

Eve's Creation in the Mural Paintings Decorating the Church of the Apafi Family at Mălâncrav (Malmkrog, Almakerék) in Transylvania*

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ABSTRACT. *Eve's Creation in the Mural Paintings Decorating the Church of the Apafi Family at Mălâncrav (Malmkrog, Almakerék) in Transylvania.*

Eve's creation image is one of the Genesis scenes in the iconographic program decorating the north wall of the nave in the fourteenth-century proprietary church belonging to the noble family Apafi in the village of Mălâncrav (Transylvania). Presenting a composition in which only Eve's head was shown, completely formed from Adam's rib, which was separated from his body and held by the Creator in his hand, this iconographic variant is seldom encountered in the medieval corpus of Genesis representations. Based on Baschet's serial method, the present article attempts to understand the origins of this representational choice and its possible interpretations suggested by exegetical texts and *exempla* literature, which are related in some cases to the Franciscans. It also aims to discuss the image's probable significance for a devout, arguably predominantly female, public.

Keywords: *Eve's creation, proprietary church, medieval wall paintings, Franciscans, Transylvania.*

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Built sometime in the first half of the fourteenth century, the church of the noble family Apafi in the Transylvanian village Mălâncrav (Târnava Mare region)¹ displays evident stylistic differences between the architectural features of the basilical nave and the Gothic structure of the choir.² This explains why some specialists dated the nave and its wall paintings earlier than the choir,³ which was modified towards the end of the fourteenth century.⁴ The church's exceptionally rich interior decoration in Transylvania's case, made of wall paintings, sculpted reliefs, and the panel paintings of the fifteenth-century winged altarpiece, reiterate and nuance the interest in the same religious themes like the Passion of Christ,⁵ the glorification of the Virgin⁶ and a variety of saints, both masculine and feminine, intercessors and protectors of several generations of Apafi donors.

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- ¹ Anca Gogâltan, "The Church in Mălâncrav (Almakerék, Malmkrog) Sibiu District. A Historiographic Overview," *Apulum, Istorie – Etnografie – Conservare* XXXVII/2, (2000): 305–313. See also a thorough bibliography on the church and its decorations in the catalogue of Marie Lionnet's doctoral thesis, "Les peintures murales en Hongrie à la fin du Moyen Âge (v. 1300–v. 1475)" (PhD diss., University Paris X-Nanterre, 2004), 2: 5, <https://www.diffusiontheses.fr/46149-these-de-lionnet-marie.html>. See also Marie Lionnet, "Almakerék, Église Notre-Dame, peintures murales" in *Sigismundus Rex et Imperator: Art et culture au temps de Sigismond de Luxembourg, 1387–1437*, ed. Imre Takács (Philipp von Zabern, 2006), 424, fig. 4.147. A more recent presentation of the church and its mural decorations appears in Dana Jenei, "Les peintures murales de l'église de Mălâncrav. Notes avant la restauration," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art, Série Beaux-Arts* LII (2015): 47–76. For a thorough analysis of the church's architecture see Ileana Burnichioiu, *Biserici parohiale și capele private din comitatele Alba și Hunedoara 1200–1550* (Editura Mega, 2018), esp. 304–316. See also Viktor Roth, "Az almakeréki templom és műkincsei," *Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum Érem és Régiségtárából* 3, no. 1 (1912): 128–184; Vasile Drăguț, "Picturile murale din biserica evanghelică de la Mălâncrav," *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei* 14, (1967): 79–93; Lionnet, "Les peintures murales," 1: 392–400.
- ² Vătășianu dated the church's architecture between 1350 and the end of the fourteenth century. Virgil Vătășianu, *Istoria artei feudale în Țările Române I* (Fundatia Culturală Română, 2001), 217–218. See also Dragoș Gh. Năstăsioiu, Ferenc Mihály, Lorand Kiss, *Monumente Medievale de pe Valea Târnavelor* (Editura ACS, 2018), 290–313 (esp. 296). Drăguț hypothesized that the church was built in the first half of the fourteenth century and „modernized” towards the end of the century. Drăguț, "Picturile murale," 80. Based on the observations during the restoration works carried out in 2001–2002 and 2013, Jenei endorsed the same hypothesis. Jenei, "Les peintures murales," 47.
- ³ Entz Géza, *Erdély építészete a 14–16. században* (Az Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület kiadása, 1996), 54.
- ⁴ Drăguț, "Picturile murale," 80.
- ⁵ Anca Gogâltan, "Passion Iconography and Narrative Strategies in the Medieval Frescoes Decorating the Church in Mălâncrav (Almakerék, Malmkrog) in Transylvania," *New Europe College. GE-NEC Program 2004–2007* (2007): 103–152.
- ⁶ Lionnet, "Les peintures murales," 1: 66–70; Mihnea Mihail, "The Hungarian Kingdom and Aspects of the Geography of Art from the Perspective of Iconographic Transfers in the Fourteenth-Fifteenth Centuries" (PhD diss., Bucharest National University of Arts, 2018), 1: 3–7, 201–202.

The murals in the nave illustrate the entire holy history of humanity from the moment of its Creation to Jesus' and the Virgin's death and Ascension.⁷ It also includes images of sacrifices suffered by some of those who died for their Christian belief. Dated on stylistic grounds around or after the middle of the fourteenth century,⁸ they occupy the whole northern wall of the central nave. They were organized in six tiers, out of which the first four follow the *bustrophedon* display, alternating the narratives' reading direction from left to right and right to left.⁹ In that way, the images could be seen in relation to each other, their significations combined to enhance their theological messages.¹⁰

The scene under study belongs to the Genesis cycle, which unfolds on the whole upper tier; it is located in the register's northwestern side between the moment of the fishes' and birds' Creation and God's Admonition to Adam and Eve concerning the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. Adam's body appears on the composition's right side, probably asleep on a mound. The introduction or enlargement of a medieval window opening partly destroyed the area. For that reason, only the feet of the ancestor of humanity can be seen.¹¹ On the scene's left side, God the Father appears as an active agent of the creational event.¹² He was represented as an older man with long, curly hair

⁷ Lionnet, "Les peintures murales," 1: 188–190. On that occasion, a thorough visual documentation of the murals was produced, consisting of black-and-white photographs and watercolors painted by Zoltán Veress. This documentation is preserved in the Hungarian Museum of Architecture and Monument Protection Documentation Center in Budapest. When compared to the current state of the wall paintings, the photos published by Éber work as more reliable visual sources, as they do not include additions by the painter. See Éber László, "Tanulmányok Magyarország középkori falfestményeiről. I. Újronnan fölfedezett falfestmények Almakeréken," in *Magyarország Műemlékei* 4, ed. Forster Gyula (A Franklin Társulat Nyomása, 1915): 71–86; Drăguț, "Picturile murale," 82. The northern wall in the central nave was the only one decorated, and the wall paintings were created at a later date after the construction. See Jenei, "Les peintures murales," 48–49.

