

# VEXILLUM

the undergraduate journal of  
classical and medieval studies

Issue 2

2012

# Eve and Her Daughters: Eve, Mary, the Virgin, and the Lintel Fragment at Autun

JESSICA FERRO  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

*The lintel fragment of Eve from the Cathedral of St. Lazaire at Autun has been praised by art historians as one of the greatest monumental figural works of the Romanesque period. Many have viewed this work as representing the typical image of Eve as an evil, seductive, and treacherous figure responsible for the fall of man, and whom misogynistic medieval thinkers blamed for the innately evil nature of women. However a few scholars, such as Linda Seidel, Karl Werckmeister, Denise Jalabert, and Areli Marina have noted a uniqueness in the features of this Eve figure, one which strays from the “repellently ugly or hatefully seductive” Eve that most associate with the biblical figure and her depictions in art. Seidel, briefly muses over the idea that perhaps viewers could read this figure as representing both the sinful Eve and the penitent Mary Magdalene. Building on this thought, the work of the other scholars above, and my onsite work at Autun and the surrounding sites, this paper proposes the idea of a conflation not only of Eve and Mary Magdalene but of the Virgin Mary as well. I hope to reveal, by way of formal description, short histories of the scorn of Eve, the cults of the Virgin and Mary Magdalene, and their relation to each other as well as brief comparison to the tympana at Neuilly-en-Donjon and Anzy-le-Duc, that there is a legitimate possibility that this lintel fragment was meant to bring to mind all three of these figures.*

---

As night begins to fall, several people gather outside the grand Cathedral of Saint-Lazare, waiting to begin a penitential ritual. As the bell rings several of the laymen drop to their knees and begin a serpentine crawl towards the north portal. The onlookers chant a prayer in low voices and watch the penitents whose faces show remnants of the ashes that were thrown on them. The air is still and the sound of the chant and eventually the low moans of the crawling sinners is all that can be heard in the quiet village. As one penitent approaches the north portal he sees first the figure of Saint-Lazare who has escaped the mouth of death. Then he sees a beautiful figure below, whom he recognizes as Eve flanked by the devil and her husband Adam (Figure 1)<sup>1</sup>. However, she seems to empathize with him, as she mirrors his crawling state, in the position more regularly given to the Magdalene (Figure 2). Is that a

---

<sup>1</sup> All figures are found at the end in the appendix.

tear falling from her eye? A tear for her own fall from grace and that of all mankind. He has never before looked at her so closely... Her face looks not like that of an evil, sinful woman but has a calmness and grace almost like that of the heavenly mother, the Virgin Mary (Figure 3). He continues to crawl into the dark church, across the cold stone floor towards the altar. As he reaches the altar he waits for his other sinful brothers and sisters in the hope that soon, his awful sins will be forgiven.

The lintel fragment of Eve from the Cathedral of St. Lazaire at Autun (Figure 1) has been praised by art historians as one of the greatest monumental figural works of the Romanesque period. She is the first large scale nude since antiquity and her graceful sinuous body looks more like a figure from the works of Gauguin (Figure 4) or El Greco (Figure 5) as noted by Kingsley Porter<sup>2</sup> or even Cézanne (Figure 6) as noted by Culture Minister Andre Malraux who pronounced Gislebertus "a Romanesque Cézanne" in the 1960s.<sup>3</sup> Many have viewed this work as merely representing the typical image of Eve as an evil, seductive, and treacherous figure responsible for the fall of man, and whom misogynistic medieval thinkers blamed for the innately evil nature of women in general. However a few scholars, such as Linda Seidel, Karl Werckmeister, Denise Jalabert, and Areli Marina have noted a uniqueness in the features of this Eve figure, one which strays at least to some extent from the either "repellently ugly or hatefully seductive"<sup>4</sup> Eve that most associate with the biblical figure and her depictions in art. For example Seidel, briefly muses over the idea that perhaps viewers could read this figure as representing both the sinful Eve and the penitent Mary Magdalene.<sup>5</sup> Building on this thought and the work of the other scholars above, I would like to propose the idea of a conflation not only of Eve and Mary Magdalene but of the

---

<sup>2</sup> Porter, Arthur Kingsley. Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads. Vol. 1. (New York: Hacker Art, 1966), 121.

<sup>3</sup> "Art: Romanesque Cézanne." *Time Magazine* (Friday, March 3, 1961). *TIMEs Online*. <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,897696-1,00.html>>.

<sup>4</sup> Kraus, Henry. The Living Theatre of Medieval Art. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967), 42.

<sup>5</sup> Seidel, Linda. Legends in Limestone: Lazarus, Gislebertus, and the Cathedral of Autun. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1999), 103-104.

Virgin Mary as well. Thus in this study I hope to reveal, by way of formal description, short histories of the scorn of Eve, the cults of the Virgin and Mary Magdalene, and their relation to each other as well as brief comparison to the tympana at Neuilly-en-Donjon (Figure 7) and Anzy-le-Duc (Figure 8), that there is a legitimate possibility that this lintel fragment was meant to bring to mind all three of these figures.

