

Apples and Mangoes: Iconography and the Foundations of Art History

Wandering the Deleuzian Garden



Mangos and Apples



Who gets the apple? The Judgment Of Paris^[SEP]Lucas Cranach the Elder^[SEP]1530-th , 36.4×50.8 cm



At the forest's edge, circa 1765, The ripe mangoes ready to be plucked are a symbol of fertility and plenty, adding to the imagery of the young women frolicking in the river and the approaching rains, ready to nourish the land. Photo courtesy of The Cleveland Museum Of Arts

Is knowledge good or bad?

Does knowledge bring pleasure?

Does beauty have anything to do with it?

What role play the artists and their work?

Throwing out a fishing net

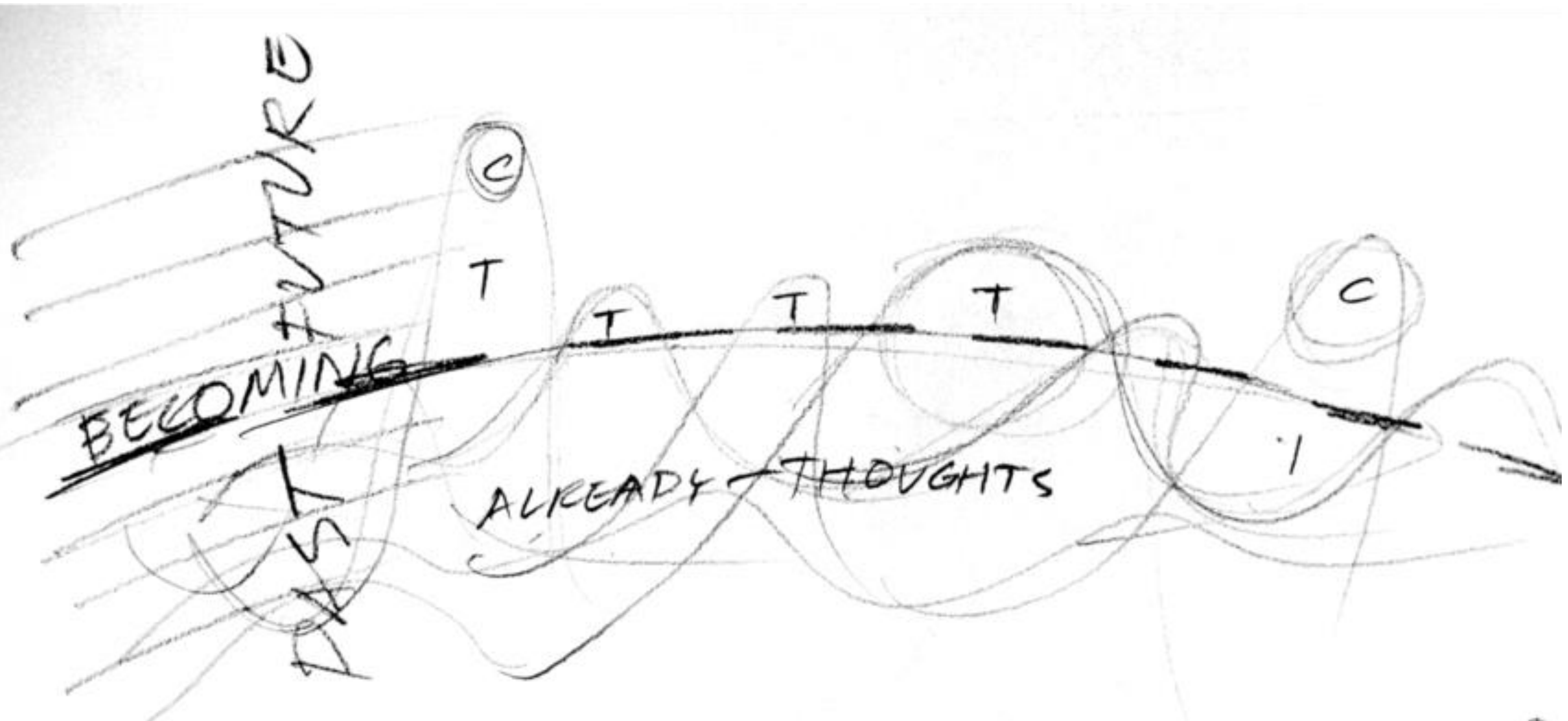
- There is no master narrative
- I am not going to tell a story
- There is no message

Things will surface, there will be connections, we will discuss, together we know more.