⁸ The paintings were dated differently by specialists. Radocsay Dénes, *Falképek a középkori Magyarországon* (Corvina Kiadó, 1977), 121 and Prokopp Mária, *Italian Trecento Influence on Murals in East Central Europe Particularly Hungary* (Akadémiai Kiadó, 1983), 141 (the first half of the fourteenth century). Drăguț believed that they were painted immediately after 1350 whereas Jenei dated them around 1350. Drăguț, "Picturile murale," 86; Dana Jenei, "The Church of Virgin Mary in Mălâncrav. The Mihai Eminescu Trust, Church Project in Mălâncrav," 2002, https://www.eminescu.org.uk/content/nd_standard.asp?n=136. Lionnet argued that they were made after 1350. See Lionnet, "Les peintures murales," 2: 3.

⁹ Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, *The Place of Narrative. Mural Decoration in Italian Churches, 431–1600* (University of Chicago Press, 1990), 53.

¹⁰ Jérôme Baschet, *L'iconographie médiévale* (FOLIO Histoire, 2008), 125–151.

¹¹ Adam's torso is supported by a partly preserved small-sized character with a halo.

¹² Johannes Zählten, *Creatio mundi. Darstellungen der sechs Schöpfungstage und naturwissenschaftliches Weltbild im Mittelalter*. Stuttgarter Beiträge zur Geschichte und Politik 13 (Klett-Cotta, 1979), 24, 104.

and beard,¹³ wrapped in a mantle over a long garment, and barefoot.¹⁴ He initiated the woman's formation by blessing the rib in his left hand out of which Eve's head emerges, with long wavy hair and eyes wide open, looking into the eyes of the Divinity.

In medieval artistic production, Eve's creation was represented in many iconographic variants.¹⁵ The image was attributed several meanings, illustrating more than a sequence in the Genesis narrative describing the apparition of the first woman on earth: it had the role to anticipate the original Sin, it prefigured the birth of the Church from Christ's wounded side, and it visualized the physical union between the ancestors of the humanity symbolizing the marital love sanctified by the Church.¹⁶ Considering the representations' diversity, the present analysis explores the symbolic significations of the iconographic variant in Mălâncrav. It searches the meaning of the fact that only Eve's head and not her torso or almost entirely formed body are shown, as she usually appears in most of the images depicting her creation. It questions the image's possible iconographic sources and discusses interpretations of the medieval exegesis and devotional literature, which could explain such a visual choice in a distant place like Mălâncrav. Further questions consider the image's public and the possible ideological connections with another meaningful scene in the iconographic program of the nave, which might have resonated with the message of the studied example.

The image's textual sources

The first two chapters of Genesis mention how God created humanity's ancestors in some contradictory statements.¹⁷ The detailed recount of the events related to Eve's creation from Adam's rib appears only in the second

¹³ God the Father was shown as the oldest principle of the Trinity, indicating his presence in the Creation process. See *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* (Herder, 1970, 1994), 2:165–170; 4: 99–123 (esp. 100).

¹⁴ The lack of footwear was considered a sign of divinity. Annegret Diethelm, "Die Beredsamkeit stummer Bilder. Auf den Spuren eines mittelalterlichen Alphabets der menschlichen Gestalt," in *Der Waltersburger Meister in seiner Zeit*, ed. Horst F. Rupp (Josef Fink Publ., 2015), 128–142 (here 135).

¹⁵ See for example Roberto Zapperi, *Geschichten vom schwangeren Mann. Männer, Frauen und die Macht* (C.H. Beck, 1979), 9–45; Baschet, *L'iconographie*, 298–341; Jack M. Greenstein, "The Body of Eve in Andrea Pisano's Creation Relief," *The Art Bulletin* 90, no. 4 (2008): 575–596; Greenstein, *The Creation of Eve and Renaissance Naturalism. Visual Theology and Artistic Invention* (Cambridge University Press, 2016).

¹⁶ Megan McLaughlin, *Sex, Gender, and Episcopal Authority in an Age of Reform 1000–1122* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 23.

¹⁷ Gen. 1:26–27; 2:19–24 King James Version Bible, <https://www.biblestudytools.com/kjv/genesis/1.html>.

chapter of the Old Testament. According to Greenstein, in the Holy Text's wording, there are two distinct descriptions: the first, representing the voice of the author, focuses on God's actions, whereas the second one is an etiological explanation of the word woman (*virago* in Lat.) mentioning Adam's view on Eve being "bone from his bones and flesh of his flesh".¹⁸ Over time, theologians analyzed the story of Genesis in numerous literal, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical interpretations, generating a significant quantity of exegetical works.¹⁹ Moreover, the biblical text was enriched with new information provided by apocryphal writings like the Greek and Latin versions of the *Life of Adam and Eve*, which explored their fate after the punitive Expulsion from the Garden.²⁰ Their story was also the subject of the earliest medieval drama, the *Play of Adam*, which appeared in the twelfth century in the Anglo-Norman world. It made their story emotionally relatable to a larger public.²¹

The iconographic variety of Eve's creation images suggests that the artists' production resonated with a rich intellectual discourse emerging from the Old Testament narrative, the apocryphal *Vita Adae et Evae*, its theatrical variants, as well as from the exegetic interpretations. This explains why visual representations of Eve's creation could have influenced her perception, interpretations of Virgin Mary's role in religious history, as well as general views on women in medieval society.