#### A Short History

The Cathedral of Saint-Lazare was built around 1120-1132, with consecrations in 1132 and in 1146. At the beginning of the twelfth century, before this church was built, the bishop of Autun was Norgaud. He was staunchly opposed to Cluniac reforms which he thought undermined his authority. However, on his death Norgaud was succeeded by Etienne de Bâge from Salieu who was a supporter of Cluny's reforms.<sup>6</sup> In his book, Arthur Kingsley Porter tells us that much like Vezelay, Autun was not a priory of Cluny but was still closely connected. He cites the fact that Bishop Etienne de Bâge, who had Autun's cathedral built, even went there to die.<sup>7</sup> He discusses artistic similarities between Autun and Cluny via the sculptural work of Gislebertus. However, he does not believe, like Denis Grivot and George Zarnecki, that Gislebertus worked at Autun, Cluny and Vezelay but that these sites are the work of three different ateliers. Grivot and Zarnecki believe, "Gislebertus...must have been trained at Cluny, and from there went to Vezelay, where the mutilated remains of a tympanum...strongly suggest his handling. It is a reasonable hypothesis...that when he was called to Autun, his work at Vezelay was taken over..."<sup>8</sup>

Saint-Lazare was originally a pilgrimage church which hoped to share in the wealth that nearby Vezelay received as a result of the popularity of pilgrimage on the way to Santiago de Compostela. The church supposedly held the relics of Lazarus, who was the brother of Mary Magdalene, whose remains, it was said, were held at Vezelay. While the church attracted pilgrims in general, it also attracted lepers who believed the church held the remains of the "Lazarus full of sores" from Luke chapter sixteen. This

---

<sup>6</sup> Grivot, Denis, George Zarnecki, and T.S.R. Boase. *Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun*. (Paris: Trianon, 1961), 11.

<sup>7</sup> Porter, Arthur Kingsley. *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, 107.

<sup>8</sup> Grivot, Zarnecki. *Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun*, 11.

conflation of the resurrected Lazarus with that of the poor, ill Lazarus is furthered by the mixture of iconography located on the cathedral. This is best shown on the north portal which has a depiction of the resurrection of Lazarus on the tympanum as well as a depiction of the Lazarus of sores on one of the capitals. Unfortunately, the cathedral suffered damage due to the Revolution. Luckily the famous Last Judgment tympanum (Figure 9) was plastered over and thus ironically protected, however the north portal, which was originally used as the main entrance since the west façade faced the burial ground,<sup>9</sup> and the tomb of Lazarus were smashed to bits.

#### Formal Description of the North Portal

However at the end of the nineteenth century the statue of Eve was rediscovered. Denise Jalabert writes of the rediscovery of the Eve fragment, which she learned from Abbé Berthollet, the curator of the Rolin Museum. Jalabert writes that,

“In 1866...a house located at number 12 Champ de Mars Place in Autun was being demolished, there was a large engraved stone, one meter thirty centimeters long and seventy centimeters wide, on which there was to be seen, amidst the foliage, the crawling figure of *Eve* leaning on the right elbow and knees, while with her outstretched left arm she picks an apple from behind her...”<sup>10</sup>

Surprisingly, after this great discovery, the owner of the house paid no attention and freely gave over the relief to the architect, Roidet-Houdaille. After the architect died, he passed on the Eve fragment to his daughter. She was later suffering financially so she made a deal with Abbé Terret, the choirmaster at Autun, who paid her debt in return for Eve. Following this, Abbé Terret dealt with a few legislative battles over the ownership of Eve but in the end the sculpture remained in Autun, housed at the Rolin Museum.

---

<sup>9</sup> Grivot, Zarnecki. *Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun*, 146.

<sup>10</sup> Jalabert, Denise. “The Eve of the Autun Cathedral: It’s Place in the History of Romanesque Sculpture.” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 35, ser. 6 (1949): 300.

Similarly in 1837, thirty years before the rediscovery of Eve, Jalabert writes that Abbé Devoucoux discovered a short text in the archives of the diocese of Autun. It was dated June 24, 1482 and in the following words described the north portal at Autun:

“ ...in the tympanum, there is the story of the resurrection of...St. Lazarus sculpted in large stone images; and below this story there are images of Adam and Eve; and on the upper part of the pillar which divides the wings of said portal, there is a small image in the shape of a bishop with a mitre, representing St. Lazarus, and below this there are some other images in the old style.”<sup>11</sup>

Denis Grivot and George Zarnecki created a reconstruction of the portal (Figure 10), which shows how they believe the portal may have looked. Werckmeister cites in his footnotes that Grivot and Zarnecki believe that a number of relief fragments found in the Musée Rolin belonged to the tympanum. The five fragments that they have found have the following scenes or figures on them (from left to right on the reconstruction): a) an angel (Figure 11), b) a healing miracle (Figure 12), c) the Assumption of the Virgin Mary (Figure 13), d) a figure of youth (Figure 14), e) unidentified feet and f) Saint Martin (?) (Figure 15).<sup>12</sup> Moreover, they think that this tympanum was similar to that at Cahors (Figure 16) which was subdivided with a large central scene and other supplementary scenes. However Werckmeister states that the iconographical identifications that Grivot and Zarnecki attribute to the tympanum do not relate to the main subject in a “meaningful way”.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, it seems that these scenes do not coincide with the 1436 text which described the tympanum as holding merely the resurrection of Lazarus. Perhaps these fragments that Grivot and Zarnecki attribute to the tympanum actually belong on the trumeau beneath the mitred Lazarus where the text says there were “some other images in the old style”.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Werckmeister, O.K. “The Lintel Fragment Representing Eve from Saint-Lazare, Autun.” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 35, (1972): 1.

