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Introduction

The story of Adam and Eve certainly belongs to the best known tales from the Bible whose main content is even familiar to people of a non-Abrahamic cultural background as it dissects aspects of creation myths fundamental to many religions: the origin of humanity to a first couple male and female generated at the beginning of time by a Maker deity, their relationship with one another as well as with their Creator and finally the gender roles ascribed to them based on their sex. It is particularly the latter that resonates in a still binary dominated patriarchal society such as our Western civilisation and accounts for the cultural significance of this tale even today. Despite a growing non-religious trend in our modern age, the West is still heavily built upon Judeo-Christian ethics alongside the Classical heritage of the Greco-Roman world. Some of these ethics and moral codes can be traced back to the narrative of the biblical progenitors that impact and even define some of our modern notions of ourselves as human beings. I am not only speaking of the complex relationship of the two traditional genders rooted in the binary concept of a first human couple, but even more so of the individual with their naked body and sexuality and the perception that a large part of society still subconsciously and/or consciously associates with it: the forever feeling of shame caused precisely by our progenitors trying the forbidden fruit. After all, it is the human body in its nakedness that becomes the first object of Adam and Eve's awakened consciousness as earthly creatures after eating from the Tree of Knowledge. It is of utter importance to point out that according to the biblical text it does not seem to be the entire naked body that pervades the protoplasts with guilt and disgust, but it is particularly the genitals for "they sewed fig leaves together and made *loincloths* for themselves" (Gen. 3:7). From this quote it becomes clear that our sexual organs and their function are the main source for the visceral stigmatisation of sexuality and the naked body that has undergone a long history in Western thought and practice that persists partially even today. Historically, the origin of sexual intercourse had always been the topic of heated and polemic debate among theologians and worldly scholars alike since early Christianity. With the Church Fathers in the fourth and fifth centuries, discourse shifted from previous hermeneutics that procreation entered the world as a consequence of the Fall to the idea that Adam and Eve already indulged in coitus prior to their transgression. It is particularly the prominent figure of Augustine of Hippo whose interpretations in *De civitate Dei* and *De Genesi ad litteram* had a long-lasting impact on the Western

imagination regarding the interlink of sin, sexuality, lust and free-will. Not only did Augustine coin the concept of sin as an inherent force the protoplasts passed onto all their descendants, but above all he propagated the idea that Adam and Eve had sex in Eden before the Fall, since there could have been no other purpose in God's creation of woman as to assist her partner in procreating their kind. However, it was lust that, according to Augustine, ushered into the world due to Adam and Eve's sinfulness and altered humanity's hitherto ennobled status as a being fully in charge of reason to one prone to the irrational demeanour caused by the libido. Consequently, sexual coitus for the biological sake of reproduction became tolerated as part of God's divine providence by the Christian authorities, who simultaneously condemned lustfulness as a malign entity humankind was expected to perpetually fight in order to be deemed worthy of salvation. Therefore, it comes as little surprise that Adam and Eve, at some point in history, were predestined to evolve into the protagonists of an artistic tradition in the West that viewed them as the ideal vessels to not only visualise the nude, but notably the awakening of sexual desire. Throughout the Middle Ages, they belonged to the most popular figures artists used to represent the naked human form in a number of various media ranging from the public sphere of church portal sculpture and retable painting, to private spaces such as the illuminated manuscript that placed them more in the context of devotional imagery. Despite a growing concern for a more gender-specific representation of the body with sometimes sensuous qualities since the thirteenth century, a development towards an autonomous status outside a religiously-motivated depiction with a clear reading of the Fall as an erotic encounter only began to take place on a large scale at the very beginning of the sixteenth century. With two influential woodcuts and one drawing, the two geniuses of the German Renaissance, Albrecht Dürer and Lucas Cranach the Elder, laid down the foundation stones of a new sub-genre that transformed Adam and Eve from a hitherto shame-plagued pair into a love couple whose partnership seems to have truly commenced with the 'lapsus humani'. Soon, this novel idea spread rapidly across the countries north of the Alps and comprised almost all artistic genres, from monumental panel painting to the more intimate forms of drawing and small-scale sculpture, to the recently established and highly-influential printmaking. The rendition did not follow one dominant prototype but rather freely configured the protoplasts' relationship with all the diverse layers that distinguish the emotional union of woman and man: we are confronted with harmonious lovers that promenade placidly arm-in-arm in Eden, a lascivious Eve who seeks to tempt an Adam clearly intimidated by his partner's

sexually-charged conduct; in reverse a crude Adam threatening an appalled Eve's sexual integrity; and, at length, a sensual couple that shows mutual interest in the carnal pleasures their naked bodies promise. Arguably, no other artist dealt with the subject so intensely and multilayered than Hans Baldung Grien, whose wide palette of skeletal Death-figures harassing young women, alluring madonnas of a very earthly kind, and lust-driven witches testify for a moralising yet morbid and eerie eroticism prevalent in early sixteenth-century German art. Seven of his ten known portrayals of the Fall of Man bear an unmistakable erotic sense that question the power structures between the genders in the early modern period and thereby translate the biblical story into a contemporary tale of fear and desire of bodies, sexuality and lust. Two little-known contour copies dated roughly into the first half of the 1530s of which no originals survive, but for reason of style and iconography are associated with Baldung's workshop, surpass everything sexual produced in drawing and printmaking in the old Empire up to then. While the first leaf constitutes a relatively mild setting of Eve perching on the Tree of Knowledge and spreading her legs to a watching Adam, the second one opens questions of a pornographic discourse since Adam, completely absorbed in his action and unaware of the beholder, penetrates with his fingers the vulva of a frivolously-looking Eve who rests nonchalantly at the tree (Ill. 1 & 2). Even among the multiple sexually-charged representations by Baldung and his peers, this particular drawing stands out due to its blunt representation of the sexual act of manual penetration, which has little to no precedent in the visual arts. Despite a strong academic interest in Renaissance erotica expressed in numerous publications over the last three decades and museum exhibitions that attempt to convey the subject to a broader public (e.g. the Getty's *The Renaissance Nude* 2018-19), these two radical pictures have barely found attention in this debate and have been a mere reference at most. Consequently, I have set myself the task in this thesis to provide a profound analysis that aspires to highlight the leaves' significance in early sixteenth-century Northern erotic art by addressing a number of issues I regard crucial for their understanding. First, I shall sketch briefly the iconographic development of the Fall of Man from early Christianity until the late Middle Ages in order to demonstrate how major compositional schemes of the motif, which were still applied in the period discussed, came into existence. Due to the prescribed short length of a thesis, I will focus on Northern objects. A detailed survey of style, composition, technique, provenance and attribution of the aforesaid drawings is to lay down the basis for a subsequent in-depth discussion of their conspicuous sexual encounter and

how we as art historians are to place this dominant theme of eroticism not only within the contemporary cultural reading of Adam and Eve's relationship, but early sixteenth-century German society as a whole. Since primary sources naming the drawings such as purchase contracts, letters, diaries or inventories are non-existent, I deem it pivotal to consult further textual genres that provide insight into contemporary perceptions of gender relations and sex. Therefore, profane literature ranging from moralising satire to love poetry and folk-plays by leading intellectual figures of the day, like Sebastian Brant or Hans Sachs, will be as much scrutinised as the Reformers' discourse on the progenitors' presumed lustfulness, especially Martin Luther's highly influential commentary on Genesis. From an artistic point of view, I believe a closer look at Baldung's works from his later creative period, to which the two drawings are dated, regardless of their subject matter, seems more plausible for formal interpretations than a mere overall contextualisation of his body of Fall of Man images, without wanting to deny the latter's significance. Furthermore, art historical study cannot rely on interpreting objects solely within one artist's oeuvre or one iconographic category, but ought to compare it with works by other artists that bear similar content and form. Thereby the different views and attitudes towards certain social and political subjects of a past epoch can be made comprehensible for a modern audience. Hence, I will not only scrutinise pictures that depict the eroticised Fall of Man, but those which incorporate blunt and explicit sexuality in further motives by Baldung's peers like the Beham brothers, Niklaus Manuel Deutsch and others. As a last point, I would like to address the emergence of pornography as a new category of representation in the beginning of the early modern period as suggested by several scholars such as Lynn Hunt and Paula Findlen. The prime example in the field of the arts in this novel approach to sexuality they refer to is the infamous series of 16 prints with accompanying sonnets commonly known as *I modi* (meaning 'the postures'), which was produced in Rome only little than a decade before Baldung's lecherous drawings, causing a scandal that perspicuously reflects the double standards of the time. Since Ill. 2 bears pornographic substance from a modern perspective, I believe a profound dissection of the *I modi* and the relation they might share with the contour copies is essential to sketch the debut of pornography in the European art canon.

I. The iconographic development of the Fall of Man

I. 1. From Late Antiquity to 1500

One finds the earliest artistic examples of the Fall of Man in a space modern viewers probably would not immediately associate with: in Roman sepulchral artifacts rather than places of worship, arguably due to the exegesis of Gen. 3:19 as ushering death into the world as divine punishment for the protoplasts' transgression. Thirteen frescoes from the third and fourth centuries, scattered through several Italian catacombs such as San Gennaro dei Poveri in Naples or San Marcellinus and Peter in Rome, are considered to be the oldest surviving depictions of the subject.[1] Despite some noteworthy differences in the interaction of the couple, all of these pictures share the compositional base scheme that arranges the progenitors symmetrically left and right to the Tree of Knowledge (with Eve mostly to the right), which stands in the centre and has the serpent winding around it. This structure was to prevail in the depiction of the motif until the end of the Middle Ages. A young Adam and Eve either appear to seriously regret their decision by casting their glance onto the earth in utter shame (Ill. 3) or they point to the tree that indicates them weighing up the possible outcomes of consuming the fruit (Ill. 4). Conspicuously, all couples cover their genitals under foliage and fall into a gender-specific model that makes the major differentiation of male and femaleness their hair: Eve is clearly distinguished by long tresses while a beardless Adam wears his hair cut short.[2] The frescoes present an artistic discourse with the scriptural content to be unmistakably conveyed to the believer as admonition, omitting any interest in the progenitors' personal relationship.

The pagan-rooted early Christian naturalism of the naked body seems to have been perceived as unsuitable once the Catholic Church had managed to fully establish itself as supreme religion in the Latin West. The high medieval iconography accounts for an abandonment of the classical form in favour of a more gender-neutral stylisation, making the beholder focus more on the

1 Bark 1994, p. 17.

2 In spite of this primary distinction all the frescoes undeniably demonstrate, many of them do underscore the corporal characteristics of male and female by juxtaposing an athletic Adam to a slender Eve with curvy hips. However, not all of the images make this reference to physicalness and e.g. render Eve with the same muscular chest as her partner.

narrative rather than aesthetic qualities.[3] The period marks the subject's entry into to the grand public stage of church architecture, while it is still frequently depicted in private objects such as illuminated manuscripts. The Bernwardsdoors from Hildesheim Cathedral (c. 1015, Ill. 5) testify to the subject having arrived in the medieval tradition of typology by juxtaposing the protoplasts' story to the life, death and resurrection of Christ. In fact, the contextualisation of the Fall of Man in salvific history is core to medieval doctrine and artistic conception. We can decipher two major principles of representation, the one that constructs the Fall of Man as a singular scene (especially popular in capital reliefs) and the one that embeds it within the overall Genesis story with several scenes put next to each other.[4] The symmetrical compositional scheme from early Christianity is still in use in the Bernwardsdoors, aside from minor alterations, with a focus on the exchange of the fruit. In contrast to the early Christian works, the bronze Adam and Eve look almost indistinguishable with semi-identical bodies and long hair. We can tell the partners apart by their exact arrangement and relationship to surrounding objects. This shift to a new stylised form might suggest the religious values of the turn of the millennium are no longer congruent with the plain naturalism the early Christians seemingly found suitable for artistic depiction.[5] Towards the twelfth century, we recognise a gradually growing revival of gender-specific treatment first traceable in the arts of the margin.[6] Romanesque church sculpture, particularly the configuration of the capitals, re-emphasised the corporal differences of male and female as the example from St. Marie Madeleine in Vézelay (c. 1130) proves (Ill. 6). While the outlines of the bodies still resemble one another, Eve features prominent breasts while a taller Adam bears a lush beard that adds a more mature likeness and thus departs from the classical type of the smooth adolescent.[7] It is impossible to constitute one stylistic trend, not to mention norm, regarding gender-specifying vocabulary for an epoch so long and artistically multilayered as the Middle Ages. Some works embrace the classical sensuality of the nude such as the alluringly soft figure of Eve in the ceiling of St. Michael at Hildesheim (c. 1200-1230) while others like the

3 Gorsen/Kuder 1980, p. 180.

4 Bark, p. 22.

5 Ibid., p. 19.

6 Gorsen/Kuder, p. 180.

7 The bearded type prevailed in the iconography until the sixteenth century. Esche 1957, p. 21.

Grabow Altarpiece (c. 1379-83)[8] employ a few simplified traits akin to the Vézelay capital. What can be determined as norm is that any affectionate or intimate interpersonal relationship between Adam and Eve is almost non-existent, let alone erotic desire. On average, the progenitors bear little to no facial expression and physical contact, if any, is limited to the touch of the hands when exchanging or mutually picking the fruit. The focus remains a discursive structure that tells the climax of the biblical plot and emotional or erotic staging should be considered an exception in medieval art. Many images hold Eve responsible for the act of sinning, since the portrayal of her handing the fruit to Adam reflects the theological discourse of the day that predominantly interprets her as the one who initiated the tragedy.[9] As pictorial instruction for a broad audience, the images had the educational mission to dun believers of all different social classes of the origin of their inherent fallen state and simultaneously promise them redemption given that the work formed part of a salvific program. This firm spiritual character extended well into the fifteenth century, which, however, opened new ways of representation linked to the Renaissance's overshadowing status as a turning point from cult to art image. Jan and Hubert van Eyck's renowned Ghent Altar (1432) still places Adam and Eve unambiguously in a salvific context, yet rises the aesthetics of the subject to an unprecedented level as the first known rendition of a life-size nude after real-life study in Northern panel painting.[10] This rapidly growing fascination of the human naked form concentrates on the male and presents a more in-depth individualised Adam next to a late Gothic ideal Eve with doll-like face and pear-shaped figure. This gender-specific division of attention has lead Daniele Hammer-Tugendhat to speak of the "Autonomisierung des Aktbildes und Geschlechterdifferenz"[11] by which she also hints at the legitimisation the biblical tale gave artists to deal with the nude. Hugo van der Goes continues the Northern tradition of high aesthetic appeal in his Vienna diptych (c. 1470s, Ill. 7). Despite the undeniable salvific message of the picture as the left wing of a devotional diptych with a Lamentation to its right and the presence of several objects symbolising Christ and Mary, its tremendous sense of craftsmanship and microscopic approach to detail make way to the

8 Hamburger Kunsthalle, Inv. Nr.: HK-500.

9 Nevertheless, there are numerous depictions that show the partners grabbing the fruit together, thereby omitting a clear verdict as to who is to take the blame.

10 Bark, p. 23.

11 This sentence forms part of the title of Hammer-Tugendhat's essay on van Eyck's depiction of the nude of 1989. "The autonomisation of the nude and gender difference." If not stated otherwise, the translations are done by me.

autonomy of the subject as art rather than cult image that was to eventually emerge at the beginning of the next century.

The works discussed so far cross in the main principles of pictorial agenda. Most of them follow the compositional base scheme first found in the catacomb frescoes by symmetrically placing the protagonists left and right of a central tree with the serpent winding around it. As regards content, they concentrate on the exchange and/or mutual consumption of the fruit, thereby staging the Fall of Man as a narrative climax rather than interpersonal relationship of a love couple. The significance of placing the subject in the context of salvation should not be underestimated, yet is not exclusive to its representation. Certainly, the works as visual envoys to instruct a Christian audience is core to their identity. In academic discourse, it is Dürer who is widely considered to have taken the subject out of its status as cult image and elevated it to autonomous artistry that was to have a long-lasting effect on the iconography. Among his eleven works dealing with the motif, it is the supreme engraving from 1504 that takes up the role as the first work to abandon an overtly religious and moralising message in favour of staging Adam and Eve as models of the ideal human body. The print still creates a religious debate by using the classical form in order to aggrandise the ideal physical state of humankind prior to the Fall as the *imago dei.*[12] Yet the medium as reproductive, easily transportable leaf for private consumption (be it for devotion or enjoyment of art) and the focus on the sensuous naked bodies depart from the overarching Christian program of the medieval predecessors. The Nuremberg master went a step further in modernising the subject in two graphics. One drawing shows the protoplasts from behind wandering towards the tree in a firm gesture of mutual embrace that identifies their relationship as a love couple (1510, Ill. 8). Even a moment of subliminal eroticism might be vaguely alluded to by Adam bowing slightly down towards Eve's unrecognisable face: is he possibly about to kiss his partner who in turn firmly clasps his neck? The sheet's nature as drawing complicates making assumptions on its impact on contemporary artists. Undoubtedly more far-reaching and influential must have been Dürer's woodcut of the *Small Passion* (c. 1510/11, Ill. 9). As in the drawing, the protoplasts' harmonious bond is visualised through a mutual embrace, yet Adam's thoughtful gaze and pointer to the serpent deliver a moralising message and the sheet's belonging to a passion cycle re-integrates the subject into the Christian context of salvation. Nonetheless, Dürer shows concern for the interpersonal relationship in these two works. His interpretation is

12 Schoen 2001, p. 63.

an amorous one, given Adam and Eve's mutual and consensual embrace, and marks a radical alteration in the iconographic conception of the couple not to be underrated considering the print's range and the artist's then already established reputation. However, the first extant German Renaissance work that negotiates the progenitors' relationship as a love couple is Cranach's woodcut from 1509, predating Dürer's graphics by a year (Ill. 10). Here, Eve lays her arm around Adam who, as opposed to Dürer's, does not reply the gesture but rests on the ground. The atmosphere is not quite as tender and intimate as in Dürer's graphics since both their gazes are fixed contemplatively on the fruit. Cranach cunningly places Adam's face right next to Eve's breasts and thus raises the question of whether sin ought to be considered cause or result of libidinous desire.[13] The single-leaf had the same possibilities of reaching a far and widespread audience like Dürer's graphic and the subsequent increase of eroticised and sexualised renditions of the Fall of Man in diverse media in the old Empire can be seen as contest of artists to compete with the two leading figures of the day. On a broader scale, the awakening interest in an eroticised or even sexual reading accounts for the potential artists saw in the biblical tale to deal both with the naked body and the relationship between man and woman in an age of a new understanding of pictures as artworks.

I. 2. The Fall of Man in Baldung's Oeuvre

Within Baldung's large oeuvre of miscellaneous topics, the 'lapsus humani generis' occupies a significant place and runs throughout his career from his beginnings as journeyman in Dürer's workshop until his last years as one of the most successful artists in the German South. [14] Two illustration woodcuts, three single-leaf woodcuts, three panel paintings and finally the two contour copies comprise the corpus and are either from the master's own hands or workshop associates.[15] Regarding the thematic emphasis, one can divide them into two groups: the first

13 Schoen, p. 204.

14 A detailed survey of all pictures is not possible and I shall only address those in depth that are affiliated with the same period as the Coburg drawings. For a profound publication on Baldung's iconography on the Fall of Man see Carrasco 2019.

15 A drawing from 1510 that singularly shows Eve with the serpent is often interpreted as the surviving sheet to a lost pendant of Adam. Since there is no proof for this hypothesis, I regard the leaf thematically as the temptation of Eve (a popular motif in medieval manuscript illustration) that chronologically foregoes the Fall of Man and thus refrain from integrating it into the group here.

concerns three woodcuts which follow the medieval tradition of salvation by incorporating the pictures into Christian cycles. Two of them function as illustrations to devotional books, the first (1505) in the *Beschlossen gart des rosenkrantz mariae* (Ill. 11) and the second (c. 1535, Ill. 12) in four lay bibles and one edition of the *Ritter vom Thurn*, the latter likely executed by an assistant or follower[16]. The third picture (Ill. 13) is a single-leaf woodcut of a four-piece cycle which additionally comprises the Expulsion, Annunciation and Nativity (1514). All three employ the traditional symmetrical composition as discussed in I. 1 and concentrate on Adam's inner conflict as to whether he should taste the fruit. The illustrations visualise Eve as temptress who communicates with a hesitant Adam by offering the fruit or pointing to the tree respectively. The single-leaf woodcut, on the other hand, puts Adam in immediate debate with the serpent and leaves Eve lost in thought while reaching for the fruit. The three graphics unambiguously constitute Baldung's more conventional perspective on the subject as religious indoctrination by insinuating the catastrophic outcome of the event through Adam's doubts. They differ immensely in style and visual exegesis from the pictures of the second group, which all abandon the discursive structure and follow Dürer's autonomy of the subject as artwork. They belong arguably to the works by the artist best internalised in scholarly research and public awareness due to their sexual nature and ambivalent portrayal of gender relations. In the earliest, a woodcut from 1511, the centrally-placed couple stares unabashed and piercingly at the viewer and catapults Dürer's affectionate carefulness of lovers to mere corporal lust as Adam nonchalantly grasps between Eve's breasts (Ill. 14). This blunt representation of sexual arousal finds no precedent in the tradition of the subject and distinguishes Baldung's inventiveness. His levelling of sin with sexual craving is made clear through the plaque in the tree reading 'Lapsus Humani Generis' next to which Adam grasps the fruit, just like he grasps between the bosom of his partner.[17] Two rabbits are all of what is left of Dürer's and Cranach's rich faunal regiment, only to embody as traditional symbols of fertility the bestial side Adam and Eve unmistakably display.[18] In this leaf, Baldung vigorously translates Dürer's and Cranach's emphasis on the emotional aspect of lovers into a menacing tale of animalistic instinct and hereby becomes the

16 For an investigation regarding authorship see Carrasco Chapter X.

17 Washington 1981, p. 121.

18 Freiburg 2001, p. 162.

first to visualize the event as an act of carnality.[19] Eve's assignment of guilt through a mischievous side-glance is completely reversed eight years later in another single-leaf woodcut in which Adam, absolutely unique, acts the role of an aggressive harasser of a disgusted Eve (Ill. 15). Once again, Baldung proves his original approach to the subject by victimising an all-too worldly looking Eve. His transfer onto easel painting continues the issue of power structures between man and woman in an age of revolving gender roles as he re-identifies Eve as the beguiling seductress whose impish side-glance to Adam in the panels from Budapest (c. 1525, Ill. 16) and Ottawa (c. 1529-1532, Ill. 17) place the subject in the late medieval topos of the power of women.[20] In his last panel (c. 1531-33), Baldung re-addresses the male superiority from the 1519 woodcut by staging Adam as possessor of his partner whose bodily sensuality he offers in a lascivious, conspiratorial leer to the beholder (Ill. 18). Despite Baldung's reading of temptation as carnal experience in these pictures, one needs to be careful not to interpret them as exclusive erotica with the intention to satiate the viewer's sexual appetite by using the religious motif as mere pretext. Rather, they combine ambivalently the highly moralising message of the medieval tradition as warning with the aesthetic appeal of an artwork of the early modern age. Baldung's focus on the sexual side and interpersonal relationship of the binary genders raises the question of whether Linda C. Hults's proposal is tenable:

> The awareness of these limitations on sensuality does not seem to have come, for Baldung, with the consumption of the forbidden fruit. Even before the fruit is eaten, the gestures and facial expressions of Baldung's first couple reveal that there is no innocence.[21]

19 Schoen, p. 193.

20 Washington, p. 244.

21 Hults 1981, p. 54.

II. Baseline Study

II. 1. Technique, Format and Condition

The drawings are in the possession of the Kupferstichkabinett of the Veste Coburg and rank as Z. 0009 (Ill. 1) and Z. 0010 (Ill. 2) in the inventory. Both sheets are executed in brown ink on unprepared laid paper, measuring 30,4 x 22,2cm (Ill. 1) and 27,5 x 12,8 cm (Ill. 2), and are signed with the artist's monogram HGB in the bottom right corner on each leaf, yet miss a date. The figures and tree take up almost all of the picture space, a compositional device Baldung employed throughout his career in painting and graphics, but with conspicuous frequency from the mid-twenties on. Both the narrow cutting of picture space and the formats prove popular within Baldung's oeuvre of drawings.[22] Some strongly faded traces of black charcoal or chalk sketches underneath the pen drawing still remain, with Adam's figure in Ill. 1 being slightly removed to the right and circles reminiscent of fruits floating between the branches (the only remnants of the sketches recognisable at first glance), whereas Ill. 2 Adam illustrates some lines in his leg area and curls.[23] A very thin pen stroke is applied for the objective lines as opposed to the thicker and more intense frame lines on the left, right and bottom paper edges (only present in Ill. 2) that exhibit some smearing, probably due to inattentive work by another artist or owner subsequently added in order to enhance the image's artistic qualities. The shape of the figures and objects are all executed in contours only, lacking any attempt of three-dimensional modelling such as hatching, wash or heightening in white, and also feature strikingly often gaps between the single contours, marking the point where the artist set down the pen. This overall minimised linear technique has lead to the generally acknowledged classification of the leaves as copies after lost originals from the very beginning of their scholarly attention, which I shall discuss in greater depth later on. The images are in very poor condition,[24] with the ink losing colour immensely. The corrugated and strongly stained paper shows traces of paste on all four sides on the back, attesting to a former full-page installation as opposed to today's single adhesive join on

22 For a list with similarly large drawings see Carrasco, p. 255, footnote 1522.

23 Julia Carrasco believes the sketches not to be part of the original conception, p. 254.

24 According to Wolfgang Schwahn, restorer for paper at the Veste Coburg, the two sheets belong to the most fragile Renaissance pieces in the collection. The withering state explains their rare public display, last (and so far only) time being exhibited at *Hexenlust und Sündenfall* in Frankfurt 2007.

the left edge. There are no further drawings or sketches on the back. The distance of the single ribs to each other on both paper sheets is 10 to 11 mm, but mainly 10, measured from the bottom right, and the webs are 30-31-30 mm on the bottom right edge on Ill. 1 and 31-31mm on Ill. 2 at the bonding at Eve's feet.[25] The front presents the felt side and the back the sieve side. Julia Carrasco states a homogeneous conservation and utilisation of the leaves due to their similar condition,[26] a presumption stressed by both images having their edges cut irregularly. While Ill. 1 has its bottom right corner removed, Ill. 2 demonstrates interestingly an added diagonal stripe of paper glued onto the original sheet right at the bottom edge where Eve's feet are placed. Reasons for the extension might lie in the original's demolition at some stage in its existence such as an accidental crease or it might have been in a cut state from its creation and a later owner wished to erase this asymmetrical blemish.

II. 2. Picture Description

In Ill. 1, the protoplasts are depicted in the moment of the exchange of the fruit. Eve sits on a fork of the tree, looking down with little expression to the fruit in her right hand which she passes to her partner, while her left hand rests on a branch, clasping another fruit. With the ball of her right foot, she stands on the ground whereas her left foot swings freely in the air. The position of her legs could indicate her opening her thighs as if to reveal her vagina to Adam. She is shown as a young woman from approximately 16 to 30 years and embodies the late Gothic ideal of female beauty with a heart-shaped head, high forehead, double chin, long hair, centre parting and small, high-sitting breasts. The primordial father stands to the left and with his upper body leans slightly forward to the fruit Eve has to offer, supporting his weight with his left arm at a branch. In contrast to Eve, his genitals are unmistakably illustrated. His gaze onto the fruit (or Eve's crotch) allows no assumptions on his inner state. His bearded face is more individualised than Eve's and speaks for a more mature age, maybe in his thirties, with a muscular body and shaggy short hair. On the trunk behind Eve winds the serpent with weasel-like face and ears and a brow bend that reflects a mood of anger. The serpent bites itself into the middle part of its body.

25 I thank Mister Schwahn for carrying out the measurements as well as assessing the paper condition.

26 Carrasco, p. 254.

Apart from a few curves framing the bottom of the tree that likely represent grass, there is no vegetation or other objects constituting a specific space or setting.
The focus of Ill. 2 lies not on the traditional exchange of the fruit, but the sexual act of Adam stimulating his partner's vagina with his right hand. Eve leans on the tree, tenderly laying her right arm around Adam's hips while holding a fruit in her left hand that she seemingly tries to hide behind her back. She looks directly with lascivious gaze at the beholder, as if to invite him. Like the Ill. 1 Eve, her figural conception conforms to late Gothic idealisation, yet her face suggests a different model than her counterpart. Besides, her vagina here is implied by some curves bending upwards. Adam, clearly the same model as Ill. 1, is entirely absorbed by fingering his partner, his gaze looking only at her genitals. With his left hand, he returns Eve's affectionate embrace around her shoulder. The composition concentrates exclusively on the progenitors and the tree, excluding the serpent from Ill. 1.

II. 3. Current State of Research

The contour copies have received little attention by art historians and are used as comparative works in most publications, predominantly exploring Ill. 2's unique sexual topic in a few sentences.[27] Only four authors have treated them as autonomous studies so far, the first one being Gabriel von Térey who lists them in his several volume encompassing catalogue raisonée on Baldung's paintings and drawings, published from 1894 to 1897. Térey entitles them plainly as *Adam und Eva* under number 163 (Ill. 2) and 164 (Ill. 1) in volume 3 of the series on drawings and gives a short picture description, survey on size and technique and rough dating within the artist's later career.[28] Significantly, he establishes the widely accepted classification as "zeitgenössische Contour-Pause[n] nach einem verschollenen Originalblatt Baldung's."[29] Half a century passed until the next art historian took notice of the drawings. Carl Koch lists them as number A26 (Ill. 1) and A27 (Ill. 2) in his catalogue raisonée on Baldung's drawings from 1941 (I shall adopt Koch's numbering when addressing the drawings from now). Koch elaborates on

27 See Bonnet 1992, p. 209; Brinkmann 2007, p. 160; Hieatt 1983, pp. 292, 294, footnote 15, pp. 300-301; Hinz 2006, p.49, footnote 43; Hinz 2011, p. 24; Koerner 1993, p. 298; Freiburg, p. 37.

28 Térey 1897, Vol. 3, pp. LVIII-LIX, Cat. Nr. 163 and 164.

29 Ibid., "contemporary contour copy after a lost original sheet by Baldung."

picture description and title (*Adam empfängt den Apfel aus Evas Hand* and *Adam begehrt Eva*)[30] and also sets a narrower dating into the first half of the 1530s due to reasons of style and composition.[31] He agrees with Térey's identification as copies, but like his predecessor owes an explanation as to why this is. Sabine Bark delivers the first iconographic contextualisation of the sheets in her PhD thesis on the depiction of the Fall of Man in German Renaissance art in 1994. Referring to them in her chapter on Baldung, she seems to be in line with the little interest most art historians have shown so far by dedicating the least attention to them out of all the works by the artist. Bark reads the drawings in the chronological order of an erotic encounter starting with A26 Eve's supposed offering of her vulva to Adam, a promise of sexual pleasure that is fulfilled by A27's act of fingering.[32] She considers A26 as exclusively sexualised despite its more ambivalent nature and interprets Baldung's portrayal of the sexual act as the reason for the protoplasts' demise, for they have agreed "in den Kreislauf von Leben und Tod, den sie durch ihre Sexualität in Gang gesetzt haben."[33] The very first and so far sole in-depth case study of the drawings is a most recent one in Julia Carrasco's PhD thesis on the iconography of the Fall of Man in Baldung's oeuvre from 2019.[34] Carrasco discusses all essential topics such as technique, composition, figural conception, iconography and socio-political context in detail and primarily places the drawings in the contemporary topos of the power of women.[35]

30 "Adam receives the apple from Eve's hand" and "Adam desires Eve".

31 Koch 1941, p. 202, Cat. Nr. A26 and A27.

32 Bark, p. 58.

33 Ibid., "the circle of life and death, which they ignited by their sexuality."

34 See Carrasco, Chapter IX.

35 My own thesis is heavily indebted to her profound thesis as well as a personal conversation that took place at the Kunsthalle Karlsruhe in February 2020.

II. 4. Identification as Copies

II. 4.1. Baldung's draughtsmanship

Térey and Koch both formulated the leaves' identity as contour copies after lost originals without actually providing proof. A brief overview on Baldung's vast oeuvre of drawings delivers a simple yet concise answer. One notes quickly the artist's remarkable craftsmanship in this medium as he diligently pays attention to render objects three-dimensional by applying hatching, wash and heightening in white, showing a special interest in chiaroscuro.[36] Baldung's great care for naturalistic modelling runs through all materials such as charcoal, brush, silverpoint and pen and does not stop at highly elaborated drawings destined for the art market: even preparatory studies and roughly executed sketches make concession for three-dimensional effect by employing little hatching at the least.[37] There is literally no drawing ascribed to Baldung's own hands that reduces the figural conception to mere contours. This solid argument against the master's authorship of A26 and A27 is confirmed by the gaps between the single contours as stated in the first passage of this chapter. Gaps in the lines usually constitute the point where the draughtsman has to set down the pen in order to replenish the ink, yet their conspicuously high number in A26 and A27 rather speaks for a copyist who constantly has to set down to observe the original painstakingly.[38] The abrupt ending of the branches in A26, as if solidly cut off, further enforces the impression of a copy.[39]

II. 4.2. Three further contour drawings

A look into the Coburg Kupferstichkabinett reveals additional evidence in the shape of three further sheets that are classified as contour copies after Baldung: a scene of two witches (Ill. 19), a standing female nude considered to be Eve or Venus (Ill. 20) and a female allegorical nude not

36 Karlsruhe 2019, p. 247.

37 For the former see for instance *The Judgement of Paris* from the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, Inv. Nr.: Estampes, Rés. B13; for the latter the black chalk sketch of the head of an anguished man from the Kunstmuseum Basel, Kupferstichkabinett, Inv. Nr.: U.IX..82.

38 Carrasco, p. 254.

39 I thank Christof Metzger for drawing my attention to this aspect.

clearly identifiable (Ill. 21). All leaves prove the same technique of exclusive contour-drawing in brown ink on unprepared paper with the gaps between the lines like A26 and A27, demonstrating a solid handling of the pen without traits of shaking. They all feature the artist's monogram (Ill. 19 even twice) and are in similar poor condition with stains and abrasion on the surface as well as strongly fading ink and traces of paste from a former installation. All these points allude to a similar conservation, ownership and authorship. Furthermore, Ill. 20 and 21 have almost the same format (29,5 x 10,2 and 29,7 x 12,9 cm) as A27 and share the same framing lines while Ill. 19 (the only composition in horizontal format) has similar dimensions (19,7 x 32,2 cm) like A26. The breasts in Ill. 21 are executed in the same dotted line as A27 Eve's left one.[40] The formal concordances are reflected in the subject matter, since all five drawings focus on the female nude in different positions and perspectives. Ill. 20 is of particular interest as it constitutes the only leaf out of the group of which the original still exists.[41] Both sheets are almost congruent in size (the original being slightly broader) and show a one-to-one adaption of the original's figure by Ill. 20, only without the hatching. The existence of the original to Ill. 20 thus cements the theory of contour copy for the other four drawings. Térey states for Ill. 20 marks of a hard instrument underneath the ink,[42] thus deducing the technique of tracing that he ascribes to all other four drawings.[43] Their nature as studies is further enhanced by two sketches of cats on the back of Ill. 19, thereby making a function as a collector's item unlikely. Based on the argumentation from the two preceding passages, I conclude on the subject of contour copies by agreeing with Térey and Koch.

II. 4.3. Watermark

Of further interest is the subject of materiality: due to similar appearance and identical number of ribs (10mm), the use of the same paper for all copies seems initially assumable.[44] However, A27 and Ill. 19 bear two different watermarks, immediately subverting this theory (A26, Ill. 20 and

40 Carrasco, p. 259.

41 Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, Inv. Nr.: KdZ 2171.