How was Eve created in the view of medieval artists?

Iconographic studies that focused on Eve's creation emphasized its popularity, especially in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.²² These mentioned two or three distinct representational types of Eve's creation, presenting many slightly different variants.²³ One of the oldest types appeared in the *Cotton* manuscript, now fragmentarily preserved (probably produced in

¹⁸ Greenstein, "The Body of Eve", 576–577; Greenstein, *The Creation of Eve*, 14–15.

¹⁹ Joy A. Schroeder, *The Bible in Medieval Tradition. The Book of Genesis* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2015), 4.

²⁰ Gary A. Anderson, "Between Biblical Commentaries and Apocryphal Narratives: The Narrativization of Biblical Exegesis in the Life of Adam and Eve," *Jewish Studies* 36 (1996): 31–39, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23382027>. See also Penny Howell Jolly, *Made in God's Image? Eve and Adam in the Genesis Mosaics at San Marco, Venice* (University of California Press, 1997), 3.

²¹ Jolly, *Made in God's Image?*, 3; Maureen Fries, "The Evolution of Eve in Medieval French and English Religious Drama," *Studies in Philology* 99, no. 1 (2002): 1–16, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4174716>.

²² See footnote 15. See also Zahlten, *Creatio mundi*, 218–222.

²³ Baschet, *L'iconographie*, 304; Greenstein, "The Body of Eve", 577; Greenstein, *The Creation of Eve*, 29.

Alexandria towards the end of the fifth century),²⁴ and in depictions of Genesis appearing in the Carolingian Bibles from the ninth century.²⁵ This first iconographic type, called narrative, depicts God's actions during Eve's creation in two or three scenes. On the Genesis frontispiece of the Bible of *San Paolo fuori le mura* (ninth century), for example, the first image from the series shows the moment of the rib extraction from Adam's body who has fallen asleep, followed by the depiction of God's 'work' in Eve's creation (her body appears already formed) and the third moment that illustrates her presentation to Adam.²⁶ The narrative type was the least spread, found in six Genesis cycles produced before the eleventh century, in five examples dated to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and disappeared by the fifteenth century.²⁷

The second iconographic variant, which, according to Baschet, was more interpretative than narrative, dated, apparently, from the second quarter of the eleventh century.²⁸ In Zapperi's opinion, this type visualized Eve's real 'birth' from Adam's body.²⁹ It presented the spontaneous emergence of the woman's torso or her almost entirely formed body from Adam's side without reference to the original rib.³⁰ This was the most widespread composition of Eve's creation, representing 90% of 275 images analyzed by Zahlten.³¹

The representation in Mălâncrav is very different from those already mentioned. It resembles singular images, considered by Baschet to be combined variants of the narrative type or intermediate/hybrids of the two previously described categories.³² However, although some synthesized compositions seem to blend the first two iconographic types, others, like the one under study, introduced certain twists in their "reading" because the roles played by its main protagonists, God and Eve, appear to have changed. Compared to the Carolingian Bibles, for example, in which the focus was on the way the Demiurge accomplished

²⁴ Kurt Weitzmann, Herbert Kessler, *The Cotton Genesis* (Princeton University Press, 1986), 3–7, 30–34.

²⁵ Herbert Kessler, "Hic Homo Formatur: the Genesis Frontispieces of the Carolingian Bibles," *The Art Bulletin* 53, no. 2 (1971): 143–160, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3048827>.

²⁶ Kessler, "Hic Homo Formatur," 148; Koichi Koshi, "Der Adam-und-Eva-Zyklus in der sogenannten Cottongenesis-Rezension: eine Übersicht über mögliche Mitglieder der verzweigten Cottongenesis-Familie," *Annual Bulletin of the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo* 9 (1976): 46–87 (esp. 67–70); Zahlten, *Creatio mundi*, 196; Baschet, *L'iconographie*, 308.

²⁷ Baschet, *L'iconographie*, 308; Greenstein, *The creation of Eve*, 32.

²⁸ Baschet, *L'iconographie*, 306–307.

²⁹ Zapperi, *Geschichten*, 11.

³⁰ Baschet, *L'iconographie*, 304.

³¹ Greenstein's observation, "The Body of Eve", 577; Greenstein, *The creation of Eve*, 38.

³² Baschet and Greenstein related this type to the artists' hesitation to renounce the Biblical text. Baschet, *L'iconographie*, 308–309; Greenstein, "The Body of Eve", 579.

the new being with his own hands, in images like the one in Mălâncrav, the emphasis seems to have been on the miracle of Eve's creation and her individuality as a separate being from Adam. Moreover, in the multi-scenic variants, Eve appeared to play a passive role, being entirely shaped and then led to Adam by the Creator, like in the mosaics decorating the cupola of the narthex in San Marco in Venice (dated to the beginning of the thirteenth century).³³ In contrast, in single representations of Eve's creation from the rib, she manifests herself as capable of recognizing and interacting with God even before being completely formed.

To understand the iconographic specificity of the image under study, I resorted to the serial method theorized by Baschet.³⁴ The French scholar based his analytic approach on the postulate that visual objects actively participated in the social world. Moreover, Western medieval art was not stereotypical and did not rigidly reproduce the Church doctrine, but demonstrated "extreme inventiveness." Baschet argued that by attentively studying a series of images on an iconographic theme or motif, paying attention to differences in artistic mediums, technique, context, visibility, chronology, place of origin, researchers could distinguish meaningful iconographic innovations by comparing the visual objects' similarities, variations, and singularities.³⁵ Although the specialist mentioned several examples of the rib type creation in his analysis of Eve's representations,³⁶ he focused less on them, probably because of their diminished quantitative relevance. Moreover, although Baschet described Eve's body shape, he based his image classification on Adam's rib configuration and the relation between the Protoplasts' figures.³⁷ The representation of Eve's body, her interaction with God, and the possible meanings of such iconographic motifs received scarce attention. The present analysis will consider, besides the representations' chronology, the cultural environments in which they appeared, the geographical mapping of their spread, the exegetic texts, and the discourses of church representatives attached to this theme. The intention is not to reduce the images to texts, but to suggest the modifications that occurred, especially

³³ Martin Büchsel, Herbert L. Kessler, and Rebecca Müller, eds., *The Atrium of San Marco in Venice. The Genesis and Medieval Reality of the Genesis Mosaics* (Mann Verlag, 2014), 186.