<sup>12</sup> Grivot, Zarnecki. *Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun*, 150-151. They seem to have put forth the most complete iconographical descriptions for Autun however many of their explanations are disputed and questioned by others.

<sup>13</sup> Werckmeister, O.K. “The Lintel Fragment Representing Eve from Saint-Lazare, Autun,” 1.

<sup>14</sup> Werckmeister, O.K. “The Lintel Fragment Representing Eve from Saint-Lazare, Autun,” 1.

It is also interesting to note that on the lintel, in their reconstruction, they have Eve flanked by Satan to the right and then they label the entire left half of the lintel as the space for Adam. However this seems like a very large space for one human figure. Perhaps Adam shared the left side either with a figure of the God-head or at least his symbolic hand coming down from the heavens. This would not be out of place when one looks at other examples from the same period such as the Doors at Hildesheim (Figure 17), a capital from a portal at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (Figure 18) and the Souvigny Bible (Figure 19). At Hildesheim, the artist represents God as an actual figure in the first two scenes on the left panel and also with a heavenly hand in the last scene on the left panel. However at Santiago de Compostela and in the Souvigny Bible the artist represents God in figural form.

As a result of the portal's destruction, almost nothing is left in situ. However there are two decorations from the original portal that remain in situ, that is one arch with folia and rosettes and four capitals, two on each side. Denis Grivot and George Zarnecki have also tried to identify these capitals. They believe that, starting from left to right, that the capitals show a) the Dives in Hell and Lazarus with Abraham (Figure 20), b) The Prodigal Son (Figure 21), c) The Widow of Nain (Figure 22) and d) the Dives and Lazarus (Figure 23).<sup>15</sup> These identifications may or may not be correct, however one that has been disputed is the capital which Grivot and Zarnecki identify as The Widow of Nain. Abbe Terret, who as stated above was the choirmaster at Autun and who was also an archaeologist and historian of the Cathedral, identified this capital not as the widow of Nain but as a scene depicted Christ with Mary Magdalene at his feet and Lazarus behind him. This seems to make more sense in context with the rest of the cathedral. Grivot and Zarnecki do not agree with this because of two reasons, the first that it is rare for an artist to portray Lazarus in the nude and he has never been shown without his grave and second that they believe it would be repetitive to show a risen Lazarus on the capital since the

---

<sup>15</sup> Grivot, Zarnecki. *Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun*, 151.

tympanum already shows the resurrection of Lazarus.<sup>16</sup> To their second objection, I think this can easily be refuted. The argument that it would be repetitive does not seem to apply here because, first Lazarus is already shown twice on the portal without counting this capital. Thus, it does not seem that the artist was concerned with repetition of this figure. Moreover, the tympanum scene and that of the capital show different scenes from the story which would make it less repetitive. The tympanum is said to have shown the resurrection of Lazarus which probably resembled the scene on the side of the *Noli me Tangere* capital in the nave (Figure 24). However the disputed capital on the north portal (Figure 22), if it is of Mary Magdalene, would have shown a different scene from the tale of Lazarus and could also be seen as a foreshadowing of the *Noli me Tangere* capital inside the cathedral (Figure 25).

The figure of Eve, as stated above, is one of the greatest works of monumental figural Romanesque sculpture. One of the first things one may notice is her strange positioning, horizontally on the lintel. There is no other example of Eve like this in Romanesque works. Usually Adam and Eve were represented standing vertically either on a capital, like that at Vezelay (Figure 26) or even on a jamb like at Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val (Figure 27). The only other example I could find of a horizontal figure on the lintel was at Saint-Michel d'Aiguilhe in Puy (Figure 28). Here we see two mermaids lying horizontally on the lintel one with the tale of a snake and one with that of a fish. It is curious that this would be what the sculptor(s) chose to place on the main portal of this small chapel because usually mermaids are beings of enchantment and persuasion, luring victims in. However, here they are the entrance to a church, so they are not luring them into a place of sin and corruption. One reason the artist could have chosen to place Eve like this could simply have been due to artistic innovation or the design plan. However, it seems that there must be more behind the placing of the figures, as Werckmeister suggests. Gislebertus could have simply chose to place them on the jambs or trumeau as is depicted in the nineteenth century reconstructed trumeau figures of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha on the west façade of

---

<sup>16</sup> Grivot, Zarnecki. *Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun*, 147.



Autun (Figure 29). However, he chose to place the figures unorthodoxly on the lintel and Werckmeister believes that this is tied to a penitential procession that occurred at Autun and other churches in the area<sup>17</sup> and even today, which I used as a basis for the imagined scene at the beginning of this presentation.