At the end there will be more questions than answers.

SIMPLICITY is COMPLEXITY *RESOLVED*







Art History Principles

Aby Warburg (1866–1929)

Iconology: Warburg is considered the father of iconology, which moves beyond mere description of artworks (iconography) to explore the deeper cultural and psychological meanings behind symbols and images in art.

Mnemosyne Atlas: His unfinished work, Mnemosyne Atlas, is a collection of images that trace patterns of visual memory across cultures and time, illustrating how ancient motifs reappear in modern contexts.

Memory and Pathosformeln: Warburg introduced the idea of Pathosformeln (pathos formulas) to explain the recurrence of emotional expressions and gestures in art, which embody collective memory. These visual formulas transmit emotional intensity from one culture and era to another, linking art history with anthropology and psychology.

Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968)

Iconography: Panofsky built on Warburg's ideas by developing the method of iconography, focusing on identifying and interpreting the content and meaning of works of art based on their subject matter, symbols, and historical context. It moves from basic description to decoding layers of meaning, distinguishing between primary, secondary, and intrinsic levels of interpretation.

Renaissance Art: He was particularly influential in Renaissance art studies, contributing to the understanding of the period as one deeply intertwined with philosophy, science, and humanism.

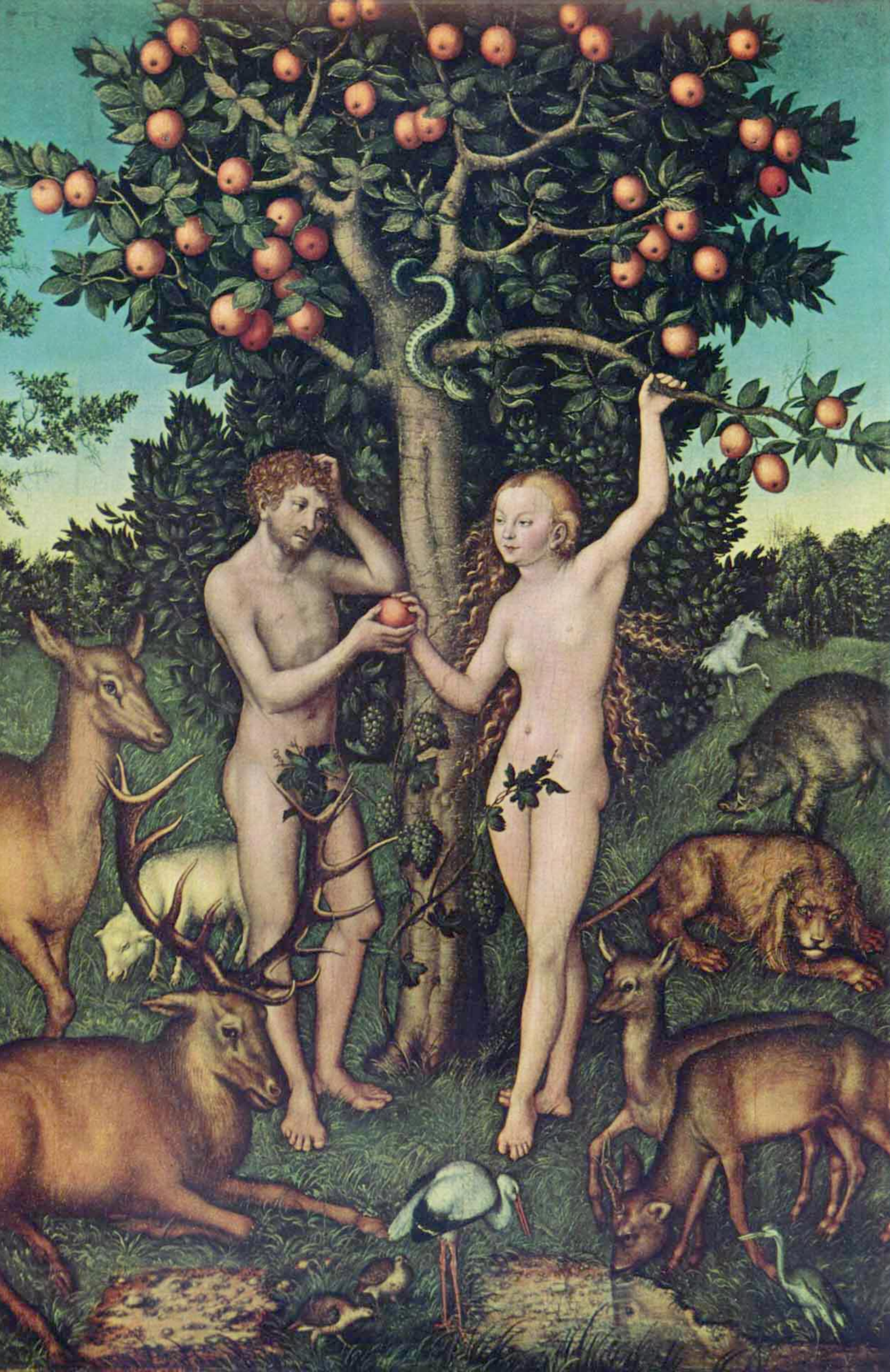
Humanist Interpretation: Panofsky sought to explore how humanistic values and intellectual currents were reflected in the art of the Renaissance. He believed that works of art were part of a broader system of meaning, shaped by philosophical and cultural ideas.