42 Térey, Vol. 1, p. XII, Cat. Nr. : 29.

43 My own perusal of the five drawings has shown signs of a hard instrument under the ink only in Ill. 21.

44 Carrasco, p. 257.

21 have none). In A27, a one-contoured object (55 x 27 mm) rubs vertically through Adam's torso that resembles a cross or scourge, though the latter seems more plausible. A. Kent Hieatt identifies the watermark as briquet 5392, which according to him is nearly identically large and was apparently in use in Zurich (1520), Nuremberg (1522/23) and Würzburg (1527).[45] Indeed, the online data bank of the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften registers briquet 5392 which seems congruent with the watermark in A27.[46] Ill. 19 on the other hand features a pearl-adorned crown (103 x 30 x 33 mm) that Koch identifies as briquet 4968 that was used in Salzburg (1528), Franconia (1526/27) and Alsace (c. 1525).[47] Most importantly, he determines the same watermark to be present in two original drawings by Baldung, the aforementioned sheet in footnote 41 and a resting love couple from 1527.[48] This fact indicates Ill. 19 to have been produced in Baldung's workshop rather than by a later artist or owner, a theory transmittable to the other four copies due to same style, technique and motif of female nudes. This body of evidence made Carrasco speculate all drawings to have been created in roughly the same time by an anonymous copyist whom she suggests to be a journeyman active in Baldung's atelier and whose origin could have been from outside Alsace based on A27's foreign watermark.[49] Despite the conclusiveness, Carrasco points out that a systematical register of Baldung's watermarks is still due to make proper conclusions and also underscores that all theories on the origin of A27 from outside Alsace have to be considered hypothetical.[50]

II. 5. Provenance

Questions regarding the provenance proved highly dissatisfying since the first overall inventory of the drawings of the Veste Coburg was undertaken during the tenure of director Karl Koetschau

45 Hieatt, p. 300, footnote 51.

46 Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften (11/05/2020), URL: http://www.ksbm.oeaw.ac.at/_scripts/php/loadRepWmark.php?rep=briquet&refnr=5392&lang=fr. I thank Matthias Weniger for helping me in this matter.

47 Koch, p. 198.

48 Ibid., pp. 138, 198, Cat. Nr.: 126 and 198; for the 1527 drawing: Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Graphische Sammlung, Inv. Nr.: C8.

49 Carrasco, p. 260.

50 Ibid., pp. 255, 260.

from 1906 to 1908, so more than a century after the Kupferstichkabinett's foundation under Duke Franz Anton of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld (1750-1806).[51] Max Lossnietzer made the earliest known intern entry of our two sheets in Catalogue I of the 1906-1908 inventory.[52] Sadly, his very short remark makes no allusion as to when and how exactly the drawings entered ducal possession, but intriguingly it reflects turn-of-the-century perceptions of the sexual nature of Ill. 2. Lossnietzer's entry reads: "Z.10 Adam und Eva. Derbe Darstellung. Liegt am Schluß / m.m. Wasserzeichen II., T. III 163 ."[53] Though his statement is not linked to the historical period under analysis here, it is still fascinating that the author uses the term 'derb' (meaning bawdy) and mentions that the leaf lies at the very end of the pile in its casket. Decency seems one plausible reason, as if the conservative authorities of a then aristocratic collection attempted to hide the image's said crudeness from an all-too-keen scholarly eye. A dry stamp applied on A27 Eve's vagina (!) in the form of a plain oval reads mirror-inverted "Veste Coburg" in an inner banderole (same appears in Ill. 20), yet there is no specific period in the history of the museum in which this type of stamp was utilised, thus making it another unreliable source.

Since no further records such as purchase contracts or letters survive either, I suggest a brief survey of the collection's history might give some hints in this matter. As stated above, the establishment of the Coburg Kupferstichkabinett began in 1775 with Duke Franz Anton, who had a special predilection for Northern Gothic and Renaissance graphics utterly rare for his time. One of his most significant undertakings was the purchase of numerous pieces from the renowned former collection of Nuremberg merchant Paulus II Praun (1548-1616) that included works by Dürer, van Leyden and Baldung.[54] The duke also managed to buy exquisite graphics by Dürer from Generalin Haller that went back to the equally important collection of Willibald Imhoff (1519-1580) and so on.[55] Franz Anton's high esteem for drawings and prints found no echo in his successors and little further purchases were made in these media for the ducal collections after

51 Wiebel/Wiedau 2002, p. 25.

52 I am much indebted to Katrin Gaßmann, who permitted me access to the original, handwritten catalogue.

53 Lossnietzer refers here to Térey. "Adam and Eve. Bawdy depiction. Lies at the end. Watermark II."

54 Wiebel /Wiedau, p. 20.

55 Maedeback 1970, introduction.

his death.[56] Consequently, it could be possible that the two drawings were part of Franz Anton's ambitions of princely collecting.

Another potential entry point might be deducible from the Art and Natural Cabinet arranged by Franz Anton's grandsons Ernst and Albert in 1842. 46 stained glass designs of coat of arms by Baldung for Alsatian patrician and noble families all bear the princes' mutual dry stamp with their crowned initials on top.[57] However, it is possible that the princes merely incorporated already existing pieces from the ducal collections into their own.[58] Above all, the stamp on A27 and Ill. 20 as mentioned above is not congruent with the one by the princes, thus making their identification as initial purchasers of the two sheets rather unlikely. As of now, the exact provenance of the contour copies hence remains unsolved.

II. 6. Attribution

II. 6.1. Monogram

The debate on the originality of A26 and A27 only opens another major question: why are they associated with Baldung's surrounding field in the first place? Of course, one might immediately point to the most obvious sign, namely the presence of the artist's monogram HBG at the bottom of the trunk in each drawing. This alleged evidence quickly crumbles away at closer inspection since the lines of both monograms are thicker and more intense in colour, particularly applicable to A27, than the contours of the figures, thus implying a later addition. Furthermore, they are so awkwardly executed that Baldung's authorship must be excluded from any serious study: in A26, the vertical stroke marking the left part of the H definitely demonstrates a shaking hand and a gap is visible between this line and a diagonal that seemingly is supposed to protrude from the former's bottom. Besides, the two curves of the B appear twice. For A27, we can decipher a similar shaking hand for the lower curve of the B, which is reflected in an overall shaky hand for the monogram under the young witch's belly in Ill. 19.

56 Ibid.

57 Coburg 1997, pp. 280-281, Cat. Nr.: 5-35a.

58 Ibid.

Already Térey and Koch mention the counterfeit of the monogram and in this context drop a name[59] every Baldung scholar is familiar with: it is Strasbourg chronicler and painter Sebald Büheler (1529-1595). Büheler inherited a considerable part of Baldung's artistic estate at some point in the 1550s from his deceased brother-in-law, painter and Baldung-associate Nikolaus Kremer, who in turn had acquired this treasure after the master's death.[60] Aside of Dürer's curl, the estate apparently consisted solely of drawings in different techniques, today scattered in several museums, and encompassed highly crafted pieces worth collectors' interest as well as preparatory studies and designs. Büheler patently was a typical representative of an age prior to preservation of valuable artefacts and freely adopted his new property as he seemed fit. The compilation and binding of the Karlsruhe sketchbook, a major legacy of Baldung, for instance goes back to Büheler's initiative.[61] Even more so, he seems to be responsible for the counterfeit of Baldung's monogram on numerous drawings. Robert Stiassny was the first to deduce this affair from assessing Baldung's designs of heraldic stained glass (mentioned in II. 5.) from the Veste Coburg in 1896. Stiassny compared the handwriting of the family names and monograms on these sheets with the one from a book of coat of arms Büheler had produced for the Freiherrn Zorn von Bulach and came to the conclusion that they both derive from Büheler's hand.[62] Stiassny subsequently scrutinised the drawings from the Karlsruhe sketchbook only to confirm his previous results and today his finding is generally accepted.[63] Concluding from A26 and A27's forged monograms and possession to the Veste Coburg just like the stained glass designs, a former ownership of Büheler seems more than likely (as applies to the other three contour copies). At the same time, the affiliation of the sheets to these designs might imply the same point of entry into the ducal collections.

59 Same as footnotes 28 and 31.

60 Büheler himself attests to this in a document from 1559 attached to the famous Dürer curl. For a transcript see Karlsruhe, p. 100, Cat. Nr.: 17b.

61 An inscription on the flyleaf of the book reads: "Costet 3ß. In zu binden Joachim Craffe[n]berg dem Buchbinder. 1582. Sebolt Büheler.", quoted in Rosenberg 1889, p. 4.

62 Stiassny 1896, p. 13.

63 Koch for instance agreed on this matter, p. 20.

II. 6.2. Dating and stylistic analysis

Any serious study seeking to place the drawings into Baldung's oeuvre of course cannot settle merely for the artist's monogram, but must apply stylistic and compositional comparison to originals by the master. Four panel paintings and one drawing exhibit strong analogies in the figural conception with A26 and A27, all dated into the late 1520s to early 1530s (three bear a clear date) and thus make a dating of A26 and A27 into this time span highly likely. The panel *Hercules and Antaeus* (Ill. 22) features date and Baldung's signature remarkably twice, once showing the year 1531 and the artist's monogram HGB in the top right corner next to an inscription reading DIVO HERCVLI, and then the same year next to the signature HG BALDUNG(VS) FAC in the bottom left.[64] Already Koch noticed conspicuous resemblances in the Hercules' and A27 Adam's bowing posture[65] onto which Hieatt elaborated by realising the figures' similar muscularity and above all identical, albeit, mirror-inverted poise.[66] Furthermore, both the Kassel Hercules and Coburg Adam bear the same fashion of groomed moustache, whiskers and lush beard. Resemblances in hair style and structure are extended to the stream of long curls protruding under the lion's pelt that indicate the Kassel Hercules to have the same thick, uncombed hair like the Coburg Adam. The Madrid panel illustrating the Fall (Ill. 18) bears no date, yet its almost equal size and high vertical format with narrow cutting focusing on the figures in front of a dark background without clear setting like Ill. 22 have made Georg Bussmann date it from 1531 to 1533.[67] Térey saw here a similar model used for Adam as in the Coburg drawings,[68] evident in the muscular body and untamed curly hair, though this Adam is far taller in stature and only shares the moustache with his Coburg counterpart, lacking the opulent beard and whiskers that the latter and Kassel Hercules share. Joseph Leo Koerner importantly stressed the Madrid Adam's beholder-confronting, sly smirk to be adopted for A27 Eve.[69]

64 Karlsruhe, p. 402, Cat. Nr.: 205.

65 Koch, p. 202.

66 Hieatt, p. 292.

67 Bussmann 1966, pp. 37-38.

68 Térey, pp. LVIII-LIX.

69 Koerner, p. 298.

Carrasco pointed to strong correspondences of the Madrid Eve and the female figure of Ill. 21[70]: both share the same face, body and transparent veil over the genitals. The drawing of *Hercules and Omphale* (Ill. 23) exhibits the date 1533 and monogram HB on the tablet suspending from the tree to the left. Like the previous examples, it favours a muscular, mature type of man for the protagonist with dishevelled, thick hair from which single curls stick out and a lush beard plus whiskers and groomed moustache very similar to the figure of the Coburg Adam. Omphale's cunning and/or frivolous gaze towards her minion mirrors the lecherous one of A27 Eve.[71] Carrasco additionally sees connections in Omphale's and A26 Eve's perching pose with regard to the cross-legged posture and skin folds.[72] Thanks to this pointer, I noted that Omphale's feet are nearly congruent with the ones of A27 Eve. The panel of the unsigned and undated Fall of Man from Ottawa (Ill. 17), one of Baldung's most famous works, displays several parallels to the Coburg sheets that were all thoroughly commented on by Hieatt.[73] The most immediate link can be drawn to the serpent, whose chief difference in the panel is its bite into Adam's/Death's arm instead of itself, but otherwise unambiguously echoes the composition and weasel-like shaped head with ear of A26. Hieatt moves on by discussing the Ottawa Eve's torso to be very much in accordance with her mirror-inverted counterpart in A27, emphasising the close proportions of hips, shoulders and waist. He also states that the conical profile breast of the Ottawa Eve proves to be as globed in the panel's underdrawing as A27 Eve's bosom. Despite his important contributions to the connection of the three works, he misses that the Ottawa and A26 Eve additionally share the same feet, albeit in reverse. The last image to be discussed has not been noted as comparative work by other scholars, probably due to its less obvious similarities. It is the panel of *Mary with the Parrot* (Ill. 24), having the inscription BALDUNG / 15 FECIT 33 on the bottom left,[74] that I believe bends Mary's three-quarter view head in a way recalling the A27 Eve. Considered meticulously, both figures share almost all facial features: the same heart-shaped face (although Mary's cheeks appear rounder), straight long nose (note the almost

70 Carrasco, p. 259.

71 Koch, p. 202.

72 Carrasco, p. 262.

73 Hieatt, pp. 292, 293-294, footnote 15. Due to his convincing argumentation, I agree with Hieatt's dating of the panel into the late twenties or early thirties as opposed to the today generally accepted mid-twenties.

74 Karlsruhe, p. 446, Cat. Nr.: 235.

congruent outlines of the two)[75], double chin, high forehead framed by curls which descend into a stream of lush tresses around each figure's right shoulder, the same sensuous mouth with a pronounced lower lip and almond-shaped eyes which fix the observer's gaze mesmerisingly, though Eve looks more from the corner of her eyes. To summarise, all the five images are to be dated into the early 1530s either due to a clear date on the picture surface or to their strong stylistic, formal and compositional relationship. Therefore, I agree with Koch that the originals of the Coburg copies were produced in the first half of the 1530s, although one must consider that Baldung sometimes reverted to older pictures as inspiration regarding composition and figural conception if they proved successful and thus might have been produced at a later state like Térey suggested.

III. Cultural and Historical Context

Despite his original amalgamation of classical and northern traditions and artistic as well as commercial success, Baldung as a person belongs to the medieval artisan world of disinterest in fashioning a self-image that seeks to preserve the character to posterity. Unlike Dürer, who is renowned for zealously staging himself both in several autonomous self-portraits as well as written accounts according to the Italian Renaissance ideal, Baldung leaves no written biographical testimony. No letters or diaries survive that would allow us a glimpse into his psychology. Economic documents such as purchase contracts in real estate or work-related notes on designs form all textual evidence by his own hands that is left. Therefore, biographical methodologies prove highly unreliable for interpreting his works and we should be more inclined to thoroughly study his cultural environment in this regard. One city stands out in Baldung's vita, which hence deserves a diligent look-up, namely the South-West German centre of book production and Reformation movement, Strasbourg. Baldung, a native of the Swabian town of Schwäbisch-Gmünd, seems to have moved with his family to the Alsatian city sometime in the mid-1490s where he might have entered the workshop of a local artisan as apprentice. Between 1503 to 1505, he is generally believed to have moved to Nuremberg, a hub of artistic production and trade in the old Empire around 1500, in order to become journeyman of the then already

75 However, Baldung utilises this linear structure of the nose throughout his career for multiple female figures.

illustrious Dürer.[76] The year 1509 marks an important date in Baldung's curriculum insofar it presents us with the first documented reference of him, an entry in the registration of Strasbourg that attests him having acquired citizenship.[77] After a professionally and commercially acutely prolific intermezzo in Freiburg from 1512 to 1517/18, he remained in the free city for the rest of his life. So what was political and cultural life like in one of the most significant cities of the Holy Roman Empire in an age of religious upheaval?

III. 1. Politics and Economy in 1500 Strasbourg

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the free imperial city of Strasbourg constituted an important centre of trade, craft and commerce due to her location at a connecting route between Italy and the Low Countries nearby the Upper Rhine river. With a population of c. 22,000 and 25 villages in her sphere of control,[78] Strasbourg belonged to the larger of the numerous free cities of the old Empire. Economically marked by the transportation and transshipment of commodities, banking and export of wine and grain,[79] the city's contribution to material culture lay particularly in the sector of stained glass[80] and the rapidly growing market of printing. With regard to the latter, Strasbourg represented the third-highest ranking sixteenth-century German city after Cologne and Nuremberg.[81] The c. 77 printers documented for the period from 1480 to 1599, many of whom were not natives, provided for all different literary genres in a city where a new book-buying clientele arose among the burghers (merchants, artisans and workmen) beside the traditional consumers (clerics, scholars and aristocrats): roughly 40 % of the common townsfolk owned two to five books on average, according to a study by Miriam Usher Chrisman.[82] Although religious publications made up the main target in the first two decades, the market also fulfilled the demand of humanist and classical literature with a total of 337 titles

76 Talbot 1982, p. 22.

77 Karlsruhe, p. 129.

78 Lienhard 1991, p. 5.

79 Brady 1978, p. 97.

80 Karlsruhe, p. 151. Baldung himself not only produced numerous designs, but was likely involved in the creation of the medium itself according to modern scholarship.

81 Chrisman 1982a, p. XXII.

82 Ibid., pp. 69-70.

being printed in the same period.[83] Baldung comprehended the commercial and artistic potential of the new medium from the beginning of his career and produced the impressive number of 387 woodcuts that appeared in 229 publications.[84]

Contrary to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries nationalistic idealisation of the early modern German imperial city as epitome of a democratic republic, the truth of the political nature of Strasbourg was that of an oligarchy in which the six leading noble families of Mülnheim, Sturm, Wurmser, Bock, Zorn and Böcklin occupied the most powerful seats and offices in the government, the city council.[85] Politically influential, yet not domineering, were the twenty guilds as the economic base on which the city's existence relied: they occupied two-thirds of the seats in the city council, one-third being reserved for patricians.[86] Baldung was member of the guild *Zur Steltz* that aside from painters also comprised goldsmiths, glaziers and printers. He managed to climb the social ladder to senator of his guild in the last year of his life.[87] The economic prospects in a thriving city like Strasbourg with many affluent residents facilitated the growing of an art market in which both the traditional commissioners of the clergy and nobility as well as the new cultural bearers of the burghers assiduously engaged. We thus find among Baldung's customers aristocrats and clerics such as the Berckheim family and the bishop of Strasbourg, as well as burghers like the Prechters.[88]

III. 2. The Reformation in Strasbourg

Considered a turning point in Western politics, sociology and religious thought, the Reformation marked a major step in the long-ongoing transforming process from the late Middle Ages to the early modern period. Strasbourg soon became a significant player on the reformers' side in this historical clash based on her strong involvement in the printing industry as a new powerful instrument in spreading ideas as well as her comparably tolerant intellectual and spiritual

83 Ibid., p. 101.

84 Oldenbourg 1962, introduction.

85 Brady, p. 93.

86 Lienhard, p. 6.

87 Brady 1975, p. 307.

88 Ibid., p. 313.

climate. The presence of Luther's writings within Strasbourg's walls began as early as 1518 with the 95 theses being posted at St. Peter.[89] Public interest increased with the publication of *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen* in three editions between 1520 and 1524 alone.[90] In spite of Luther's undeniable pivotal role in the movement, Strasbourg had her own reformatory preachers and theologians with border-overlapping scope: Matthias Zell, Martin Bucer, Caspar Hedio and Wolfgang Capito became the leading clerical figures who did not agree on every subject with the great figurehead Luther or even one another. As in many other German cities, the Reformation in Strasbourg was particularly carried by the middle and lower classes, resulting in a flash of iconoclasm in 1524.[91] The first legal triumphs could be celebrated on 1. December 1523 when the government ordered to preach exclusively the gospels from the pulpit and in spring 1524, Mass and baptism were to be held in German. Traditional social structures experienced drastic re-shaping when clerics started to marry and acquire citizenship while ten of fourteen monasteries and convents were dissolved.[92] In 1529, the city council decided to cease the celebration of the Mass by which the city became officially evangelical.[93] As intolerant as these actions first appear to a modern reader, one ought to take into account the great religious freedom Strasbourg offered to the multiple evangelical sects that flourished in the early days of the Reformation when the movement had not yet institutionalised into an official Church. Fundamentalist Christians, such as the Anabaptists, refused secular authority and traditional sacraments and called for a theocracy. Commonly referred to as 'dissidents' in academia, these sects, whose agendas and beliefs deviated from the religious norm, experienced high persecutions and executions in most parts of the Empire.[94] Remarkably, this was not the case in Strasbourg where the city council proved to be comparably tolerant and ordered only two executions based on religious conviction.[95] Dissidents are verifiable in the Alsatian city as early

89 Schedl 1996, p. 220.

90 Lienhard, p. 6.

91 Schedl, p. 230.

92 Lienhard, p. 8.

93 Ibid., p. 9.

94 Schedl, p. 245.

95 Schade 1983, p. 53.

as 1524[96] and by 1528 they already constituted c. 500 out of the total population.[97] The outstanding free attitude granted by the secular authorities in Strasbourg is best expressed in a statement by humanist and theologian Sebastian Franck who summarised in *Germaniae chronicon* (1528): "Was man anderswo henckt, dz streicht man zu Strazburg mit ruten ausz."[98] Another significant group with groundbreaking beliefs are the so-called 'Epicureans'. The term is used both by historians and contemporaries alike for a class of wealthy bourgeois citizens whose exact religious exegesis and possible political coalition lie hidden under the veil of history. A few surviving sources tell us that some upper-middle class burghers with professions such as scholars, physicians and teachers vehemently opposed the oppressing bias of Martin Bucer who had taken over religious leadership after the synod of 1533. Bucer's fundamentalist advocacy of a theocracy in which the government was to control the citizens' morals and religious everyday life was challenged by the more profanely inclined Epicureans. Highly interested in humanist writings, they demanded freedom of belief for the individual and seem to have rejected the general idea of religious institutionalisation, apparently fearing a resurgent papacy in the new Church.[99]

III. 3. Strasbourg Intelligentsia

Strasbourg's more open-minded attitude towards dissidents finds its intellectual parallel in a circle of several noteworthy German humanists and clerical authors such as Sebastian Brant, Jacob Sturm, Johann Geiler von Kaysersberg and Jacob Wimpfeling, whose writings in German and Latin attest to a flourishing local literary tradition. Wimpfeling even initiated the foundation of a literary association called *Sodalitas litteraria Argentinensis* in 1510 (notable members being Brant, Sturm, but also preacher Hedio) after the model of poet laureate Conrad Celtis,[100] thus

96 Schedl, p. 244.

97 Lienhard 1983, p. 12.

98 Quoted in Lienhard 1991, p. 40. „What is executed somewhere else is scourged in Strasbourg."

99 See Lienhard 1982, pp. 160-181.

100 Söll-Tauchert 2010, p. 86.

testifying to the interest of Strasbourg intellectuals to connect and mould a fertile cultural landscape. One of the literary genres proliferating in Strasbourg around 1500 was that of hymns and poems in praise of the Virgin, which often incorporated classical innuendos in order to celebrate Christianity's hegemony over antique paganism.[101] This example furnishes evidence for the cultural appropriation of the classical heritage by Christian humanist scholars, a method Baldung and many of his peers too employed in the field of the arts. Baldung himself was put into a classicising context by two humanist contemporaries: Toul canon Jean Pélerin called "Hans Grun" an Apelles in a 1521 list of German artists while Schlettstadt author Beatus Rhenanus considered him to be on equal rank with the classical artists, only to be surpassed in his prowess by Dürer.[102] Susanne Schedl identifies the topos of the 'Narr' (fool) with its moralising message as integral to local humanist literary production and refers to Brant's main work *Das Narrenschiff* (1494), one of the most successful and widely circulating books of its time.[103] Another major figure in Strasbourg literature who picked up the fool topic several times was the Franciscan friar Thomas Murner who proved to be one of the most controversial intellectual figures in the city for his blunt rejection of Luther. Two of his deeply cynical and satiric works will be discussed in greater length to illustrate a literary pendant of misogyny to Baldung's female figures.

III. 4. Theological Exegesis

In spite of the secular appearance of the eroticised Fall in sixteenth-century art, one must refrain from interpreting this type as mere pretext to granting respectability to erotica. Considering the high ambiguity many German Renaissance artists demonstrate regarding form and content, we cannot simply put aside the significance of the narrative and leave the purpose of the works with the nineteenth-century notion of 'art for art's sake'. The content of these images still deals with a tale central to Judeo-Christian thought and thus knowledge of the theological discourse of its day

101 Weber am Bach 2006, p. 166.

102 Ibid., p. 176, footnote 840.

103 Schedl, p. 294.

is required in order to make assumptions concerning their function. Gen. 1-3 appears in numerous commentaries by the Church Fathers and scholastics, in the apocryphs as well as profane drama and prose. The relatively short narrative with little detail made allowance for various interpretations on the exact nature and consequences of the protoplasts' transgression. The story aided to explain the natural condition of humankind trapped in a perpetual cycle of suffering and death which (for Christian exegesis) predestined the advent of the Saviour. Furthermore, it delivered legitimation for the socio-political system of inequality such as class division and patriarchy. In the context of this thesis, it is of particular importance to assess the Christian commentators' remarks on sexuality and lust.

III. 4.1. The Early Christian Model

The first critical Christian comments on Adam and Eve already appear in the Bible itself. It is the Apostle Paul who sets the traditional distribution of power between the genders in conjunction with the progenitors. In 1. Cor. 11: 8-9, he states "for the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man", thereby justifying patriarchal hegemony with the chronology of the genesis of man and woman. Paul goes even further and blames responsibility for the Fall on Eve since "Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner" (1 Tim. 2: 14). His verdict on Eve as the original sinner does not, however, fully acquit Adam of guilt. Paul, to be precise, concludes that "[…] just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned" (Rom. 5: 12). Therefore, while Paul's inference that Eve was the one tempted, he did not put her on the same rank as the causer of God's punishment of death, but rather cedes this part to Adam. Importantly, this comment is the first where a hereditary concept of sin is hinted at, something on which Augustine was to elaborate the idea of original sin. Eve's guilt for the Fall quickly established itself among Christian theologians and the second-century Latin Church Father Tertullian surpasses Paul in his spiteful misogynistic language when he writes in *De Cultu Feminarum:*

> Tu es diaboli ianua; tu es arboris illius resignatrix; tu es diuinae legis prima desertrix; tu es quae eum suasisti, quem diabolus aggredi non ualuit; tu imaginem Dei, hominem, tam facile elisisti; propter tuum meritum, id est mortem, etiam filius Dei mori habuit.[104]

One of the first to bring sexuality into the arena of debate was the fourth-century Church Father Ambrose who writes in *De paradiso*:

> "mulier symbolum sensus est nostri, vir mentis. delectatio itaque sensum movet, sensus menti transfundit quam acceperit passionem. delectatio igitur prima est origo peccati […]."[105]

The Milanese bishop concludes in this passage that the genders represent 'ratio et emotio*'* and that Eve as 'emotio*'* must have been naturally prone to succumb to the serpent's deception. Significantly, he identifies pleasure as the main reason for sin. However, this interpretation did not hold sway and most theologians did not regard sexual engagement as the true reason for the Fall, but the violation against God's commandment. So writes Jerome in *Adversus Jovinianum* "ac de Adam quidem et Eva illud dicendum, quod ante offensam in paradiso virgines fuerint: post peccatum autem, et extra paradisum protinus nuptiae."[106] Jerome makes clear that sexuality only began to occur in a postlapsarian world outside Eden. The arguably most influential figure on the subject is Augustine, whose large body of works owes to Paul's exegesis and was to resonate intensely among medieval theologians. Augustine reconstructed Paul's statement from Rom. 5: 12 into the concept of original sin in *De Civitate Dei*, that is every human being is sinful by birth through the progenitors' transgression for

104 Tertullian 2003, 1. 1. "You [woman] are the devil's gateway: you are the unsealer of that (forbidden) tree: you are the first deserter of the divine law: you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of you desert [death] even the Son of God had to die." Trans. same source (modified 16/08/2003).

105 Ambrose 1896, p. 331. "The woman stands for our senses and the man for our minds**.** Pleasure stirs the senses, which, in turn, have their effect on the mind. Pleasure, therefore, is the primary source of sin." Trans. in Miles 1989, p. 92.

106 Jerome 1883, p. 246. "As for Adam and Eve, we must maintain that before the fall they were virgins in Paradise; but after they sinned, and were cast out of Paradise, they were immediately married." Trans. in Pagels 1988, p. 94.

> in primo igitur homine per feminam in progeniem transiturum uniuersum genus humanum fuit, quando illa coniugum copula diuinam sententiam suae damnationis excepit; et quod homo factus est, non cum crearetur, sed cum peccaret et puniretur, hoc genuit, quantum quidem adtinet ad peccati et mortis originem.[107]

Augustine understood the libido part of this inevitable punishment:

> Nam posteaquam praecepti facta transgressio est […] senserunt ergo nouum motum inoboedientis carnis suae, tamquam reciprocam poenam inoboedientiae suae. iam quippe anima libertate in peruersum propria delectata et deo dedignata seruire pristino corporis seruitio destituebatur.[108]

He unambiguously sees sexual lust as a consequence, not precondition, of the Fall. Above all, he classifies it a divine punishment, by which he condemns its very existence as something utterly despicable and malicious that ought to be avoided at all cost. Augustine also deciphers why exactly lust poses such an incomparable threat, since "cum tota plerumque menti cohibenti aduersetur."[109] To the Church Father, lust puts the physics over reason, a distribution of power within the individual's composition he fears will result in losing one's control. It is essential to point out that Augustine and most of his medieval followers,[110] unlike Jerome, drew a sharp line between coitus as an act of biological reproduction divinely ordained from the beginning of time and the libido as sentiment that infiltrates said act as postlapsarian sentence to make people lose control. Augustine's view that sexual lust is an abhorrent, yet integral condition of humanity linked to the Fall was eagerly adopted by many of his medieval Catholic successors and

107 Augustine, 13.3. "the entire human race that was to pass through woman into offspring was contained in the first man when that married couple received the divine sentence condemning them to punishment, and humanity produced what humanity became, not what it was when created, but when, having sinned, it was punished." Trans. in Ibid., pp. 108-109.

108 Ibid., 13,13. "After Adam and Eve disobeyed […] they felt for the first time a movement of disobedience in their flesh, as punishment in kind of their own disobedience to God. The soul, which had taken a perverse delight in its own liberty and disdained to serve God, was now deprived of its original mastery over the body." Ibid., p. 110.

109 Ibid., 14,16. "on the whole it is totally opposed to the mind's control." Trans. in Miles, p. 212, footnote 37.

110 For the scholastics' exegesis on lust as punishment see Köster 1979, esp. p. 116, footnote 16.

eventually taken over by the reformers.[111] It is important to note, however, that it was the protoplasts' hybris to aspire to become like God that constituted the real act of sinning in mainstream theological debate, while lust was primarily deemed a punishment of God.[112]

III. 4.2 Luther and Bucer. Protestant views

In his sermons on Genesis 1 from 1527, Luther gives detailed descriptions on the cause and ramifications of the Fall in which he continues the ambivalent theological attitude as to whom in the couple is to blame. Like many of his medieval predecessors, he makes misogynistic excuses for Eve as the female who naturally lacks the intellectual capacities to thoroughly think through her actions:

> Aber des versahe sie sich nicht, das der teuffel da were, Denn also sagt Paulus Adam war nicht verfuret, das weib aber ward verfuret und hat die ubertrettung eingefurt. Das ist so viel gesagt: Heva war nicht so verstendigals adam, wie auch oben gesagt ist, das Gott mit Adam selbs gerededt hat und ihm ein gebot geben, das er Hevam solt leren, Darumb wil er sprechen: *Adam hats wol gewust und verstanden, Sie aber war einfeltiger und dem listigen Teuffel zu schwach und versahe sichs nicht, Aber Adam versahe sichs wol, der hette wol sollen und kunnen weren, wenn ers het wollen thuen*.[113]

Adam's guilt weighs more as he is the only one to bear full reason, which Luther reiterates a few pages later:

111 Due to the prescribed length of the thesis, I cannot give a profound analysis of the medieval conventional exegesis, yet would like to point to Köster for further information. Very briefly summarised, the main representatives of scholasticism such as Thomas Aquinas, Hugo of St. Victor or Bonaventura incorporated the major features of the Augustinian model without radical alterations.

112 Köster, pp. 104, 107.

113 Luther 2004, pp. 83-84."But she was not aware that the devil was there. For Paul says "Adam was not seduced but rather the woman, and she introduced sin." This is as much as to say that Eve was not as intelligent as Adam… that God spoke with Adam himself and ordered him to teach Eve. For that reason, he intends to say that Adam well knew and understood, but she was simpler and too weak for the crafty devil and was not aware of him. But Adam was well aware; he should and could have defended himself if he had wanted to." Trans. Karant-Nunn/Wiesner-Hanks 2003, p. 20. Emphasis added.

> Aber das er auch ubertrit, macht die sunde zumal schwer und greulich, *Sie war eine nerrin leicht zu verfuren, wusts nicht anders, Er aber hatte Gottes wort fur ihm, das wuste er wol und solt sie gestraffet haben*, so stehte er da, sihet zu und isset auch […].[114]

Luther states that Adam must have been fully aware of the negative outcome in stark contrast to Eve who was not yet created at the point God uttered the prohibition to try the fruit. Luther's traditional exegesis of the Fall based on the Augustinian model is also evident regarding the matter of sexual lust:

> Da war nu unmueglich zu weren allen gliedmassen, die sie hatten, noch der boesen Lust zu steuern, *Sie sahen sich behde an mit boeser Lust und unkeuschen begirden, als sie nacket waren, wilche ihn zuvor unbekand waren*: Sie waren abgefallen und Gotte ungehorsam worden, da ward hernach auch alles ungehorsam was am leibe war, das sie es nicht zemen kunden widder gedancken noch geliedmas. Das ist nu an uns geerbet und bleibet noch also: wie sie gewesen sind, so sind alle ihre kinder […]. [115]

Not only does Luther regard lust an atrocious consequence of Adam and Eve's wrongdoing, but puts it on par with the penalty of death, namely being inherent to every human being. This was to have a pivotal impact on the high revaluation Protestant reformers gave to the state of marriage, which they propagated every man and woman should engage in. Here comes remarkably a new solution the reformers offered to stem the existence of lust: in stern opposition to their Catholic predecessors/peers, they acknowledged that sexual lust is a natural 'need' (or divine punishment, from their perspective) so visceral that no virginal dedication to God alone in religious service could ever truly canalise it.[116] Rather, they advocated marriage as the only acceptable

114 Ibid., pp. 89-90. "But because he also transgresses, he makes the sin all the heavier and more gruesome. She was a fool, easy to lead astray, did not know any better. But he had God's word before him." Trans. Ibid. Emphasis added.

115 Ibid., p. 90. "They regarded each other with evil lust and unchaste desires, for they were naked**,** which had been unknown to them before. They had fallen away and become disobedient to God. After this they practiced all the disobedience that was in their bodies, and they could not tame either their thoughts or their members. We have inherited this, and it remains in us: just as they were, so are all their children.", Ibid., p. 21. Emphasis added.

116 Wunder 1993, p. 22.

arrangement in which man and woman can live out this otherwise uncontrollable desire. Luther exemplifies:

> Derhalben wo leute sind im glauben, die schicken sich recht darein und tragen diese last gerne, nemen weiber, erbeten und und lassens ihn fawer werden, *Es ist wol nicht ein fein ding nach dem fleisch, aber ein guter stand nach der seele.* [117]

Martin Bucer as leading preacher of Strasbourg is of particular interest for our study. Unlike Luther, Bucer did not dedicate a detailed analysis to the Fall of Man, but rather made short remarks that are very much in accordance with the tradition. In *Das Wormser Buch* (1540/41), he affirms his belief in original sin and death as divine punishments as „[...] sie durch den Adam jnn alle seine nachkomen durchtrungen und hatt geregniert zum todt.“[118] In this passage, he only mentions Adam as causer of these penalties. In his treatise against Anabaptist leader Melchior Hoffmann (1533), he does however assign blame on Eve:

> Nun hat ihr Gott gesagt, der todt were an dem baum [...] Nun aber vergaffet sich das weyb an dem baum und an dem falsch auffgeredten gut, das sie solten werden wie gotter[...]damit liessen sie Gott und sein wort auß der achtung und greyffen zur verbottenen frucht.[119]

Similar to Luther’s Lectures on Genesis, Bucer demonstrates his belief that Eve received the word of prohibition directly from God and is thus to be held accountable for her actions. At the same time, Bucer stresses the mutual picking of the fruit. His incorporation of the Augustinian tradition of lust as divine punishment is made clear in a legal report he wrote on the value of

117 Same as footnotes 123-125, p. 103.“On that account, where people stand in faith, they send themselves right in [marriage] and bear this burden gladly – they take wives, labor and let their lives be painful. It is not a fine thing in fleshly terms, but it is a good estate in spiritual ones.”, Trans. same as footnotes 123-125, p. 24. Emphasis added.