Werckmeister believes that the iconographic program of the north portal is based on the Office of the Dead and that it was used both to remind the local laypeople of the sacrament of reconciliation and penance along with being used for a penance ritual. The Office of the Dead incorporates the same themes of penance and forgiveness, which are shown on the portal, and also makes allusions to Lazarus and the Last Judgment. Moreover, Werckmeister goes on to discuss the idea of the portal's use for a penance ritual. He cites sources where the ritual has been described starting from the tenth century. Werckmeister states that several of the penitential treatises describe the following scene:

"...on Ash Wednesday...those sinners ready to undergo public penance were to present themselves in front of the church, clad in sackcloth and barefoot, prostrate themselves before the bishop, and proclaim their guilt. After...their penance, the bishop conducted them into the church...and were then told 'that, as Adam was expelled from Paradise, so they, too, are ejected from the church because of their sins.' Finally, servants ritually expelled them from the church...while the clergy followed, chanting a quotation from Genesis iii, 19, 'With sweat on your brow shall you eat your bread.'"<sup>18</sup>

Thus it seems that the portal is sculpturally and "allegorically"<sup>19</sup> supposed to relate to the sinners who are undergoing the ritual. Werckmeister also explains that while the sinners were in their prostrate position, ashes were strewn on them and the bishop and clergy recited the following line from Genesis: 'Remember, man, that you are dust and will return to dust'. Thus Werckmeister states that these penitents are undergoing the same punishment that Adam and Eve went through after their great sin.

Thus when we observe the figure of Eve we notice that she is in a position that looks like she is crawling with her knees bent on the ground line and her right elbow supporting her in this position. She

---

<sup>17</sup> Werckmeister, O.K. "The Lintel Fragment Representing Eve from Saint-Lazare, Autun," 15-23.

<sup>18</sup> Werckmeister, O.K. "The Lintel Fragment Representing Eve from Saint-Lazare, Autun," 18.

<sup>19</sup> Werckmeister, O.K. "The Lintel Fragment Representing Eve from Saint-Lazare, Autun," 18.

is in the position of the penitents but she is also in the position given to the penitent Mary Magdalene. At Saint-Hilaire in Foussais, there is a sculpted image of Mary Magdalene in a prostrate position on her elbows and knees much like that of Eve (Figure 30a). In this image she is washing the feet of Christ and he points to her and motions to the man next to as if to say that they should look to her as an example (Figure 30b).<sup>20</sup> At Autun, Gislebertus has sculpted Eve in a graceful manner with sinuous curves which are mimicked in the swaying of the foliage and the waves in her hair. Moreover, her body is shown in a contorted view. When viewed from the front, one sees her face and lower body in profile and a frontal upper body. However, the masterful carving of this work creates a figure that is almost in the round, protruding out from the surface fifteen inches. And when you walk to the left you can see her entire face (Figure 31). Surprisingly her face is not depicted in the way you would expect an artist to depict Eve. This Eve is shown with a graceful visage, with large thoughtful eyes, a small, delicate mouth and a teardrop falls from her left eye (Figure 32), enforcing her remorseful and penitent nature. Denise Jalabert notes that Eve's face is practically a mirror image of the face of the Virgin Mary on a capital within the church depicting the *Flight from Egypt* (Figure 3).<sup>21</sup>

Now let us turn to the context of this portrayal of Eve. We see Eve among trees, with a central branch partially hiding her nudity. However this depiction of Eve is not merely one of her after the fall but shows her reaching back with her left hand to grab the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. Thus this is a conflation of Eve before and after the Fall. On the tree we can see the dragon-like claw of Satan (Figure 33) bending the tree towards Eve to ease her plucking of the fruit. When we move to the face there is once again a conflation of narrative. She cups her right hand to her mouth as if she is about to whisper to Adam. However, her face does not show any hint of her being a scheming seductress following the will of Satan. Instead, it is almost as if we are led to sympathize with her. She is grieving for

---

<sup>20</sup> Also above the scene of the House of Simon is the scene of *noli me tangere* with Christ and Mary Magdalene after his resurrection (Figure 30c).

<sup>21</sup> Jalabert, Denise. "The Eve of the Autun Cathedral: It's Place in the History of Romanesque Sculpture," 303.

the sin that she has already committed and the hand which she may be using to whisper to Adam also doubles as a sign of grief.

This description of the north portal helps elucidate the sculpture relation between Eve, Mary Magdalene, and the Virgin Mary. We see a figure of Eve who is prostrate with a tear in her eye in the position usually given to the Magdalene, penitently washing the feet of Christ with her hair and tears. However she is nude, in the act of sin and grieving for the sin as well which are all characteristics of Eve from before and then after the fall. However, we see an Eve who is graceful and calm despite her forthcoming banishment and the sin she has committed with only a tear falling from her eye. This is similar to many depictions of the Virgin who is always calm and graceful and calls to mind her mourning at the foot of the crucifix. Thus in the figure of Eve we have the presence of three women. We have the sinful Eve, the penitent Mary Magdalene prostrate as if begging for forgiveness before Christ and the heavenly Virgin who is without sin and through her purity is able to redeem the sins of mankind and come full circle as the Second or New Eve who intercedes on behalf of all sinners.