Heinrich Wölfflin (1864–1945)

Formalism: Wölfflin emphasized the formal qualities of art—line, shape, color, texture, and composition—arguing that the analysis of these elements was key to understanding art history. His focus on visual perception and aesthetic judgment marked a shift away from content and subject matter, focusing on the evolution of style in art.

Principles of Art History: In his book *Principles of Art History* (1915), Wölfflin introduced five pairs of opposing stylistic principles that characterize shifts in art between different periods. These pairs—such as linear vs. painterly, closed form vs. open form—were used to compare Renaissance and Baroque art. His systematic approach sought to show how styles evolve and reflect broader cultural changes.

Evolution of Style: Wölfflin's methodology was groundbreaking in that it presented art history as a science with observable laws of stylistic evolution. His comparative analysis of Renaissance and Baroque styles helped to frame art history as a discipline concerned with visual structures and stylistic transformations rather than just historical or biographical factors.



- Knowledge
- as poison?

- Hmmm should I eat this?

Cranach the Elder - Adam and Eve, temptation and fall
Lucas Cranach the elder
Adam and Eve, temptation and fall [1526]
London Courtauld Institute Galleries



Atlas bringing Heracles the apples of the Hesperides in the presence of Athena

Atlas bringing Heracles the apples of the Hesperides in the presence of Athena, marble metope from the east end of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, c. 460 BCE; in the Archaeological Museum, Olympia, Greece.

Photo DAI Athens, Hege 684

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Hercules/Heracles steals the golden apples in the garden of Hesperides

- Pre-history: Age of Heroes (2000-1200 BC)
- Heracles Steals the Golden Apples
- Golden Apples: Sacred fruit symbolizing immortality, gifted to Hera by Gaia.
- Garden of Hesperides: Guarded by nymphs and the dragon Ladon; represents the boundary between mortals and gods.
- Heracles' Task: Retrieve the apples as one of his Twelve Labors, symbolizing his attempt to gain divine favor.
- Atlas's Role: Heracles tricks Atlas into retrieving the apples by temporarily taking on the burden of holding the sky.
- Symbolism: The apples represent the desire for immortality and the limits of mortal power. After the labor, the apples are returned to the gods, signifying that immortality is reserved for the divine.