118 Bucer 1995, Vol. 9/1, p. 346. “[…] she [original sin] has infiltrated through Adam all his descendants and generated death.” I owe particular acknowledgment to Marc Lienhard for pointing out Bucer’s writings dealing with the protoplasts.

119 Bucer 1978, Vol. 5, p. 76. “So God told her that death was in the tree […] Woman now is smitten with the tree and the false words that they shall be like gods […] so they disregarded God and his words and grab the forbidden fruit.”

marriage for the city council of Ulm in 1533: „Andere sagen, ietz seye ein boser lust darbey, der aber im paradys nit ware [...] Es ist leyder vom fall Adams im menschen ein soliche mißordnung der begirden unnd lüsten kommen […].“[120] Entirely absorbed with the Protestant reformatory idea that marriage is the only way to enclose the maliciousness of carnal lust, he proceeds: „Da zu will der geyst Gottes eben drumb, das ieder sein eygenn weib, iede iren eigen man habe, das leyder ein soliche mißordnung der begyrden unnd lusten inn unns ist.“[121] To summarise, the examples of Bucer and Luther have shown that the Protestant point of view did not differ massively from their Catholic forebears. Both groups portray sexual lust as part of the punishment God wreaked upon humanity in accordance with Augustine's exegesis. They also agree in identifying the transgression as the true act of sinning and struggle to cast a clear verdict concerning the culprit. Even though Eve's role as temptress and initiator is incessantly stressed, Adam's part of the wrongdoing is not excused but tends to be emphasised with regard to the penalty of death. Most theologians also agree he should have known better compared to an innocently naïve Eve. However, a major difference between Protestant and Catholic interpretation that affected social life vehemently is the practical handling of sexual lust. For the Protestants, its existence presented a divine punishment so deeply ingrained in each individual that its erasure from everyday life through the Catholic celibate embrace of virginity was viewed impossible, if not ludicrous. As Bucer's and Luther's quotes have demonstrated, marriage posed the sole Protestant model to solve the issue of animalistic desire, thereby destroying spaces in which women previously (and in the Catholic world still) could wield independence from patriarchy to a certain extent such as convents or lay sisterhoods like the Beguines.

120 Bucer 2001, Vol. 10, p. 200. “Some say there is an evil lust to it which had not existed in Paradise […] Disorder of desires and lust has sadly come to mankind because of Adam's Fall.”

121 Ibid., p. 201. “Therefore the spirit of God wants for everyone his own wife and her own husband, since there is such disorder of desires and lust in us.”

IV. The Sexualisation of early modern imagery

IV. 1. Defining the terminology

Core of my study is the sexuality outrightly exposed in A27 and potentially alluded to in A26 that requires a profound analysis of the sexual realities and morals of the time as well as their artistic and literary representation. Before I dive into the history and sociology of late medieval and Renaissance sexual culture, setting the matter of terminology is essential since modern society often uses the words 'erotic', 'sexual' and 'pornographic' interchangeably. Interlinked and not clearly separable as these expressions certainly are, they do bear distinctions that without would make their very existence invalid. The Oxford Online Dictionary supplies the following definitions: 'erotic' is classified as "showing or involving sexual desire and pleasure; intended to make somebody feel sexual desire", 'sexual' is being "connected with the physical activity of sex" and 'pornographic' is "intended to make people feel sexually excited by showing naked people or sexual acts, usually in a way many other people find offensive".[122] 'Erotic' seems to function as an extensible over-category that could encompass the latter two by generally dealing with sexual desire of any kind. 'Sexual' appears as a less vague term that refers explicitly to the act of intercourse without validating its arousing qualities. 'Pornographic', important for a study of visual culture, concerns primarily the representation of naked bodies and sexual acts for the sake to infuse the observer with pleasure and arousal.[123] 'Sexual' seems easily separable with its neutral position regarding the matter of causing desire and pleasure in the viewer, but where do we draw the line between 'erotic' and 'pornographic' that both promise exactly this? 'Pornographic' deliberately aims at the desire and lust of its audience, whereas something (a person, an object, an act) can radiate 'erotic' qualities to someone without actually intending so. The representative idea distinguishes them additionally, for 'pornographic' is limited to that principle (already viewable in 'graphic') as opposed to 'erotic' that could be applied to a real-life person, act or fetishised object.

122 URL: https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com (13/08/2020).

123 The Dictionary's addition of offense to a broad audience is strikingly biased and certainly out of place in any serious approach to the topic in a modern discourse.

One further differentiation is the subject matter the terms address. As clarified above, 'sexual' solely and neutrally deals with sex acts in a representative or non-representative way. 'Erotic' on one hand can, but does not have to include sex acts. For we would immediately refer to a naked or specifically (or non-specifically) dressed person in a specific setting, posture and facial expression as 'erotic' based on subjective perception as to what stirs our lust, although that person in question is not affiliated with any kind of sex act. The same applies to fetishised objects. 'Pornographic', on the other hand, has sexual acts (be it between persons or one person and objects) at its very core, even though the Oxford Online Dictionary speaks of sexual acts *and* naked people, thereby indicating that a mere representation of naked bodies in certain positions and arrangement would already suffice to be called pornographic. I disagree with that definition and would like to point out Lynn Hunt's very conclusive definition that pornography is "the explicit depiction of sexual organs and sexual practices with the aim of arousing sexual feelings".[124] The portrayal of naked people alone as objects of sexual desire hence needs to be classified as erotic, to speak here of pornographic would require some engagement in sex acts. A fourth term belonging to this group is that of 'erotica', which integrates the representative idea of pornography as it deals with "books, pictures, etc. that are intended to make somebody feel sexual desire."[125] It thus can be interpreted as the materialisation of the 'erotic', referring to objects with content that aims at sexual pleasure, yet is not restricted to sexual practices like pornography. Even though the terms are modern in their meaning (our understanding of 'sex' as intercourse has only been in use in English since the mid-eigtheenth century)[126], I rank their usage for historical artefacts as valid since the pre-modern vocabulary with expressions such as the Latin'actum venerum' or 'carnalia facta' or the English 'feeling privities' or 'carnality'[127] seem unfit when arguing from a twenty-first-century perspective. The question of if deliberate arousal is the main aim of images becomes particularly relevant when assessing those that depict an act of sexuality or bear a sense of eroticism, yet are religious in subject matter like the Coburg drawings. The strong ambiguity of sexually charged religious and mythological imagery in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries respectively has been the centre of a heated ongoing

124 Hunt 2007, pp. 355-356.

125 Same as footnote 132.

126 The first record of the word 'sex' in English appears in the late fourteenth century and exclusively addresses the biological differentiation between male and female, see Phillips/Reay 2011, p. 13.

127 For a detailed list of medieval Latin and early modern English expressions for sex see Ibid., p. 14.

debate in the art historical world, oscillating between judgements of educating the viewer on the devastating outcomes of lustful indulgence and taking advantage of the motif in order to make pleasurable sexuality representable. I wish to contribute to this controversy with my thesis without the (in my opinion impossible) aspiration to find an unequivocal solution.
After setting the linguistic ground, we need to resolve with which term we are going to address the Coburg drawings primarily and what academic context we thereby create. Erotica might appear as the most plausible guiding term, for it is the general description for images and texts that have a sexual or erotic content with the aim to arouse the consumer. A27 fulfils this precondition to a certain degree given the sex act and particularly Eve's salacious glance at the observer. Erotica, to remind us, includes subjects that display erotic content, but not necessarily sexual components. In the field of the arts, this is particularly applicable to the motif of the (mostly female) nude whose popularity reached an unprecedented level in the times of Baldung. However, I would like to draw the line much tighter and put focus on images which have a sex act, be it explicitly or hinted at through visual disguise, as part of their pictorial agenda since it is the remarkable display of manual penetration that attracts modern (and questionably contemporary) audiences the most in A27. As the preceding paragraph declares, it is impossible to draw a sharp line between 'erotic' and 'sexual' for it depends on the subjective perception of the beholder as to what object or moment fits these categories: a modern Western viewer with liberal attitudes marked by their own highly sexualised visual and material culture would possibly rate the depiction of a single nude figure like Giorgione's *Sleeping Venus* as erotic at the most. They would presumably first miss details such as the hand resting on Venus's vulva that their contemporary counterpart debatedly would have interpreted as alluding to masturbation or (in the case of a male observer more likely) an invitation to please the sitter sexually, thus making the painting fit to be addressed as sexual. On the other hand, a modern viewer with conservative ethics would maybe condemn the same picture as sexualised for exactly these reasons, thereby reiterating the clerical moralists of the painting's own time who tended to curse the rendition of the naked sensuous body. I therefore would like to point out that the erotic and the sexual always touch one another and some of the images I will discuss might divide readers concerning the display of sexuality. What can be agreed on is that both erotic and sexual, cut short, deal with the sexuality of the individual. If one is to tie the differentiation really close, one can arguably simplify erotic as the *allusion* to sex acts without actually representing them (as in

the *Sleeping Venus* or A26) versus sexual as the *explicit visualistion* of sex acts (as in A27). I seek to concentrate on sexual works rather than providing an overall development of erotica with its inclusion of the nude or love couples.[128] As already stressed, I strongly emphasise that none of these subjects and terms are unequivocally separable from one another as they all refer to human sexuality in all its many-sided forms and thus will cross in the course of this thesis. A brief look at medieval sexual art shall illustrate a potential tradition of which Baldung could have been informed by. Geographical focus will be the areas north of the Alps with Italian examples only used as comparisons.

IV. 2. A brief history of sexual imagery in the Middle Ages

The Romans' affinity for a rich and varied sexual material culture ranged from objects as diverse as the renowned Pompeii frescoes featuring couples engaging delightedly in coitus, orgiastically charged literature such as Petronius's satirical novel *Satyricon*, and small genital cult objects. This tradition did not go extinct with the demise of paganism, but rather experienced a transformation in the succeeding medieval Christian realms with a new subject matter as result. Well transmitted to us is the courtly culture of the high and late Middle Ages characterised by the overarching virtue of chivalry. In a varied set of secular literature ranging from epics to troubadour poetry and pastourelles, the aristocratic elite idealised a love codex between an unmarried damsel and her obedient knight. This glorified image of outer-matrimonial relations among the ruling class was far from the sexual morals the Church stipulated. These tales were virtually predestined to generate a profane iconography of visual erotica that was distanced from religiously motivated reprimand. From the final quarter of the twelve century onwards,[129] courtly works of art began to steadily translate the prosperous literary tradition into a wide transmedial set ranging from manuscript illuminations, murals, ivory carving, tapestries to miniature painting. Popular north and south of the Alps, these images envision either single couples or

128 Most research on medieval and early modern sexuality comes from historians rather than art historians. Those art historians who deal with the subject have the tendency to comprise sex acts in general studies on medieval erotica. They carve out the development of love subjects from the courtly sphere to the desirable nude and eventually the imagination of sex practices. See for instance Michael Camille, The Medieval Art of Love. Objects and Subjects of Desire, London 1998; Martha Easton, Was It Good For You Too? Medieval Erotic Art and Its Audience, URL: differentvisions.org 2008; Doris Guth/Elisabeth Priedl (eds.), Bilder der Liebe. Liebe, Begehren und Geschlechterverhältnisse in der Kunst der frühen Neuzeit, Bielefeld 2012.

129 Camille 2000, pp. 10-11.

group gatherings in the outsides and bath houses[130] in which the figures engage in acts of leisure as varied as carousing, eating, promenading, dancing, playing games or music. Though most of the objects avoid graphic display of sexual acts, they allude (thus the use of the category erotic) to them evident in the figures' flirtatious demeanour of exchanging lecherous gazes, kissing, embracing and touching each other.[131] A strong sense of sensuality persists the pictorial conception particularly with regard to the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century works, making the production for erotic consumption highly likely.[132] Added to the genre of erotica was the sensuous (female) worldly nude as autonomous subject that contrary to popular modern opinion did not evolve with the Italian Renaissance, but already looked back to a history in the North prior to 1400.[133] But objects of desire and love aside, how exactly did medieval society envision the act of copulation?

We find a number of manuscript illuminations that illustrate the amorous encounters of the characters of the medieval romances as early as the early thirteenth century.[134] They sometimes, though not preponderantly, make the sex act centre of the proceedings. The lovers usually appear in bed with the man on top of the woman, avoiding any other position than missionary.[135] Contrary to the classical proclivity for complete nudity, the couples in most medieval manuscripts are covered up to the hips or shoulders by a duvet, concealing the genitals and sexual doing from the beholder's eye (Ill. 25). We must refrain from assuming that the representation of love-making couples ends at fiction, for a number of medical and jurisdictional manuals equally deal with the affair. An appearance here only makes sense given the content of

130 Bathing, be it in the literary pretext of the legendary fountain of youth or the real-life late medieval custom of public bath houses, enjoyed a particular favour among artists to exhibit erotic moments. Famous examples are the Codex Manesse (c. 1300-1340) or the Wenzel Bible (c. 1390-1400) in which noble men are served by flirtatious bathing maids.

131 Notably, some of the leisure activities in question such as drinking and eating were culturally associated as prerequisites of love-making.

132 Hammer-Tugendhat stresses the main purpose of these objects to evoke desire as opposed to earlier art historical interpretation as allegorical or symbolic, p. 90.

133 The female nude as isolated figure is retrievable in small objects such as clay reliefs, cloth or play cards of which only a few are extant, Nuttall 2012, p. 299.; Wolfthal 2018, pp. 81-83.

134 Camille, p. 19.

135 The Romans, contrarily, embraced a full set of different sexual positions as is affirmed e.g. by the Pompeij frescoes or Ovid's *Ars amatoria.*

medical advice for procreation or legal actions in sexual matters. From a formal point of view, they subscribe to the same compositional scheme from the romance (Ill. 26).

Only a few manuscripts have come down to us that go beyond the scope of the rather discreet handling of coitus. In a Franconian astrological treatise from c. 1445, one couple lies on the grass, completely naked with their bodies tightly wound and gazes fixed at each other (Ill. 27). In accordance with the illuminated romances, the man is on top, reflecting his social position as the woman's supreme.[136] Striking is the allowance to represent the woman's genitals through strong pubic hair and mons pubis. This illumination takes the visualisation of intercourse a step further than the semi-covered couples and attests that a more bodily depiction of coitus was possible. However, it must be stressed that the surviving material testifies for the domination of the covered prototype, indicating its more accepted appropriateness.

Manuscript illumination appears as the ideal medium for taboo subjects as it is only accessible to a small group of people and easily hidden away in a spacious shelf from the examining eye of the authorities. We must not be mistaken, however, to assume that the subject matter of sexual practices was strictly limited to the gaze of a few privileged men behind closed doors. Mural painting transfers the theme to the more public space of interior decoration. In the Vienna residence of merchant Michel Menschein (c. 1400), eight murals adorn the main hall and depict leisure activities of secular couples inspired by poems by Neidhart von Reuental (early 13th century). The third scene *Spiegelraub* ("theft of the mirror") exhibits a man grabbing a woman by leg and arm, pushing her to the ground and lifting her skirt in order to penetrate her (Ill. 28).[137] It echoes the missionary position from the illuminations. What makes the image especially revealing is its presence in the most representative room of the house that was used for festivities.[138] Here, it could be seen by family members as well as servants and guests. The mural's presumed uniqueness must be challenged when considering that most medieval interiors have fallen victim to later demolition or stylistic remodelling, thus making a more frequent portrayal of similar subjects in other patrician houses or aristocratic palaces at the time at least

136 In fact, the medieval official moral codex designated the missionary position with the man on top as the only acceptable one, condemning any other as unnatural. See Karras 2005, p. 83. The tension between the sexual regulations prescribed by the authorities (both secular and clerical) and the social realities will be evaluated more deeply in the following sub-chapters.

137 The weathered condition allows no judgment on the woman's consent.

138 Höhle 1982, p. 17.

conceivable.[139] From a sociological point of view, the mural demonstrates the commissioning of sexualised objects not to be restricted to the nobility once the burghers had risen as new powerful class. The exhibition in a room accessible to a broader audience did effect the degree of graphicness as the couple is portrayed dressed unlike Ill. 27 (no hint at the genitals is given either), confirming the need for decorum in a more public artwork.

So far the listed examples have proven that sex acts were no unique specimen in medieval secular art, but circulated across different media in which they illustrate literary (be it fictional or non-fictional) models. Most of the extant works are to be found in the private medium of manuscript illumination, suggesting the theme's controversy for public display. We can figure out the convention to centralise the missionary position with the man on top, evidently in order to reflect the power structures of the genders and their socially prescribed sexual roles for real-life. An unwillingness for detailed portrayal of genital penetration so shamelessly illustrated in A27 prevails the visual vocabulary. Consequently, a blunt representation of naked bodies committed to sexual practices including a direct look at genitals so common in our era seems to have been impossible for medieval standards. Given their identity as works produced for the secular estates[140], it is doubtful to read them exclusively as moralising instruction. Unfortunately insoluble is the question of erotic appeal to contemporaries due to a virtual non-existence of sources,[141] but since these images form the sexual visuals of their time, arousing qualities and intentions are not to be ruled out.

There is another group of objects in the Middle Ages that feature sexuality as main content, yet whose purpose and rendition set them clearly apart from erotica, making a separate scholarly assessment necessary. Theirs is a grotesque and macabre carnival of salacious upheaval: ass-showing peasants on choir stable reliefs, humongous vulva-stretching sheela-na-gigs above church portals, penis-picking nuns in the margins of manuscripts or horse-riding vulva pilgrim

139 The Neidhart murals only came to light under layers of overpaint due to reasons of refurbishment in 1979. See Ibid., p. 5. Another surviving example is the fresco of the fountain of youth in the Sala Baronale at the Castello della Manta (c. 1420). Though clear sexual acts are not visualised, two couples' close embrace, leering gazes and kissing suggest that an encounter of this kind is to follow. As residence of the markgraves of Saluzzo, the fresco speaks for the consumption of sexually charged imagery by a courtly clientele in a more public sphere reminiscent of the Neidhart murals.

140 Of course we cannot exclude the probability of clerics owning such works, yet their more common circulation among the nobility and upper burghers seems more plausible considering their worldly subject matter.

141 To my knowledge, the first sources proving the sensuous qualities of artworks appear in the mid-fifteenth century and will be dissected later.

badges. The bizarreness and burlesque humour contradicts arousing purposes, especially when compared to the previous pictures. Instead, their function was to warn of the ruining outcomes of bawdy behaviour and unbridled desires bearing in mind the ecclesiastical location.[142] We do not know, however, if contemporaries would have reacted predominantly appalled or admonished. What might merely evoke laughter or disgust in the upper classes, who were familiar with more refined imagery, could have appealed to the peasantry and labourers to whom these crude objects presented the only known accessible sexual materials. These images drastically metamorphose the sensuous conception of sexuality into a wild satire that derides the animalistic instincts visceral in postlapsian humanity.

Conclusively, the continuing production of sexualised imagery in a cross-range of media proves the modern stereotype of a world-denying medieval society solely orientated to spiritual matters wrong. The diversity in subject matter and media rather speak for the societal need to tackle the issue of sexuality in materialised form and lead Kim M. Phillips and Barry Reay to question whether we can speak of a public culture of sex in premodern Europe.[143] What can be reasoned is that Baldung's regiment of bawdy temptresses and provocative rakes could draw from a rich tradition of sexual material culture.

IV. 3. The Coburg drawings and Erotica in the early sixteenth century

The fifteenth century's growing demand for pictures was unsurprisingly echoed in an increasing production of sexualised works that also affected subject matter and pictorial conception. Importantly, the missionary position as the main pictorial type to make sex acts representable slowly took its leave from artists' agenda and was gradually replaced by more insinuating models that focused on flirtatious behaviour and foreplay rather than actual copulation. The hitherto figural focus of erotica had been preponderantly on both genders' more or less equal doing in their amorous affairs as the examples from the previous chapter have demonstrated. This shifted conspicuously during the course of the fifteenth century towards an unprecedented interest in woman as the object of desire as well as projected body of masculine anxieties which Hammer-

142 Phillips/Reay, p. 118.

143 Ibid., p. 132.

Tugendhat described as the "Auszug des männlichen Protagonisten aus dem erotischen Bild."[144] Although the exact weight of her statement has been challenged,[145] it is undeniable that woman became artists' main vessel when envisioning ideas of sexuality around 1500.

While the Italians re-imagined the classical nude in mythological personae such as Venus to celebrate the grandeur of the human body owed to God's all-powerful creation[146] as aesthetic experience, Baldung and his generation in Germany widened the canon by continuously staging the female as menacing seductress who causes man to lose reason and thus social and political hegemony. They adjusted the narratives of biblical, mythological and otherwise literary characters such as Bathseba, Omphale or Phyllis, all addressing sexual themes of seduction and rape, in order to embody the contemporary patriarchal notion of the insidious woman who cunningly uses her physical resources and charm to beguile man only with the intention to ruin him.[147] Even figures who initially personified virtues and heroic deeds such as Judith as rescuer of her city were deliberately transformed into the very opposite of female vice triumphing over man to serve patriarchal propaganda.[148] Woman as the pervading symbol of male angst proved a very popular theme in late medieval and early modern northern art and literature, to which academia commonly refers to as the topos of the 'power of women'.[149] This degradation is shortly but concisely expressed in chapter 50 of Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* (1494)[150] in which the author equalises the very being of woman with sexual desire: "Wollust der welt, die glychet sich eym üppigen wib"[151].

144 Hammer-Tugendhat 1994, p. 401. "The exodus of the male protagonist from the erotic image."

145 Marianne Koos points to the idealised images of sensuous patricians and shepherds in early sixteenth-century Venetian portraiture and genre painting that speak for a subtle continuation of the eroticised figure of the man. See Bildnisse des Begehrens. Das lyrische Männerporträt in der venezianischen Malerei des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts, Berlin/Emsdetten 2006.

146 The idea of the human body as the 'imago dei' pervades Renaissance discourses, especially with regard to the protoplasts' identity as prelapsarian humans. See Schoen, p. 66.

147 We find artistic representations in almost all fields from panel painting, small-scale sculpture, wood-carving, drawing to the new medium of printing, reflecting the commercial success of the theme.

148 See for instance Sebald Beham's prints of a naked sensuous Judith peering at Holofernes's severed head.

149 See for instance Susan Louise Smith, The power of women. A topos in medieval art and literature, Philadelphia 1995.

150 On Brant's impact on the literary treatment of the fool see Schedl, pp. 294-295.

151 Brant 1854, p. 53. "Voluptuousness of the world resembles an opulent woman."

IV. 3.1. The cultural and historical image of the lustful female

The German Renaissance's misogynist portrayal of woman as the malicious and dangerous seductress roots in the medieval patriarchal belief of women's nature to be fundamentally sensual in contrast to men who were fabricated as the reasoned gender.[152] This was partially informed by the theological interpretation of Eve as naturally of weaker will than Adam. High and late medieval secular literature constructed the image of the forever lustful female whose cravings instigate troubles such as adultery and clerical concubinage in comic poetry and prose such as the French fabliaux or the *Decameron* and *Canterbury Tales*, which were addressed to an aristocratic and/or bourgeois readership.[153] A significant indicator of women's continuous degradation as libidinous beings posing severe threats to male hegemony was the rise of the witch hunts that slowly commenced at the end of the fourteenth century and reached first peaks around 1500. The highly sexualised figure of the witch was imagined as a succubus-like creature who indulges uninhibitedly in orgies with demons and the Devil and steals men's members. Inquisitor Heinrich Kramer well expresses the growing hostility towards female sexuality in his powerful witch treatise *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487) that states that "omnia per carnalem concupiscentiam, quae quia in eis est insatiabilis."[154] Baldung himself became a pioneer of the visualised version of the witch that stages nakedness and unconstrained handling of her own sexuality as main features.[155]

It needs to be stressed that Baldung lived in changing times regarding gender relations in which patriarchal power structures experienced increasing consolidation at the expense of women's hitherto freedoms. Modern historical scholarship commonly agrees that the Reformation and foregoing decades marked a turning point in Western society of women's social subordination. They were steadily pushed into the unifying role of the wife whose duties were to remain exclusively with the domestics. The Protestant position thereby eradicated any space that previously had granted women certain levels of autonomy from male intervention such as

152 Roper 1991, p. 326.

153 Burghartz 1991, p. 128.

154 Kramer 1580, p. 95. "All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable."

155 Four drawings, two woodcuts and one panel painting from 1510 to 1544 can be attributed to his hands.

convents, lay confraternities like the Beguines, widowhood and labour.[156] Even concessions to women's education in newly found public schools were basically preparations to obedient wifehood.[157] The representation of female triumph over men through sexual cunning thus becomes a materialised extension of contemporary patriarchal fears of female supremacy.

IV. 3.2. Eve and the power of women

Baldung's oeuvre makes a rich pool of those female characters who ought to stir the male viewer's senses as well as conscience and preoccupied the artist from the very beginning (a drawing as early as 1503 depicts Phyllis's mischievous ride on Aristotle (Ill. 29)) to the end of his career. They arguably constitute the most deep-seated image of his work in public collective memory and range from witches, biblical (anti?) heroines, prostitutes, maidens chased by Death to the primordial mother of them all: Eve. But why is the mother of mankind to be found among villainous seductresses? As examined in Chapter III., the theological discourse generally identified Eve as main culprit in the Fall and stressed her role as Adam's temptress. Therefore, it was only natural that secular society would internalise this misogynist reading of the first woman. What differentiated secular and ecclesiastical understanding of the transgressing act of trying the forbidden fruit, however, was the former's interest in the genders' awakened libido. While the Church (both Catholic and Protestant) regarded this matter as comparably subordinate in their exegesis, profane literary and artistic production testify for early modern secular society's notion that the protoplasts' temptation was heavily interlinked to bodily pleasure. As briefly sketched in Chapter I. 2., Baldung's vision of the Fall of Man was less concerned with the linear course of the narrative, but its significance for humanity's innate sexual drive and sensation of lust. None of his renditions proves the sexual theme as more central to his comprehension of the biblical tale than A27, which surpasses the hazardous eroticism of his other pictures to a drastically overt representation of lustful genital penetration. And he certainly was not the only one to translate the Fall as a sexual event as numerous objects by early sixteenth-century northern artists confirm: aside from multiple paintings and drawings by Jan Gossaert and

156 Wiesner 1989, esp. pp. 10-15.

157 The first girls' school in Strasbourg was founded in 1524. Subsequently each district received an own girls' school. See Heitz-Muller 2014, p. 208.

Cranach the Elder,[158] small-scale objects such as a 1514 limestone relief by Ludwig Krug (Ill. 30) and a c. 1525 wooden relief by the monogramist IP (Ill. 31) prove the subject's transmedial suitability and popularity. The rise of erotica at the beginning of the sixteenth century affirms the need to materially articulate society's concerns with sexuality and what other figures would be more convenient to tackle the very origin of lust than the causers themselves? As the initiator of humanity's demise, Eve specifically presented the ideal persona to visualise the malign outcomes of female seduction. While Dürer, and partially Cranach, translated the relatively harmless late medieval theme of the love couple onto the progenitors who inhabit Eden harmoniously, Baldung's lascivious Eves and satyresque Adams make clear that no innocence lies in post- (or even pre-?) lapsarian humanity.

So how do the Coburg drawings respond to the idea of the perfidious female presiding over male reason? At first glance, A26 appears as an emotionally neutral handling of the progenitors' relationship, since no immediate bodily touch occurs. Nor do the cast-down gazes convey a sense of amorous delight. Rather, Baldung centralises the long-established iconographic move of the exchange of the fruit, which identifies the transgression against God's commandment as the reason for the downfall of humanity. Eve's spread legs are the only debatable sexual innuendo of her deliberately showing her genitals to her partner, a theory to which Bark subscribes[159]. Yet this interpretation forms only one solution and has no claim to certainty[160] as one could easily argue Adam to examine the fruit without interest in his partner's bodily presentation. The direction of his gaze is not clearly identifiable based on the almost shut lids. Eve's own facial expression additionally does not go beyond a vague smile, far remote from the frivolous grin of Baldung's previous representations of the first woman. The sexual weight of this drawing would therefore end abruptly if it was not for the incorporation of the self-biting serpent that forms part of a special canon of sexual metaphors. However, I would like to comment on this element more profoundly in its own sub-chapter, as for now I am concerned with Eve's role in the power of women topos for which A26 proves invalid. Baldung certainly makes amends in A27 in which he unmistakably stages Eve as victorious temptress. Even though Adam is rendered as penetrator

158 Bark provides a full list of Baldung's, Dürer's, Gossaert's and Cranach's erotic renditions of the Fall at the end of her publication.

159 Bark, p. 58.

160 Carrasco sees here a love couple in concord, p. 266.

and thus active part in the bodily doing of sexual practice, his almost shut lids depict him fully immersed in this matter and thus unconscious of the beholder. Eve's challenging gaze, on the other hand, makes no doubt who is in charge: from the corner of her semi-closed eyes, she transfixes the viewer with mischievous delight and enticingly draws her left eyebrow by which she draws him into the image's happenings. It is the same leering smile by which the Ottawa and Budapest Eves conquer their Adams and the 1511 woodcut Eve her viewer respectively. This knowing smile makes clear Adam is not the instigator of the sexual encounter in A27, but Eve who joyously makes him stimulate her. By using her body, which she uninhibitedly exhibits to the viewer as weapon to attract, she manages to take over control and thus becomes the "erste Exempel der Weiberlist"[161]. That sexual action is the visual core of the picture needs no further comment, but Bodo Brinkmann's interpretation that the approximate same height of Eve's penetrated vulva with the fruit she holds equalises the act of transgression with the sexual doing of the couple[162] immensely intensifies the debate about whether original sin was understood sexually. A look at the appropriation of Gen.3 in Renaissance German profane literature is indispensable when seeking for contemporary popular perceptions of the progenitors.

IV. 3.3. The protoplasts' representation in German Renaissance secular literature

Adam's role as the sensuously tempted one had been dealt with in profane poetry since the fourteenth century where he appears as the first slave of minne in works by poets like Oswald von Wolkenstein.[163] The tale of Adam and Eve became a sub-topic in fool's literature, a satirical and moralising genre extremely popular in 1500 Germany, in which Adam takes on the persona of the fool for falling for Eve's temptation. A return to the overshadowing figure of the genre, Sebastian Brant and his powerfully influential *Narrenschiff,* thus seems plausible, especially when considering that it flourished in Strasbourg, experiencing three German and two Latin editions between 1494 and 1512 alone[164]. Brant unequivocally stages Eve as culprit who is responsible for Adam's downfall since "Adam wer nit der gnaden beroubt, hett er nit bald der

161 Ibid., p. 79.

162 Brinkmann, p. 160.

163 Carrasco, p. 78. "The first example of the power of women."

164 Kristeller 1888, p. 159. The author provides a general list of works published in late fifteenth- to early sixteenth-century Strasbourg on pp. 158-172.

frowen gloubt“[165]. Though not mentioning sexual seduction, Eve’s persuasiveness is disclosed as reason for humanity losing divine mercy by which Brant is in accordance with the theological exegesis. Another representative of the fool’s genre mentioned in III. 3., Thomas Murner, appears equally important as literary comparative example in a study on Baldung since he too resided most of his life in Strasbourg where he became a key figure in the city’s literary landscape in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.[166] Among his 70 works are several satires which, in Brant’s tradition of the fool, scoffingly attack his contemporaries’ low morals and specifically ridicule effeminate men patronised by dominant women.[167] *Die Mühle von Schwindelheim und Gredt Müllerin Jahrzeit* (1515) deals with a miller’s beautiful wife who unscrupulously entices all men of the village. In Chapter II, Murner expands on Brant’s rather short verdict and gives a detailed explanatory statement why Eve provoked the Fall:

Denn Eva war das erste rypp,
das solche grosse hochfart trypp,
Da durch sie uns und selber sich
In kummer stiesse iemerlich,
Do sie den appfel anesach,
so bald der tüffel zu ir sprach:
Eßt ir den apffel mit geferden,
so werdent ir als gotter werden,
Wyssen boß und auch das gut.
Do fiel das wib in ubermut,
als ein hoffertigs rippli thut,
Und fieng an gotlich art begeren
Und meynt, wenn sie auch gotter weren!
Auch understundt sich got zu glichen:
Doch gott zu werden nympt vil kichen.
Eva hat ein somen gseyet,
den man noch yetz uff erden meyet.[168]

165 Brant, p. 97. „Adam would not have been dispossessed from mercy if he had not believed women.”

166 Chrisman, p. 104.

167 Murner 1931, pp. XII-XV.

168 Murner 1923, pp. 14-15. “For Eve was the first rib [Murner uses rib as metaphor for woman as Eve was created of Adam’s rib, p. 161] /who did such great haughtiness/for through herself she cast us and herself into miserable grief/when she beheld the apple/the Devil spoke to her as such:/if you eat the apple with your partner/you will become like gods/and know everything/so the woman became cocky/as a haughty rib does/and commenced to desire divine power/and thought of them being gods/and dared to resemble God/Eve has sown a seed/which one still mows on earth today.”

Murner names Adam not a single time and assigns full blame on Eve, whose female haughtiness (and thus assumed female feeble spirit) is identified as reason why the Devil chose her over Adam as manipulative tool. This work by Murner proved neither popular nor widespread.[169] Yet it confirms even stronger than Brant's *Narrenschiff* the early modern misogynist view of Eve as sole culprit in the actions of Gen. 3 based on her gender that is believed as naturally more inclined to impulse (note Murner's emphasis on Eve's 'hoffart'). In the *Mühle*, Murner uses Eve to explain why the female protagonist cannot act differently than fooling men for she and all other women are daughters of the first temptress and thus of weaker will. Baldung picked up the idea of Eve as true culprit not only in A27, but also in the Ottawa panel where Eve triumphantly glides towards the tree while a decaying (!) Adam desperately (or vindictively?) grasps her lower arm. The same concept applies to the Budapest panels in which Eve's lewd glance directed to Adam unmistakably tells that she has tried the fruit already (underscored by her hiding the fruit that is potentially intended for Adam) while her partner is still sunk in conversation with the serpent and thus acquitted from the accusation. Although Murner as friar represents the clergy, the value of his writing as insight into early modern popular notions of Eve should not be diminished considering it to be primarily addressed at a secular audience. In her study on Adam and Eve's role in the Protestant Reformation, Kathleen M. Crowther argues for instance that the majority of sixteenth-century secular society did not encounter the story of the progenitors through the Bible itself, but rather its retelling in sermons, images, satires and plays[170] into which Murner's work clearly falls. Particularly the field of religious plays proved highly popular in Baldung's age where biblical tales were rewritten to make their content as theatrical performance, sometimes even taking several days, more digestible as well as entertaining for the broader public.[171] Due to the reach of the stage to the illiterate majority of then society (something a book could never keep up with), the relevance of plays for marking the imagination on the progenitors among the broader population should not be underestimated.

Two mid-sixteenth-centuries plays integrate ideas of erotic allurement concerning Adam's temptation and thus supply a literary counterpart to the contemporaneous artistic treatment of the

169 His earlier conceptions on the fool's theme *Narrenbeschwörung* and *Schelmenzunft* (both 1512) were in turn perceived a great success, Ibid., pp. 123-25.