### **The Scorn of Eve and the Cults of the Virgin and Mary Magdalene**

The following are a few lines from a medieval liturgical drama about the Fall:

“Oh, evil woman, full of treason...  
Forever contrary to reason,  
Bringing no man good in an season:  
Our children’s children to the end of time  
Will feel the cruel whiplash of your crime!”<sup>22</sup>

Here an infuriated Adam cries out these words after their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. There has been much written about the Fall of man and the guilt bestowed on women due to Eve’s great sin. Henry Kraus and Areli Marina provide thorough studies which discuss the writings on Eve and the fall. One group, which seems to be the most prevalent, is the group which attributed to Eve all the blame for

---

<sup>22</sup> Kraus, Henry. *The Living Theatre of Medieval Art*, 44.

the fallen state of man and the evilness of women. Kraus focuses on this group which included theologians like Sts. Bernard and Augustine.<sup>23</sup> However, Marina brings to light another group of writers which includes St. Ambrose, who did not have such a scornful view of Eve and focused on the idea that the Fall brought about free will.<sup>24</sup>

While Eve was the object of scorn for many of the faithful, the Virgin and Mary Magdalene became figures of adoration during the middle ages. Marina states that the “gaze of the twelfth century saw women as twofold: as Eve and as Mary...However the popularity of the cult of Mary Magdalene is evidence of the fluidity of those two roles.”<sup>25</sup> The cult of the Virgin as the “Mother of Mercy” was initiated, according to Kraus, at the end of the tenth century by the order of Cluny.<sup>26</sup> The Virgin was known as the Second Eve because she was seen as the woman who through her grace, faith and virginity was able to redeem not only women but all humankind from their fallen state. St. Paul said that “as the First Eve’s disobedience brought sin into the world, the Second Eve’s obedience enabled human salvation.”<sup>27</sup> This theme is shown in the *Siegburg Madonna* (Figure 34), a sculpture of the Virgin from Cologne. In this work we see the Virgin Mary holding the Christ child in her left arm and in her right hand she holds up a small apple. By doing so, Andreas Petzold says she “identifies her[self] as the new Eve.”<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Kraus, Henry. *The Living Theatre of Medieval Art*, 42-46. An example of St. Bernard’s writing from Kraus’s chapter is: ‘Eve was ‘the original cause of all evil, whose disgrace has come down to all other women.’” An example of St. Augustine’s writings on Eve can be found in Karen Armstrong’s *The Gospel According to Women*: “What is the difference whether it is in a wife or a mother, it is still Eve the temptress that we must beware of in any woman. I fail to see what use woman can be to man, if one excludes the function of bearing children.”

<sup>24</sup> Marina, Areli. “Gislebertus’s Eve: An Alternative Interpretation of the Eve Lintel Relief from the Church of Saint-Lazare, Autun.” *Athanas* 13, (1995): 10-11; An example St. Ambrose’s writings from Marina’s article: “And the women said: ‘The serpent deceived me and I ate.’ That fault is pardonable which is followed by an admission of guilt the woman is therefore not to be despaired of, who did not keep silent before God, but who preferred to admit her sin...Although she incurred the sin of disobedience, she still possessed in the tree of Paradise food for virtue. And so she admitted her sin and was considered worthy of pardon.”

<sup>25</sup> Marina, Areli. “Gislebertus’s Eve: An Alternative Interpretation of the Eve Lintel Relief from the Church of Saint-Lazare, Autun,” 10.

<sup>26</sup> Kraus, Henry. *The Living Theatre of Medieval Art*, 46-47.

<sup>27</sup> Apostolos-Cappadona, Diane. *Encyclopedia of Women in Religious Art*. (New York: Continuum, 1996), 126.

<sup>28</sup> Petzold, Andreas. *Romanesque Art*. (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1995), 123.

Thus this idea of a relation between Eve and the Virgin was established by the early Christian writings and continued through into the times of the Middle Ages.

However, how does Mary Magdalene fit into this spectrum of sin and redemption? The cult of Mary Magdalene developed around 1050 at the Cluniac Abbey at Vezelay.<sup>29</sup> Mary Magdalene gave the faithful a figure which they could relate to on a human level; a midway point between the Eve and the Virgin. She was of course a holy figure, but in no means perfect, not one without sin and not a virgin. While the Virgin Mary was the ideal model for Christians to emulate, Mary Magdalene provided a more realistic aim of someone who had been in a state of utter sin and through faith and honest penance was forgiven and became a favorite of Christ. It is interesting to note that the Doors at Hildesheim (Figure 17) show not only a few scenes of Adam and Eve on the left panels but also that they show images of Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary as well. It is believed that the two halves of this work have a typological relation, one relating the Old Testament to the New Testament (Figure 35)<sup>30</sup>. For example the creation of Eve from the rib of Adam is set across from the scene of Christ's resurrection with Mary Magdalene at his feet (*Noli me tangere*) and Eve nursing Cain is juxtaposed with the scene of the Adoration of the Magi with the Virgin holding the Christ child in her arms. Thus with these scenes there is a sense that Christ is the New Adam while both Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary are the New Eves together. Thus there seems to be a trinity of women created; while Mary Magdalene sinned like Eve, she achieved salvation like the Virgin, leading to a trinity where Eve is the sinful woman, Mary Magdalene the earthly, humanly and penitent woman and the Virgin is the heavenly and redemptive woman.