³⁴ Baschet, *L'iconographie*, 267–274.

³⁵ For a more detailed presentation of the serial method see Jérôme Baschet, "Inventivité et sérialité des images médiévales. Pour une approche iconographique élargie," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 51, no. 1 (1996): 93–133 (esp. 111–122), https://www.persee.fr/doc/ahess_0395-2649_1996_num_51_1_410835.

³⁶ Koshi, "Der Adam-und-Eva-Zyklus," 70–71; Zahlten, *Creatio mundi*, 196–197; Greenstein, "The Body of Eve," 579–580.

³⁷ See the classification in Baschet, *L'iconographie*, 309–310.

beginning with the twelfth century, in some theological interpretations, which could help us understand the particularity and significations of an image like the one in Mălâncrav.

Eve and Adam's rib

The corpus of presently known images belonging to the rib type (27), dated between the twelfth and the beginning of the fifteenth century, confirms Baschet's observation that it was the least preferred variant among the representations of Eve's creation. However, the range of possible compositions that included the rib in forming the first woman was pretty diverse and appeared, apparently, shortly before the middle of the twelfth century. One of the oldest examples is the marble relief on the facade of the Basilica San Zeno in Verona (Italy), dated around 1138 and attributed to Master Niccolò.³⁸ The image presents the Divinity extracting Eve's torso from Adam's side. The rib, which looks like a small appendix still attached to the first man, connects her to him. This depiction illustrates not only the tight link between the two beings, but also the secondary creational order of the woman from the sleeping man's body.³⁹

More than half of the studied images (18 out of 27) visualized Adam's essential role in this creation, depicting the rib still attached to his body. The bone appears in different ways: like a vertical or a horizontal one (a sort of revolving rib, according to Baschet)⁴⁰ or, quite often, like an umbilicus, sometimes of large dimensions. The firmly, vertically placed bone on Adam's body occurs in Eve's creation scene in the manuscript from the Benedictine monastery in Millstatt (1180–1200, Austria),⁴¹ as well as in the *Passional of Kunigunde*, the abbess of the Benedictine monastery dedicated to St. George in Prague (dated around 1312–1321).⁴²

Images in which the bone attached to Adam's body resembles a flexible umbilical cord from which Eve's body grows with God's assistance, who supports it with his hand, can probably be included in the same category. The producers of the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* manuscripts, dated to the

³⁸ Greenstein, "The Body of Eve", 580, fig. 6.

³⁹ See similar examples in Zahlten, *Creatio mundi*, 196, fig. 56; Baschet, *L'iconographie*, fig. 42.

⁴⁰ Baschet, *L'iconographie*, 309.

⁴¹ Koshi, "Der Adam-und-Eva-Zyklus," 70. See also Greenstein, "The Body of Eve", 580. For the manuscript see Hella Frühmorgen-Voss, *Studien zur illustrierten Millstätter Genesis*, Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters 4 (Beck Verlag, 1962).

⁴² Koshi, "Der Adam-und-Eva-Zyklus," 71, footnote 79. For the manuscript, see Ferdinand Seibt et al., *Gothic Art in Bohemia. Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting* (Praeger Publishers, 1977), 42–43.

fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, preferred this variant.⁴³ Similar to birth scenes, in Zapperi's opinion, in which Eve visibly emerges from Adam's body, the rib, shown like an umbilical cord, was probably chosen to illustrate the biblical text more accurately.⁴⁴ On the other hand, it could have been an acceptable solution to visualize an inexplicable physical phenomenon by referring to some aspects of the public's life experience. Some medieval writers searched for explanations, as for example Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), who had a theory that the production of Eve's entire body from a single bone was possible with the help of the humidity and heat produced by the rib of the first man.⁴⁵

The variant in which Eve's body trunk developed from Adam's (horizontal) revolving rib occurs in the manuscript *Antiquitates Judaicae* of the antique author Flavius Josephus (dated to the second half of the twelfth century),⁴⁶ and later on the *Genesis* panel from the Grabow winged altarpiece attributed to Master Bertram of Minden (before 1383).⁴⁷ Most probably, this variant served as a model for ensuing representations in which the horizontal rib was no longer connected to Adam's body, but appears in the Creator's hand. Eve's torso miraculously grows from it, presenting corporal dimensions comparable to Adam's. Shown in the so-called *Psautier glosée*, produced around 1190–1195 (probably in the Benedictine monastery in Tournai, Belgium), this variant was adopted in mural paintings from south-western Germany, such as those in Freudenberg and Oberschüpf (Baden-Württemberg), both linked with the same painterly workshop and dated around 1300.⁴⁸

In the manuscript *Hortus deliciarum* (1167–1185) attributed to Herrad of Hohenburg (1125/30–1195), the abbess of the female Augustinian monastery

⁴³ See *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* from Toledo (1320–1340, Chapter Archives, Ms. 10.8, fol. 3v), *Speculum* produced in England, dated to the end of the fourteenth century, (Paris, National Library, Ms. 400, fol. 1r). For more examples see the database of the Warburg Institute, London, https://iconographic.warburg.sas.ac.uk/vpc/VPC_search/subcats.php?cat_1=14&cat_2=812&cat_3=2903&cat_4=5439&cat_5=13111&cat_6=10590&cat_7=3782.

⁴⁴ Zapperi, *Geschichten*, 17. Baschet argued that in Eve's case, to be created did not mean to be born. Baschet, *L'iconographie*, 312–328.

⁴⁵ Gemma Louise Wain, "Nec ancilla nec domina: Representations of Eve in the Twelfth Century" (PhD diss., Durham University, 2013), 83, <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/10526/>.

⁴⁶ Realized probably at the Benedictine monastery Saint Trond, Belgium, Ms. 1632, fol. 3, the Condé Museum, Chantilly, France. See Baschet, *L'iconographie*, 309, fig. 41.