170 Crowther 2010, pp. 13-15.

171 Murdoch 1995, p. 66.

progenitors as love couple. Valthen Voith's *Ein schoen Lieblich Spiel* (1538) makes Adam realise after eating the fruit that something arousing radiates from Eve for he speaks of "böse lust"[172] that now overcomes him. He then goes on "du gefelst mir anders dann vor/das sag ich dir auch gantz vorwor/mich thut itzt noch dir vorlangen" to which Eve retorts „mit lust mein hertz ist gefangen"[173]. To Voith the Fall of Man, in contrast to its scriptural telling, seemingly connotes the genders' awakened sexuality, yet not for mere reproductive purposes, but pleasurable stimulation. Importantly, Voith regards sexual desire a consequence, not Edian precondition of the human state, and thereby demonstrates that the Augustinian exegesis still shaped popular opinion a millennium after.

Nuremberg poet and playwright Hans Sachs, a tremendously productive representative of his craft who enjoyed great popularity in his time, wrote three plays on the protoplasts that akin to Voith went beyond the portrayal in the Scripture and adjusted apocryphical folk-beliefs.[174] In *Tragedia von schöpfung* (1548), he agrees with the common perception that it is Eve who beguiles her partner for she says "hast du mich lieb, so nem"[175] to which Adam responds "wenn ich den apfel essen sol/so iß ich in nur durch dein bitt/von mir selb eß ich in gar ned"[176]. Sachs does not depict an erotic encounter per se unlike Voith, but prefers to centralise Adam's unwillingness to eat from the fruit, which conveys Eve's guilt quite clearly. Yet her words "hast du mich lieb" strongly appeal to Adam's attachment to her by which Eve evidently applies the strategy of emotional blackmail. This portrayal unmistakably places Sachs's Eve into the context of the power of women for he stages her precisely as the archetype of the female who is aware of the dominion she exercises over men through her feminine charms. Since Adam succumbs to her words, the feared victory of female cunning over man through enticement becomes reality. Eve's belonging to the legion of perfidious seductresses is reinforced some stanzas earlier where the Devil explains why he chose her in the first place for "das weyb aber ist nit so klug/bald sie gelaubet unserm liegen/wird sie den mann wol selb betriegen/mit ihren süssen schmaichel-

172 Voith 1884, p. 222. "Evil lust."

173 Ibid. „I like you differently then before/this I say to you candidly/for now I desire you."; „My heart is trapped with lust."

174 Murdoch, pp. 63-64.

175 Sachs 1870, p. 38. "Take it if you love me."

176 Ibid., p. 39. "If I shall eat the apple/I will only do so because of your plea/for I myself do not wish to eat it."

wortten"[177]. Sachs readdresses Eve's role as temptress who uses language appropriately to make Adam fall for her. His strong belief in Eve as the primordial mother of all temptresses is confirmed in the play *Die zwölf frawen des alten testament, fon den die mender sind gedeuscht und petrogen worden* (1569)[178] in which he makes her preside over them all, thus truly bestowing a paramount position on Eve in the power of women topos.[179] Though neither Voith's nor Sachs's play can be drawn as immediate influence on Baldung's conceptions of the Fall due to their creation afterwards, they form an important literary source for a secular perspective on the protoplasts' relationship as love couple. While Voith links their misconduct to sexual lust, Sachs translates it as sensuous temptation with Eve as agitator. The playwrights hence contribute significantly to our understanding of early modern German secular imagination of Gen. 3 and thus potentially to Baldung's own vision of the sexualised Fall evident in A27.

IV. 3.4. The instrumentalisation of the female gaze

Considering the sentence of Eve as sensuous temptress in secular literature, it needs to be asked how exactly Baldung achieves A27 Eve's superiority to be recognisable to the viewer unlike her more reserved A26 pendant. As pointed out earlier, her passive role in the act of penetration does not reduce her dominion over Adam, but it is her beholder-confronting glance floating with audacity and knowledge that redistributes the power structures between the genders. The early modern period experienced an increasing control of emotion in public life in order to guarantee societal stability mirrored not only in legal actions against unseemly behaviour or the Church's millennia-long appeal for salvific reasons, but physiognomic treatises that attempted to read the individual's character and psychology based on their facial expression.[180] The monitoring of the gaze hence became an essential part of the required regulations of one's emotions and even though men too were instructed to comply, it is little surprise that disciplining the eye was particularly demanded from women. For female seductive power was regarded to occur initially through the gaze which features enormously in satire, poetry and theological discourse since the

177 Ibid., p. 33. „But the woman is not so prudent/once she believes our lies/she will deceive the man/with her sweet flattering words."

178 „The twelve women of the Old Testament, by whom men were betrayed and deceived."

179 Carrasco, p. 78.

180 Kleinspehn 1992, pp. 26, 30.

High Middle Ages.[181] Once again Brant and Murner provide literary insights into Baldung's own time that make male anxieties of the power that thrive from women's eyes unmistakable. In Chapter 32 of the *Narrenschiff*, entitled *Vor frowen huetten*[182], Brant writes that "eyn frome frow sol haben gberd/Ir ougen schlagen zu der erd/Vnd nit hoffwort mit yderman/tryben…"[183]. The author clearly traces women's self-restraint to the gaze that he postulates to never be directed at men and notably links this vice to another male constructed immoral female trait, that of chatter and garrulity. Murner again exceeds this misogynist disparagement in the fool's satire *Geuchmat* (1519)[184]:

[...] Eyn geuchin brendt mit irem gsicht,
Das mir der flam das hertz durch sticht
Sy wychendt mit den ougen nit
Dem keyser, wenn er sy schon bit.
Do mit das hertz sy ußer schütz
Sy hafftendt ire ougen still
Als eyne, die verraten will
Mit den ougen ir gemuet.
Do mit entzindt sy myn gebluet,
Das ich gantz schellig byn und wuet.
Ich hab darab ein grosses wunder
Un frummen frouwen nun besunder,
Das sy die ougen nit thundt under,
So sy das selb doch sicher wyssen,
Das geuchsche man sindt bald beschissen.[185]

181 Kleinspehn 1989, pp. 32-35.

182 „Beware women."

183 Brant, pp. 33-34. „A pious woman shall have restraint/her eyes are to look at the earth/and not indulge in chat with every man."

184 In a letter to Brant from 1517, Murner states that he wrote the *Geuchmat* as exposure of effeminate men due to numerous requests. See Murner 1931, p. XII.

Murner warns his reader of the destructive force women wield through the gaze since men have no chance of escape once under the spell of the female eye. While Brant simply commands women to keep their gaze at the ground, Murner specifies the nature of the man-bondaging gaze to be so piercing that even the most powerful like the Emperor will surrender. It is precisely this soul-penetrating glance Murner describes which Baldung not only applies on A27 Eve, but a fair amount of his temptresses throughout his career. The artist shows the tendency to make female allurement particularly tangible less through a naked body, but more so through facial expression. While his earliest known representation of a temptress, the Phyllis in the Louvre drawing (Ill. 29), seems to be content with a restrained smile, his succeeding conceptions elaborate the seductive qualities of the gaze. Baldung established a bawdy grin with lips drawn upwards as fundamental stylistic device for the figure of the temptress first detectable in the young witch riding a goat in the famous woodcut of the witches' Sabbath of 1510 (Ill. 32). Two types of the sexualised female gaze in the artist's work can be distinguished: either his anti-heroines target the male protagonist within the picture, or they establish direct contact with the presumably male beholder outside the frame. Figures of both types are often, though not exclusively, depicted with semi-closed eyes in almond shape, a compositional move that enhances the pernicious sensuality they radiate. It conspicuously features in all eroticised conceptions of Eve except the 1511 woodcut where she appears with eyes wide open. The three pictures dealing with female temptation closest in time to the Coburg drawings, the Madrid panel of the Fall, the drawing of Hercules and Omphale and a fragmented panel of Lot and his daughters (Ill. 33), are noteworthy in that they all incorporate this element. Baldung additionally shows the affinity to follow the pattern of a head in three quarter view that is slightly bent downwards, which he already invested for his earliest female nudes, the witch of Ill. 32, the Hamburg drawing of Eve (Ill. 34) and a panel of the three ages of woman and Death (Ill. 35) all dating around 1510. The composition of A27 Eve's head therefore marks no unique approach, but resorts to longstanding practice. Notable exceptions of this type are i.a. all three panels of Eve and a panel of an unequal couple (Ill. 36) which go for a more frontal view of the female head. Baldung uses the exchange of gazes between female temptress and male beholder more

185 Ibid., pp. 136-37. "A female fool burns with her face/so that the blaze pierces my heart/she will not give way with the eyes/not even the Emperor when he asks her/she transfixes her eyes still/as one who wants to tell/her mind with her eyes/thereby she ignites my blood/so that I am all dizzy and furious/it is a great miracle to me/and to pious women specifically/when they do not cast their eyes below/for they certainly know/that foolish men are then screwed."

frequently in print and drawing and less so in panel painting (note for instance the figures of Eve in all three panels look at Adam unlike the 1511 woodcut or A27) with the exception of the Lot panel and the remarkable *Weather Witches* (Ill. 37). There does not seem to be a causal explanation since the females whose consciousness remains within the picture space do not appear less seductive and threatening than their sisters who dare to look at us directly, making the argument for decorum in the more public medium of panel painting rather invalid. It is extremely striking that Baldung seemingly perceives the side glance of particular relevance when visualing the sexualised female gaze since the majority of his temptresses (including A27 Eve) look out from the corners of their eyes. Arguably this is because the side glance was feared a particularly powerful strategy to capture men as is for instance echoed in the play *Vom Papst und seiner Priesterschaft*[186] (1524) by Swiss painter and draughtsman Niklaus Manuel Deutsch in which a prostitute going by the denotative name "Hur Sibilla Schilöugli"[187] appears.

The glance as integral device to visualise female sexual vice was a widely-used trend in Northern Renaissance art as is evident, for instance, in the numerous prostitutes inhabiting the drawings of Urs Graf, Conrad Meit's refined alabaster statuette of Judith (Ill. 38) or the decorative mythological and biblical figures (including Eve) in Cranach's extensive oeuvre.[188] Even Dürer, who usually tends to avoid explicit eroticism,[189] incorporated this element in his few works of the sensuous female nude. In *Women's Bath* (Ill. 39), we encounter two women in the picture's centre whose lascivious side glance directed at the viewer and slightly inclined heads in three-quarter view interestingly parallel Baldung's own vision of feminine evil. This raises the question of whether the journeyman might have come across this particular drawing in the master's workshop to adapt it a few years later. The demonisation of the sexualised female glance, however, is not without relevance for the subject matter. In the context of the Fall, the significance of Eve's lustful gaze so explicitly shown in Baldung's oeuvre goes beyond her responsibility of sexually tempting Adam. Heiner Borggrefe points out that violating God's

186 „On the Pope and his priests."

187 Deutsch 1878, p. 61. "Harlot Sibilla leer-eyes."

188 Another major representative of sexualised images in the German Renaissance, Sebald Beham, interestingly rarely makes use of this feature.

189 Bonnet in her diligent 2001 study on Dürer's rendition of the nude emphasises the artist's deconstruction of the sensuous female, pp. 271-273.

prohibition to eat from the Tree of Knowledge started with the sense of seeing[190] for "[...] when the woman *saw* that the tree was good for food, and that it was a *delight to the eyes* […] she took of its fruit and ate […]" (Gen. 3: 6). The pivotal role seeing plays in the downfall of humanity is already perceived in Baldung's time evident in Chapter 25 of the *Geuchmat* which is laid out as lamentation of Adam and Eve: "Wie wol wir beyd gegucket handt/do mit erworben dissent standt […] darumb hat uns gestraffet got/umb unser gucken sere gescholten…"[191] The iconology of Eve's voluptuous gaze thus becomes double-layered and re-emphasises her role as culprit for it was her eyes, not Adam's, that were tempted by the appeal of the apple. The educated male viewer who had access to an eroticised version of the Fall such as A27 could have been intellectually challenged to decipher in Eve's libidinous glance not only a warning of women's charms, but additionally the origin of sin to root precisely in the act of seeing. Hence, he would have been reminded to constantly restrain his very own gaze. The high polyvalence of Baldung's works with multi-layered messages make this theory not too unlikely. Added to Brinkmann's hypothesis that A27 presents the Fall as sexual act would transform the drawing partially into a pictorial instruction to always control all senses to guarantee the societal balance the public regulation of emotions required.

The pictures and poems discussed demonstrate the cultural perception of the glance as a particularly perilous power tool through which female supremacy manifests. In the context of erotica and its link to moralisation in Renaissance Germany, the danger of the female gaze to male self-restraint and supremacy becomes especially applicable to the type A27 Eve represents: the woman who seeks direct eye contact with the male beholder. The iconography of sexualised medieval art is very much centred on the figures' interaction with one another within the picture plane and rarely look outside the frame (note the examples from IV. 2.). Towards the sixteenth century, the trend grows towards (mostly female) figures which seek the attention of the viewer. Direct eye contact in sexual subjects achieves a more immediate resonance of allurement since the beholder remains no mere observer, but becomes the very target of female temptation by being invited into the events of the picture. Robert W. Scribner refers to the exchange of the glance between pictorial character and viewer in German Renaissance art as an "affirming

190 Borggrefe 2011, p. 44.

191 Murner 1931, pp. 109-110. „For the both of us *beheld*/and therefore acquired this condition […] therefore God punished us/and scolded us very much for *our seeing*." Emphasis added.

glance" by which he claims that the figure transmits a visual appeal that requires the viewer's emotional reciprocality.[192] He elaborates on the new role the viewer thus assumes: from the hitherto blameless consumer of figures oblivious of his presence to that of the voyeur who is confronted with the dilemma to either relish the sexualised female body as object of desire or to question its sinfulness and thus his very own morals.[193] The context of the power of women dramatises the viewer's inner conflict as it reminds him that failing to resist will ultimately result in the actions of the picture: female victory over male reason and thus mayhem. Therefore, the female's direct glance challenges the beholder to restrain his affects in order to thwart such calamity. No other female character seems more appropriate to ponder on the destructive ramifications of lustful engagement than Eve as causer of the Fall. Baldung bestows Eve's figure with the viewer-seeking gaze in the 1511 woodcut, 1510 drawing and A27, a device Cranach too, but not Dürer and Gossaert, employs for some of his paintings. Eve's representation in A27 appeals particularly drastically to the male audience that if they do not suppress the sexual desire women ignite, they will exactly end as Adam: Eve's obedient "Minnesklave"[194] who only exists to do as his mistress pleases.

IV. 3.5. Sexual Realities and Moral Codex

Despite his renown for morbid erotica and violent sexuality, Baldung usually followed the convention to conceal intercourse through well-tried symbols that would have been recognisable by contemporaries. None of his extant works adopts the medieval fashion of couples in missionary position, nor is any of it concerned with explicitly illustrating the act of genital penetration, with the exception of two: one drawing of a witch of 1515 (which will be assessed later) and the canon-breaking A27. The way Adam's middle finger is positioned somewhat in a right angle with forefinger and thumb abducting implies him thrusting it through Eve's not represented labia. There is no doubt that Baldung reads the narrative of the Scripture as an event

192 Scribner 1992, pp. 317-319.

193 Ibid., p. 325.

194 „Slave of minne."

that is interlinked with sexual lust, paralleling the literary tradition as shown in IV. 3.3. In comparison to his previous sexualised versions of the Fall, A27 constitutes the only conception that does without visual metaphors and graphically illustrates sex practices. But how he and his contemporaries exactly validated the nature of lust and whether we can deduce from this the meaning of A27 as mere visual tool to stimulate the beholder or to criticise lustfulness presents one of the major questions regarding the iconology of sexualised images in the German Renaissance. Manual penetration of the vulva in post-classical art outside an ecclesiastical context remains unique to this point and testifies to Baldung's audacity when seeking an individual visual language. An image concentrating so immensely and remarkably on a sex act ultimately leads to the sociological aspects of sexuality: what were the realities and expected appropriateness that could provide a frame to understand this drawing?

Textual sources on sexuality from the post-classical world up to Baldung's times come primarily from either the Church or legislation. Sex was defined as an act of penetration the man did to the woman,[195] which Ruth Mazo Karras eloquently expressed as "doing unto others"[196]. The official codex for appropriate sexual conduct was essentially and unsurprisingly dictated by the Church as all-controlling institution and revolved around one major principle: copulation ought to solely occur between man and woman to fulfil the purpose of biological reproduction without enjoyment. Any non-procreational practices such as anal, oral, contraception, masturbation and same-sex deeds were condemned "acts against nature".[197] So writes French Dominican William Peraldus (12/13th centuries) in *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus*:

> Quandoque enim est contra naturam quo ad modum ut cum mulier supergreditur vel cum fit bestiali modo opus illud, tamen in vase debito. Quandoque vero est contra naturam quantum ad substantiam cum quis procurat vel consentit ut semen alibi quam in loco ad hoc a natura deputato effundatur.[198]

195 Karras, pp. 3, 85.

196 This is the subtitle of Karras's important study on medieval sexuality.

197 Ibid., pp. 73,83; Phillips/Reay, pp. 18, 19, 58.

198 Quoted in Payer 1993, p. 77, footnotes 69, 70. "For sometimes it is against nature in terms of the manner as when a woman mounts or when this act is done in a bestial manner but in the correct vessel. But sometimes it is against nature in terms of the substance when someone procures and consents to semen being spilled elsewhere than in a place deputed by nature." Trans. author, p. 76.

The comprehension of sex as action supposed to result in pregnancy is furthermore clarified by a hierarchy of sexual vices the Church established by the thirteenth century in which unnatural acts range on top before fornication (sex between unmarried couples), adultery, incest, debauchery and abduction-rape.[199] The heavy restrictions did not stop at non-procreative acts and even vilified positions that would result in conception other than missionary with the man on top. The strong propagation of the missionary style as norm explains its omnipresence in medieval illustrations of sex acts as examined in IV. 2. The clerics' condemnatory writings on specific practices and positions raises the questions of whether people really engaged in them. If not, why would they pose such a concern to so many a cleric? Secular sources provide more substantial evidence for medieval and early modern sexual realities.

Naturally, secular authorities' perspective on sexuality was considerably indebted to the Church's regulations. Legal prohibitions of acts not producing offspring are passed as early as Carolingian times.[200] This criterion prevailed Western jurisdiction until early modern times with regional and local specification evolving.[201] Court records on sexual crimes represent a particularly valuable form of textual source on the rather scarcely traceable topic of sexual realities since they describe the sexual conduct of the accused. Peter Dinzelbacher for instance has analysed twelve cases involving brothels in medieval France out of which ten name specifically the practice of missionary between prostitute and client.[202] N.S. Davidson, on the other hand, mentions the focus of the 1448 established Lucca magistrate on cases involving anal intercourse as a distinct form of abomination.[203] Bette Talvacchia investigated confession manuals from the first half of sixteenth-century Italy that showed the preachers to deliberately question the penitents on their sex life that included the so-called acts against nature.[204] Private individual writings such as letters or diaries commenting on sex seem not to appear prior to the sixteenth century. One such important source, though produced in the final decade of the sixteenth century, are French courtier and diplomat

199 Phillips/Reay, p. 18.

200 Dinzelbacher, p. 55.

201 Davidson 2011, p. 101.

202 Dinzelbacher, p. 75.

203 Davidson, p. 104.

204 Talvacchia 1999, p. 119.

Pierre de Brantôme's memoirs *Les Dames galantes* that might be still relevant for Baldung's own sexual culture. In one passage, Brantôme speaks of

> […] aucunes femmes qui disent qu'elles conçoivent mieux par les postures monstrueuses et surnaturelles et estranges, que naturelles et communes, d'autun qu'elles y prennent plaisir davantage, et comme dit le poëte, quand elles s'accommodent *more canino*, ce qui est odieux [...].[205]

The anonymity with which Brantôme protects potential high-ranking women (the class he more likely communicated with than commoners) makes the truth of this statement quite plausible. Pivotal is the author's condemnation of said practices as it speaks for the missionary position with vaginal penetration as socially constructed sexual norm, undoubtedly informed by the Church's stipulations. Fictional literature that has proven so valuable when searching for the popular treatment of the protoplasts cannot fulfil the same when looking for ethnographic evidence for sex practices. The rich medieval tradition of sexualised poetry and prose never goes into detail on positions and merely describes in a few sentences that some form of sexual action between the characters occurs. Even remarkably explicit and vulgar poems do not precisely describe the nature of sex as shows one ballad by Nuremberg composer and physician Georg Forster from 1540:

Es wolt ein meidlein grasen gan
‚fick mich, lieber Peter!'
Und do die roten rößlein ston
‚fick mich mer, du hast's ein ehr!
Kanstus nit, ich wil dich lern!
Fick mich, lieber Peter![206]

Hostility towards sexuality grew with the advent of the Reformation. The reformers' concern with marriage everyone ought to consummate under the surveillance of the Church effected

205 Brantôme 1841, p. 32. "[...]some women who say that it is easier to conceive when in monstrous, unnatural, and strange positions rather than natural and common ones, since from this they take more pleasure, and as the poet says, when they assume the position *doggy style,* which is odious." Trans. Talvacchia 1999, p. 118.

206 Forster 1903, p. 95. „A maid wished to go onto the meadow/'Fuck me, dear Peter!'/and where the red roses are/'Fuck me more, for you have honour/If you can't, I shall show you/Fuck me, dear Peter'."

previously tolerated areas of non-marital sex negatively. To these belonged the so-called 'secret marriages' that were consummated without official consent and the 'concubinage,' love relationships between higher-ranking men and lower-ranking women such as patricians and clerics with servants.[207] These alternative forms of sexual relations, as well as pre-marital sexual activity, became gradually classified criminal conduct in the course of early modern state-building.[208] Further measures to regulate sexuality as exclusive conjugal right was the establishment of marriage courts assembled by secular and ecclesiastical deputies that prosecuted illicit sexual conduct.[209] One of their targets became brothels that hitherto had been an inherent part of the late medieval city, particularly in the old Empire,[210] and were now steadily shut down in the course of the sixteenth century.[211] Baldung thus lived in highly changing times in which sexual activity became incrementally viewed as matrimonial prerogative. In contrast to the preceding centuries in which authorities theoretically aligned with this idea, it now became a major concern to actively intervene in the burghers' sexual lives for the sake of public decorum.

IV. 3.6. Subversion of marital and sexual norms in the 1530s

Chapters III. 4.2., IV. 3.1. and IV. 3.5. have given a perspective of the changing gender relations and attitudes towards sex during the Reformation. In the first half of the 1530s when the Coburg drawings were likely produced, Strasbourg was additionally confronted with events in which the conventions of sex and marriage were dramatically challenged. The publicly executed debates might have fueled Baldung's already great interest in the dynamics of sex and the relationship between woman and man. One issue was the already mentioned regulations for appropriate demeanour in public, which obviously included sexual misconduct. To guarantee this, the city council established an Order of Chastisement in 1535.[212] More importantly, some of the

207 Schröter, p. 176.

208 Ibid., 175.

209 Ibid., 174; Roper 1994, p. 40.

210 The Holy Roman Empire had the highest number of urban brothels in Europe due to its denseness of cities and towns. See for instance Peter Schuster, Das Frauenhaus. Städtische Bordell in Deutschland 1350-1600, Paderborn 1992.

211 Schröter, p. 177.

212 Lienhard 1983, p. 18.

numerous dissident movements went beyond the new emphasis on marriage as mandatory institution propagated by the Reformation. The by far most radical wing that vehemently fell out with any kind of sexual norms all Christian churches agreed on was one Anabaptist sect that managed to establish itself as head of government of the city of Münster in the years 1534 and 1535. Referred to as the 'Münster rebellion' in academia, the sectarians are infamous today mainly for their propagation of polygamy, a concept absolutely unheard of among Christian congregations in this period. Though the rebellion never spread outside of Münster and was annihilated after a year, its radical doctrines quickly passed through Europe thanks to pamphlets and newspapers. In Strasbourg alone, three imprints (one composed by Luther) reported the incident in 1535 and 1536.[213] Other Anabaptist groups such as the Batenburgers in the Netherlands incorporated their Münster brethren's principle of polygamy in the late 1530s.[214] Near Erlangen in Franconia, several villages caused sensation when local peasants separated from their spouses without the consent of the Church in order to marry in a spiritual ceremony those whom they believed God had chosen as their righteous partners.[215] In Strasbourg, Anabaptist supporter David Joris demanded the overcoming of sexual shame.[216]

Strasbourg as centre of dissident movements also faced one case in which the Christian norms of monogamous marriage and divorce were affronted. In 1534, the Anabaptist Claus Frey disowned his wife and mother of several children in order to marry a certain Elisabeth Pfersfelder (herself married) without the official procedure of divorce.[217] In a spectacular trial, Frey justified his actions by blaming his first wife to be the serpent from Eden and that only a marriage to Elisabeth Pfersfelder as his divinely ordained bride would guarantee his salvation. Eventually executed for his refusal to renounce, the trial against Frey might have been one of the major topics spoken about in Strasbourg for its uncompromising break with societal and religious conventions. Frey's case and the other examples of non-conform marriage that spread in the first decades of the Reformation give us an insight into the revolving attitudes towards sexuality

213 Chrisman 1982b, pp. 219, 341. This publication accompanies Chrisman's study on book production in sixteenth-century Strasbourg of the same year (see footnote 83) and is a register of all retraceable titles printed in Strasbourg from 1480-1599.

214 Roper 1991, p. 310.

215 Ibid., pp. 311-315.

216 Ibid., p. 310.

217 Ibid., pp. 316-318.

happening in Baldung's later years, which defied everything Christian conjugal values so far had stood for. It is therefore conceivable that these events might have deepened his or his patrons' thoughts on the link between unregulated sexuality and mayhem. Baldung's sexual images of this period, such as the Coburg drawings, the Madrid panel and *Lot and his daughters*, should hence be read in consideration of this context and are at best visual responses to the norm-breaking sexual alternative lifestyles of their time.

IV. 3.7. The act of manual penetration

It poses an even more challenging task to place the sexuality of A27 into the already very limited verifiable landscape of sex practices of the early sixteenth century. None of the contemporary sources I have consulted specify on the act of manual penetration between man and woman. From a modern perspective, this act is perceived either sexual foreplay or an act in itself, yet we have no certification if the same applies to early modern society. The strict rules prescribed by the Church would suggest contemporary condemnation as an act against nature since it cannot result in conception. As such, it might have had the potential to be prosecuted, but its lack in court records regarding sexual crimes involving heterosexual couples might be rooted in the defendant's engagement in further practices deemed more severe and punishable. The exception in which it is named are trials against female same-sex deeds. One specific case, that of Katherina Hetzeldorfer in Speyer in 1477, explicitly states that the accused used two, then three fingers to penetrate her female lovers before inserting a leather dildo-like tool.[218] Notably, the penetration here appears as foreplay. Even though the case of Hetzeldorfer unequivocally deals with female homosexuality, the mentioning of the act of manual penetration of the vulva makes its practice among heterosexual couples quite imaginable. Although one needs to be very careful to take artistic objects as ethnographic evidence for social realities, Baldung's depiction of the act indicates at least an idea or imagination of it that must be linked to some form of real-life practice. Returning to Hetzeldorfer's case, it is not the utilisation of fingers that constitutes the true nature of the crime, but that of a phallic instrument. Karras points out that the twelve extant cases of female same-sex trials from the Middle Ages all revolve the application of a phallic device, which was regarded as replacing and excluding men from female sexuality and thus a

218 Phillips/Reay, p. 92.

threat to patriarchal domination.[219] The cultural history of the dildo gives us some insight into practices of vaginal penetration other than with the penis and should therefore not be underestimated when evaluating the sexuality of A27. Known since Greco-Roman times, phallic implements for stimulating women seem to have been wide-spread in the Christian West. Already Burchard of Worms inquires female penitents in *Decretum* (c. 1012) if they have used a self-made instrument for vaginal stimulation with other women or themselves.[220]
Dildo-like devices (most commonly leather stripes stuffed with wool or cotton and stiffened with a stick)[221] made their way into fictional writing with Giovanni Sercambi's novella *De libidine* (c. 1400) that follows the medieval literary convention to humourise sexual doings by describing the female users as sexually voracious and frustrated without men.[222] This affirms women's assumed dependence on male penetration to feel pleasure, for the moment Sercambi's protagonists (nuns) meet men, they dispose with the dildos. Italian printmaker Marcantonio Raimondi even produced an engraving of a nymph inserting a dildo into her vulva just a couple of years prior to the Coburg drawings (Ill. 40). Brantôme too briefly mentions its use among court women.[223] Though evidently not being the same as manual penetration, the example of the dildo speaks for a sexual culture in the early modern period that was not entirely concerned with vaginal penetration with the penis. The threat of autonomous female sexuality (and thus independence from patriarchy) so inherent to the dildo seems somehow present in A27. Although Adam is staged as penetrator, Baldung clearly identifies him as the tool to Eve's pleasures: lack of facial expression omits any enjoyment on Adam's part and thereby renders Eve, unmistakably relishing her partner's commitment, as sexually superior. The figure of Adam becomes instrumentalised to cause female arousal exclusively for the female's sake and hence parallels the qualities of the dildo as device for women owning their sexuality.
One poem by Neidhart von Reuental (whom I have talked on in IV. 2) embarks on the theme of vaginal play when he complains about ribald peasants who mock his courting for a maid:

219 Karras, p. 110.

220 Simons 2010, p. 80.

221 Ibid., p. 84.

222 Ibid., p. 81.

223 Ibid., p. 77.

Ach daß ich nun soll
Selber meine Schande rügen!
Ihr, die meiner Augen Wonne, griff er an die
Scham!
Blöder Hund, das dürfte selbst dem Kaiser
Friedrich reichlich scheinen.
Scherz, der kränkt, er findet niemals guter Leute
Lob.[224]

The poet accuses his opponents of grabbing his love at the vulva which reflects women's victimisation by men as sexual commodity anytime free at disposal. The poem might only speak of touching the vulva without subsequent sex acts, yet represents a relevant cultural framework for one specific type of sexualised imagery that proliferated in late fifteenth and early sixteenth century-Germany and focused on this exact action.

IV. 3.7a. The representation of vaginal play in German Renaissance art

The motif of man touching or playing with woman's genitals was especially favoured for drawing and prints and featured in sub-genres as diverse as the northern theme of Death and the Maiden or classical myths. Baldung's vision of the Fall in A27 certainly draws from this pictorial archetype. An engraving by the Master of the Banderoles from c. 1470 (Ill. 41) exhibits an early example, which uses the fountain of youth subject. The picture is inhabited by frolicking couples who show deep sexual interest in one another through appetent gazes. Two couples have already crossed the line of flirtatious approach: in the bottom right corner appears a man aggressively grabbing under his lover's skirt who approves with a delighted smile. Another couple, this time naked, stands knee-deep in the fountain and reveals what their dressed equivalents outside allude to: the man touches his lover's vulva in a way that slightly suggests, yet not explicitly shows, him inserting his fingers. The woman seemingly tries to stop him by seizing his lower arm defensively, yet simultaneously smiles at him and lasciviously caresses her left breast. This ambivalent reaction might speak for the woman teasing her partner, only heating up the sexual momentum. Considering that Baldung uses manual penetration in A27 to revert traditional power

224 Quoted in Höhle, p. 24. „Alas, for I shall/rebuke my own shame!/You, pleasure of my eye, he grabbed at the/vulva!/Stupid dog, even the Emperor Friedrich/ would disapprove./Banter, which affronts, it never praise of good people."

structures of the genders, we ought to note that the anonymous printmaker creates two different forms of relationship. While the dressed couple demonstrates male superiority given the man's aggressive demeanour, the naked bathers allow for more sexual equality suggested by the figures' same height, playfulness and reciprocal smile. The overall satisfaction of the figures and lack of vanitas symbols make erotic consumption rather than moralising instruction plausible.
Niklaus Manuel Deutsch connotes the act with the theme of Death and the maiden in two panel paintings. The one more commonly referred to in scholarly writing shows the maiden kissing Death's left cheek while he holds her head and lifts the skirt to presumably tackle her non-represented genitals (1517, Ill. 42). Similarly to the couple in the fountain, the maiden ambivalently clasps the wrist of her decaying suitor and leaves the viewer to decide whether she thwarts or guides him. The imprecision of forced sex gives way to unambiguous violation in Deutsch's second panel where Death crouches to pull his head under his victim's skirt who imploringly raises her hands to a fist and gazes horror-stricken at the viewer (c. 1517, Ill. 43). The artist thus demonstrates an ambivalent attitude towards man's interaction with woman's genitals. In Ill. 42, he creates a sense of eroticism by giving Death the air of a lover tenderly supporting the maiden's head who in turn lacks the frightened status of her Ill. 43 pendant. The soft breeze blowing through her curls and the balanced composition of the figures standing tranquilly next to each other enhance the sensuous effects. This harmonious equilibrium is entirely abandoned in Ill. 43 where male terror over female integrity prevails the composition. Both panels transport the vanitas message of transience of youthful beauty and corporal pleasures given the subject matter. The arousing qualities of Ill. 42, however, suggest additional erotic consumption whereas the coarse and cruel sexuality of Ill. 43 focuses substantially more on the warning instruction and even morbidly humourises sexual violence against women. Contrary to A27, Deutsch reconstructs the normative power relations of the genders by ceding the dominant part to Death and hence visualises the act of manual penetration as male sexual pleasure with woman as resource.
Nuremberg printmaker Sebald Beham too places the motif of vaginal play in the union of death and love so present in German Renaissance interpretation of sexuality. The artist translates the subject of Death and love couple in an unusually innovative approach that rivals Baldung's authenticity by rendering a naked man and woman touching each other's genitals while Death with erect member (!) and a child leaning on a sack of coins fuel the scene (Ill. 44). The

immensely sexualised engraving from 1529 has achieved more scholarly attention[225] than A27 and is equally up for debate concerning an emerging pornographic tradition. The man lays his hand in a soft, almost cautious gesture onto his partner's vulva that almost strokes her left thigh with middle, ring and little finger. However, thumb and index finger stick together in a way that suggest the man's attempt to insert the latter into the vulva. This is enhanced by the slightly bent position and shadow that falls onto the tip. Despite the otherwise blunt depiction of libidinous powers, Beham does not dare to go as far as Baldung and rather plays with the viewer's imagination at what exact stage of genital dissection the man stands. Importantly, Beham parallels Baldung's contexualisation in the power of women theme by letting the female examine the male with a dangerously salacious gaze of which he appears to be rather intimidated. Her sexual appetite for him is underscored by the gesture of impetuously grasping his hair, although it is not clearly distinguishable whether this is done by her or Death. Unlike A27 Eve, she will not be satisfied with merely being stimulated, but eagerly grabs her partner's penis, an act that remains unique in artistic representation up to this time.[226] The portrayal as aggressor reads her as dominant part echoed by the man's reserved composure. Beham, just like Baldung, exemplifies the message to man to always maintain control over the naturally lustful female as well as his own passions to not endanger patriarchal supremacy. The presence of Death and the sack of coins plus the inscription "MORS VLTIMA LINEA REVM"[227] unequivocally speak for a vanitas iconology that exhorts the viewer of the lethal outcomes of carnal desire.

Beham proves that artistic representation of sexuality in Germany was not exclusively embedded in ethical indoctrination, but also informed by the Italians' favour for erotic appeal. In Italy, erotic subjects appropriated especially the classical theme of the 'love of the gods' in order to make sexuality representable since the glorified ancient past provided a frame of acceptability.[228] Not often the case in first half-sixteenth-century-Germany, Beham's engraving of *Nessus and Deianira* (c. 1531-50, Ill. 45) makes use of classical mythology to depict genital play. A satyr sits

225 See for instance Nuremberg 2011, pp. 153-154, Cat. Nr.: 3; Mentzel 2015, p. 391; Zschelletzschky 1975, p. 86; Borggrefe, p. 45.

226 Scenes in which women sexually attack men were part of the canon (albeit conspicuously less frequent than the reverse), yet never dared to represent the physical assault on man's genitals. See for instance Sebald's *Fool in Women's Bath* (1541) or the Master of the Banderoles' *Fool in Women's Bath* (c. 1460-70) in which women grab the semi-naked, terrified fool, but without touching his member.

227 „Death, the final boundary of things."