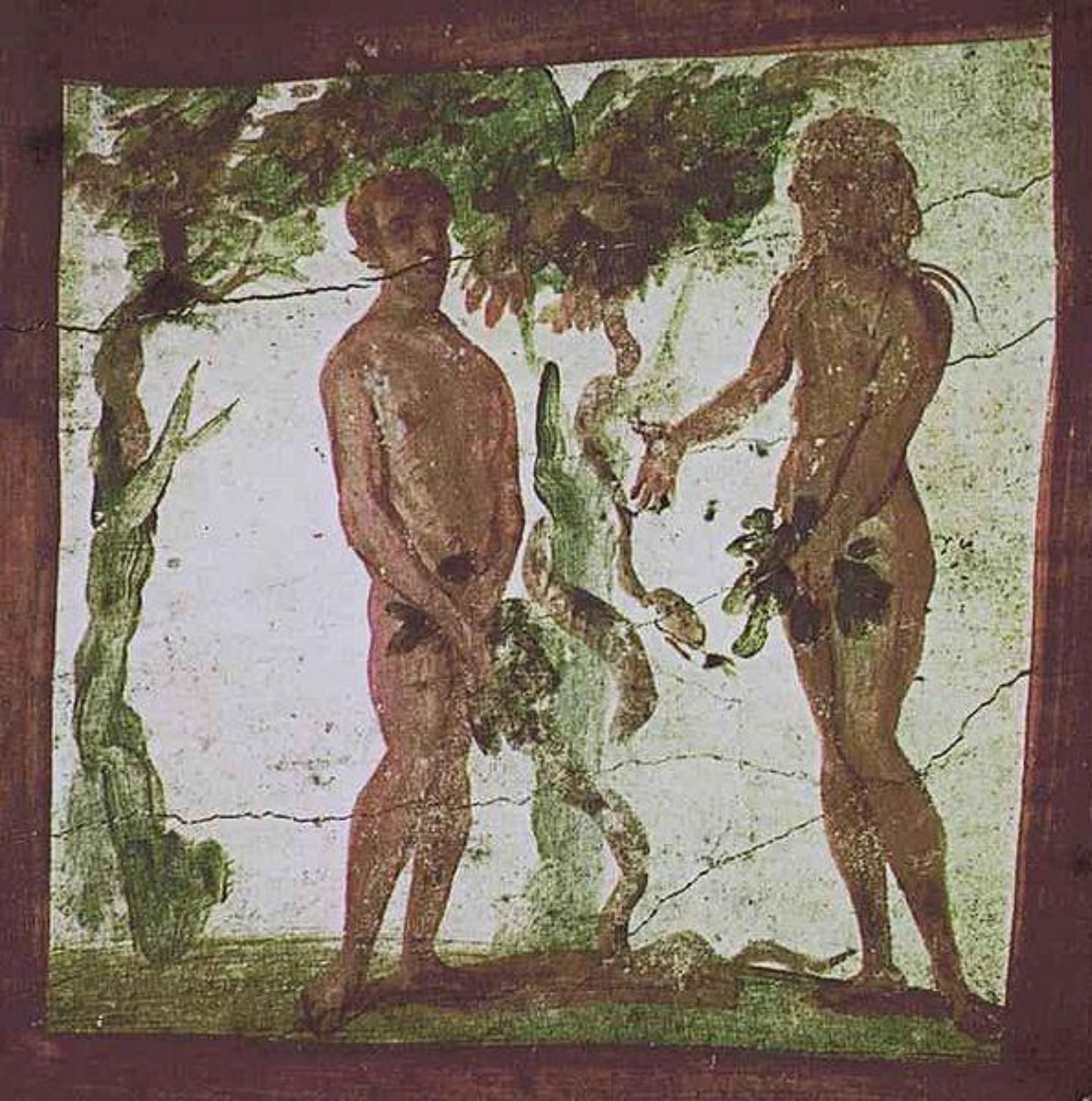


The **Judgment of Paris** is a famous myth from Greek mythology that led to the events of the Trojan War (legend from ca. 8th century BCE?)