⁴⁷ Martina Sitt and Stephanie Hauschild, *Der Petri-Altar von Meister Bertram* (Conference Point Verlag, 2008, 2016), 9, fig. 59.

⁴⁸ Matthias Klein, *Schöpfungsdarstellungen mittelalterlicher Wandmalereien in Baden-Württemberg und in der Nordschweiz*. Hochschulsammlung Philosophie Kunstgeschichte 4 (Freiburg [Breisgau] Hochschulverlag, 1982), 83, fig. 52, 307, fig. 164.

Mont Sainte Odile in Alsace,⁴⁹ the bone, depicted like a semi-circle generating Eve's miniature torso,⁵⁰ seems to be similarly separated from Adam's body in the Creator's hand.⁵¹ Baschet argued that this image represented a successful synthesis of the multi-scene illustration of the narrative type in one composition. Still, the scholar paid less attention to Eve's hand gestures. One notices that, despite her incomplete formation, Eve adopts the antique orans position, suggesting her active adoration of God from the moment of her creation.⁵²

Eve's head

The image under study is part of a narrow group (8 out of 27) that presents only Eve's head, partly or entirely formed, growing from Adam's rib. In Genesis cycles from the twelfth century, like the centrally staged composition in the antiphonary from the Benedictine Abbey in Zwiefalten (Baden-Württemberg, 1138–1147),⁵³ representing the first example of this type, and the similar one in the manuscript entitled *Liber Scivias* (1172)⁵⁴ attributed to Hildegard of Bingen, leader of the Benedictine monastery at Rupertsberg (Rhein-Pfalz, south-western Germany), as a second example, the generating rib appears like a thin bone still linked to Adam's body out of which Eve's head emerges with her modeled features and opened eyes.⁵⁵ In the already-mentioned representation in the Millstatt Bible (the third example), Eve's head is incomplete. It is noteworthy that whereas in the first two cases, apparently realized by the same scriptorium, the Creator's role was only suggested, the Millstatt manuscript visualizes the divine activity. God is shaping the woman, being assisted by a hallowed character, probably an angel, just like in the image at Mălâncrav. A similar representation, without the

⁴⁹ For the manuscript, see Danielle B. Joyner, *Painting the Hortus Deliciarum. Medieval Women, Wisdom, and Time* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

⁵⁰ The miniature size diminishes the suggestion of her sensuality.

⁵¹ Koshi, "Der Adam-und-Eva-Zyklus," 70, fig. 40; Greenstein, "The Body of Eve", 580.

⁵² Jean-Claude Schmidt, *Rațiunea gesturilor* (Meridiane, 1998), 31; Jolly, *Made in God's Image?*, 12.

⁵³ Ms. Cod. Hist. 2^o 415, Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek. This image exemplifies the austere style of the Zwiefalten scriptorium, consisting of drawings in black and red ink. Hermann Josef Pretsch, "Das Ende der Hirschauer Reformbewegung," in *900 Jahre Benediktinerabtei Zwiefalten*, ed. Hermann Josef Pretsch (Ulm Süddeutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1990), 61–72 (here 63); Zahlten, *Creatio mundi*, 59; Baschet, *L'iconographie*, 44.

⁵⁴ Zahlten, *Creatio mundi*, 61. See also Rebeca L. R. Garber, "Where is the Body? Images of Eve and Mary in the Scivias," in *Hildegard of Bingen. A Book of Essays*, ed. Maud Nurnett-McInerney (Routledge, 1998), 132–162.

⁵⁵ *Liber Scivias*, University Library Heidelberg, Ms. IX, Room X, 16, fol. 2v. See Zahlten, *Creatio mundi*, fig. 61.

assisting figure, can be seen in the Passion of the Abbess Kunigunde (the fourth example), in which God's modeling effort was nuanced in a tender gesture of support and blessing Eve's face, whose features were already formed.⁵⁶

The differences between the aforementioned images and the one under study (the fifth example) are both chronological and compositional. The bone from which Eve's head emerges appears separated from Adam's body in God's hand. This variant eliminates the emphasis on the bodily connection between the two ancestors of humanity and underlines the direct relation between the Creator and his female creation.

An image resembling the one in Mălâncrav appears in an illuminated Bible from Bohemia dated to the beginning of the fifteenth century⁵⁷ (the sixth example). It resembles two other representations produced in Bohemia in the same period. One occurs in a sumptuous manuscript containing the work of the renowned scholar Peter Comestor (approx. 1110–1178), entitled *Historia Scholastica* (the seventh example), which belonged to King Sigismund de Luxemburg (1387–1437), according to Irina von Morzé.⁵⁸ The other, significant because of the popularity of the manuscript, is a *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* (included in the miscellaneous work *Krumlovský Sborník* dated to 1417) (the eighth example) in which God holds the rib in his hand, like in Mălâncrav, out of which Eve's head emerges from it completely formed, while Adam sleeps nearby.⁵⁹ Destined for a nuns' convent, according to the specialists Jan Müller and Josef Krása, the manuscript was created as support for the preaching activity of Dominican and Franciscan brothers, not only for the *cura monialium*, but also *laicorum*, as stated by Daniela Rywiková.⁶⁰

In conclusion, this particular iconographic variant appeared initially in manuscripts related to the Benedictine monastic environment before the mid-twelfth century. They were most likely produced within an intellectual environment characterized by an intensification of women's participation in

⁵⁶ Prague, University Library, Cod. XIV A 17, fol. 4r. Koichi Koshi, *Die Genesis miniaturen in der Wiener "Histoire Universelle"* (COD. 2576), (Adolf Holzhausen, 1973), 10; Seibt et al., *Gothic art in Bohemia*, 42–43. See also Gia Toussaint, *Das Passion der Kunigunde von Böhmen. Bildrhetorik und Spiritualität* (Brill, Schöningh, 2003).

⁵⁷ Vatican Library, Reg. Lat. 87. Baschet, *L'iconographie*, 436, endnote 13.