### **Comparison to Neuilly-en-Donjon and Anzy-le-Duc**

---

<sup>29</sup> Grivot, Zarnecki. *Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun*, 17.

<sup>30</sup> This figure shows a typological map of the Doors of Hildesheim which was show in my recitation for Art History 101.

Two examples from churches close to Autun show this interest in a relation between Eve, Mary, and the Virgin as well as simply that of the Virgin and Eve. The first is in Neuilly-en-Donjon (Figure 7). The church of Neuilly-en-Donjon was built during the second quarter of the twelfth century and dedicated to Mary Magdalene.<sup>31</sup> The tympanum of the main portal shows the “same serpentine, El Greco-like style”<sup>32</sup> which is found not only at Autun, but also, as Arthur Kingsley-Porter, points out is at Anzy-le-Duc and Vezelay. This portal holds a tympanum with a depiction of the Virgin enthroned with the Christ child in her lap with the Magi bringing gifts (Figure 36). The scene is placed on the backs of two large dragon-like monsters, which many believe symbolize the evil in the world. On the lintel, at the left, there is a depiction of the Fall (Figure 37), where a serpent emerges from a tree from which Eve plucks a fruit and hands it over to Adam. To the right of this scene is a depiction of the supper at the house of Simon the Pharisee where Mary Magdalene is believed to have washed the feet of Christ with her tears and hair (Figure 38). Thus this tympanum seeks to show a close relation between Eve, Mary Magdalene, and the Virgin. Andreas Petzold states that, “In each of these scenes the woman is defined in relation to man: Eve as Adam’s sexual partner and temptress; Mary Magdalene by her self-abasement and selfless love of Christ; and the Virgin Mary as the mother of Christ--- the vessel through which God assumed human form.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, here on this tympanum we see the trinity of women proposed above all laid out instead of being conflated into one figure.

Similarly the south priory tympanum at Anzy-le-Duc (Figure 8) shows this idea of the redemption of man through the Second Eve who reverses the sin of the Original Eve. This tympanum was completed around the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The viewer is compelled to think about the relation between Eve and the Virgin and can concretely correlate Eve with sin and hell, which is shown by the damned in the lintel beneath her (Figure 39), and the Virgin with redemption and salvation with the saved being taken into Heaven on

---

<sup>31</sup> Petzold, Andreas. *Romanesque Art*, 123.

<sup>32</sup> Porter, Arthur Kingsley. *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, 121.

<sup>33</sup> Petzold, Andreas. *Romanesque Art*, 123.

the part of the lintel beneath her (Figure 40). Although this tympanum does not show any reference to the Magdalene, it still helps to further the idea of the relation between these women. There are definite connections between the Virgin and Eve and also between Eve and the Magdalene, thus when these three women are shown together it is evident that one can tie the strings together and create a relation between the three of them.

## **Conclusion**

While mankind is forever bound to the original sin that Eve's act caused, "once fallen and forever after prone,"<sup>34</sup> they have been redeemed by the coming of Christ through the Virgin's purity. Moreover, mankind can look to the example of Mary Magdalene as the ideal and faithful penitent who like humankind is in the state of sin but is redeemable and follows in the footsteps of Christ. Eve, Mary Magdalene, and the Virgin Mary represent the three main archetypes of women, those of sin, repentance, and redemption. Eve is the mother of all women and thus has imbued them with her sin. However they can strive to be like their new mother, the absolutely obedient and pure Virgin Mary. But since this is out of reach they can look to Mary Magdalene. Thus this sculptural relation created between Eve, the Virgin and Mary Magdalene, as well as the background information on their cults can show that the lintel figure of Eve at Autun was meant to represent not only a sinful Eve, but also a penitent Mary and the redemptive Virgin.

---

<sup>34</sup> Kraus, Henry. The Living Theatre of Medieval Art, 46.

## Appendix: Figures



Figure 1. Giselbertus, Eve, lintel fragment from the north portal of Saint-Lazare, Autun, ca. 1120-1132, Musée Rolin, Credit: Grivot/Zamecki



Figure 2. Noli me Tangere, nave capital from Saint-Lazare, ca. 1120-1132, Credit: Grivot/Zamecki



Figure 3. Flight from Egypt, detail of a capital from Saint-Lazare, now shown in the chapter house, ca. 1120-1132, Credit: Grivot/Zamecki



Figure 4. Paul Gauguin, *Eve Bretonne*, 1889

Figure 5. El Greco, *The Burial of Count Orgaz*, 1586



Figure 6. Paul Cézanne, *Leda with Swan*, 1880-82







Figure 7. Portal, West facade, Church of Sainte-Madeleine, Neuilly-En-Donjon, 12<sup>th</sup> century



Figure 8. Portal, South Entrance of Priory, Anzy-le-Duc, 12<sup>th</sup> century



Figure 9. Giselbertus, Last judgment, tympanum from the west façade Saint-Lazare, Autun, ca. 1120-1132, Credit: personal photo