- Setting: The wedding of Peleus and Thetis, where all gods and goddesses are invited, except Eris, the goddess of discord.
- Golden Apple: Eris, angry at being excluded, throws a golden apple among the guests with the inscription "For the fairest."
- Three Goddesses Claim the Apple: Hera (queen of the gods), Athena (goddess of wisdom and war), and Aphrodite (goddess of love and beauty) all claim the apple as theirs.
- Paris as Judge: Zeus decides that Paris, the prince of Troy, will be the judge to determine who is the fairest.
- **Bribes:**
 - Hera promises Paris power and dominion over Europe and Asia.
 - Athena offers him wisdom and success in battle.
 - Aphrodite promises the love of the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen of Sparta.
 - Paris's Choice: Paris chooses Aphrodite, awarding her the apple.
- **Consequences:**
 - As a result, Paris is given Helen, who is already married to King Menelaus of Sparta.
 - Paris's abduction of Helen leads to the Trojan War, as Menelaus and his allies wage war against Troy to retrieve her.

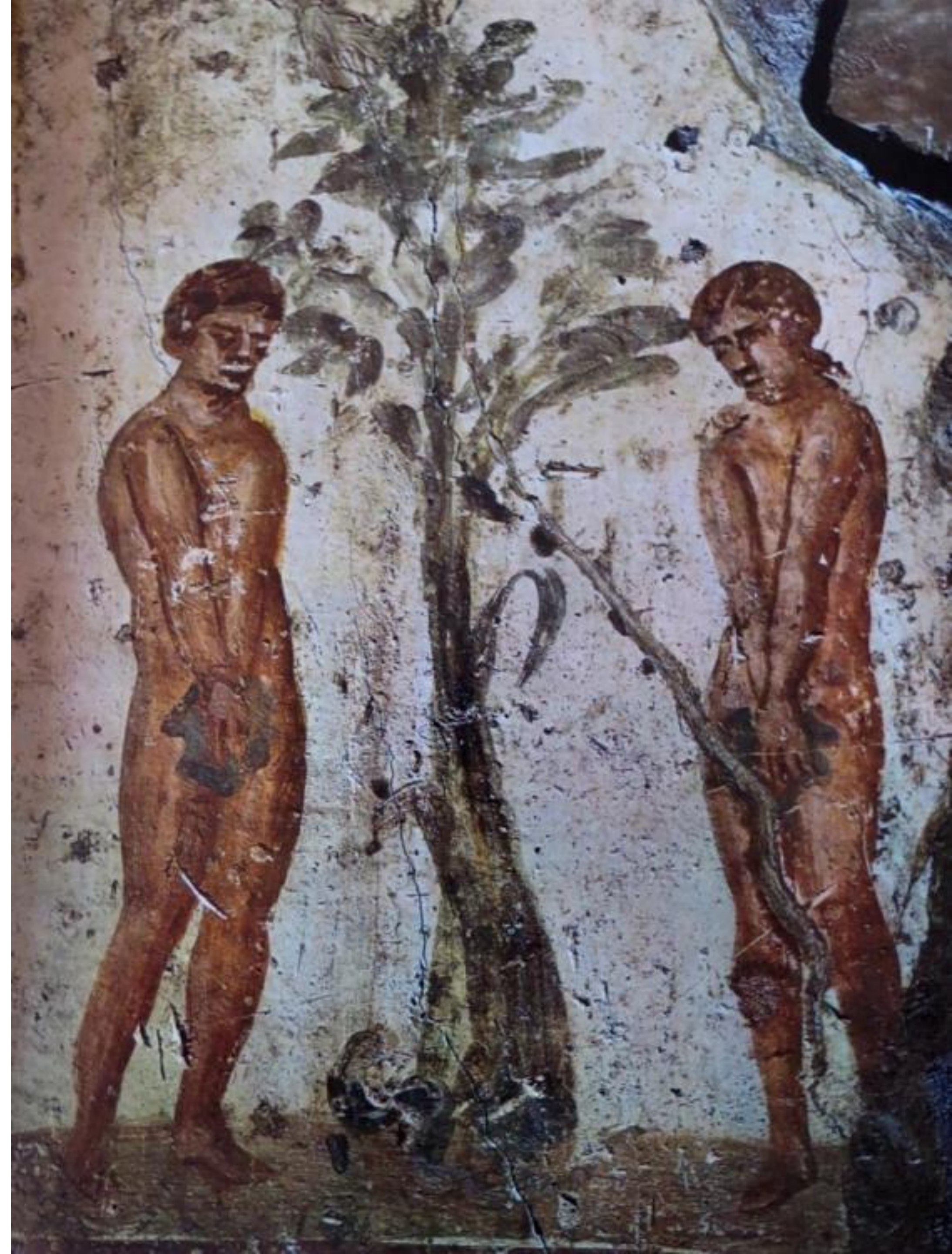
This myth is an important prelude to Homer's Iliad and the entire saga of the Trojan War.