⁵⁸ Vatican Library, Ms. Vat. lat. 5697, dated before 1437. See Irina von Morzé, "Eine Weltgeschichte für den Kaiser: Rom, BAV, Vat. Lat. 5697 (vor 1437)," *Das Buch als Medium – Mittelalterliche Handschriften und ihre Funktionen*. Interdisziplinäre Graduiertentagung in Wien, September 1–2, 2017, <https://rmbf.be/2017/07/21/colloque-das-buch-als-medium-mittelalterliche-handschriften-und-ihre-funktionen-interdisziplinare-graduiertentagung/>.

⁵⁹ Daniela Rywiková, "The Question of the Krumlov Miscellanea: The chalice as Utraquist Symbol?," *Umèni LVII* (2009): 349–363 (esp. 362), <https://www.academia.edu/36279716>.

⁶⁰ Texts destined for nuns were usually illustrated like the mentioned manuscript. Rywiková, "The Question," 350, 358.

the monastic movement.⁶¹ If, in the case of the Zwiefalten Antiphonary, the connection with the nuns of the double Benedictine Abbey in Zwiefalten is not certain,⁶² the manuscripts *Liber Scivias* and the *Passional of Kunigunde* were definitely related to respected women, leaders of female monasteries. Although their works had a different possible public (one recording the mystical visions of Hildegard of Bingen, the other being the property of an abbess belonging to the ruling dynasty in Bohemia and Moravia until the fourteenth century), the fact that they were produced in monastic environments of privileged women is significant. Although not exempt from male dominance,⁶³ these nuns lived separately, far from the social and political contexts that constantly reiterated the subordination of women to men within the framework of family and marriage.⁶⁴ It is common knowledge that their ideas did not remain isolated, although their persons were secluded. The writings attributed to Hildegard of Bingen, for example, were not only well known during her lifetime,⁶⁵ but also influenced fourteenth-century theologians and mystics like the Dominicans Meister Eckhart (approx. 1260–1329), John Tauler (approx. 1300–1361), Henry Suso (approx. 1295–1366), the nuns Margaret Ebner (approx. 1291–1351), Adelheid Langmann (approx. 1312–1375), and Christina Ebner (1277–1356).⁶⁶

The texts and the image

Since antiquity authors like Tertullian (c. 155/160–after 220), in his work *De anima*, correlated Eve's creation from Adam's side with the birth of the Church from the side wound of the crucified Christ.⁶⁷ Over time, this analogy was often repeated by exegetes of the Genesis.⁶⁸ In the attempt to explain why the woman was created from the rib, most theologians repeated Augustin's explanation that God chose that particular bone because of its location in the

⁶¹ Claudia Eliass, *Die Frau ist die Quelle der Weisheit. Weibliches Selbstverständnis in der Frauenmystik des 12. und 13. Jh.* (Centaurus, 1995), 31–32, 53–54.

⁶² In the Zwiefalten scriptorium, worked as well nuns from the parallel female monastery. Heribert Hummel, "Eine Zwiefalter Bibliotheksgeschichte," in *900 Jahre Benediktinerabtei Zwiefalten*, ed. Hermann Josef Pretsch (Süddeutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1990), 101–121 (esp. 104).

⁶³ Eliass, *Die Frau*, 33.

⁶⁴ Eliass, *Die Frau*, 40.

⁶⁵ Hildegard of Bingen corresponded not only with the Abbots of the monasteries in Hirsau and Zwiefalten (1150–1170) but also with Bernard de Clairvaux (1146). Pretsch, "Das Ende," 61–62.

⁶⁶ Leonard P. Hindley, "Rhenisch Confluences. Hildegard and the Fourteenth-Century Dominicans," in *Hildegard of Bingen. A Book of Essays*, 206–220 (here 206).

⁶⁷ Thomas J. Motherway, "The Creation of Eve in Catholic Tradition," *Theological Studies* 1, no. 2 (1940): 97–116 (esp. 109). See Wain, "Nec ancilla nec domina," 84–85.

⁶⁸ *The Fathers of the Church. Saint Augustine on Genesis. Two Books on Genesis against the Manichees and On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis: An Unfinished Book*, trans. Roland J. Teske (Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 84: 132.

middle of the man's body.⁶⁹ The choice underlined that Eve was neither destined to be inferior nor superior to Adam. However, the order of their creation clearly showed the importance of each of them. Based on the Epistle to the Ephesians and the one to the Corinthians, the church fathers correlated this hierarchical relation with the classical opposition between spiritual/rational and carnal. Consequently, the general consensus was that men were designated from the beginning to be the "head." In contrast, women were seen as "body," which explained their exclusion from positions of authority in both the private and public spheres.⁷⁰ The woman was perceived as weak and needed protection from herself and the temptations of life in general.⁷¹ Even Peter Abelard (c. 1079–1142), who attempted to challenge the notion of women's inequality, blamed Eve for her poor moral judgment when she disobeyed God's commandment not to eat the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Abélard concluded that "man was created in God's image, whereas Eve was created only in his likeness."⁷² Therefore, the images that show Eve's torso or her almost entirely formed body emerging from Adam's rib were perfect occasions to emphasize her sexuality. Depicting her long hair and breasts underlined her role as a seductress, explaining why the man fell into sin because of his love for the woman, as St. Augustine suggested.⁷³ On the other hand, by reducing Eve's visualization to the head, considered since Antiquity as the place of intellect by some authors,⁷⁴ this type of image eluded the body with which most medieval writers equated Eve. This visual choice could modify the message concerning Eve's capacity to interact with God and her essential role in the divine plan.⁷⁵

The images' suggestion correlates with isolated but not singular medieval discourses which appeared in the twelfth century at several authors from the Benedictine environment.⁷⁶ Abélard's work *Expositio in Hexaemeron*, written for his wife Heloise, the abbess of the female monastery Paraclete in Ferreux-Quency (France), contained a genuine apology for the idea that, despite her

⁶⁹ Evelina Miteva, "The Bodies of Adam and Eve: The (Missed?) Encounter of Natural Philosophy and Theology in the Account of Albert the Great," *Synthesis VI*, no. 2 (2019): 393–404 (esp. 403), <https://www.academia.edu/41450959>.