228 Talvacchia 2011, pp. 176-177.

in front of reeds with a woman crouching between his legs. They are about to kiss each other with closed eyes. Beham does not allow direct sight onto the genitals for Nessus's crotch is covered behind Deianira's body who in turn presses her legs together, only showing the mons pubis. We are therefore excluded from the exact goings on between her legs where both figures put one hand each inbetween. Deianira's bends slightly towards her vulva, perhaps guided by her lover. The relationship is characterised by harmony and consent with Nessus as dominant part who holds his partner's head tenderly and encloses her with his legs. Unlike the three previous examples and A27, moralising instruction gives in this picture way for more overt erotic intention. This is not only based on the sexual action as consensual and affectionate, but also Beham's disinterest or ignorance of the actual tale.[229] Nessus and Deianira belong to the narrative of Hercules and deal in fact with abduction-rape: after being payed by Hercules to carry his bride Deianira over a river, the centaur Nessus becomes attracted to her and runs away only to be slain by the hero in an act of revenge. Beham's interpretation of a love couple could not be further from the literary model. The carelessness for authentic pictorial translation is also reflected in the figure of Nessus who contrary to his literary identity as centaur is portrayed as satyr. If it was not for the clear inscriptions of the names on the left and top margin, the viewer would have virtually no clue as to the iconography and would probably interpret the couple as Pan and Syrinx or an unidentifiable satyr and nymph. The lack of vanitas symbols, violence, aggression or female vice acquits the print from moralising propaganda. Rather, Beham's concentration on the couple's loving relationship positivises the desirability of sex and attests to the existence of an art market in Germany for erotica to purposefully stir the viewer's senses.

The representation of man's engagement with woman's genitals proved popular for German Renaissance sexualised imagery and came in many guises and media. The motif experienced multi-layered iconology from focus on the sensuous qualities to disciplining desire and something inbetween. Importantly for a study on sex acts, it shows the shift from the medieval main model of missionary position towards more insinuating actions at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The missionary position so prevalent in medieval illuminations steadily played a subordinate role in the erotic canon.[230] Either, it might have been too daring for the easier

229 Nuremberg, p. 154, Cat. Nr.: 4.

230 A rare example is Heinrich Aldegrever's engraving of 1530 depicting a monk and nun caught in act by a mercenary in the woods. The print mocks Catholic clerics' double standards from the perspective of a Protestant artist.

accessible media of print and panel painting,[231] or it might not have been deemed worth moral indoctrination since it represented the only permitted position unlike the 'unnatural' act of genital play. Overall, the sub-genre of vaginal touch seemingly became a conventional and acceptable way to portray sexuality. Although some images might allude to manual penetration such as Ill. 41 and 44, none equals Baldung's clear display of it. This suggests unequivocal illustration of penetrative sex to cross societal boundaries and confirms Baldung's audacity and inventiveness. The Strasbourg master's representation of the motif in A27 remains unique and would have certainly caused a heated debate if spread in public.

IV. 3.7b. Baldung's portrayal of the vaginal touch and female genitalia

As one of the most forward artists on sexual subjects of his generation, it comes as little surprise that Baldung did participate in the visual discourse of vaginal play. A drawing as early as of c. 1512 shows a couple perching comfortably on pillows whose intent exchange of glances and tender embraces pinpoint an amorous encounter (Ill. 46). The nakedness of the woman's legs protruding under the skirt and the pulled-down left sleeve leave no ambiguity as to what is to follow. Notably, she clasps the man's hand on her lap, potentially laying it onto her genital area, though the arrangement does not say for certain. If we assume this to be the case, Baldung identifies the female as the driving force behind the sexual initiation, enhanced by her putting her right arm casually around the man's shoulder. Baldung uses the innuendo of female genitalia to construct a real-life woman as seductress reminiscent of the power of women theme. In a woodcut dating four years later, Baldung revisits the figural constellation of Ill. 46 in reversed position in open landscape (Ill. 47). The couple's bawdy grins and the female's face hidden in shade create an eerie atmosphere distant from the more balanced composition of Ill. 46. The uncanniness of sexual forces are no coincidence since the woodcut illustrates the Sixth Commandment 'Thou shalt not commit adultery'. Although the man acts dominantly when grasping the woman's waist and leading her left arm towards him, her putting her right hand on her lap identifies female genitalia as the true source as well as ultimate aim of fornication. Baldung translates the Commandment's declaration quite manipulatively, since woman touching herself admonishes the viewer that the sin of adultery is wholly kindled by the allurement of the

231 The existence of the Neidhart mural, however, would speak against the theory of public view.

female body. The inclusion of the woodcut in 18 publications in- and outside Strasbourg[232] verifies Baldung's misogynist interpretation of the vaginal touch as commercial success. The artist's interest in showing a male actively touching the vulva, however, is only represented in A27. All three pictures significantly omit the notion of woman as submissive object of male desire. While Deutsch and Beham conceptualise the grip of the vulva as man's dominion over woman's body, Baldung understands it as women's awareness of the power their sexual attraction holds over men. He portrays woman as cunningly utilising her genitals to conquer men, which reaches its zenith in A27 where man has eventually succumbed. Consequently, the artist's iconology of the subject again draws at the power of women theme in which men's interaction with the vulva leaves them as victims prone to female spite.

Numerous other images attest to Baldung's perception of female genitalia as perpetual origin of vice and immorality. In one panel from 1524 that only survives as copy[233], a naked woman adorned by drapery in classical fashion scrutinises her vulva in a convex mirror (Ill. 48). The motif of a naked sensuous woman contemplating her genital beauty in a mirror very likely determines the figure as an iconographically unique example of the allegory of vanitas or luxuria. The sinful obsession with the own reflection is thus equalised with the very origin of desire and target of sexual lust. Baldung picks up the motif of woman checking her genitals in a mirror in another panel copy in which two beguiling young women and a crone gather naked around a convex mirror (Ill. 49). The one to the right brushes her pubic hair, possibly to apply an unguent for depilation.[234] That this act was regarded sexual by contemporaries is made clear by a poem that according to an eighteenth-century inventory adorned the original frame and sees the women preparing for sexual debauchery in the house of Roman fertility god Priapus:[235]

Hispida cum speculo, qaeris, cur femora pectant?
Hoc quoniam templo festa Priapus aget.[236]

232 Oldenbourg, p. 101.

233 For attribution to Baldung's surroundings see Brinkmann, p. 115.

234 Some medieval manuals such as the *Trotula* propagated court women's hairlessness as ideal and advised on the required cosmetics and procedures of depilation. See Jolly 2012, p. 190. Brinkmann therefore proposes this meaning for Ill. 49, p. 121.

235 The panel or its lost original was in possession of Basle senator Peter Vischer (1751-1823) who commented on the poem, Brinkmann, pp. 117-118.

In one of his famous drawings of witches dating from his times at Freiburg (1512-16/17),[237] the artist revisits the motif of vaginal touch, yet this time without the aid of men. Two young and one old witch form a triangle through various acrobatic poses (Ill. 50). The young witch on top places her hand on her vulva, suggesting masturbation by which Baldung draws again at female autonomous sexuality. The force of masturbation poses an even higher threat to patriarchal stability than Eve's possession over Adam in A27 since it reminds the viewer that female sexuality without men is not only possible, but leads to the uttermost havoc so tangible in the ferocious and savage demeanour of the tumbling witches. Sigrid Schade goes further and reads the drawing's inscription "DER COR CAPEN EIN GUT JAR"[238], onto which the young witch peers, as mockery of one specific group of men, namely Catholic clerics.[239] Their highly controversial double standards of officially-prescribed celibacy and secretly-lived concubinage caused a heated debate prior to and during the Reformation. Baldung would than instrumentalise the young witch's sexual play with herself to ridicule the hypocrisy of the Catholic Church which is in accordance with the medieval social satire of clerics' lecherous sexual behaviour[240]. The old witch in the drawing opens another topic so far not discussed yet, namely Baldung's stylistic vocabulary of genitals. As already pointed out, A27 Eve's genitals are only represented through a mons pubis while her A26 counterpart conceals her crotch with the right leg entirely. Despite Baldung's audacious approach to sexual subjects, he remarkably barely dared to exhibit genitals with anatomical truthfulness. The only known figures explicitly featuring a penis are Adam in the Coburg drawings and formerly the Kassel Hercules (Ill. 22) whose member was overpainted with the lion's paw in the seventeenth century and remains so until today.[241] Otherwise he only gives vague glimpses of pubic hair or testicles as in Ill. 23 or the Budapest panel. For his regiment of females, the artist allowed more sight onto the genital area by depicting the mons pubis, yet

236 Quoted in Ibid., p. 118. "Why do they brush/you ask/their hairy thighs at the mirror?/Because Priapus will hold feast in the temple here." Trans. author.

237 For a profound analysis on Baldung's witches see for instance Schade, pp. 42-125 and chapters 1-3 in Linda C. Hults, The Witch as Muse. Art, Gender, and Power in Early Modern Europe, Philadelphia 2005.

238 „To the canons a good year."

239 Schade, pp. 112-118.

240 Burghartz, p. 128.

241 Hieatt, p. 301, footnote 54. A reconstruction of the original state can be found on the final page in Berthold Hinz, Anatomie eines Zweikampf. Hans Baldung Grien. Herkules & Antäus, Munich/Berlin 2008.

hardly included the labia. Only the old witch in Ill. 50 and a defecating woman in a drawing of 1513 (Ill. 51) show the labia explicitly. Numerous of Baldung's peers such as printmaker Sebald Beham, draughtsman Urs Graf or sculptors Conrad Meit and Ludwig Krug[242] testify that the representation of the labia did not vehemently defy decorum, but presented an acceptable form of depicting bodies for various characters including Eve, so long it was restricted to small-scale objects. It is therefore quite dubious as to why Baldung did not follow this trend at least in drawing and woodcut in which he proved so prolific. Perhaps he preferred to visualise female vice through strong pubic hair evident in his panel paintings of Eve (note particularly the Ottawa panel) or Ill. 48 and 49 since female body hair, especially in the genital area, was associated with sexual lustfulness.[243] Considering that Ill. 51 likely functioned as preparatory study of a witch,[244] Baldung possibly associated the labia with such vicious sexual powers that it was only representable for the outer-societal figure of the witch as embodiment of the world upside down. Even his second picture that deals with vaginal penetration omits the incorporation of the labia: in another drawing of a witch, the female protagonist is depicted in some form of sexual engagement with a drake-like creature (Ill. 52). While leaning on a staff, the witch's vulva is connected to the dragon through a ray whose identity has caused massive debate among scholars. Interpretations are as varied as the witch pouring urine or menstural blood into the dragon's wide open maw to a jet of fire or second tongue with which the beast stimulates the witch. If we go with the theory of menstural blood, the disastrous powers believed to reside in the vulva would be underlined. Yvonne Owens points out the medieval superstition of women on their period to radiate a toxic gaze, dating back to Aristotle's writings and being adopted by influential scholastics such as Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas.[245] I believe there is no intention for clear identification, but rather again Baldung constructs a visual puzzle with polyvalent meanings to challenge his audience's imagination and anatomical knowledge.[246] What matters

242 See for instance Meit's alabaster statuette of Judith (Ill. 38) and a wooden statuette of Eve (c. 1530/35, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, Inv. Nr.: KK 9889); for Krug Ill. 29 and a woodcut of the Fall of Man (1510-1532); for Beham *Joseph and Potiphar's wife* (1526), *Night* (1548), *Three women in bath* (1548); for Graf *Fortuna as Wanton* (c. 1520, Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nuremberg, Inv. Nr.: Hz160).

243 Jolly, p. 186.

244 Karlsruhe, p. 320, Cat. Nr.: 155.

245 Owens 2018, p. 197.

246 Owens for instance places the picture into the contemporary fascination with alchemy.

more in the context of A27 is that Ill. 52 poses the only other extant example of vaginal penetration in the artist's oeuvre, once again in a remarkable and unique way. In both drawings, Baldung hides the vulva behind objects (hand and jet respectively) and accounts for the boundary to not illustrate the direct penetration of female genitalia. Similarly to A27's adaption of a biblical narrative, the use of the infernal beings dragon and witch instead of a real-life couple raises the question whether a sex act needed some form of iconographic pretext to make the unrepresentable representable. At the same time, the appropriation of hellish creatures for showing sex acts negates sexual lust as something abominable that will lead to mayhem if not restrained.

The examples discussed here have shown Baldung's subscription to contemporary understanding of female lust to reside in the vulva which he identifies primarily as something negative.

IV. 4. The Medical tradition

The religious, legal, literary and visual components on genital play I have so far commented on omits one significant criteria, namely the anatomical discourse. The dissection of the human body by empiric study became an integral element of medical education during the sixteenth century[247] and converged with artistic production when woodcut illustrations for the quickly multiplying number of printed treatises both north and south of the Alps reached a high demand. Baldung too was involved in several such projects and thus consideration of the medical tradition seems plausible when interpreting the sexuality of A27. Contrary to the Church's demand to suppress lust, the secular medical conversation of the Middle Ages partially advocated the enjoyment of intercourse. Medical advice books for conception such as the *Trotula* (twelth century) propagated lust as an essential factor to facilitate impregnation and proposed certain positions and ways of stimulating the female to enable this.[248] This idea was informed by the anatomical theories of classical authors such as Aristotle and second-century AD physician Galen who claimed that the male and female body differentiated i.a. in temperature. According to Aristotle, the male body was naturally hot and its female counterpart cold.[249] Galen elaborated on

247 Klestinec 2011, p. 114.

248 Karras, pp. 73, 78; Jones, p. 36; Dinzelbacher, p. 59.

249 Klestinec, p. 118.

this hypothesis by stating that both male and female bodies produced semen during orgasm that mixed together in order to procreate.[250] To guarantee the ejaculation and mingling of the two, both bodies needed to heat up, which could only be achieved when lust in both participants was evoked.

Galen remained a major impact on anatomical study well into Baldung's age. Among the eleven anatomical treatises published in sixteenth-century Strasbourg, there are at least three that feature Galen's name in the title, as well as an exclusive edition of one of his works.[251] Baldung designed several woodcut illustrations of the human body and its organs such as for Eucharius Rösslin's gynaecological treatise *Der Schwangeren Frauen Rosengarten* (1507) or Walther Hermann Ryff's *Menschen beschreibung oder Anatomi* (1541).[252] Though Baldung mainly copied from preceding illustrations, his woodcuts often show a higher quality than the originals by which we should call into question his partial familiarity with the anatomical discourse of the day.[253] Was the manual penetration in A27 perhaps informed by the medical propagation of foreplay and lust as crucial factors for conception, especially when considering Baldung's involvement in a gynaecological book? Since the drawing has no aspiration for medical illustration, I do not believe that it was the artist's intention to reproduce scientific knowledge. Nor is anatomy relevant for the narrative of the protoplasts or the purpose of an erotic image to stir desire. However, it deepens our understanding of contemporary secular perception of lust and genital play as something that can be positive and not entirely vicious as propagated by the Church.

One fugitive sheet produced by Baldung's peer and Strasbourg compatriot Heinrich Vogtherr does make use of genital play in an anatomical context. Vogtherr's illustration *Anathomia oder Abconterfettung eines Weibs Leib*[254] of 1538 shows a naked female resting on a plinth (Ill. 53). The true purpose of the sheet is only revealed when the viewer grabs a flap pinned over the female's vulva under which her organs are disclosed.[255] Though the face lacks expression, the literal touching of the vulva by the viewer materialises the artistic type of female genital play

250 Jones, pp. 35-36.

251 Chrisman b, pp. 239-241.

252 Karlsruhe, p. 312, Cat. Nr.: 151. „The Rose Garden of Pregnant Women"; "Description of Man or Anatomy."

253 Ibid.

254 „Anatomy or Portrayal of a Woman's body."

255 Encarnación 2002, p. 221.

which we have encountered in the preceding chapter. Here, the viewer abandons his role of voyeur or invited guest and becomes active participant. This adds a sense of eroticism as well as obscene humour to the work, which is echoed by the Venetian fashion of prints depicting courtesans whose sumptuous dresses can be lifted up by the same method of a flap pinned over the vulva only to reveal the female's undergarment (Ill. 54).[256] Nuremberg artist Hans Guldenmundt even created unfortunately lost woodcuts, which used Adam and Eve (!) as models for anatomical representation of the organs with the same concept by which the viewer had to lift their fig leaves.[257] These anatomical fugitive sheets translate genital play literally into a haptic experience and broaden our understanding of the popularity of the subject in early sixteenth-century culture.

IV. 5. A26 and the art of sexual metaphor

The tranquil atmosphere and emotionally rather neutral interaction between Adam and Eve in A26 so far has given the impression that the drawing belongs to the more conventional tradition of rendering the Fall as linear narrative. The unique portrayal of the serpent biting itself, however, raises doubts about whether the personal relationship of Adam and Eve really is that non-sexual. While Carrasco interprets the serpent primarily as the traditional symbol of the ouroboros to convey "die andauernde Gültigkeit des Sündenfall-Vergehens für die *conditio humana*",[258] Hieatt locates it in the cultural adjustment for phallic innuendo[259]. He points out the compositional relation to the serpent in the Ottawa panel and reads both to personify sinful phallic arousal. In the Ottawa panel, Hieatt argues for this symbolism based on the serpent's level with Adam's crotch as well as Eve gently stroking the serpent's tail. Therefore Adam's rotting body would convey the divine penalty of death caused by libidinous desire. The author cements his claim by stressing the importance of the serpent as phallic metaphor in late medieval and early modern literature and art such as Agrippa von Nettesheim's treatise *De originali peccato*

256 Findlen, p. 60.

257 Encarnación, p. 221.

258 Carrasco, p. 261. "the continuing validity of the transgression of the Fall of Man for the *conditio humana*."

259 Hieatt, pp. 298-300.

(1529) in which the serpent from the Fall is described as swelling sexual male organ.[260] The association between male genitals and serpent dates back millennia and is already used by Ambrose who regards the serpent "typum accepit delectatio corporalis".[261] Medieval folk belief had it that if women dug their pubic hair in the ground when menstruating, a serpent would grow from it.[262]

The artistic tradition unsurprisingly incorporated the serpent as a phallic symbol. Barthel Beham, brother of the aforementioned Sebald, makes use of it in an engraving that also displays the Fall (c. 1526-29, Ill. 55). Iconographically outstanding, Beham depicts the Tree of Knowledge as skeleton and thus Death himself.[263] From its pelvis wreathes the serpent all the way up to offer the fruit to the protoplasts. Its appearance from the pelvis certainly equalises it with the male organ. A now lost wooden relief by Master PS from 1529 reflects the same idea by illustrating Death on his knees and presenting a fruit to a naked woman who disgustedly rejects (Ill. 56). Here too slithers a serpent from Death's pelvis and resembles a penis even more than Beham's engraving. The figural constellation plus the tree in the background strongly imply inspiration by the Fall of Man. The pictures discussed here conspicuously all connect the sexualised serpent with Death in the context of Gen. 3, thus warning us of an overindulgence in lustful sexuality. While Hieatt's argumentation for the phallic metaphor in the Ottawa panel seems conclusive, he fails to provide proper points for A26. The similar composition of both serpents and the images' close proximity in date prove his only arguments and he does not differentiate between self-bite and biting Adam. If we assume the self-biting serpent to represent sexual arousal, Baldung's claim in A26 would be the same as in the 1511 woodcut: unbridled sexual lust is the precondition for the lapsus humani. Since the serpent is almost in line with Eve passing on the apple, her guilt for stirring Adam's senses would be made quite clear. The gesture of opening her legs would more than certainly mean sexual invitation. However, since her portrayal is far from the seductive appeal in Baldung's other depictions of Eve from around the same time, it is difficult to read clear sexual intentions behind the self-biting serpent. Presumably Baldung once again poses

260 Ibid., p. 299; Brinkmann, p. 179.

261 Ambrose, p. 331. "A type of pleasures of the body."

262 Jolly, p. 186. This only continues the negative association of the female period as pointed out regarding the potential menstruation jet in Ill. 52 and thus adds to our understanding of contemporary condemnation of female genitalia.

263 In fact his brother Sebald invented this iconography in a woodcut from 1524.

a visual riddle to entertain his educated patron and the answer to the symbolism of the A26 serpent might lie inbetween Carrasco's and Hieatt's interpretations.

One of Baldung's major projects in the field of printing poses a key to early modern artistic possibilities of visualising sex acts by means of the metaphor. A series of three woodcuts from 1534 (Ill. 57-59) follows the potential principle of A26 to use the disguise of animals to make a statement on the animalistic instincts and ferocity that lies in human sexuality. In Ill. 57 we see a herd of wild horses inhabiting a dark forest. One stallion with erect member approaches a browsing mare. The savageness of this scene is made clear by the stallion bellowing with raised head and two horses behind attacking each another. The stallion's attempt to mount the object of his desire fails in Ill. 58 where the mare kicks out, causing the stallion to ejaculate onto the ground, which startles the herd. The final outcome is a battle of the horses, which ruthlessly attack and bite each other in Ill. 59. Schade sees the woodcuts as unambiguous symbol for the disastrous forces of the libido that resides inherently in humanity.[264] That the horses stand for humans is expressed by the artist's monogram that wanders through all three prints. Certainly does Baldung not place it coincidentally underneath the erect member of the stallion in Ill. 57 where a monkey, itself a symbol of prurience, lifts it up. Baldung shows that animals' feral state of sexuality also lies within us and if we cannot restrain it, we as individuals as well as society will fall to the chaos of the fighting horses in Ill. 59. It is quite certain that the explicitness of erection and ejaculation applied onto human figures without accompanying attributes would have caused a scandal.[265] The series hence demonstrates the limits of sexualised imagery in the first half of the sixteenth century and how artists tried to find an acceptable vocabulary by means of visual metaphor. Interestingly, the woodcuts date from roughly the same time as the Coburg drawings and convey a similar message of admonishment. The dating would speak in favour of Hieatt's theory of the serpent in A26 as phallic symbol since the comparably clear iconology of the horse[266] might have informed the idea of animals as sexual symbols or vice versa.

264 Schade, pp. 80-85.

265 Note that the erection of Death in Ill. 44 belongs to a tiny body of images. Its symbolism will be evaluated later on.

266 Schade also mentions the cultural construction of the horse as symbol for unrestrained sexual drive in contemporary writing with regard to Nuremberg scribe Lazarus Spengler who makes use of this in a letter to Dürer from 1509/10, p. 83.

V. The Question of Pornography

The representation of penetrative sex coupled with feeling pleasure in A27 might initially bring to mind thoughts of pornography in the modern viewer. As declared in IV. 1., pornography is defined as the written or visual representation of sex acts and genitalia for the purpose to arouse the audience sexually. This raises the question of whether the sexualised imagery from the German Renaissance we looked at can be classified as such. Hunt points out that pornography as a distinct category with sexual content exclusively aimed for stimulation in the consumer only commenced during the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century.[267] She emphasises that prior to this, sexualised imagery or writing was always linked to something else, mainly satire and attack against the authorities and established social order.[268] Deriving from the Greek 'pornographoi' (meaning 'the writing of harlots'), the term appears only once in classical literature, namely in second-century BC author Athenaeus's *Deipnosophistae*.[269] Its first reusage in post-classical Europe occurs in Restif de la Bretonne's treatise *Le Pornographe* (1769) which retains the original addressee of prostitutes.[270] Our modern notion of representing sex acts for pleasure's sake is first traceable in the 1830s/40s when the term had a clear derogatory connotation of immorality and vulgarity, finally making its way into the Oxford English Dictionary in 1857 to refer to obscene imagery and writing.[271]

Despite pornographic material culture in its purest form to exclusively depict sexuality in order to arouse is a nineteenth-century phenomenon, some modern scholars such as Hunt trace the very first stages to Renaissance Italy and its humanist culture. Within the context of art history, there is one work commonly identified as the first post-classical European pornographic body of imagery that conveniently falls into this period. It is a series of sixteen prints that illustrate different sexual positions between man and woman which are predominantly peeled off of mythological or religious pretext. Plainly referred to as *I modi* (meaning 'the positions') in academia, the series was produced in collaboration by Giulio Romano and Marcantonio

267 Hunt, p. 355.

268 Ibid., 356.

269 Phillips/Reay, p. 113.

270 Hunt, p. 358.

271 Ibid.

Raimondi in Rome in the early 1520s and shortly after subjoined by poems by Pietro Aretino which praise the illustrated sex act. Due to the prints' concentration on sex acts as a pleasurable experience, a close examination is required if we wish to link A27 (and indeed the other explicit material discussed) to the development of pornography. A comparison between sexual imagery of Italy and the North shall show different cultural attitudes and perceptions towards the subject in the Renaissance. Eventually, I wish to determine whether sexualised imagery already bore erotic potential to contemporaries despite moralising iconography and literary pretext.

V. 1. *I modi* and the art of intercourse in Renaissance Italy

The exact history of production and subsequent reach of *I modi* remains obscure due to a lack of contemporary sources. What can be retraced is that Romano initiated the project (if it was even conceived as such from the beginning) by creating sixteen drawings somewhere around 1523. By the end of the following year, Raimondi might have already finished the engravings based on his peer's designs. Aretino's sonnets are believed to have been composed in spring or early summer of 1525 to be soon printed along the sheets in a second edition.[272] The series quickly caused a huge scandal when spread among the Roman nobility, leading Pope Clement VII. to have all circulating sheets of the first edition burnt and made their reprint punishable by death. Raimondi was incarcerated while Romano had already left the city under the pretense of his new employment as court painter of the Gonzaga at Mantua.[273] In spite of the death penalty, a second edition (now with Aretino's sonnets) soon distributed across Italy and beyond, accounting for a black market that craved for such daring and boundary-breaking imagery. The series was still printed and sold in Amsterdam and London in the last quarter of the century[274] and Brantôme remarks its availability in Paris where it was particularly sought after by women of the elite.[275] The prints' appeal to the upper classes is confirmed in a letter by Aretino himself in which he sends one edition as gift to Genoese nobleman Cesare Fregoso.[276] The series' status as international popular underground object, however, did not save it from near erasure: today, only

272 Lawner 1988, p. 3.

273 Ibid.

274 Findlen, p. 58.

275 Brantôme, p. 31. According to Brantôme, the Venetian printer who secretly offered the series at high prices in the Rue St. Jacques sold 50 copies within less than a year.

one sheet (of Position 1) attributed directly to Raimondi still survives and is kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Of Position 1 and 11, two copies in the form of an engraving and woodcut can be found in the British Museum and Albertina respectively.[277] Only one set containing almost all sixteen images (positions 5 and 6 are missing) is still extant, which Lynne Lawner dates to 1527 (Ill. 60-73).[278] Their poor quality and application of woodcut speak for a low-budget copy far from the original refinement.[279] Since we do not know if the originals perhaps looked more revealing than these extant copies, we need to be cautious when making assumptions based on the latter's sexual and bodily vocabulary.

The visual agenda of *I modi* follows a simple stylistic and compositional pattern: each picture shows a man and woman engaged in coitus. The artists used one model for the female as young woman with pinned up hair (except Ill. 72 where the hair is loose). They made more allowances for male types, ranging from a beardless youth (Ill. 60, 63, 67-70) to a mature with beard (Ill. 61, 71, 72) and even old man (Ill. 64, 73). The bodies of both genders incorporate the classicising fashion of muscular stature and idealised faces. All couples appear in a closed space, usually on bed with the exception of Ill. 72 and 73, which are set outdoors. The style of the furniture enhances the classicising effects e.g. when featuring herms. The sexual positions vary from the standard missionary (Ill. 61, 62, 65, 68, 69, 70) to uplifting the female (Ill. 72), from behind (Ill. 64) to the notorious role reversal with the woman on top (Ill. 67, 71). They all display penetrative sex with the penis and exclude other actions such as manual penetration in A27. Even though five pictures show the erect penis (Ill. 63, 64, 66, 67, 73), none dares to depict its female counterpart (note in Ill. 67 is the labia hinted at with one solid line through which the penis thrusts). Indeed, the actual act of penetration is omitted throughout the series, implying of what might have been perceived the absolute limit of representability even in such a daring and novel project. Furthermore, none of the couples' faces show signs of enjoying the lustful moment with the debatable exception of the men in Ill. 64 and 73. We need to recall, however, that we only

276 Lawner, p. 17. The letter from 1527 states Fregoso to have asked for the edition, affirming knowledge of the existence of *I modi* outside Rome from a very early age.

277 Ibid., 4.

278 This edition was found in Italy in 1928 and is named after its discoverer, Italo-American historian Walter Toscanini. Today, it is kept in a private collection in Geneva. Copies of all sixteen images in aquarelle after alleged originals were produced by Maximilian von Waldeck in the mid-1850s (British Museum & Bibliothèque Nationale) who claimed to have seen them in a convent in Mexico. Lawner, pp. 2, 10.

279 Talvacchia 1999, p. 5.

deal with second-class copies that lack the elaborate craftsmanship of Romano and Raimondi. Thus we cannot judge if the originals might have been more exposing of genital penetration and facial expression since the few surviving sources commenting on them do not go into detail.[280] Considering the rich culture of sexualised artworks and literature north and south of the Alps, it needs to be investigated why exactly this series posed such an affront.

The uniqueness of *I modi* and thus their classification as first post-classical pornographic work lies particularly with the visual omission of almost any iconographic mantle. All the works dissected so far in the thesis place the sexual moment in some form of literary pretext, be it secular literature such as the medieval romance (e.g. Ill. 25, 28), Greco-Roman mythological tales (Ill. 45) or religious narratives like the Coburg drawings. The contextualisation of sexual acts in narratives or instructions by means of accompanying objects or figures that would unmistakably transmit the content such as the apple and tree in A27 is nearly absent in *I modi.* Here, the focus is on the couple's sexual engagement and the only surrounding material really is the bed and sanitary items such as a basin. Furthermore, no special piece of garment nor corporal distinction feature to identify the figures as individual fictional characters. The only exceptions to create some form of pretext are the figures of an old woman in Ill. 68, a cherub in Ill. 71 and the satyr in Ill. 64 (note the figure's pointed ears). The old woman is shown observing the scene from a window, which brings to mind the motif of the procuress negotiating between a prostitute and client.[281] The symbolic values of the cherub as token of love and the satyr as creature embodying fertility and animalistic libido are self-explanatory. It leads to the question why the artists included them in the otherwise figurally minimised composition. Talvacchia has offered the interpretation for the cherub to legitimise the act of woman riding on man as most abhorred position for reversing the prescribed role of missionary.[282] Reasons of decorum could also be applied to the figure of the satyr, whereas the old woman in her role as procuress would certainly moralise the print's content. Given the strong focus on eroticism throughout the series, I do not believe that any of the three figures deliberately aim to provide literary protection, but rather reflect formal solutions indebted to the high influence of classical culture on contemporary

280 Another contemporary who describes the prints is Giorgio Vasari in Vol. 5 of his *Vite*. The alleged father of art history, however, falls into a polemic rant on their obscenity and gives no clue to the originals' possible look.

281 Lawner, p. 25.

282 Talvacchia 1999, p. 121.

Italian art. This argument is cemented by the overall stylistic application of classical visual vocabulary, particularly evident in the idealised faces (note the prevalence of Greek profile for the women), muscular bodies and furniture. I therefore suggest the three figures to fulfil more ornamental functions in order to add visual diversity to the compositional constancy of man and woman alone. Besides, any serious undertaking to make the sexual content acceptable through literary pretext would have required similar figures or objects for the other illustrations considering their togetherness as series. This point leads us to the controversy of the acceptability of erotica and how *I modi* broke with this tradition.

Though academia stresses the Italians' embrace for more overt sensuality and erotic appeal in artworks as opposed to the ambivalence of their Northern colleagues, most works surviving also make use of some form of iconographic disguise, most often by embedding the motif into mythological subject matter. The rise of Venus as potentially the most iconic character to embody the allurement of female beauty lasting until the Ancien Régime is just one example confirming the obsession with ancient gods as vehicles for erotica. Talvacchia states that the mythological narratives and characters were deemed ideal vessels since they were linked to the glorified past of ancient Rome and Greece.[283] This helps to explain why other equally explicit material such as an engraving of a female satyr about to beget with the statue of a herm by Raimondi (Ill. 74) were regarded conventional ways of representing sex acts that did not cross the boundaries of decency. Another crucial factor was the limited possibilities of accessibility as evident in one of the most renowned Italian Renaissance works of erotica: one of Romano's major projects were the frescoes adorning the walls of the Gonzagas' summer residence, the Palazzo Te near Mantua, which illustrate the love of the gods. In one of them, Jupiter in the metamorphic interstage of human and serpent approaches a naked Olympias, infamous mother of Alexander the Great, who enticingly reclines in bed and eagerly spreads her legs to conceive the erect member of the father of the gods (Ill. 75). Considering the vast dimensions of the fresco and the detailed visual description of the penis as thick and long, including strong pubic hair and the prepuce, a modern viewer might be started as to why this aesthetically more refined and compositionally equally provocative work did not experience the same repercussions as *I modi.* The program of the love of the gods was not the only reason to protect the cycle from attack, it was also the location in the dukes' private palazzo that prevented the visibility of the images from public eyes. Only an

283 Talvacchia 2011, p. 177.

illustrious circle of courtiers, diplomats and artists (and servants of course) would have had access to these rooms, making their contemplation an exclusive experience.[284] The dukes' status as powerful statesmen would have additionally secured the frescoes from outer reprimands. Furthermore, it was the nature of fresco as unique object that differentiates essentially from *I modi* as prints.

Findlen and Talvacchia underscore the importance of the reproducibility of prints in the early sixteenth century to have kindled the development of a visual pornographic culture since now all classes achieved much broader access to this kind of material.[285] The greater purchasable availability of sexualised imagery through the process of reproduction seems to have posed one of its major issues contemporary moralists feared as ethical decline. Aretino's pupil and later vehement critic, Ludovico Dolce, for instance sees no problem in Romano having produced the drawings to *I modi* since they were not for sale to the public unlike Raimondi's engravings for which Dolce rebukes him.[286]

Aside of the visual conception of the series, Aretino's response in the form of sonnets also marks a major turning point in erotic literature towards more graphic language intended to arouse desire. They describe the sex acts in detail and convey indulgence as central theme:

O'L metterete voi?ditel di gratia,
Dietro, o dinanzi?io lo vorei sapere
Perche farotti io forse dispiacere,
Se ne'l cul me lo caccio per disgratia?
Madonna no, perche la potta sazia
Il cazzo si, ch'ei v'ha poco piacere,
Ma quel ch'io faccio, il fo per non parere
Un frate Mariano verbi gratia.
Ma poi, che'l cazzo in cul tutto volete,
Come voglion i grandi, io son contento,
Che voi fate del mio cio che volete;
E pigliatel' con man, mettetel'drento,
Che tanto utile al corpo il trovarete,
Quanto c'ha gli amalati l'argomento;
Et io tal gaudio sento.
A sentir il mio cazzo in mano a voi,

284 Talvacchia 1999, p. 45.

285 Findlen, p. 60; Talvacchia, 1999, p. 10.

286 Talvacchia 1999, p. 10.

Ch'io moriro, se ci fottiam fra noi;[287]

This sonnet on position 7 (Ill. 64) not only uses colloquial language for sex organs, it also genuinely describes the sex act represented in the print, in this case from behind. Aretino solely writes on the sexual moment and is not concerned to provide a narrative, making it clear that the reader's arousal is his main aim. It was not Aretino's application of vulgar and provocative language that made the sonnets an isolated case. Many humanist authors proceeded likewise when describing genitals or sex. However, they do so within the context of political satire such as Antonio Vignali's *La Cazzaria* (1525-26), which parodies tyrannical government and class struggle by using sexual organs as metaphors for society and gender.[288] The humanists' tackling of the issue of sex thus transports the medieval satire as vehicle to criticise societal double standards into the field of politics. Though we cannot deny that their writing might have evoked desire in the reader, causing pleasure is not their main concern. The humanist tradition of sexualised literature thus clarifies that Aretino's propagation of lustful indulgence in the sonnets mark a radical break. However, Lawner interprets the four female names mentioned in sonnets 12, 13 and 14 (Ill. 69-71) as belonging to contemporary Roman courtesans, which according to her research are retracable in the documents of the time.[289] Especially sonnet 12 is of concern since it gives the name of a certain captain Ercole Rangone who was married to the likewise named courtesan Angela Greca.[290] Considering the frequent presence of prostitutes in Italian Renaissance erotic writing as critical observers of the establishment,[291] their inclusion in Aretino's sonnets calls into question whether the author did not dare to fully transgress the boundaries of the literary acceptable. He could have simply excluded names, but chose not to.