Adam and Eve, catacombs of Saints Marcellinus and Peter - The scene is on the vault of a cubicle in the catacombs.
First half the 4th century
Catacomb of St Piretro and St. Marcellino, Rome, Italy

“Adam and Eve”, painting from the late 3rd century (Cemetery of the Saints Peter and Marcellinus, Rome)
The tree in the middle of the couple who cover their bodies with grape leaves.



Der Reichsapfel des Heiligen Römischen Reiches - Globus cruciger

Der Reichsapfel (Globus cruciger) around 1191

- Symbol of Authority: Represents the emperor's power over the world, with the cross symbolizing Christian dominion.
- Holy Roman Empire: Part of the Imperial Regalia, used in coronation ceremonies of emperors.
- Design: A gold orb topped with a cross, signifying the fusion of secular and divine authority.
- Christian Symbolism: The orb represents the Earth, and the cross atop it signifies Christ's rule over the world.
- Historical Use: Associated with medieval Christian kingship and Roman imperial tradition, symbolizing global sovereignty under God.
- Current Location: Preserved as part of the Imperial Regalia in Vienna, Austria.



The Creation and Expulsion of Adam & Eve in Chartres Cathedral Stained Glass between 1205 and 1240

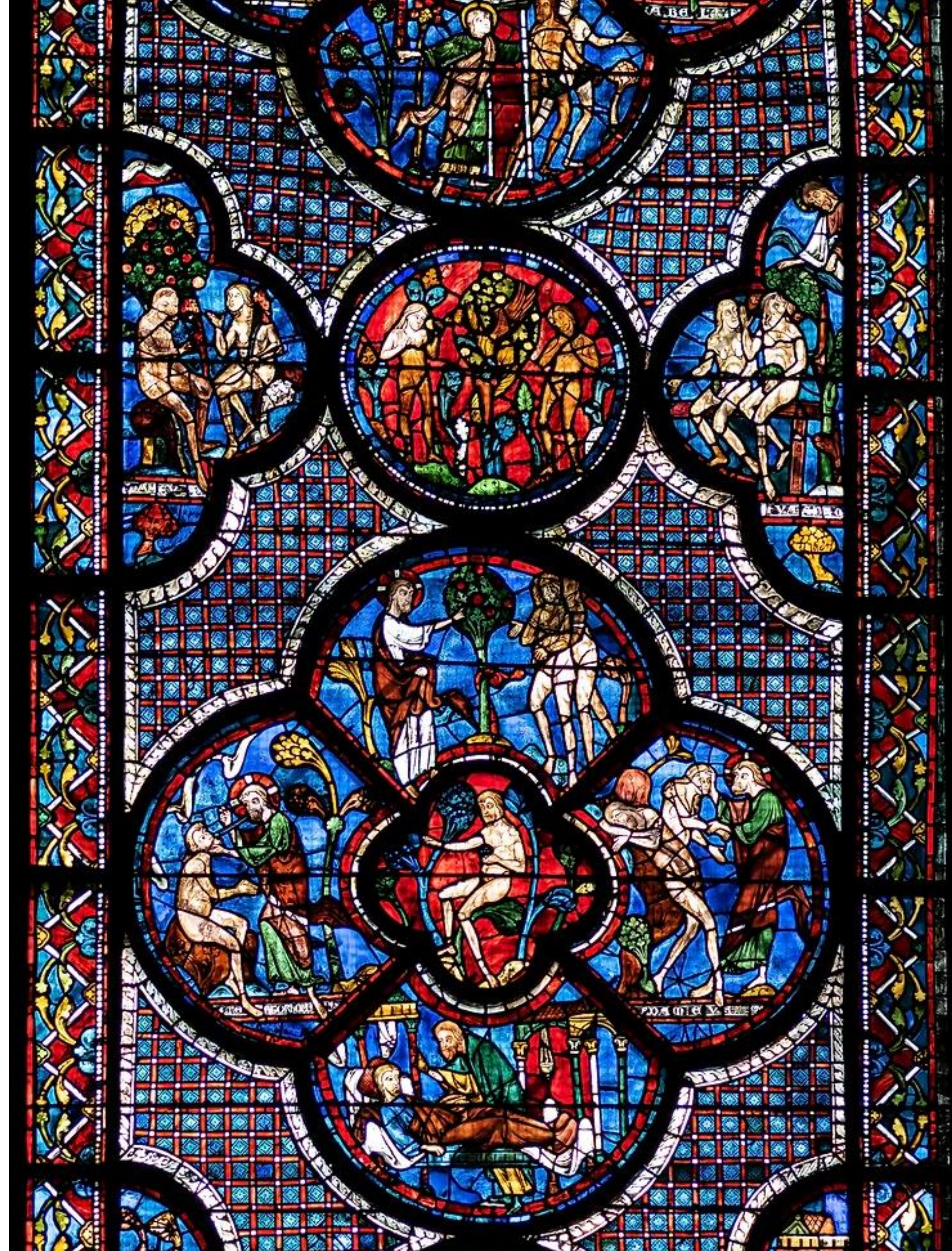
Divine Authority: Emphasizes God's will and the consequences of human disobedience, with Adam and Eve as passive figures in the narrative.

Medieval Symbolism: The Tree of Knowledge represents sin and temptation, focusing on the inevitability of the Fall and divine punishment.

Stylized Figures: Reflects medieval art's spiritual focus, with less concern for anatomical precision, prioritizing moral and religious messages.

Narrative Scope: Depicts both creation and expulsion, highlighting the beginning and end of humanity's fall from grace.

Theological Emphasis: Reinforces traditional Christian teachings of sin, guilt, and redemption, centered on God's authority and human frailty.



