020).



Figure 110 The monstrous races, *Arnstein Bible*, Arnstein c. 1172. London, British Library, Harley MS 2798, folio 243r (http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_2798, accessed November 28, 2020).



Figure 111 Melusine, Jean d'Arras, *Roman de Melusiné*, France c. 1450-1500. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Français 24383, folio 19 (http://expositions.bnf.fr/contes/grand/008_3.htm, accessed November 28, 2020).



Figure 112 Witches sabbat, Johannes Tinctoris, *Invectives contre la secte de vauderie*, Brugge 1460-1467. Brussel, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, hs.11209, folio 3 ("Vrouwen op den besem en dergelijck ghespoock" Pieter Breugel en de traditie van hekseryvoorstellingen in de Nederlanden tussen 1450-1700, Renilde Vervoort (Nijmegen: Stichting Nijmeegse Kunsthistorische Studies, 2011), 112).



Figure 113 Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostsanen, *Saul at the witch of Endor*, 1526, oil on panel, 87.5 x 122.8 cm., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, C. 5 (<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/SK-A-668/catalogue-entry>, accessed November 28, 2020)



Figure 114 The snake with a woman's head stabs Adam in the heart with a spear, *Buch der heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*, Tegernsee after 1467. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, BSB Cgm 598, folio 9 (<https://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/0001/bsb00016775/images/index.html?fip=193.174.98.30&seite=9&pdfseite=>, accessed January 7, 2021).