287 Quoted in Lawner, p. 72. "Where are you going to put it? Please tell me/Behind or in front? I really want to know/Why? Would it make you unhappy/If accidentally I stuck it into the rear end?/Dear lady, not at all. The pussy sates the dick/Hence little pleasure's to be had there./My intention in approaching you that way/Was to avoid looking like Brother Mariano./However, since you want my dick in your bum/As fashionable minds prefer today/Do with my sex whatever you fancy/Seize it with your hand, put it inside/You'll feel the same benefit from it/That sick men get from enemas/For my part, it's so pleasurable/Already feeling my dick in your hand/I'll die if now we consummate the act." Trans. author, p. 71.

288 Findlen, pp. 87-106.

289 Lawner, pp. 24-25.

290 Ibid., p. 24.

291 Hunt, p. 364. Aretino's other major work, the novel *Ragionamenti* (1534), describes the sexual culture in Renaissance Venice from the perspective of prostitutes and scoffs the double standards of the time.

The sonnets to *I modi* nonetheless present a novel approach to literary erotica by concentrating on the reader's sensual experience, an experience that is visually extended in the prints. Since some of the sexualised images discussed throughout the thesis show sex acts similarly explicit (assuming that the lost originals did not clearly illustrate the penetrative act like the Toscanini copies), it is less the compositional arrangement in *I modi* that caused a scandal but their complete liberation from literary pretext as well as availability to all classes of society as reproducible prints. Therefore, modern scholarship validates the series to usher in the age of pornography in which sexuality as positive experience becomes a purchasable commodity by means of material culture.

V. 2. A27 and *I modi.* On the ambivalence of German Renaissance sexualised imagery

Compositionally, A27 and *I modi* share fundamental features that initially might speak for a similar background. Both concentrate on the couples' sexual engagement and both depict so-called unnatural acts (though *I modi* also illustrate the missionary style many times). Accompanying objects become secondary in the overall conception. Even in A27, our first and foremost debate is with the couple rather than the tree or fruit. The essential difference between Baldung's Coburg drawings and *I modi* in the context of cultural history is thus less a question of formal language, but indeed content. The Italian prints revolutionised sexualised imagery by abandoning the tradition of narrative framework in favour of the sexual moment between worldly couples as sole content, thereby elevating the sensual perception of the image to its key purpose. This cannot be said of the contour copies, indeed of none of the Strasbourg master's many eroticised works. All of them not only illustrate traditional iconographic scenes from the Bible, literature or folk beliefs, the representation of the erotic moment in them never appears as something positive, unlike the serene revel in *I modi.* A27 Eve's sexualised gaze dominates the sheet's composition as does the equally sexualised self-bite of the serpent in A26, thereby conveying warning and moralising indoctrination. There can be no doubt that educated contemporaries would certainly have understood the instructive messages when looking at the most renowned couple of Christianity engaging in sex. Therefore, as tempting as they initially might appear, we must exclude the Coburg drawings from the emergence of a pornographic tradition during the Renaissance if we define pornography as the representation of sex with the

intention to arouse. Their kinship to *I modi* ends at the formal conception. However, this is not to say that there was no erotic purpose in the sheets at all. Rather, their ambivalence makes allowance for several readings.

In past scholarship, the literary content of sexualised pictures has been interpreted as either an excuse to make sex acts representable in an age of political and social repression or as the very opposite, seeing them as pictorial warning of the disastrous effects of unbridled lust.[292] As I have stated throughout the thesis, modern academic research, on the other hand, highlights the ambivalence of Northern Renaissance sexualised imagery as oscillating between moral preachment, humoresque satire and erotic experience. Talvacchia states that "erotic imagery is an eloquent conveyor of the sexual values of the society that creates it"[293] and therefore deduces that religious narratives do transmit a function that goes beyond erotic appeal, for they raise debate on sexual temptation and the sins involved therewith.[294] An explicit rendition of sex acts and naked bodies such as in A27 can thus be read as the artist's challenge to convey the message of moral reprimand very bluntly. With regard to Baldung's drawings of witches, Borggrefe asks whether their provocative sexuality could have been applied onto worldly people and stresses that iconography creates a distance to reality.[295] So are we to read the unbridled sexuality and female supremacy in A27 as ostensibly warning instruction?

In his meticulous study on Baldung's peer Albrecht Altdorfer and his panel painting *Lot and his daughters* (1537),[296] Hans-Paul Ties provides a sharp and conclusive summary on the nature of German Renaissance erotica:

> In der fiktiven, täuschend echt in Erscheinung tretenden Sphäre der ‚Kunst' *konnte* sich der Betrachter daran ergötzen, von den ‚Weiberlisten' auf die Probe gestellt zu werden, begehrlichkeiten zu entwickeln und – in der Konfrontation (und Identifikation) mit Lot sowie mit der bedrohten Idylle des ‚Bildes im Bild' als Lüstling bzw. Sünder ertappt zu werden. Er *konnte* (denn *möglich* waren beiderlei Reaktionen) besagte Indizien

292 Koch for instance claims Baldung's later work to be more concerned with artistic rather than religious questions, introduction.

293 Talvacchia 2011, p. 175.

294 Ibid., p. 182.

295 Borggrefe, p. 42.

296 Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, Inv. Nr.: 2923.

> beherzigen, von den Begehrlichkeiten Abstand nehmen, eventuell Vorsätze für das reale Leben fassen; er *konnte* die Warnung aber auch erst recht als Stimulans wahrnehmen und sich –in der Fiktionalität seiner Betrachterrolle- über sie hinwegsetzen.[297]

Ties states that several interpretations were not only possible for sexualised works with narrative context like the Coburg drawings, but that they were virtually expected by the aristocratic or bourgeois patrons. Multi-layered messages challenged the intellect of the educated elite and transformed the pictures into visual puzzles in an age that elevated the status of images to that of artworks. The content thus did not rule out aesthetic experience and erotic arousal, but rather co-existed within the picture. Sybille Weber am Bach expanded on the theory of deliberate ambivalence in eroticised works with regard to Baldung's sensuous portrayals of the Virgin from the 1530s (e.g. Ill. 24). Similarly controversial as his depictions of the Fall of Man, these images of a very earthly and seductive Mary have often been seen as excuses to paint female beauty. We note the sensual undertone infiltrating Ill. 24 by means of the lascivious way the leering Christ Child (no longer a toddler) sucks at his mother's big breast and the parrot tenderly biting her pearl-adorned neck. Weber am Bach, however, notes that these paintings lack clear interpretation and deliberately provoke polyvalent readings. The uneducated viewer might have merely seen a representation of the mother of God. An educated audience, on the other hand, would have understood the artistic aspiration for aggrandising the genre of painting by transforming Christianity's most significant female into an icon of beauty as well as a visual response to the religiously motivated poetic sub-genre that elevates Mary's beauty over her pagan rival Venus.[298] We therefore need to ask if similar polyvalent readings might apply to the Coburg drawings, especially considering their creation at roughly the same time as the eroticised Marys. Their strong sexual content, sensuous conception and nature as drawing make their creation as works of worship such as an altar unlikely. Rather, they and the other erotic depictions of the Fall of Man belonged to the body of religiously inspired works for private collectors in an age of a

297 Ties 2005, p. 218. "In the fictional, deceptively real sphere of 'art', the viewer *could* indulge in being tested by the 'power of women', develop desires and feel caught as debauchee and sinner respectively in the confrontation (and identification) with Lot and the menaced idyll of the 'picture within the picture'. He *could* (since both reactions were *possible*) take the implied signs to heart, distance himself from the desires, perhaps taking resolutions for the real life; yet he *could* more than ever perceive the warning as stimulant and –within the fictionality of his role as viewer- defy it."

298 Weber am Bach, pp. 138-140.

growing art market. As such, they certainly would have fulfiled the need of an artistic puzzle just like Altdorfer's *Lot and his daughters* or Baldung's sensuous Marys. The owner could have contemplated on the wickedness of women destined to wreak havoc on the world. He could have felt fear of the power of women, pressing him to discipline all the women in his own surroundings as well as making sure that reason never lets lust take hold of him. At the same time, he could have simply enjoyed the moment of Adam penetrating Eve, perhaps inspiring him to carry out similar acts for his very own bed. For a number of contemporary sources affirm that early modern pictures did cover a need for sexual craving.

V. 3. Contemporary reception of eroticised imagery

From the fifteenth century on, we find sources which comment on the erotic effects of images without raising the topic of disguised symbolism. Jean Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris, condemns as early as 1402 the "faedissimas corruptiones apud puerulos et adolescentiores, nunc imaginibus pudendis et nudis, quae etiam venales exponuntur, in ipsis templorum foribus et diebus sacris."[299] Though Gerson polemically attacks the works in question, his remark speaks for the existence of pictures deliberately aimed at erotic consumption. Italian humanist Bartolomeo Facio's description of the female bathers in two lost panel paintings by van Eyck in *De viris illustribus* (1456) deals exclusively with their aesthetic appeal and makes no intellectual contemplation of allegorical symbolism or moral reprehension.[300] Aretino likewise describes a statue of Venus intended for the Duke of Mantua's bedchamber as "si vera e si viva che empie di libidine il pensiero di ciaschuno chi lamira."[301] The poet wastes not a single thought on the allegorical value of an ancient goddess and proves the arrival of erotica in its purest form. German humanist and poet Joachim Camerarius the Older confirms the erotic effect as main purpose of artworks when he accuses "nicht wenige durch unzüchtige malerische Darstellungen beim Volk Ruhm und Bewunderung gesucht haben."[302] In the context of the Coburg drawings, it

299 Gerson 1844, p. 51. „ [...] filthy corruption of boys and adolescents by shameful and nude pictures offered for sale in the very temples and sacred places." Trans. in Wolfthal 2012, p. 288.

300 Nuttall, p. 306.

301 Quoted in Damisch 1996, p. 346, footnote 34. " [...] so true to life and so living that it will fill with lustful thoughts the mind of anyone who looks at it." Trans. in Findlen, p. 63.

is of particular relevance to assess the reception of works with religious content emanating sensuous qualities. Here too survive thankfully a number of written records.
Especially interesting in a study on Baldung is a case the Strasbourg city council investigated in 1511 against the painter Jost who apparently depicted the Virgin with such alluring breasts that there was serious concern for appropriateness.[303] The trial shows that the artistic presentation of religious works could radiate such a high sense of sensuality that the Christian message completely submerged and public morals to be feared to decline even in a place as tolerant as Strasbourg. This is asserted in the anonymous satire *Neu-Karsthans* (1521) formerly attributed to Murner and first published in Strasbourg:

> Was sol man dann alhie sagen von dem grossen geschmück in den kirchen, der von gold, sylber, perlin, Edelstein und allerley geschmeyd zusamen gebettelt ist, von den kostlichen gemaelts darinnen, von bildung und tafeln […] In dem allem ich gar kein andacht spür, kan auch nit dencken, wie ettwas guts von sollichem gezier kommen moeg. Fürwar, do ich ein jüngling was, wann man in kirchen uff den orgeln pfiff, gelustet mich zu dantzen. Und wann ich hort singen, ward ich im fleisch aber nit im geist bewegt. *Hett auch offt boese gedancken in anschauwung der fraewlichen nildungen auff den altaren*. Dann kein bulerin mag sich üppigklicher oder unschamhafftigklicher becleiden oder zieren, dann sie yetzund die mutter gottes, sant Barbaram, Katherinam und andere heiligen formieren.[304]

Not only does the author comment on the overall preponderance of sensual over spiritual experience in the magnificent array in (Catholic) churches, his note on the figures of female saints is striking since their beauty undoubtedly stirs sexual thoughts in him. Zwingli also harshly attacks overtly sensuous Christian figures that distract from devotion: “Die säligen wyber gstaltet man so hurisch, so glat und ußgestrichen, sam sy darumb dahyngestelt syind, das die

302 Quoted in Bonnet 2001, p. 272. „ [...] not few [artists] seeking fame and admiration by the people with prurient painterly depictions.”

303 Duerr 1997, p. 133.

304 Murner 1960, p. 428. „What is one to say to all the splendid adornment in the churches, which is beggared together by all the gold, silver, pearls, gems and all kinds of jewellery, to the delicious paintings, to the pictures and panels […] In all this I did not feel devotion, I cannot think how anything good can come from all this sumptuousness. Really, when I was an adolescent I felt inclined to dance by the sound from the organ in the churches. And when I heard singing, I was moved in the flesh but not in the spirit. *I also had often wicked thoughts when contemplating the female pictures on the altars*. Because no paramour dresses more lush and shameless than the mother of God with Barbara, Catherine and other saints.” Emphasis added.

mann an inen gereitzt werdind zu uppigheit."[305] The thin divider from religious icon to pornographic commodity is intriguingly asserted by Franciscan priest Bernardino of Siena who accounts in *De inspirationibus* (1427) that:

> Novi personam, quae dum contemplabatur humanitatem Christi pendentis in cruce (pudet dicere et horrendum est etiam cogitare) sensualiter et turpiter polluebatur et foedabatur.[306]

Bernardino demonstrates that the erotic appeal in works with a completely different function could provoke uttermost sexual desire, going so far as to use them as inspiration for actual sexual stimulation. A court case against Venetian patricians for having vilified a statue of Christ from the 1630s[307] confirms the possibility of transforming an icon of worship into a sex toy. Specifically relevant for the possible perception of the Coburg drawings is Beham's similarly provocative print of a lascivious couple (Ill. 44). An inventory of Paul III. Behaim's extensive Nuremberg collection of prints from 1618 notes the following remark on Beham's engraving: "Der doth hinder 2 nackendtn menschen VNND einem kindt, propter quam picturam Sebaldo Beham civitate fuit ejecto."[308] Behaim apparently believed Beham had to flee Nuremberg because of the audacity of this print. Though this was not the case,[309] the comment transmits that even images with clear instructive framework were considered by some as too inappropriate due to their explicit composition. Despite dating from a century later, Behaim's remark still retains validity when assessing reception of Renaissance sexualised imagery since the moral codex did not change drastically within this century. The mantle of religious narrative in A27 thus would probably not have prevented a lot of people to feel revulsion and offense instead of reprimand considering the compositional kinship to Beham's print.

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305 Zwingli 1905, p. 218. „The holy women are depicted like harlots, so smooth and painterly, that their shape provokes men to wantonness."

306 Quoted in Mormando 2008, p. 196, footnote 52. "I know a person who, while contemplating the humanity of Christ suspended on the cross (I am ashamed to say it and it is terrible to imagine) sensually and repulsively polluted and defiled himself." Trans. author, p. 185.

307 Findlen, p. 60.

308 Mentzel, p. 393. "Death behind two naked people and a child, by reasons of which the painter Sebald Beham had to flee the city."

309 In fact, Sebald and his brother Barthel were banned from Nuremberg in 1525 due to their reluctance to embrace the Reformation as well as accepting the city council's authority. See Cat. Ex. Dürer Haus, p. 17.

The contemporary quotes on eroticised works of diverse backgrounds add to the theory that German Renaissance sexualised images were no exclusive moral propaganda, but simultaneously bore the idea to enjoy the erotic moment. Therefore, the Coburg drawings' effects on the viewer were certainly different and depended on the individual. But who exactly would have been the audience of the sheets?

VI. Function and ownership

The first question coming to mind when investigating the function and ownership of the drawings concerns their medium. Since they only survive in copies, we need to ask about the nature of the originals. Were they always conceived as drawings, or might they have been preparatory studies for print or painting? The idea of a print seems not entirely out of place, considering the high amount of sexualised images executed in this medium. As stated by Findlen and Talvacchia, the factor of reproducibility immensely accelerated a market for erotic imagery and speaks for their public demand. The fact that no prints based on the Coburg drawings circulate today does not completely erase the possibility of an original existence. Raimondi's engraving of a nymph (Ill. 40) is extant in precisely one sheet, as is Barthel Beham's satirical engraving of a women's bath of 1539 in which the motif of vaginal play is catapulted into an exclusively female sphere.[310] Both these examples stand iconographically as unique and daring as the Coburg drawings. Their provocative style might be the reason for later destruction, as if purchasers either feared prosecution or heirs felt disgust.

Another option might be the initial conception as panel painting. Berthold Hinz suggested this theory without deeper argumentation,[311] only to later comment more carefully that it remains uncertain whether the contour copies were executed after panels or other material[312]. The idea of a two-sided panel featuring the content of A26 and A27 appears tempting. It raises thoughts of a linear narrative in which A26 might have functioned as recto, illustrating a comparably decent conception of the Fall easily presentable to guests. Eve's posture to spread her legs would than become the prelude to the aggressive sexual engagement of the verso, perhaps reserved to the

310 Sebald Beham's almost identical copy of his brother's print from 1548, however, survives in several sheets.

311 Hinz 2006, p. 49, footnote 43.

312 Hinz 2011, p. 24.

gaze of close confidants of the owner. The ownership by a powerful statesman holding a protective hand might have facilitated the execution in panel painting.[313] If they existed as such, they (or rather specifically A27) certainly would have caused his owner serious concern for repercussions should the public ever find out. Consequently, their exhibition could only have been possible in some well-hidden room and/or behind curtains.[314] However, no similarly explicit depiction of penetration survives as painting north of the Alps. Deutsch's panel of Death and the maiden (Ill. 42) only conveys an insinuation of what is happening (or will happen) between the couple. Even Romano's blunt representation of Jupiter's thick and large phallus (Ill. 75) might not have been perceived as equally aggressive as A27 since the god is shown about to penetrate Olympias, yet not in the actual process unlike Adam in A27. This implies that the larger and not so easily to hide medium of painting required some form of compositional restriction, making the Coburg drawings' execution as panels rather unlikely. Any hypothesis on their conception as prints lost to the sword of morality also remains speculative due to a lack of evidence. Therefore, we should analyse their original purpose in the medium that survives and simultaneously seems most plausible, that of drawing. As unique piece, the drawing would have enabled the owner to easily hide it somewhere in a folder or book, inhibiting discovery by disagreeable eyes.

The early history of collecting prints and drawings remains a difficult art historical task, yet we know that they were glued into books or folders as early as the fifteenth century as is testified by the collection of Nuremberg humanist Hartmann Schedel.[315] The first traceable theoretical discourse on collecting prints from the old Empire is a treatise by Samuel Quicchelberg dedicated to Duke Albrecht V. of Bavaria.[316] It comments on the popularity of the medium among Nuremberg burghers who stored the sheets in books, shelves, folders and portfolios, but always as subsets of larger art collections. However, the treatise only addresses engravings and dates from 1565, which complicates assumptions about earlier conceptions of collecting, especially with regard to drawings. Considering the quick acknowledgement of the artistic value of drawing

313 Ties asks whether the mighty elite really needed justification for the possession of audacious erotica, p. 217, footnote 177.

314 Weber am Bach sees for instance the artist's paintings of sensuous Marys equally restricted to the private rooms of bedchamber or study, p. 162.

315 Goddard, p. 18.

316 Ibid., pp. 20-23.

in the Renaissance, Baldung's innumerable elaborately executed samples likely would have aroused interest of eager collectors. Sebald Büheler's careful compilation and preservation of many of the master's drawings testifies to their contemporary appreciation. Small versions of what would later develop into 'Kunstkammer' are verifiable for Strasbourg only after Baldung's death around the mid-sixteenth century.[317] Nevertheless, the flourishing economy and culture of the city make a first ownership of the Coburg drawings among the citizens conceivable. One potential clientele of innovative and radical images might have been the obscure group of Epicureans mentioned in III. 2. As a well-educated and affluent class interested in humanist culture, they might have had the liberal attitudes necessary for such daring material. Bourgeois patronage among his fellow citizens is at least proven for Baldung's Budapest panels, which were sold from Strasbourg to a merchant in Basle in 1641.[318] The acquisition of erotic material by the rising bourgeoisie during the transition to the early modern period has been proven by the Neidhart murals. Further evidence are preachers Jan Hus and Girolamo Sanovarola at the beginning and end of the fifteenth century respectively who condemn the many paintings of nudes found in the houses of wealthy burghers.[319] A description of a patrician mansion in Cologne of 1539 names paintings of a naked Lucretia and Fortuna in the great hall.[320] The display in a representative room might be imaginable for A26, yet less so for A27, which might have required some form of security. One of the earliest verifiable examples of a patrician collection of erotic prints and drawings gives an idea of the original place of installation for at least A27: Frankfurt lawyer Heinrich Kellner owned several sheets of sensuous female nudes of Northern genesis (one explicitly showing the labia), which he glued aside other motives in an art book from 1588.[321] A similar instalment of the Coburg drawings thus seems plausible, especially with regard to A27.

The nobility as original owners can be equally brought into question considering their status as traditional commissioners of erotica as well as Baldung's strong ties to aristocratic families from the Upper Rhine. The numerous designs for stained glass which Baldung produced for the

317 Weber am Bach, p. 163. The first real ‚Kunstkammer' in Strasbourg was compiled by glass painter Josias Schach in the seventeenth century. He apparently acquired Baldung's estates some time after Büheler's death.

318 Bussmann, p. 25.

319 Nuttall, p. 300.

320 Wagner 2014, p. 29.

321 Sanders/Schedl 2020, pp. 51, 54. My thanks go to Christof Metzger for pointing Kellner's art book out to me.

regional aristocracy often feature love couples and single lecherous female figures. A specific case of aristocratic ownership could be addressed to the markgraves of Baden who belonged to the artist's most illustrious patrons.[322] An inventory of their collection from 1773 mentions two paintings of female nudes of which one is now commonly identified as Ill. 49.[323] Two erotic bath scenes are also verifiable for the their collection at Basle of 1688.[324] As ruling princes, the markgraves represented the most powerful class that most likely could hold a protecting hand over illicit material just like their Gonzaga peers did with Romano.

Finally, despite their official propagation of chastity, the clergy also emerged as noteworthy patrons of erotica.[325] The first known owner of Dürer's panels of Adam and Eve[326] was the Bishop of Breslau who might have installed the paintings in his library or bedroom.[327] Though not erotic works in a strict sense, the strong sensuality by which Dürer revolutionised the subject of the Fall prevails the composition and shows its appreciation by the Church. An early example of proper erotic material commissioned by the clergy in Germany are Altdorfer's murals of bathing men and women adorning the bath in the residence of the Bishop of Regensburg.[328] To cement the possibility of clerical possession of the Coburg drawings, we will return to Ill. 50. The drawing with the inscription "DER COR CAPEN EIN GUT JAR" names exactly canons as addressees. Schade's interpretation as parody of the clerics' infringement of monastic rule offers only one option to the function of the sheet. It might as well have been a new year's gift from Baldung to the canons of the Freiburg Minster for which he painted the high altar between 1512-1517/18. In this case, the drawing would ridicule the subject of sexuality as joke and less as discursive propaganda. The witches' uninhibited sexual acrobatics echo the atmosphere in A27 and perhaps Eve's ribald gaze was reserved for the not-so-celibate eye of a cleric appreciating the joys of worldly life.

322 Brady 1975, p. 313.

323 Brinkmann, pp. 115-119.

324 Ibid.

325 One only needs to briefly think of the splendid patronage of the Renaissance Popes that certainly skipped the value system they demanded from the public.

326 Prado, Madrid, Inv. Nr.: P002177 & P002178.

327 Schoen, pp. 117, 122.

328 Levy 1988, p. 41.

All traditional classes of patrons aside, we should terminate the question of ownership with Baldung himself. The drawings, particularly A27, might have been a vision of Baldung's dark fantasies to which we will never find real access due to virtual non-existence of sources. As an artist thoroughly fascinated with the macabre and ready to break boundaries, Baldung might have returned to the subject of the Fall to materialise his thoughts on the ongoing battle between the genders with no intention for sale. Likely he was well aware of the taboo A27 represented and the troubles therewith. I thus conclude with the option that at least A27 might have been a study reserved for the artist's very own domestics or workshop, never designed to leave the safety of the master himself.

Conclusion

The Coburg drawings are testimony to Hans Baldung Grien's innovative contribution to the new iconography of the Fall of Man in Renaissance Germany that centres on the emotional relationship of Adam and Eve. While A26 might apply more conventional vocabulary to insinuate a sexual moment through visual metaphor, it is the blunt exposure of a sex act that dominates A27 and makes this sheet so fascinating when exploring the development of erotica in the early modern period. Despite the proliferation of sexualised subjects through all media at the beginning of the sixteenth century, this particular drawing stands out with the unambiguous representation of manual penetration of the vulva. A clear display of penetrative sex crossed the boundaries of the acceptable as is evident in the normative pattern of Renaissance sexual imagery to use visual innuendo or foreplay. The scandal of *I modi* and the survival of Raimondi's engraving of a nymph pleasuring herself with a dildo in one sheet prove furthermore what was deemed representable. The motif still drew at the popular and widespread type of man's interaction with female genitalia by which Baldung asserts his prowess to amalgamate tradition with individual touch. Essential for the thesis was the discourse between content and form to make proper assumptions on the agenda of early sixteenth-century erotica. In this matter, we can differentiate between the Italian inclination to sensualise the pictures to the extent that erotic consumption appears as main purpose, while their Northern peers were particularly intrigued to convey the damaging ramifications of sexual lust. Both cultures tended to employ some form of literary pretext, be it the Italians' incorporation of their heritage of classical mythology or the

Germans' interest in religion and folklore. The strong sense of satire infiltrating the composition of German artists' works was heavily informed by the literary tradition of the Middle Ages and generated the prototype of the forever destructive female who uses her physical resources in order to ruin man. A27 certainly belongs to the topos of the power of women for ascribing the persona of the succubus-like temptress onto Eve who degrades Adam to her obedient slave of minne. Early sixteenth-century sexualised imagery poses the difficult undertaking to decipher the iconology as either moral indoctrination or aesthetic experience to arouse desire. As demonstrated in the thesis, A27 fulfils neither nor, but exactly both: it was the speciality of German artists, more so than their Italian peers, to create an image in the way that it transmitted both messages for an educated clientele with humanist interests who demanded visual puzzles to challenge their intellect. The Coburg drawings completely subscribe to this concept by offering the audience beautiful male and female bodies engaged in amorous actions, but within the religious context of the progenitors' transgression. The significance of the content must not be underestimated and the high popularity of the eroticised Fall of Man is no surprise as Adam and Eve were perceived the causers of sexual lust that plagues humanity as perpetual divine punishment. Baldung's vision of the Fall in most of his representations unequivocally conveys how secular society, in contrast to the Church's focus on the violation of God's prohibition, saw lust and the power struggle between the genders as integral to the biblical narrative. While the basic scheme of A26 is more in accordance of the linear discourse of the subject stemming from the Middle Ages, A27 unmistakably makes clear to the male viewer what is going to happen if woman ever manages to gain victory: male subordination and a reversal of society falling into a disastrous world upside down. Further academic dissection of the drawings should include deeper focus on Baldung's corporal figuration that still owed to the medieval norm to apply stronger individualisation to Adam and idealisation to Eve. It is striking that all his depictions of Adam in the Fall of Man, with the exception of the first, envision the first father as a mature man as opposed to e.g. Dürer's juvenile athlete. An elaboration on the artist's ideas of masculinity thus seems necessary when evaluating the topic of gender. There remains the question whether Baldung had an impact on the following generations regarding both the subject of the Fall of Man as well as erotica. Does the audacity of Baldung's oeuvre cease with his death or did subsequent masters of sexualised subjects such as Habsburg court painter Bartholomäus

Spranger with his regiment of mythological love couples catapult the Strasbourg artist's agenda into the next century?

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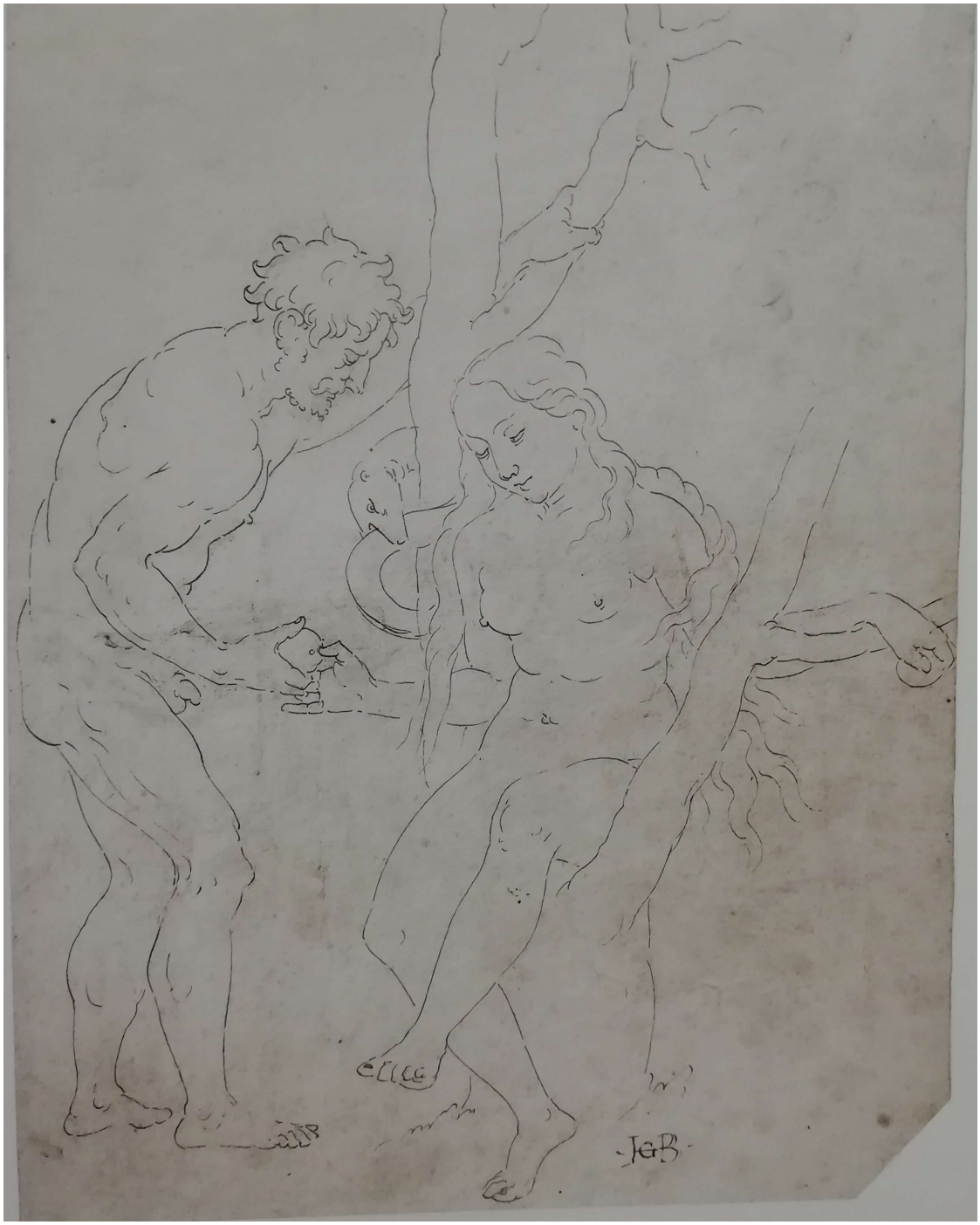
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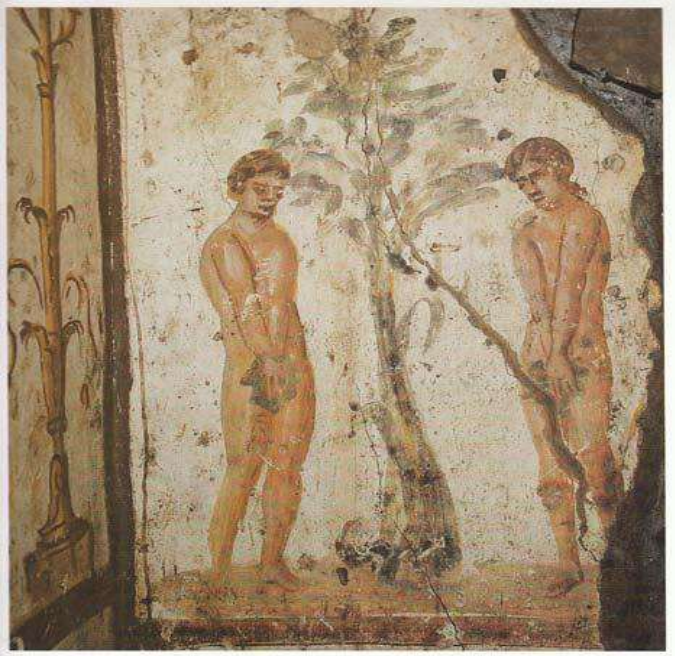
Illustrations



Ill. 1. Anonymous after Hans Baldung Grien
Adam and Eve
c. 1530-35
Pen and ink over charcoal, 30,3 x 22 cm
Kunstsammlungen Veste Coburg



Ill. 2. Anonymous after Hans Baldung Grien
Adam and Eve
c. 1530-35
Pen and ink over charcoal, 27,5 x 12,8 cm
Kunstsammlungen Veste Coburg



Ill. 3. Adam and Eve
4th century
Fresco
SS. Marcellino e Pietro, Rome



Ill. 3. Adam and Eve
4th century
Fresco
SS. Marcellino e Pietro, Rome



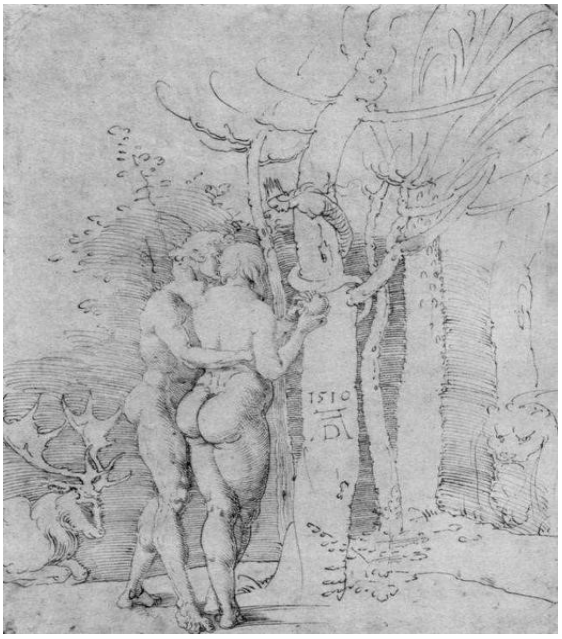
Ill. 5. Bernward Doors, Detail
Adam and Eve
c. 1015
Bronze
St. Mary's Cathedral, Hildesheim



Ill. 6. Adam and Eve
c. 1130
St. Marie-Madeleine, Vézelay



Ill. 7. Hugo van der Goes
Adam and Eve
After 1479
Oil on oak, 41 x 61,5 cm
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