⁷⁰ Alcuin Blamires, "Paradox in the Medieval Gender Doctrine of Head and Body," in *Medieval Theology and the Natural Body*, eds. Peter Biller and Alastair J. Minnis (York Medieval Press, 1997), 13–29 (esp. 13).

⁷¹ Eliass, *Die Frau*, 54.

⁷² Jolly, *Made in God's Image?*, 34.

⁷³ Sf. Augustin, *Despre geneză în sens literal*, trans. Iuliu Popescu (Minerva, 2008), chapter XLII, 11: 417.

⁷⁴ For example, the pre-Socratic philosophers Plato and the representatives of Neoplatonism. See James Longrigg, *Greek Rational Medicine. Philosophy and Medicine from Almaeon to the Alexandrians* (Routledge, 1993), 58–59.

⁷⁵ Eliass, *Die Frau*, 59.

⁷⁶ Blamires, "Paradox," 26–27.

wrongdoing, Eve became even dearer to God than many men who were free of sin.⁷⁷ Eve's transgression made the Incarnation and Resurrection necessary. The world could not have met Jesus if Eve had not fallen from grace. Defining sin, the author described virtue as an active attitude, as opposed to the lack of wrongdoing perceived as passive. Abélard believed that the human soul could engage in genuine love of God regardless of sex.⁷⁸

Contributions by female authors, or those explicitly addressed to women, emphasized the topic differently. The typological interpretation of the opposition between Eve and Mary, the "new Eve," which posits that Mary restored the first woman's transgression, seems to have played a lesser role in theological texts written by women.⁷⁹ Hildegard of Bingen argued instead that God created Eve with the same power with which he sent his son to the Virgin; she was created from Adam's tender flesh, whereas Jesus was born by Mary's virginal body.⁸⁰ This is not the sole medieval recuperative discourse on Eve. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, a more nuanced perception of her appears in *Miroir des bonnes femmes/ Speculum dominarum*, compiled by a Franciscan monk and copied around 1300. The manuscript proposes a collection of *exempla* of feminine characters, both negative and positive.⁸¹ Popular in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,⁸² the work was intended to be read and listened to, as well as used as parables in sermons primarily for women.⁸³ Eve was invoked both as a negative and positive example; she was a woman guilty of nine 'follies' and a human being whom God granted a series of honors.⁸⁴ The fact that the persons of the Trinity talked about her was an honor which no angel or archangel from heaven enjoyed. Her creation was an honor because she was the only one shaped from a man, but she became the origin of all the people in the world.⁸⁵

Blamires drew attention to the moment when the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) introduced mandatory confession, which challenged the traditional hierarchy between men and women. Consequently, many clerics became aware

⁷⁷ Wain, "Nec ancilla nec domina," 5. See Peter Abelard, *An Exposition of the Six-Day Work*, trans. Wanda Zemler-Cizewski, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievals in Translation*, CCCM 15 (Brepols, 2011), 8: 113.

⁷⁸ Wain, "Nec ancilla nec domina," 7.

⁷⁹ Garber, "Where is the Body?," 132–162 (esp. 132)..

⁸⁰ Eliass, *Die Frau*, 115.

⁸¹ John L. Grigsby, "Miroir des bonnes femmes," *Romania* 82, no. 328 (1961): 458–481 (esp. 461–462).

⁸² Bert Roest, *Franciscan Literature of Religious Instruction before the Council of Trent* (Brill, 2004), 394.

⁸³ Roest, *Franciscan Literature*, 388.

⁸⁴ Grigsby, "Miroir," 469.

⁸⁵ John L. Grigsby, "Miroir des bonnes femmes (suite)," *Romania* 83, no. 329 (1962): 30–51 (esp. 32–33).

that in some moral matters, the body, namely the woman, outshone the head, the man.⁸⁶ Therefore, the solution suggested by St. Augustine was that in families where the husband was corrupt, the woman should transfer her moral loyalty to the ultimate 'head,' namely, to God.⁸⁷

The iconographic source of the image in Mălâncrav and its public

As we have already seen, the great majority of representations that included Adam's rib in Eve's creation appeared in manuscripts (19 out of 27), whereas images showing only Eve's head occurred exclusively in manuscript illuminations (7 out of 8), except for the one from Mălâncrav.⁸⁸ Therefore, it is likely that the source of the image under study was not in the working repertoire of the nave painters because of their provincial style and the image's lack of popularity. However, the image may have been suggested to them or shown in a manuscript as an inspirational guide. Arguably, it must have been a well-known one like *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, similar to the copy mentioned above, included in the miscellaneous work *Krumlovský Sborník* from Prague. These works served didactic and devotional purposes, illustrating complex theological concepts for a literate audience of clergy and laypeople.⁸⁹ The large number of copies preserved (over 350, only in Latin), one-third illustrated with up to 190 scenes, indicates their popularity.⁹⁰ *Speculum's* notoriety owed a lot to translation into numerous vernacular languages like French, English, German, Dutch, and Czech, which made it accessible to a wide range of believers.⁹¹ The fact that they were treasured primarily in ecclesiastic libraries suggests that their content was spread mainly through clergy and mendicants.

⁸⁶ Blamires, "Paradox," 13–14.

⁸⁷ Blamires, "Paradox," 13.

⁸⁸ As previously shown among the twelfth-century manuscripts were the antiphonary from the Benedictine Abbey in Zwiefalten destined for the monks' usage in church rituals of the Prime, the work containing Hildegard of Bingen's comments and mystic visions (*Liber Scivias*) and a free translation of the Genesis in Middle High German (the Millstatt Genesis). The fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth-century images appeared in a collection of religious texts in Latin focusing on the Passion of Christ (the Passional of the Abbess Kunigunde), in Comestor's overview of the sacred history (*Historia Scholastica*), in an illuminated Bible and in *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*.

⁸⁹ Manuela Niesner, *Das Speculum Humanae Salvationis der Stiftsbibliothek Kremsmünster*. Edition der mittelhochdeutschen Versübersetzung und Studien zum Verhältnis von Bild und Text (De Gruyter, 1995), 6–8.

⁹⁰ Evelyn Silber, "The Reconstructed Toledo *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*: The Italian Connection in the Early Fourteenth Century," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 43 (1980): 32–51 (esp. 32).