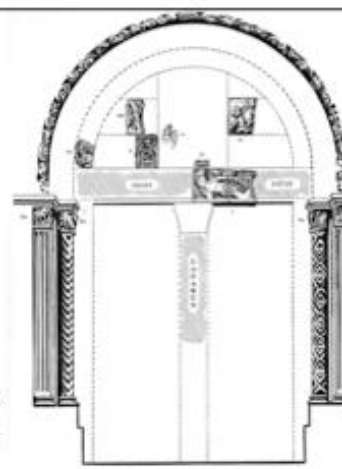


Figure 10.  
Reconstruction  
of the north  
portal at Saint  
Lazare, Autun,  
created by Denis  
Grivot and  
George Zarnecki

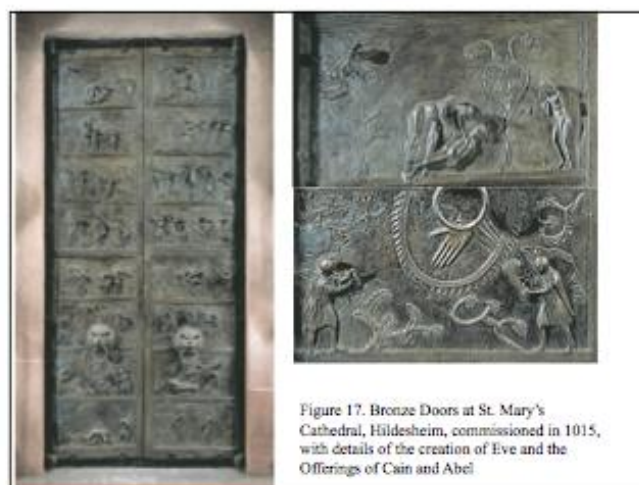
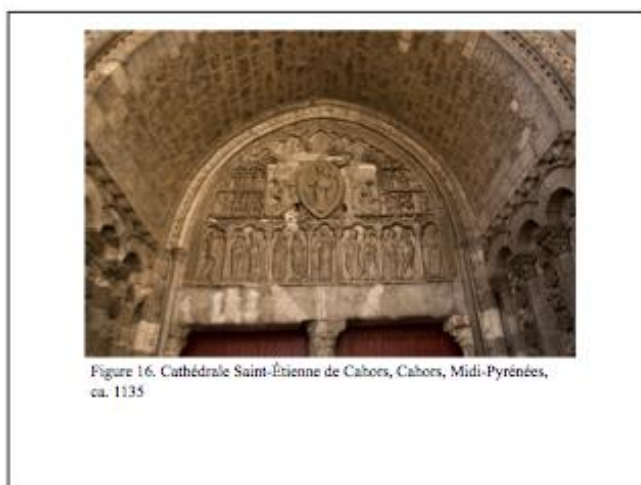
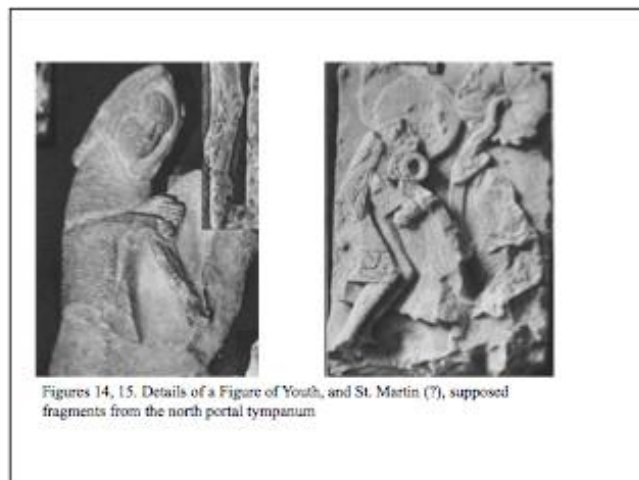
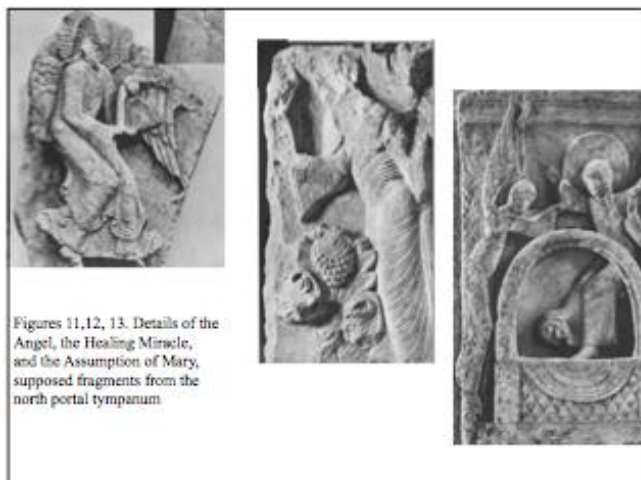




Figure 18. Capital from Puerta de las Platerías at Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (South portal), early 12<sup>th</sup> century

Figure 19. Page from the Souvigny Bible, facsimile, ca. 12<sup>th</sup> century credit: personal photo



Figures 20 and 21. Dives in Hell and Lazarus and Abraham and the Prodigal Son, detail of capitals from north portal



Figures 22 and 23. Widow at Nain or Mary Magdalene, Christ, and Lazarus and the Dives and Lazarus, detail of capitals from north portal



Figure 24. Detail of Lazarus from the Noli me Tangere capital in the nave at Saint Lazare