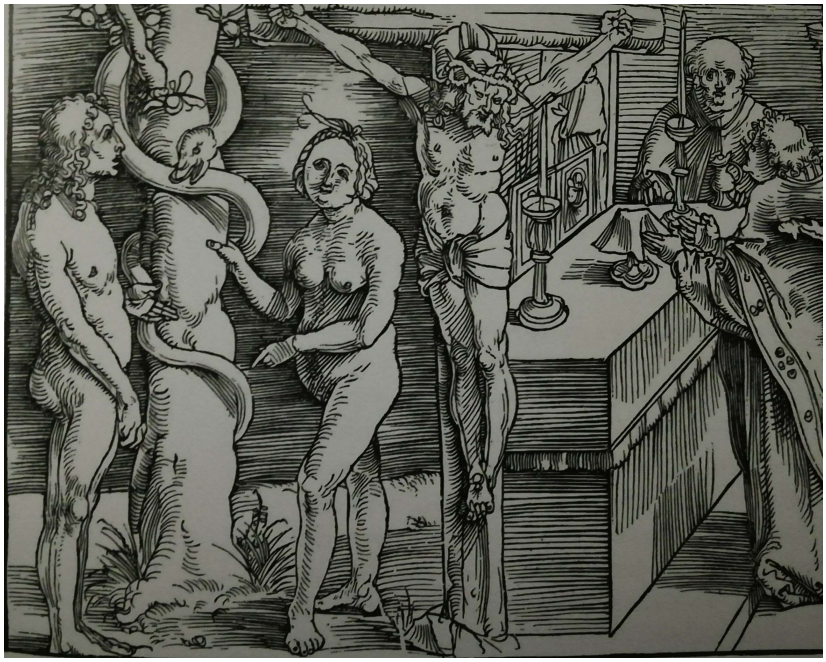
Ill. 8. Albrecht Dürer
Adam and Eve
1510
Pen and ink, 29,4 x 21,9 cm
Albertina, Vienna



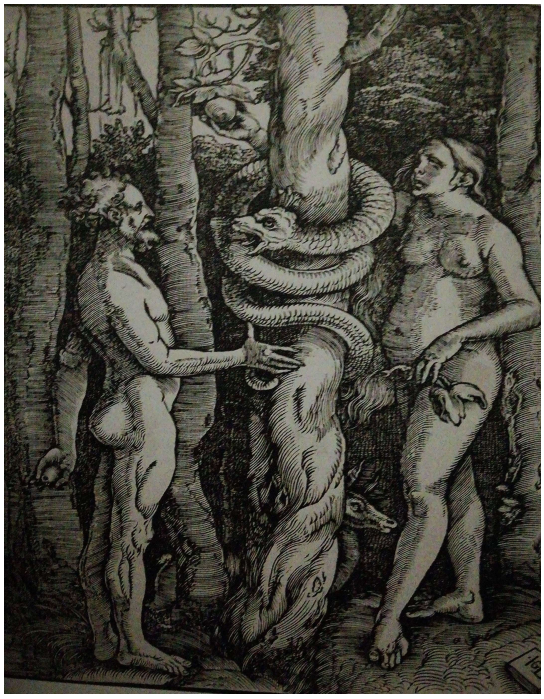
Ill. 9. Albrecht Dürer
Adam and Eve
1510/11
Woodcut, 12,7 x 9,7cm



Ill. 10. Lucas Cranach the Older
Adam and Eve
1509
Woodcut, 32,4 x 22,8 cm



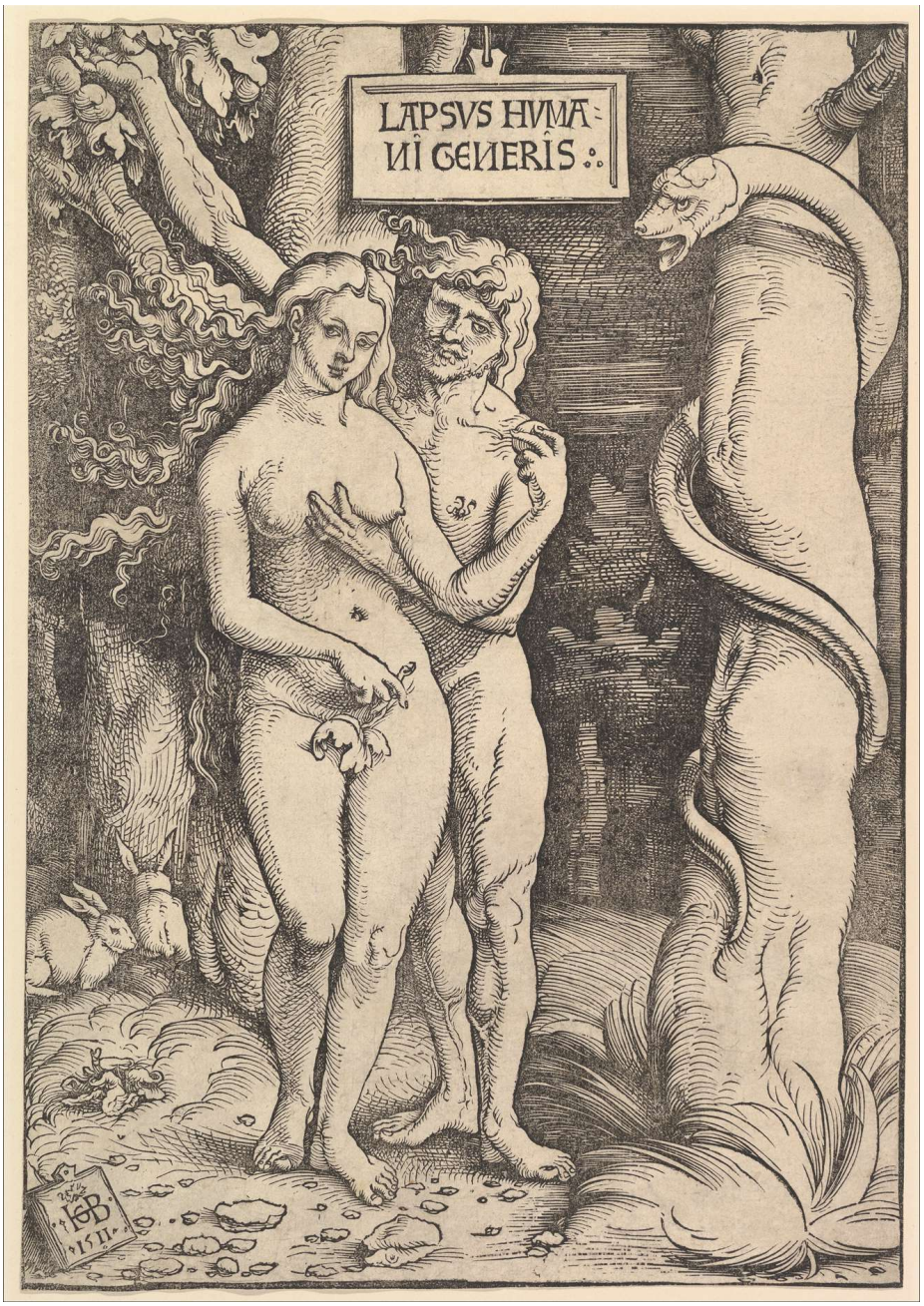
Ill. 11. Hans Baldung Grien
The Crucified between Fall of Man and Mass
1505 (in: *Der Beschlossen gart des rosenkrantz mariae*)
Woodcut, 12,5 x 16,4 cm



Ill. 12. Hans Baldung Grien
Adam and Eve
1514
Woodcut, 21,9 x 15,6 cm



Ill. 13. Hans Baldung Grien
Adam and Eve
c. 1530-35
Woodcut, 7,3 x 7,3cm



Ill. 14. Hans Baldung Grien
Adam and Eve
1511
Woodcut, 37,6 x 25,8 cm



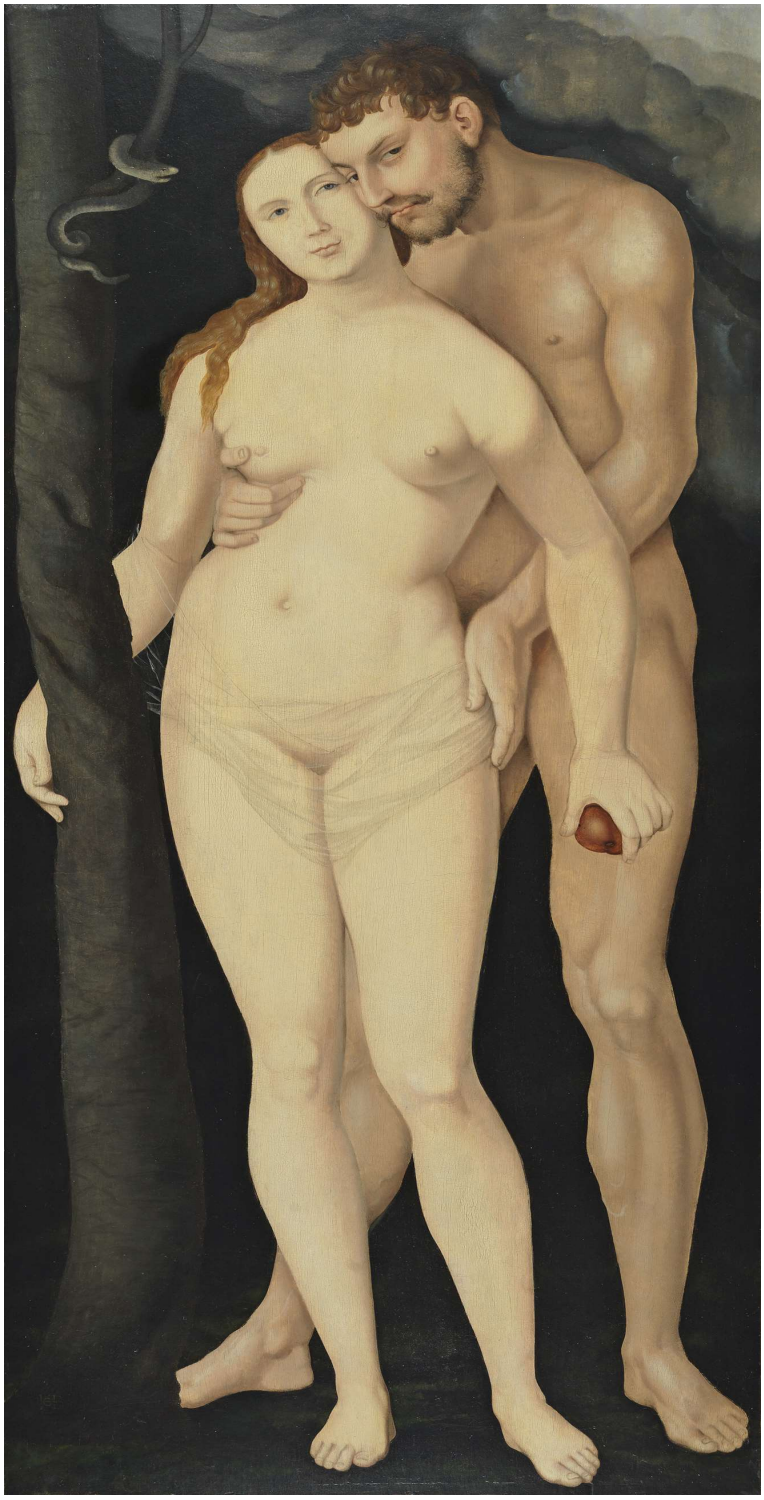
Ill. 15. Hans Baldung Grien
Adam and Eve
1519
Woodcut, 24,9 x 9,5 cm



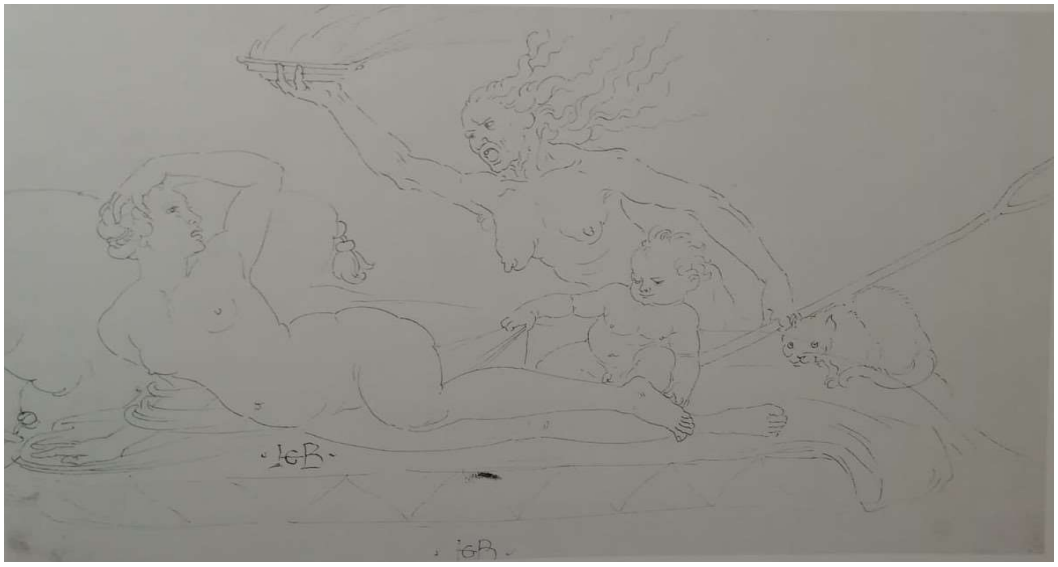
Ill. 16. Hans Baldung Grien
Adam and Eve
c. 1525
Oil on limewood, 208,5 x 83,5 cm each
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest



Ill. 17. Hans Baldung Grien
Adam and Eve
c. 1529-1534
Oil on limewood, 64 x 32,5 cm
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



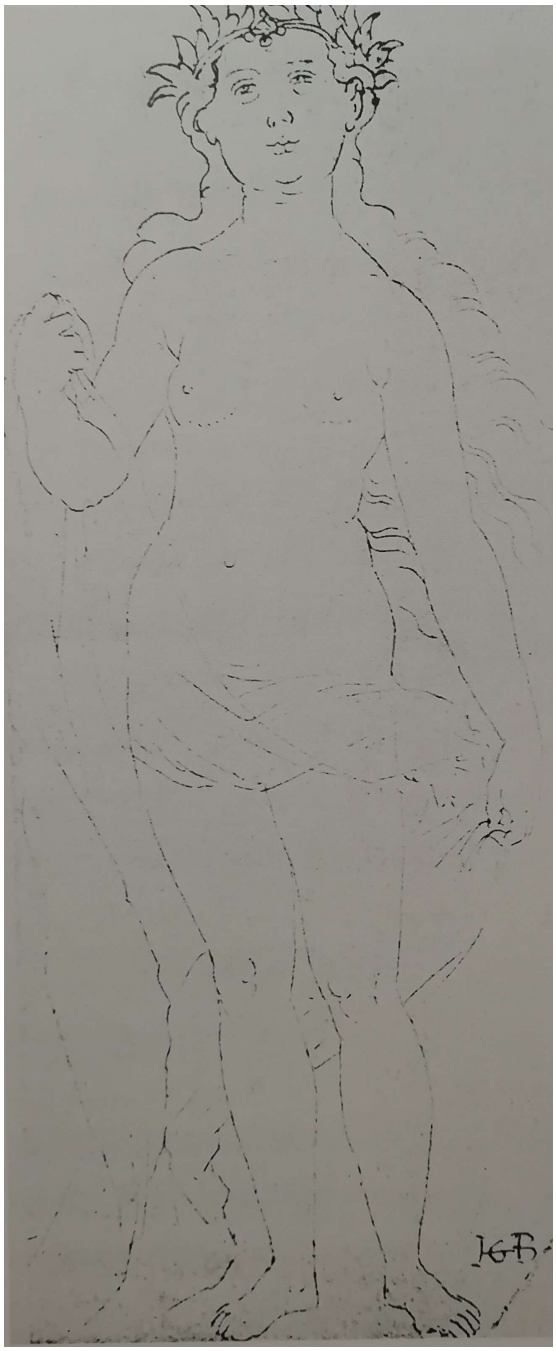
Ill. 18. Hans Baldung Grien
Adam and Eve
c. 1531-33
Oil on fir, 148 x 67,3 cm
Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid



Ill. 19. Anonymous after Hans Baldung Grien
Young witch woken by old witch
c. 1530-35
Pen and ink over charcoal, 19,7 x 32,2 cm
Kunstsammlungen Veste Coburg



Ill. 20. Anonymous after Hans Baldung Grien
Venus or Eve
c. 1530-35
Pen and ink, 29,5 x 10,2 cm
Kunstsammlungen Veste Coburg



Ill. 21. Anonymous after Hans Baldung Grien
Allegorical female figure
c. 1530-35
Pen and ink over charcoal, 29,5 x 11,8 cm
Kunstsammlungen Veste Coburg


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Ill. 22. Hans Baldung Grien
Hercules and Antaeus
1531
Oil on limewood, 153,5 x 65,3 cm
Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Kassel



Ill. 23. Hans Baldung Grien
Hercules and Omphale
c. 1533
Pen, ink and washing, 27,2 x 39,2 cm
École des Beaux-Arts, Paris



Gm 1170 © Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Foto: Dirk Meßberger

Ill. 24. Hans Baldung Grien
Mary with the Parrot
1533
Oil on limewood, 91,5 x 63,3 cm
Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg



Ill. 25. Coitus as forge of nature (in: *Le Roman de la Rose*)
France, c. 1380
MS Egerton 881, fol. 126r.
British Library, London



Ill. 26. Advice on conception (in: *Régime du Corps)*
Lille, c 1285
MS Sloane 2435, fol. 9v.
British Library, London



Ill. 27. Planet Venus and her children (in a treatise on astrology and mantic)
Rhineland/Franconia
c. 1445
Illumination on paper, c. 37 x 52 cm
Sign. Ms.germ. Fol. 244
Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin



Ill. 28. The Robbery of the Mirror (scene 3 of the Neidhart murals)
c.1400
Secco mural
Wien Museum, Vienna



Ill. 29. Hans Baldung Grien
Phyllis and Aristotle
1503
Pen and ink, 28,1 x 20,2 cm
Louvre, Paris



Ill. 30. Ludwig Krug
Adam and Eve
1514
stone, 14,1 x 8,2 cm
Bode-Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin



Ill. 31. Monogramist IP
Adam and Eve
c 1525
pear wood, 64,5 x 46,5 cm
Schloss Friedenstein, Gotha



Ill. 32. Hans Baldung Grien
Witches' Sabbath
1510
Woodcut. 36,7 x 25,4 cm



Ill. 33. Hans Baldung Grien
Lot and his daughters (fragments)
1535-40
Oil on oak, original size c. 95 x 158 cm
Kunsthalle Karlsruhe



Ill. 34. Hans Baldung Grien
Eve and the Serpent
1510
Pen and ink, 29 x 21,1 cm
Kunsthalle Hamburg



Ill. 35. Hans Baldung Grien
Three ages of woman and Death
c. 1510
Oil on limewood, 48,2 x 32,8 cm
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



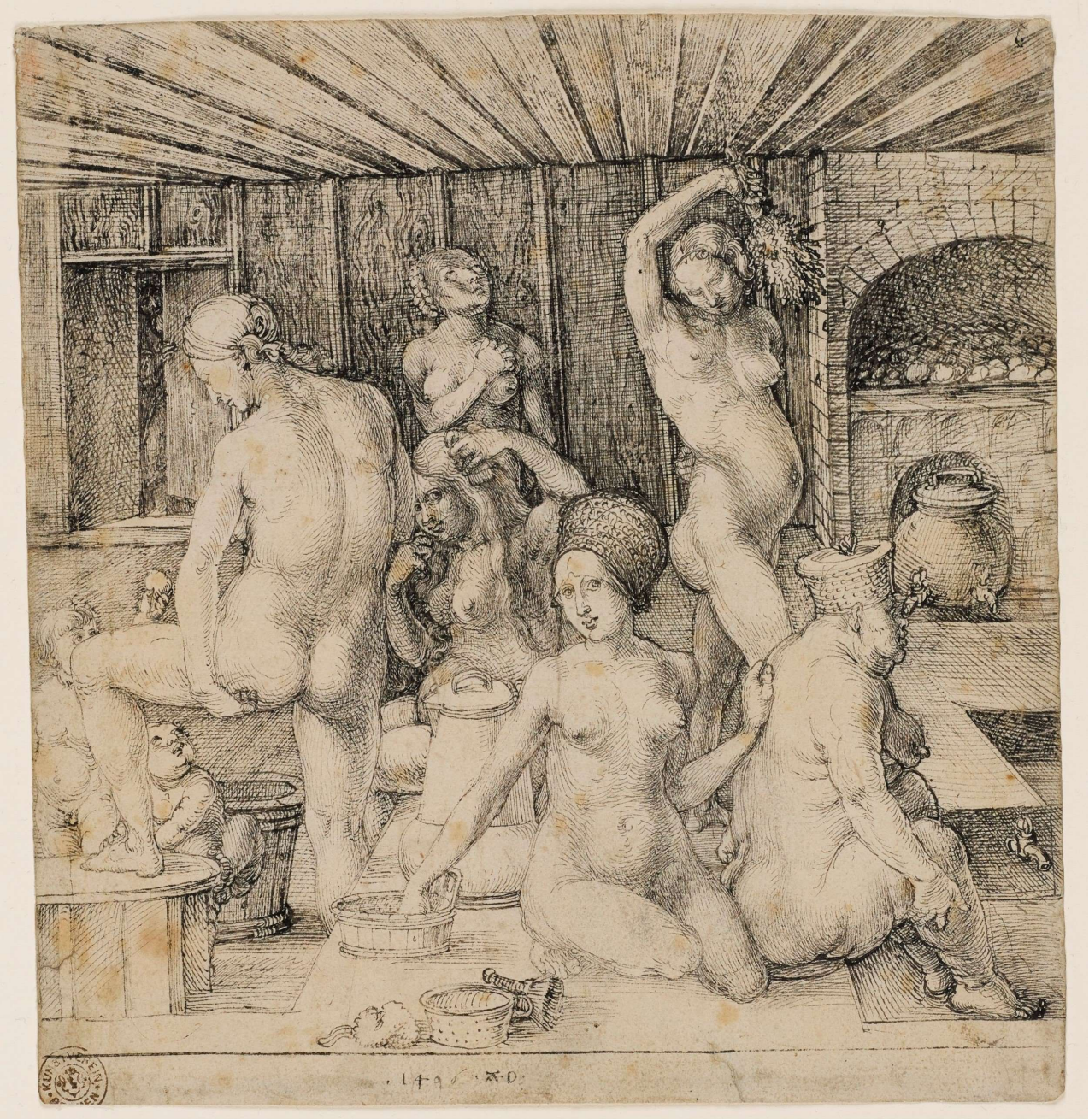
Ill. 36. Hans Baldung Grien
Unequal Couple
1527
Oil and tempera on limewood, 48 x 42 cm
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool



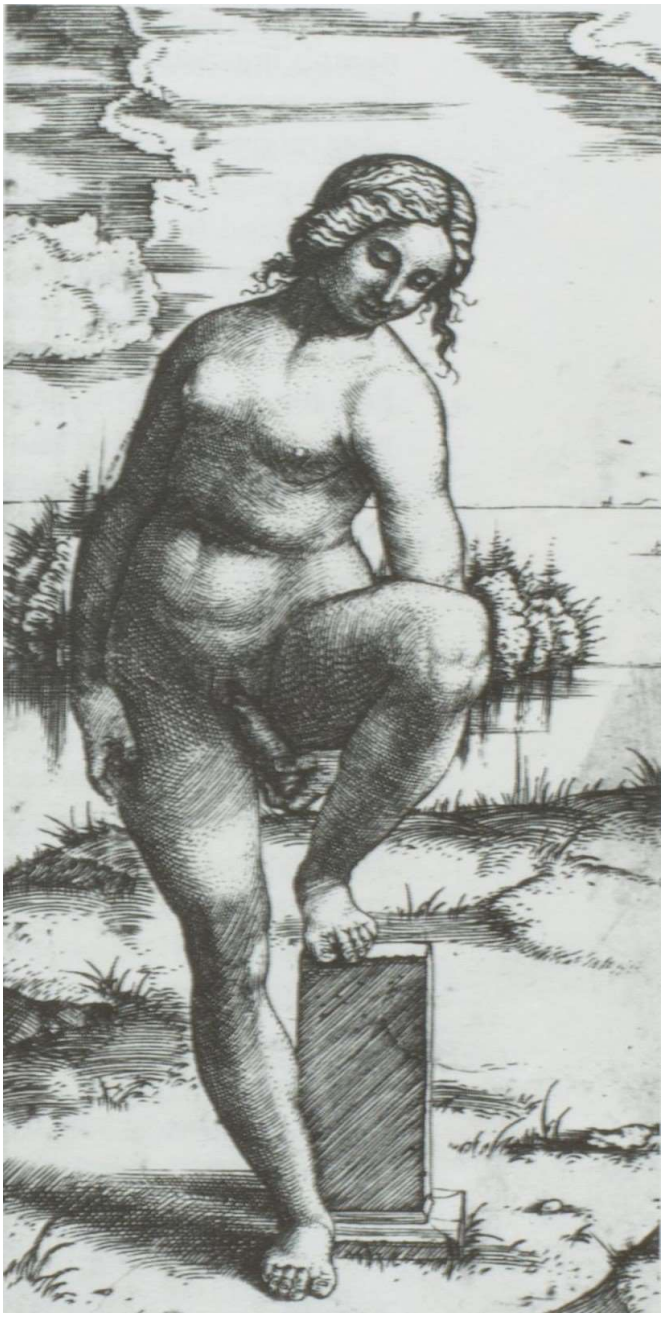
Ill. 37. Hans Baldung Grien
Weather Witches
1523
Mixed technique on limewood, 65,4 x 46 cm
Staedel, Frankfurt/Main



Ill. 38. Conrad Meit
Judith with the head of Holofernes
1525-28
Alabaster, 29,5 x 13,1 x 10,0 cm
Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich



Ill. 39. Albrecht Dürer
Women's Bath
1496
Pen and ink, 23,1 x 23 cm
Kunsthalle Bremen



Ill. 40. Marcantonio Raimondi
Nymph inserting dildo
c .1525
Engraving, 14,1 x 7 cm
Nationalmuseum Stockholm



Ill. 41. Master of the Banderoles
The Fountain of Youth
c.1470
Engraving, 23,1 x 31,5 cm



Ill. 42. Niklaus Manuel Deutsch
Death and the Maiden
1517
Mixed technique on fir, 38,2 x 29,2 cm
Kunstmuseum Basle



Ill. 43. Niklaus Manuel Deutsch
Death and the Maiden
c. 1517
Pen, weightening, coloured, on wood, 10,7 x 8cm
Kunstmuseum Basle



Ill. 44. Sebald Beham
Lascivious couple with Death
1529
Engraving, 82 x 49 mm



Ill. 45. Sebald Beham
Nessos and Deianira
1531-50
Engraving, 72 x 52 mm



Ill. 46. Hans Baldung Grien
Love couple
c. 1512
Pen and ink, weightening, 19,7 x 15,8 cm
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett



Ill. 47. Hans Baldung Grien
You shall not commit adultery
1516
Woodcut, 10,9 x 14 cm



Ill. 48. Anonymous after Hans Baldung Grien
Vanitas or Luxuria
1524
Oil and tempera on parchment, mounted on wood, 48,6 x 26,6 cm
Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlung, Munich

h



Ill. 49. Anonymous after Hans Baldung Grien
Women's Bath
1520s
Oil on oak, 46,3 x 32,4 cm
Kunsthalle Karlsruhe



Ill. 50. Hans Baldung Grien
Witches
1514
Pen and ink, weightening, 30,9 x 21 cm
Albertina, Vienna



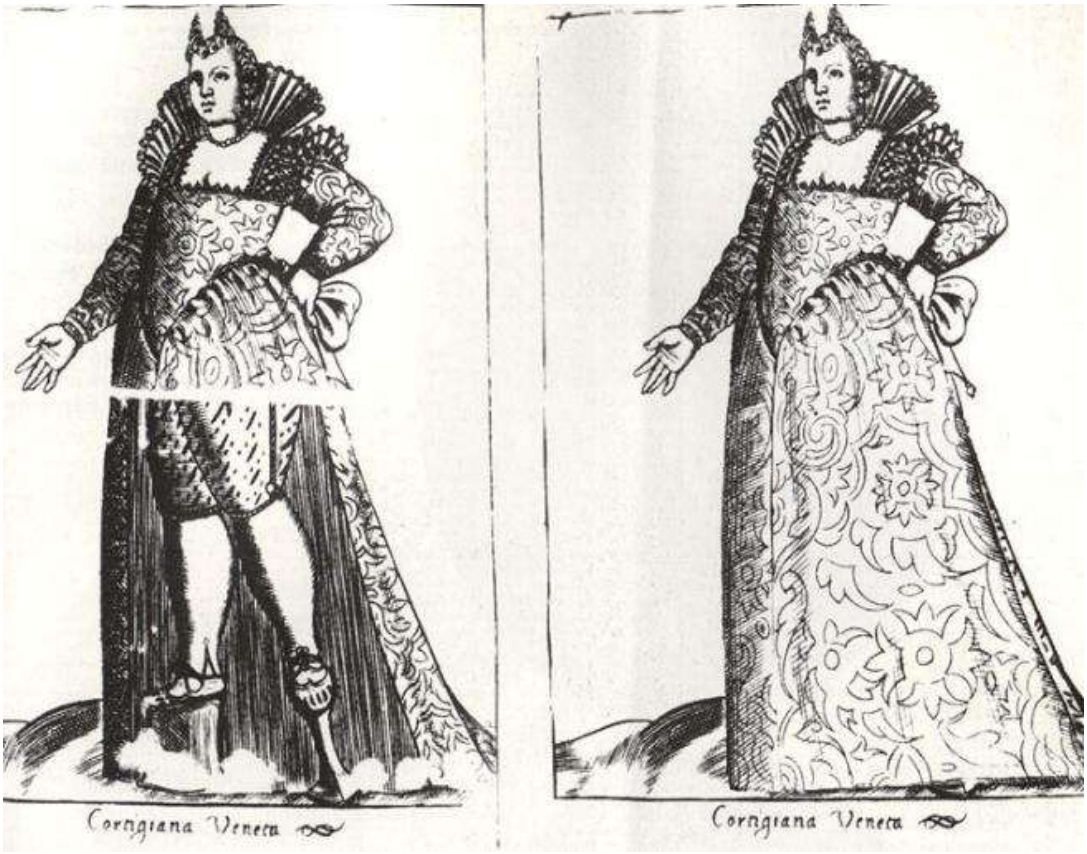
Ill. 51. Hans Baldung Grien
Defecating woman
1513
Red chalk, 19,9 x 19,9 cm
Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin



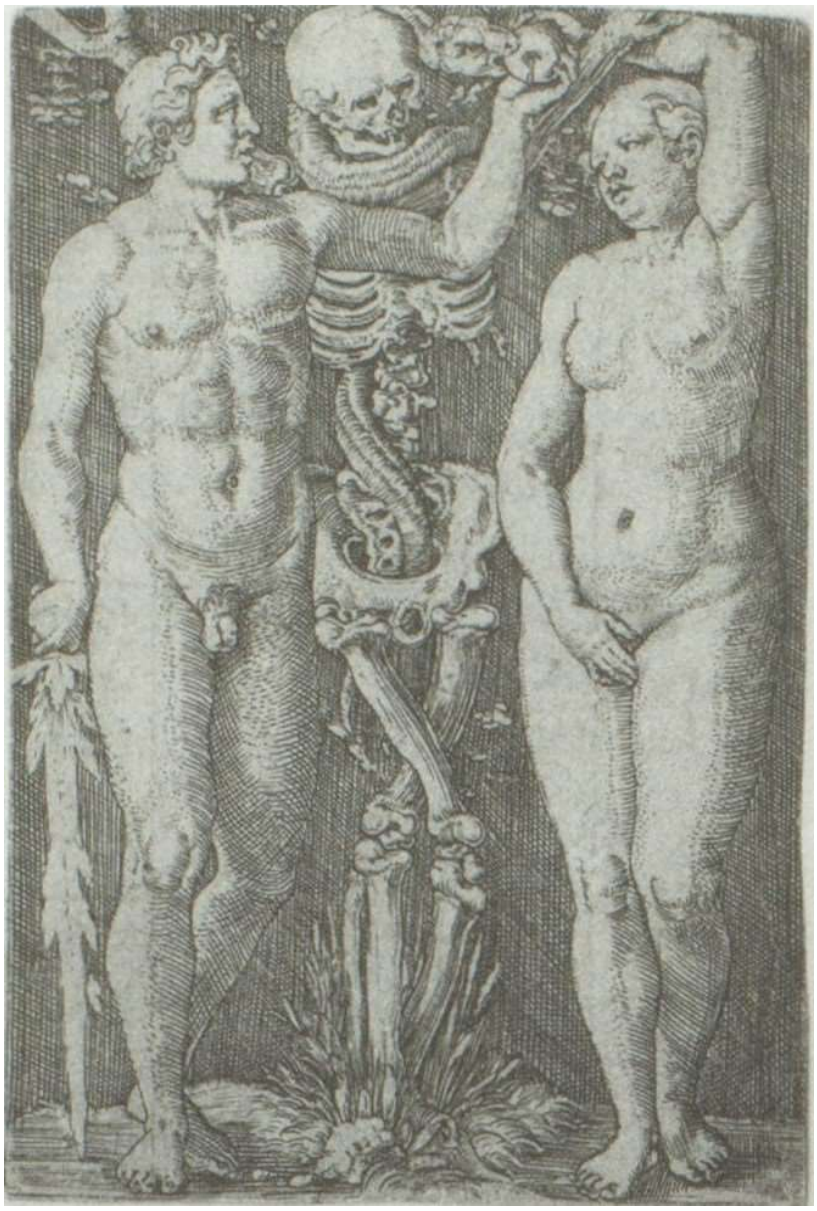
Ill. 52. Hans Baldung Grien
Witch with dragon
1515
Pen and ink, washing, 29,5 x 20,7 cm
Kunsthalle Karlsruhe



Ill. 53. Heinrich Vogtherr
Anathomia
1539
Woodcut, 52,7 x 26 cm



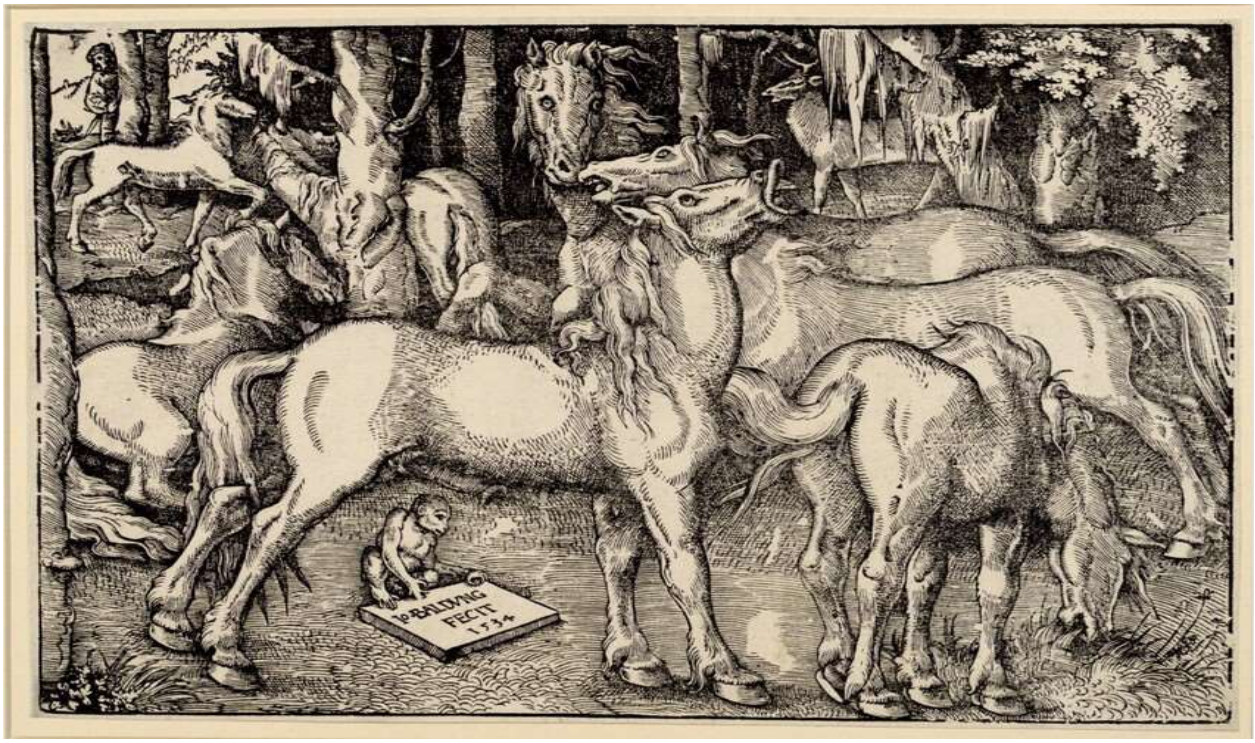
Ill. 54. Venetian Courtesan
mid-16th century
Details unknown