⁹¹ Niesner, *Das Speculum*, 8.

Concerning the possible regions of iconographic transfer, it is noticeable that similar images appear mostly in German, Austrian, and Bohemian areas. However, an informed conclusion concerning the iconographic sources of the image in Mălâncrav will benefit more from correlations with iconographic and stylistic patterns found in the whole decorative program of the nave.⁹²

Despite its partial relevance, by intentionally eluding her body, the image of Eve's creation in Mălâncrav accentuates the creational process described in the Biblical text. The representation was probably meant to focus the interest on Eve's instrumental role in God's plan and in the history of humanity, played from the beginning. In the iconographic program of the nave in Mălâncrav, another strongly focalizing image at the start of the cycle, depicting the Childhood of Christ on the eastern side of the second tier, enhances this idea. The representation illustrates the moment when the Divinity, having Christ Child in his lap, who is blessing and holding the scroll of the new law, instructed Archangel Gabriel to announce to the Virgin that she was the chosen one to be the Savior's Mother. The motif itself was no iconographic novelty. Lionnet underlined that it emerged in the Franciscan environment at the beginning of the fourteenth century, in popular works such as *Meditationes Vitae Christi* or on the panel *Lignum vitae* created by Pacino di Bonaguida (1305–1310) for Convento delle Monache di Monticelli, the oldest monastery of the Poor Clares in Florence.⁹³ It emphasizes that humanity's creation and salvation were manifestations of God's will and power. The German mystic Meister Eckhart expressed a similar belief, which he apparently took it over from Hildegard of Bingen; in his writings, Eckhart argued that humanity was from the very beginning God's Creation and instrument.⁹⁴

Church rituals also implied relations of connectivity between these distinct periods in human history by establishing links between the Old and New Testaments. Notably, the texts read during Advent and on the seventh Sunday before Easter were selected from the Old Testament.⁹⁵ According to Hans

⁹² Lionnet argued that the frescoes in the nave presented a combination of South German, Austrian, and Italian models influenced by the Byzantine iconography. See Lionnet, "Les peintures murales," 1: 398–399.

⁹³ See Lionnet, "Les peintures murales," 1: 397, with examples from Bohemian illuminated manuscripts and from Italian art like Giotto's Arena frescoes in Padua (1303–1305). See also Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green, eds., *Meditations on the Life of Christ. An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century* (Princeton University Press, 1961), 15. For Pacino di Bonaguida and the Tree of Life see Raphaële Preisinger, *Lignum vitae. Zum Verhältnis materieller Bilder und mentaler Bildpraxis im Mittelalter* (Brill, 2014); Philip Esler, "Pacino di Bonaguida's Tree of Life: Interpreting the Bible in Paint in Early Fourteenth-Century Italy," in *Biblical Reception* 3, ed. J. Cheryl Exum and David J. A. Clines (Phoenix Press, 2015), 1–29 (esp. 3).

⁹⁴ Hindsley, "Rhenish Confluences," 208–209.

⁹⁵ Joanne M. Pierce, "Medieval Christian Liturgy," <https://oxfordre.com/religion/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-84?mediaType=Article>.

Michael Thomas, such correlations became significant in the works of Franciscan theologians like Joachim of Fiore (c. 1135–1202) and Ubertino da Casale (1259–c. 1329); they associated the idea of the human role and responsibility with a historically perceived evolution of humanity which stretched in an unfolding chronology from the Creation to the Last Judgement.⁹⁶

In conclusion, while not arguing that the image in Mălâncrav was addressed exclusively to women, one could suppose that, supported by a discourse that valued Eve's role in sacred history, such a representation could have been more meaningful for a devout female audience. Keeping in mind that this rare representation occurs in a proprietary foundation of a noble family in which, most probably, women were the ones who participated more frequently and in a larger number at church rituals and received the didactic and theological, visual and auditory messages of the Holy Liturgy, this hypothesis should be considered.

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⁹⁶ Ubertino da Casale divided the history of humanity into the time of the Father, that of the Son, and a prophesied period of the Holy Spirit or an epoch of slavery one of childish obedience and a future one of freedom. Hans Michael Thomas, *Franziskanische Geschichtsvision und europäische Bildentfaltung* (Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1989), 10–16 (esp. 13).

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EVE'S CREATION IN THE MURAL PAINTINGS DECORATING THE CHURCH OF THE APAFI FAMILY
AT MĂLÂNCRAV (MALMKROG, ALMAKERÉK) IN TRANSYLVANIA

Illustrations

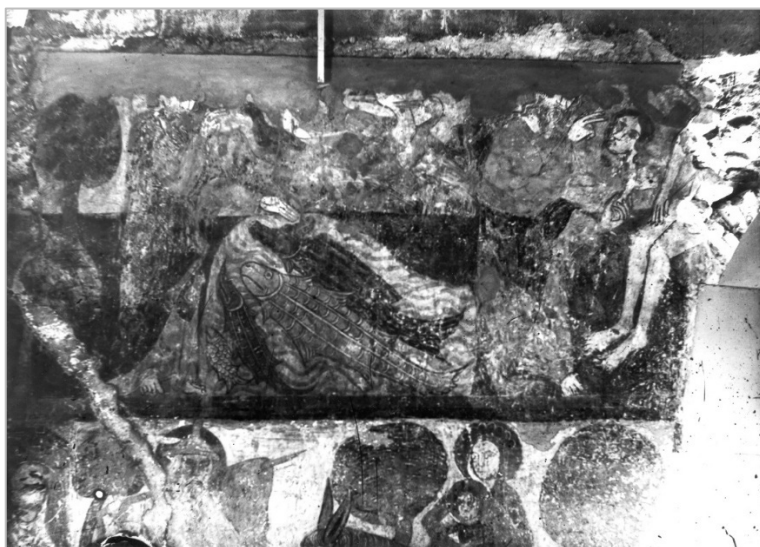


Fig. 1. *Eve's creation*, Mălâncrav (Éber, Tanulmányok. II. 136.)



Fig. 2. *Eve's creation*, Mălâncrav – detail