Figure 25. Detail of Mary Magdalene and Christ from the Noli me Tangere capital in the nave at Saint Lazare



Figure 26. Nave Capital, Adam and Eve, Basilica of St. Mary Magdalene, Vézelay, ca. 1130



Figure 27. Jamb sculpture of Adam and Eve from Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val, 1120, near Montauban



Figure 28. Chapel of Saint-Michael d'Aiguilhe, Le Puy and detail of the portal lintel, originally built in 962, with renovations to Portal and other parts in 12<sup>th</sup> century



Figure 29. Trumeau figures of Lazarus, Mary and Martha on west façade at Saint Lazare, reconstructed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Autun





Figure 30a. Detail of Mary Magdalene in the Scene of the House of Simon, Saint-Hilaire, Foussais, France, 12<sup>th</sup> century.



Figure 30b. Detail of Saint Hilaire showing Christ as well gesturing towards Mary Magdalene.



Figure 30c. Pull view of Saint Hilaire, with sculptural architecture with both the Meal at the house of Simon and the noli me tangere scene



Figure 31. Detail of Eve from the left



Figure 52. Detail of Eve from the left, pointing out teardrop



Figure 33. Detail of Satan's claw



Figure 34. Siegburg Madonna, ca. 1160, Schnitzgen Museum, Cologne

Old Testament	Comparison of Themes	New Testament
Formation of Eve	Peaceful Eve and then Peaceful Gabriel	Naïf Eve Targem
Eve Presented to Adam	Substitution	The Three Marys at the Tomb
Temptation and Fall	Use of Knowledge (on the Tree of Life) (The Cross, Substitution)	The Crucifixion
Accusation and Judgment of Adam and Eve	Judgment	Judgment of Jesus by Pilate
Expulsion from Paradise	Separation from God (on the Mountain with God)	Presentation of Jesus to Joseph
Adam and Eve Working	Forbidden Fruit of Eve (Cave and Mary (Jesus) (Heavenly Wealth)	Adoration of the Magi
Offerings by Cain (grain) and Abel (fleece)	Abel's Sacrificial Lamb (on the Cross, Lamb of God)	The Nativity
Cain Slaying Abel	Despair, Sin, Murder (on the Cross, Lamb of God)	The Annunciation

Figure 35. Typological map of the Doors at Hildesheim



Figure 36. Detail of the Virgin Mary and Child on the tympanum of Neully-en-Donjon



Figure 38. Detail of Mary Magdalene, Neully-en-Donjon



Figure 37. Detail of Adam and Eve, Neully-en-Donjon



Figure 39. Detail of the damned on the tympanum at Anzy-le-Duc



Figure 40. Detail of the saved on the tympanum at Anzy-le-Duc

## Bibliography

- Apostolos-Cappadona, Diane. *Encyclopedia of Women in Religious Art*. New York: Continuum, 1996.
- Armstrong, Karen. *The Gospel According to Woman: Christianity's Creation of the Sex War in the West*. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1987.
- "Art: Romanesque Cezanne." *Time Magazine* (Friday, March 3, 1961). *TIME Online*.  
<<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,897696-1,00.html>>.
- Cook, William R. "A New Approach to the Tympanum at Neuilly-en-Donjon." *Journal of Medieval History* 4 (1978): 333-345. *JSTOR*.
- Gantner, Joseph, Marcel Pobé, and Jean Roubier. *Romanesque Art in France*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1956.
- Gardner, Arthur. *Medieval Sculpture in France*. New York: Kraus Reprint, 1969.
- Grivot, Denis, George Zarnecki, and T.S.R. Boase. *Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun*. Paris: Trianon, 1961.
- Grössinger, Christa. *Picturing Women in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art*. New York: Manchester University Press, 1997.
- Jalabert, Denise. "The Eve of the Autun Cathedral: It's Place in the History of Romanesque Sculpture." *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 35, ser. 6 (1949): 299-306. *Print*.
- Kraus, Henry. *The Living Theatre of Medieval Art*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967.
- Maisch, Ingrid. *Mary Magdalene: The Image of a Woman through the Centuries*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1998.
- Mâle, Emile. *Religious Art in France, the Twelfth Century: a Study of the Origins of Medieval Iconography*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978.
- Marina, Areli. "Gislebertus's Eve: An Alternative Interpretation of the Eve Lintel Relief From the Church of Saint-Lazare, Autun." *Athanas* 13, (1995): 7-13. *Print*.
- Petzold, Andreas. *Romanesque Art*. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1995.
- Porter, Arthur Kingsley. *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*. Vol. 1. New York: Hacker Art, 1966.
- Schapiro, Meyer, and Linda Seidel. *Romanesque Architectural Sculpture: The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2006.
- Schiller, Gertrud. *Iconography of Christian Art*. Trans. Janet Seligman. Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1971.



Seidel, Linda. *Legends in Limestone: Lazarus, Gislebertus, and the Cathedral of Autun*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1999.

Warner, Marina. *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*. New York: Knopf, 1976.

Werckmeister, O.K. "The Lintel Fragment Representing Eve from Saint-Lazare, Autun." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 35 (1972): 1-30. *JSTOR*.