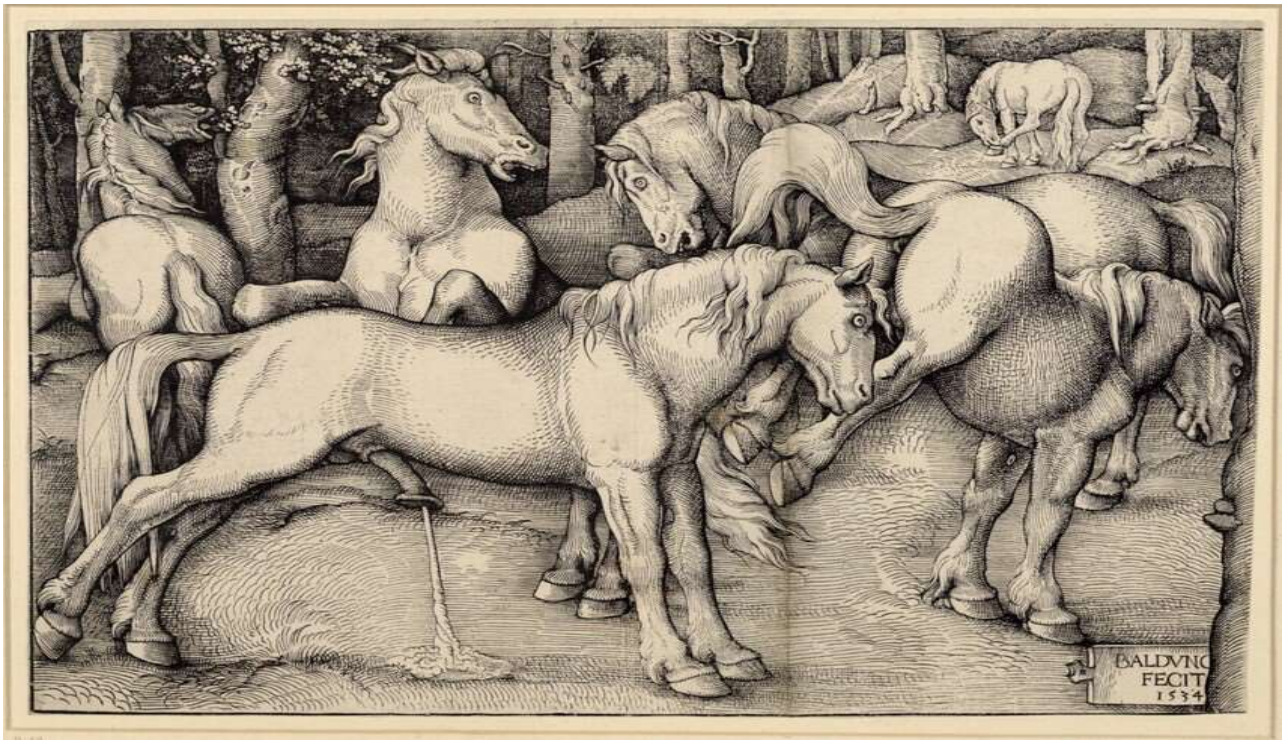
lll. 55. Barthel Beham
Adam and Eve
1526-29
Engraving, 78 x 54 mm



Ill. 56. Master PS
Woman and Death
1529
Boxwood, 17,5 x 12,5 cm
Location unknown (formerly Collection List, Magdeburg)



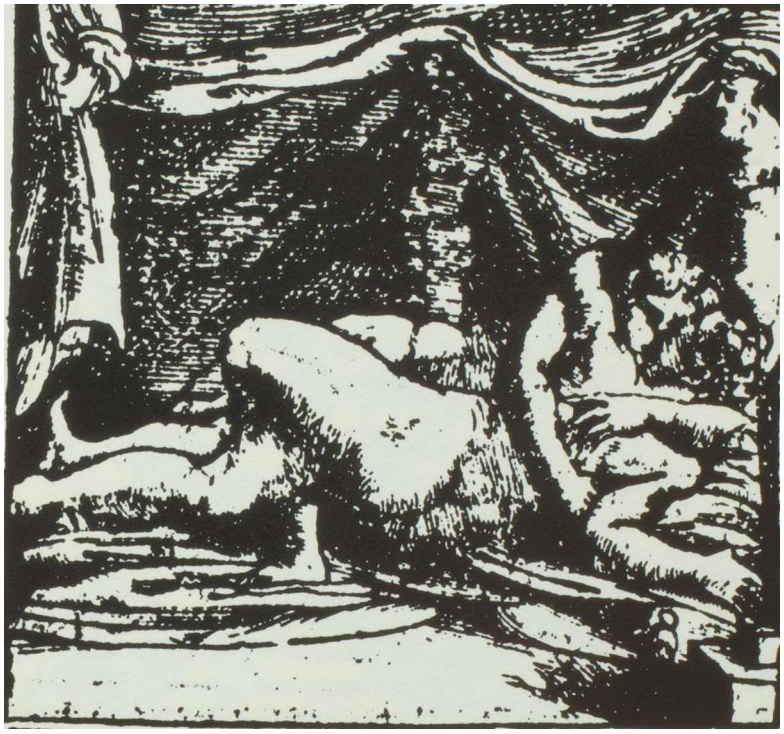
Ill. 57. Hans Baldung Grien
Wild Horses
1534
Woodcut, 22,5 x 33,5 cm



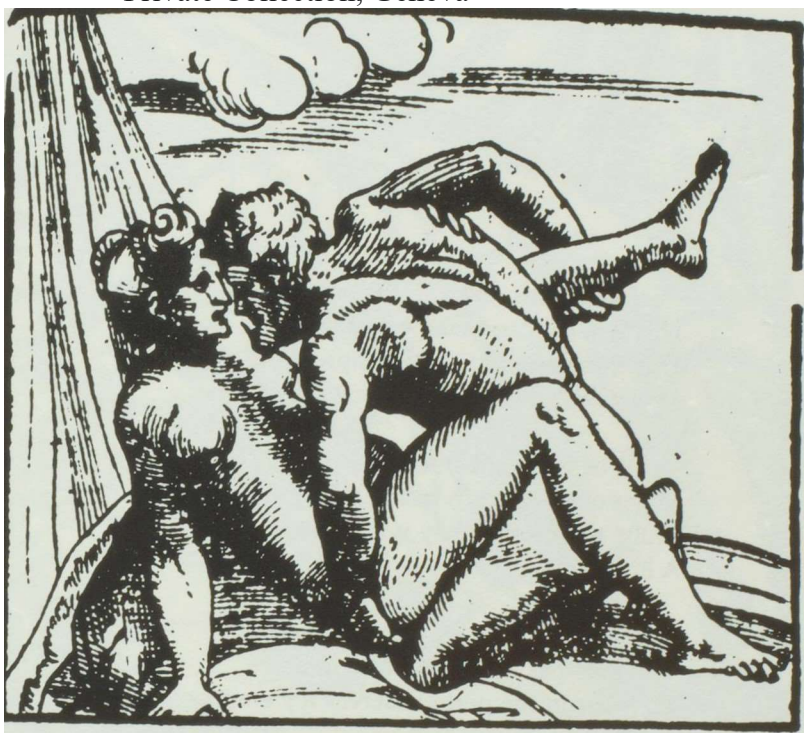
Ill. 58. Same as Ill. 57. (except dim. 23,2 x 33,7 cm)



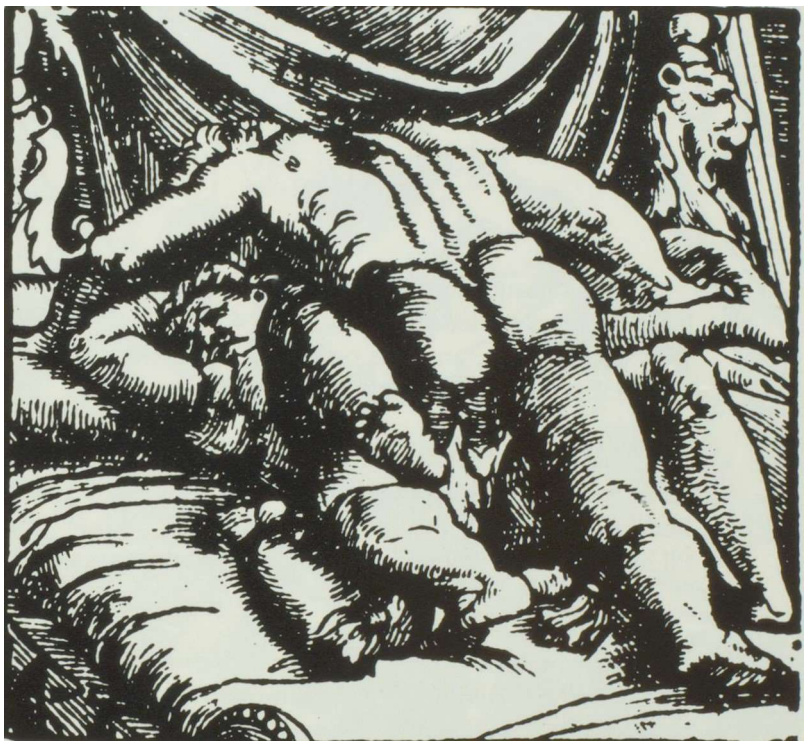
Ill. 59. Same as Ill. 57 & 58 (except dim. 21,6 x 32 cm)



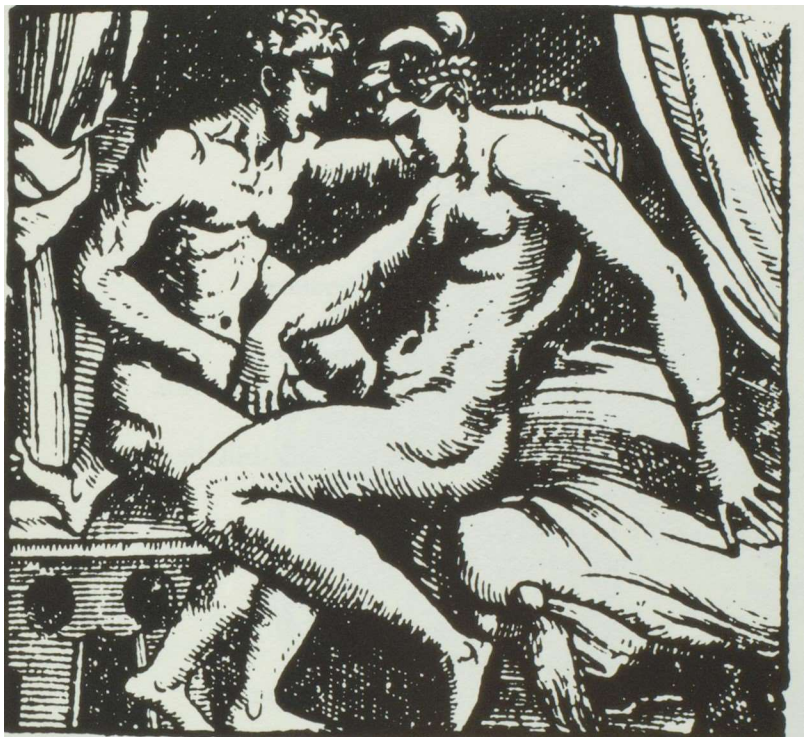
Ill. 60. Anonymous after Giulio Romano and Marcantonio Raimondi
I modi
c 1527
Woodcut, c 60 x 66
Private Collection, Geneva



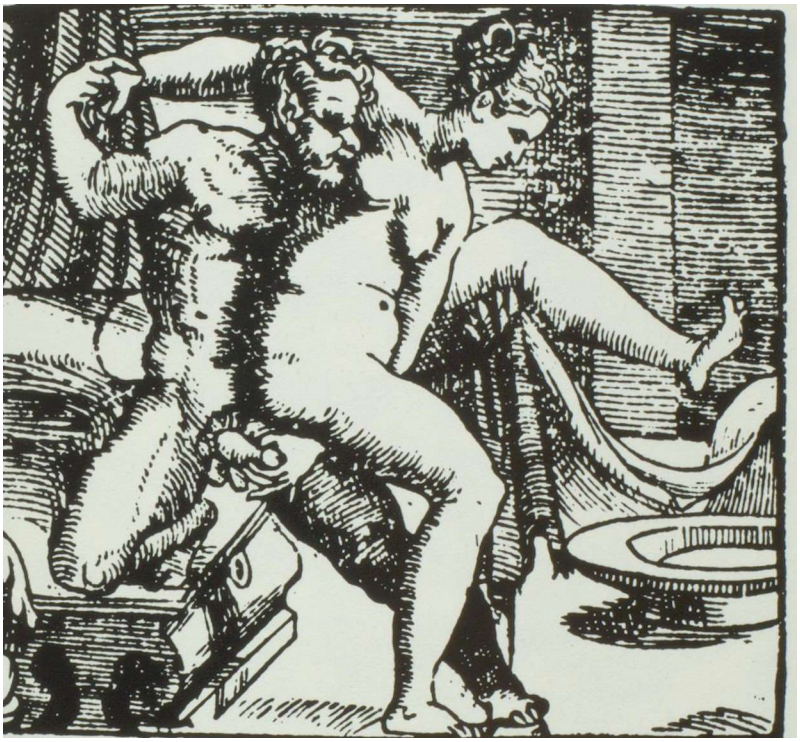
Ill. 61. Same as Ill. 60.



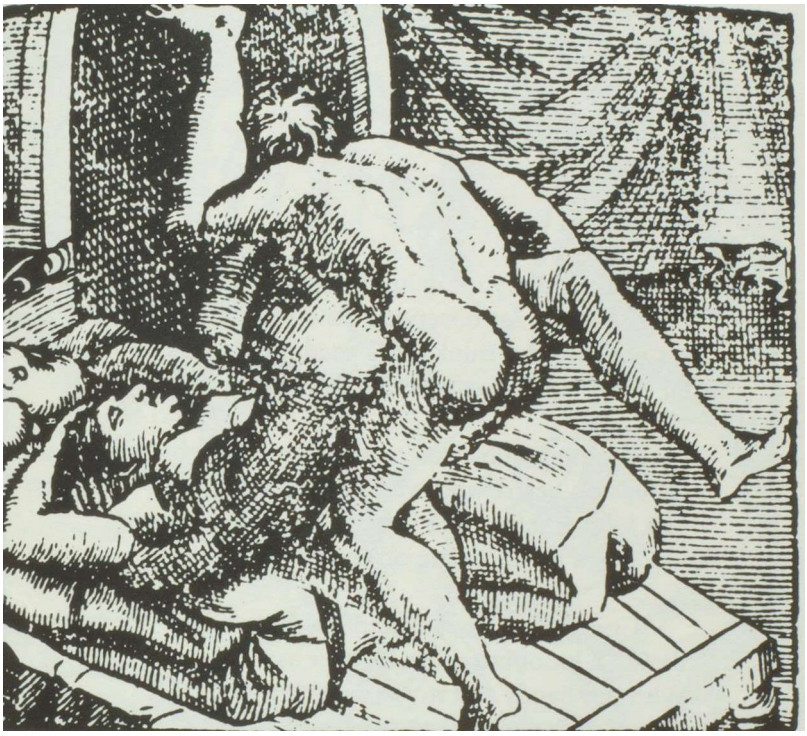
Ill. 62. Same as Ill. 60.



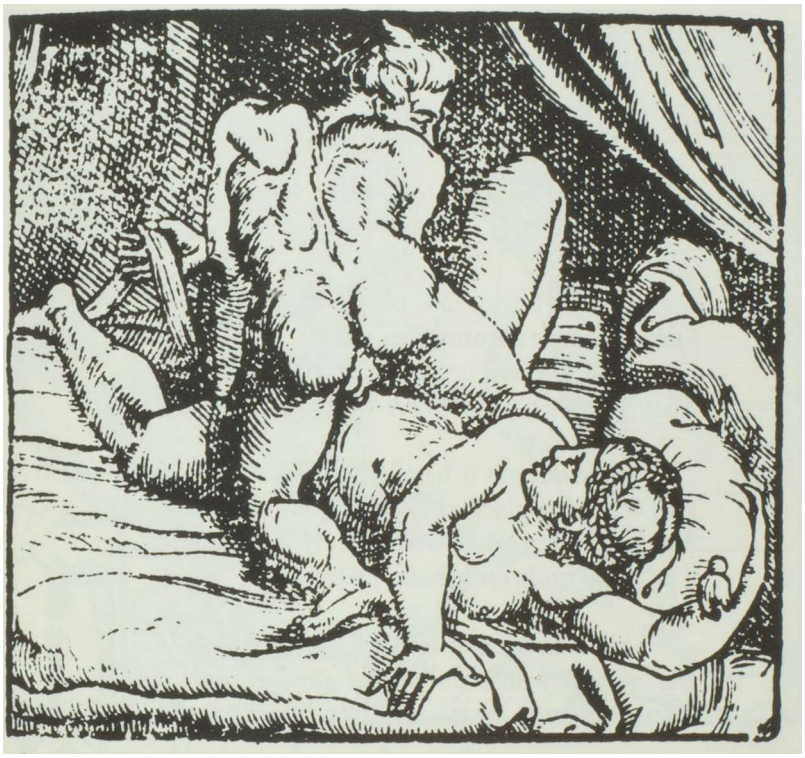
Ill. 63. Same as Ill. 60.



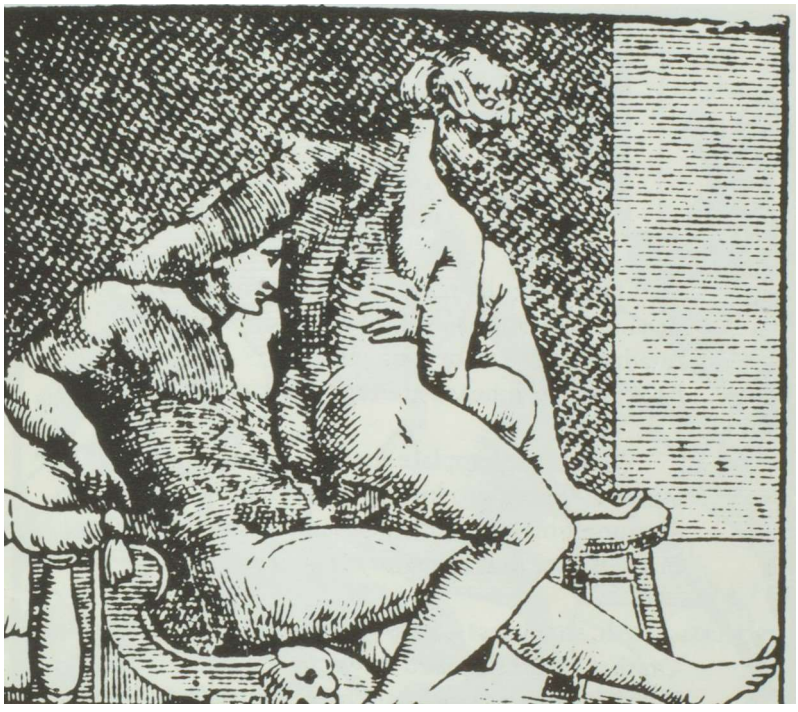
Ill. 64. Same as Ill. 60.



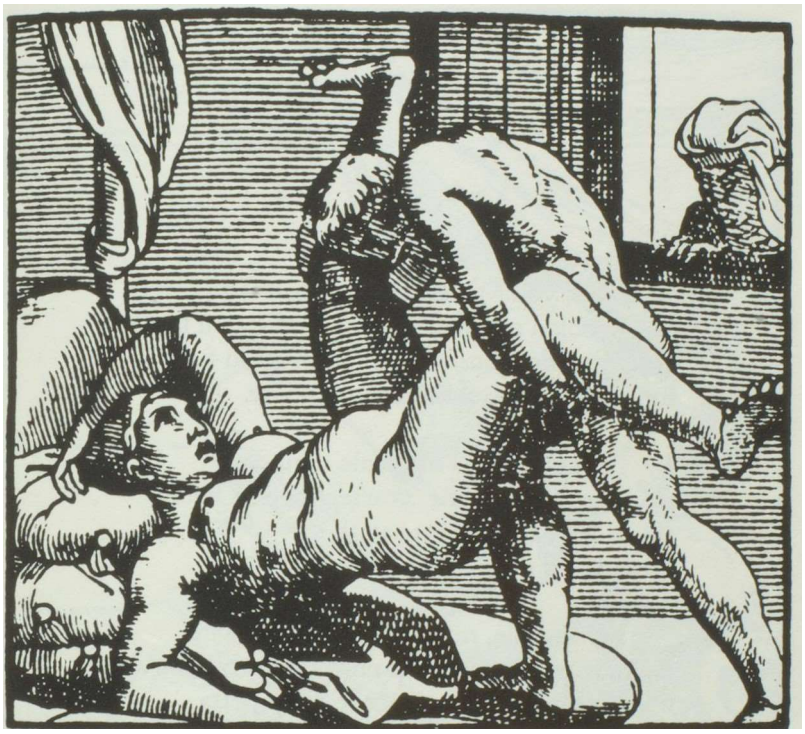
Ill. 65. Same as Ill. 60.



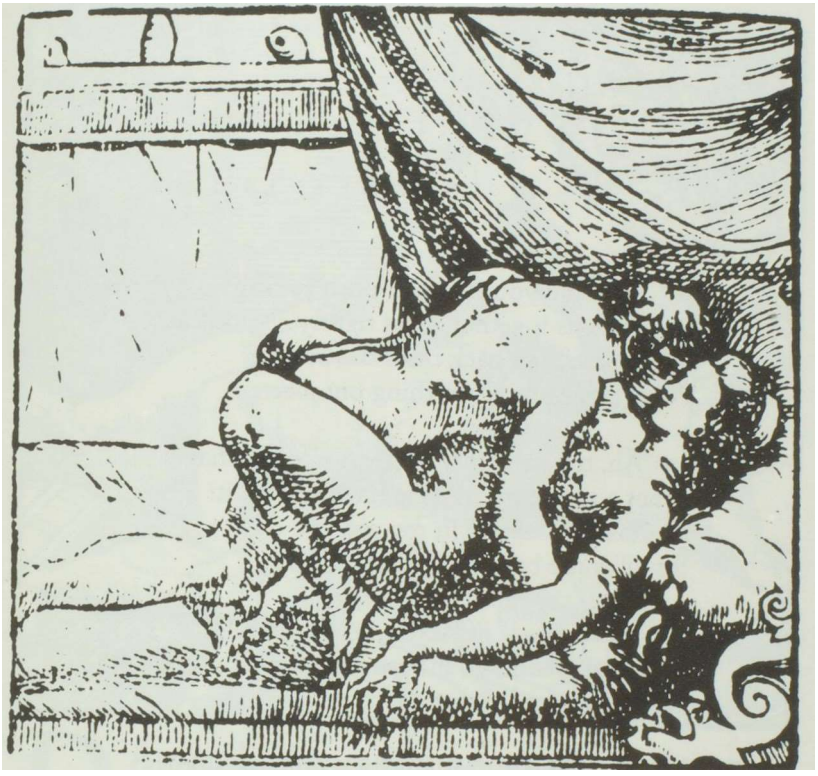
Ill. 66. Same as Ill. 60.



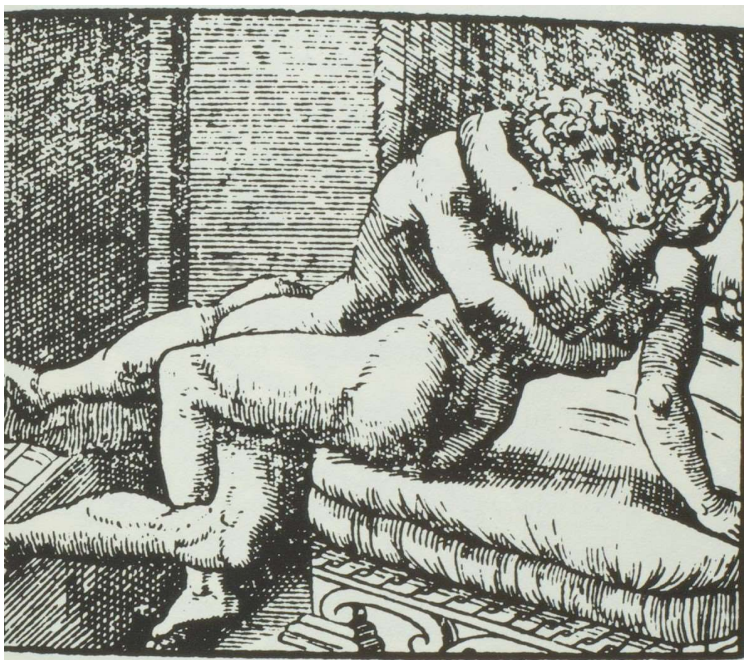
Ill. 67. Same as Ill. 60.



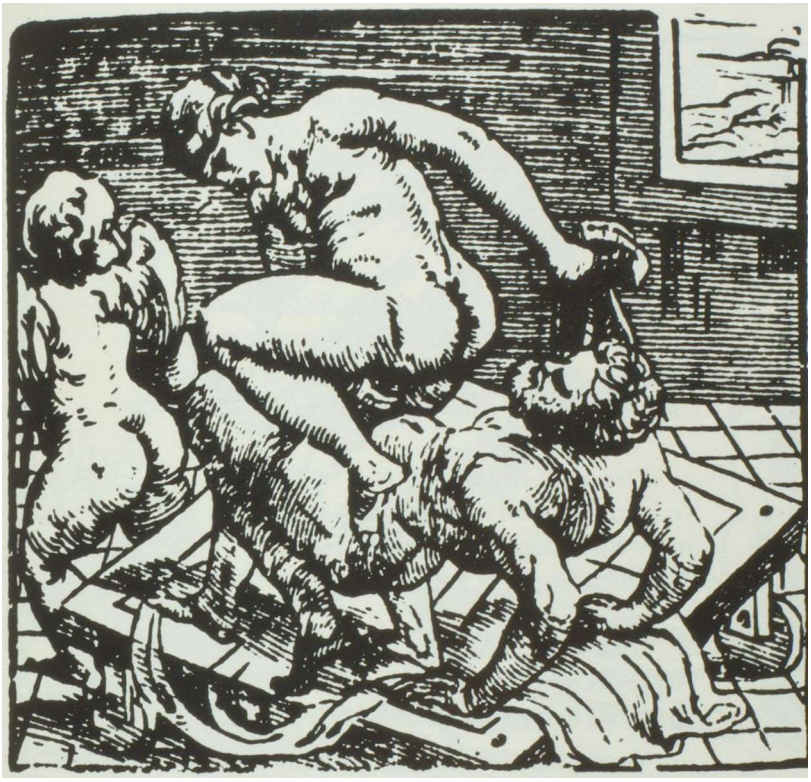
Ill. 68. Same as Ill. 60.



Ill. 69. Same as Ill. 60.



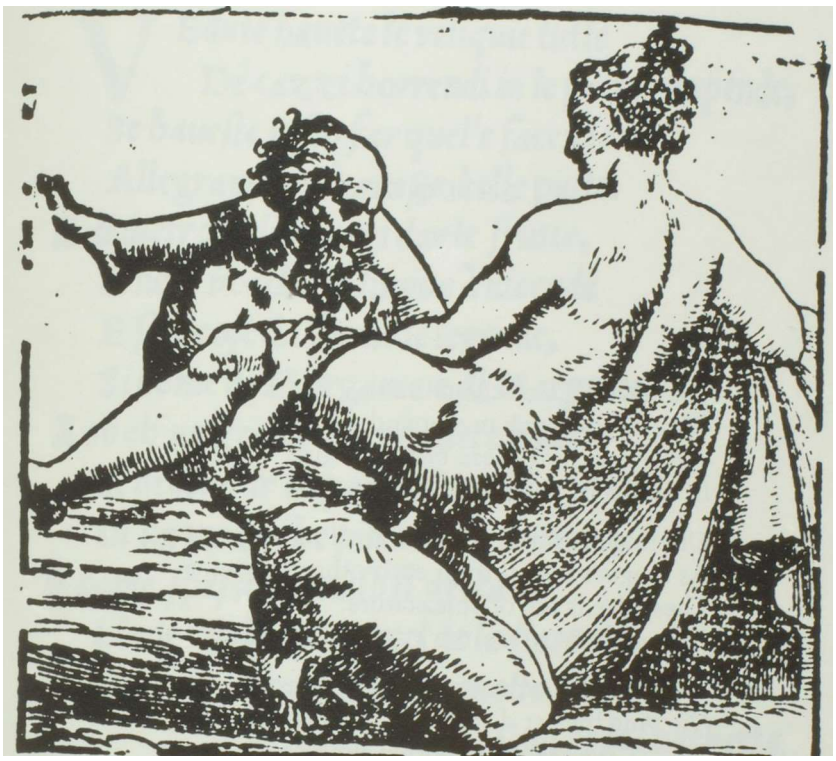
Ill. 70. Same as Ill. 60.



Ill. 71. Same as Ill. 60.



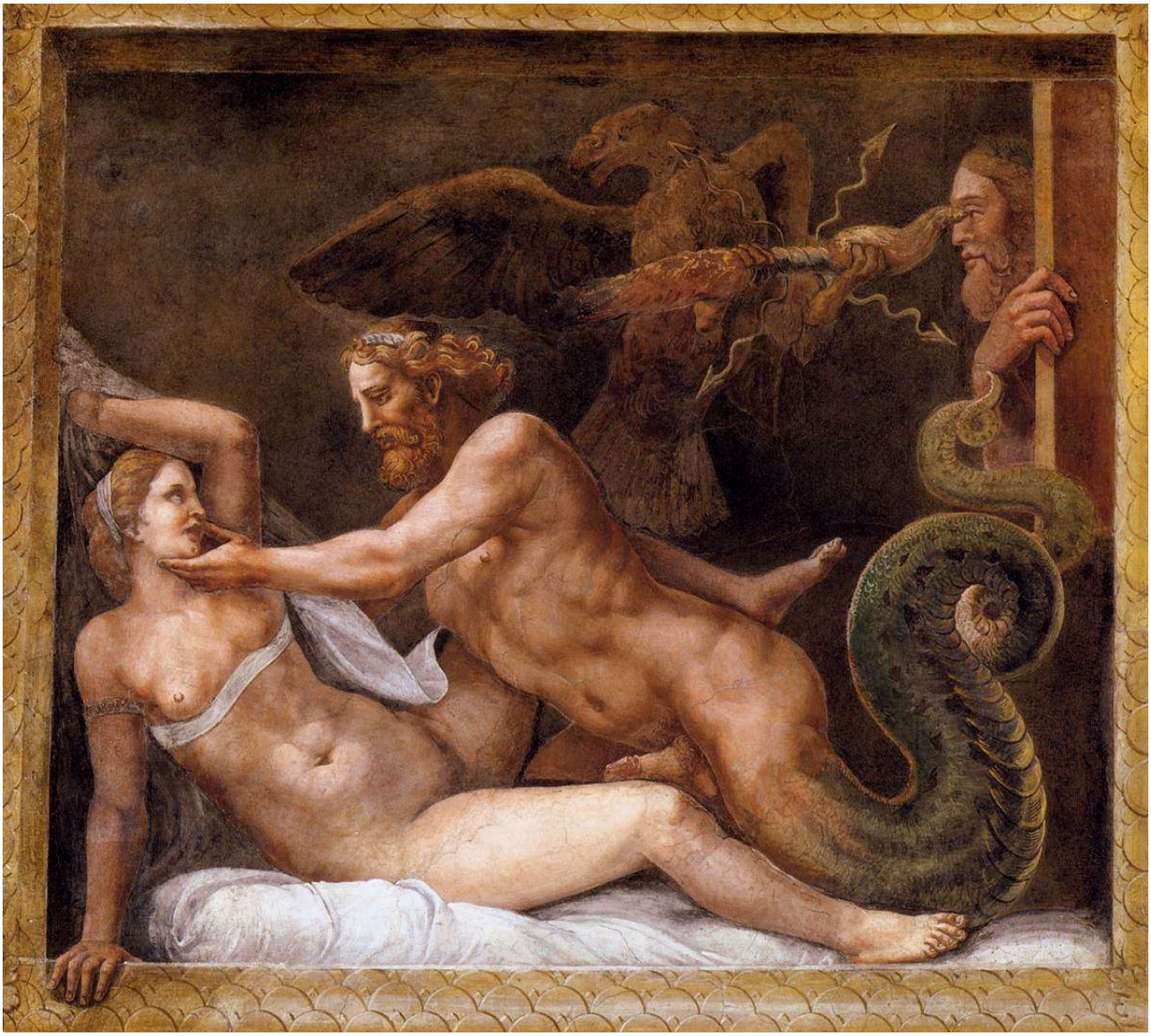
Ill. 72. Same as Ill. 60.



Ill. 73. Same as Ill. 60.



Ill. 74. Anonymous after Marcantonio Raimondi
Satyr and herm
c. 1510-50
Engraving, 15,7 x 11,1 cm



Ill. 75. Giulio Romano
Jupiter and Olympias
1526-28
Fresco, Dim. unkown
Sala di Psiche, Palazzo Te, Mantua

Abstract

Zwei Konturkopien in der Veste Coburg, die den Umkreis Hans Baldung Griens zugeschrieben werden, stellen den Sündenfall dar. Insbesondere die zweite Zeichnung bricht mit ihrer expliziten Darstellung manueller Penetration von Evas Vulva mit den Normen visueller Repräsentation in der Renaissance. Trotz dieser höchst unkonventionellen Ikonographie wurden beide Zeichnungen bisher kaum von der Wissenschaft gewürdigt. Ziel der Arbeit ist es daher die Werke in ihren historischen Kontext einzubetten und sowohl die künstlerische Entwicklung des biblischen Narrativs als auch sexualisierter Themen in der frühen Neuzeit in Deutschland zu bearbeiten. Im Zuge der Wandlung von Bild zu Kunstwerk um 1500 fällt ein stetiges Interesse and Erotika, das sich insbesondere den Stammeltern widmete. Erstmals werden Adam und Eva auffällig oft als Liebespaar dargestellt, entgegen der mittelalterlichen Tradition, die Erzählung von Gen. 3 mit ihren Folgen für die Menschheit als linearen Diskurs zu visualisieren. Hierbei zeigt sich, dass konträr zur textlichen Vorlage und theologischen Exegese die zwischenmenschliche Beziehung Adam und Evas als erstes Paar für viele Zeitgenossen im Fokus des Interesses stand. Das Erwachen sexueller Lust als Strafe Gottes hielt nun Einzug in den künstlerischen Kanon und interpretierte dies oft im zeitgenössischen Kontext der Weibermachten, in welcher die Frau ihre physischen Reize nutzt, um Männer ins Verderben zu stürzen. Insbesondere die zweite, höchst sexualisierte Zeichnung ist in diesem erstarkenden patriarchalen Rahmen zu betrachten, bedarf aber nichtsdestotrotz einer Bewertung von Erotika als Werke, die bewusst auf das sinnliche Verlangen des Betrachters abzielen. Die Ambivalenz vieler erotisierender Bildwerke deutschsprachiger Künstler der Renaissance, die zwischen ästhetischer Erfahrung und moralisierender Indoktrination pendeln, sind hierbei besonders zu beachten. Ein Vergleich mit der berüchtigten Druckserie *I modi* soll Fragen nach einem pornographischen Diskurs in der frühen Neuzeit beantworten und inwiefern Baldungs Zeichnungen Antwort auf ein wachsendes Interesse an sexuellen Objekten sind.