Willhelm Tell

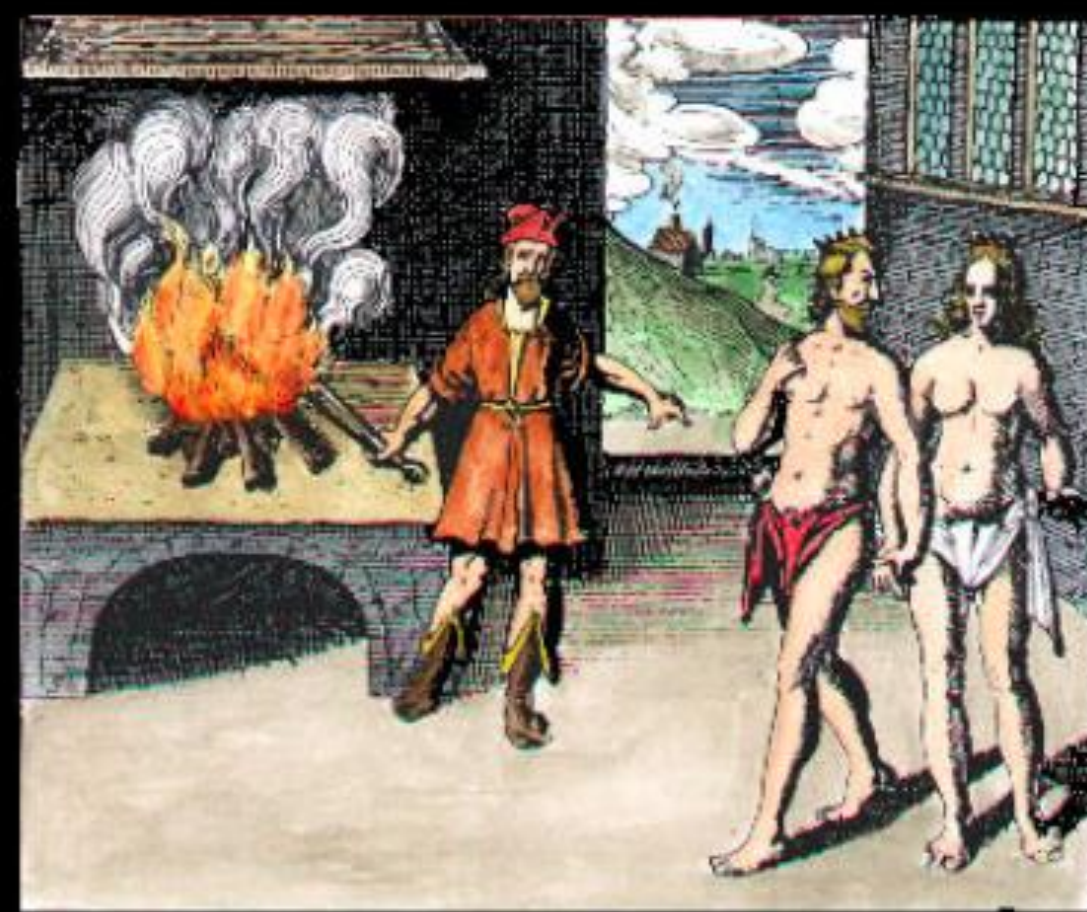
According to Swiss folklore, William Tell was a skilled archer who lived during the early 14th century when Switzerland was under Austrian rule. The story goes that Tell was forced by the Austrian governor, Gessler, to demonstrate his archery skills by shooting an apple off his son's head.



Sixteenth Century Floor Rosarium philosophorum Room Mylius printed version Side Gallery

[Early Period Floor](#) [Early Europe Floor](#) [Sixteenth Century Floor](#) [Seventeenth Century Floor](#) [Eighteenth Century Floor](#) [Floorplan](#) [Back to alchemy website](#)

Johann Daniel Mylius' book *Philosophia reformata* was published in 1622. It contained many alchemical emblems engraved by Balthazar Swan. The twenty images from the *Rosarium* were recreated as engravings in the early 17th century style.



Alchemy - Rosarium Philosophorum

- In The Rosary of the Philosophers (Rosarium Philosophorum), an important alchemical text, paradise apples symbolize the fruit of knowledge, a central theme in both alchemy and religious traditions. The apples are linked to the myth of the Garden of Eden, where the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge grants awareness of good and evil, thereby representing the transformative power of knowledge.
- In alchemy, this transformation is paralleled by the process of turning base materials into gold or achieving spiritual enlightenment. The paradise apples, specifically, may also be seen as allegorical symbols of this shift from ignorance (base matter) to wisdom (gold), which is the ultimate goal of the alchemist.
- The journey depicted in the Rosarium Philosophorum follows the interplay of opposites—often illustrated through the union of masculine and feminine principles—and the apples fit within this broader framework of spiritual or material transmutation.



Dürer's *Adam and Eve*: Renaissance Themes and the Tree of Knowledge

Humanism & Free Will: Emphasizes human agency in moral decisions, reflecting Renaissance ideals of autonomy and choice.

Classical Ideals: Depicts Adam and Eve with idealized, anatomically detailed forms, blending Christian and classical influences.

Pursuit of Knowledge: The Tree of Knowledge symbolizes the Renaissance belief in the importance of intellectual and spiritual growth, even with moral risks.

Moral Ambiguity: Suggests a complex, human-centered view of morality, where knowledge is both enlightening and dangerous.

Albrecht Dürer, *Adam and Eve*, 1504, engraving (fourth state), 25.1 x 20 cm
([The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#))

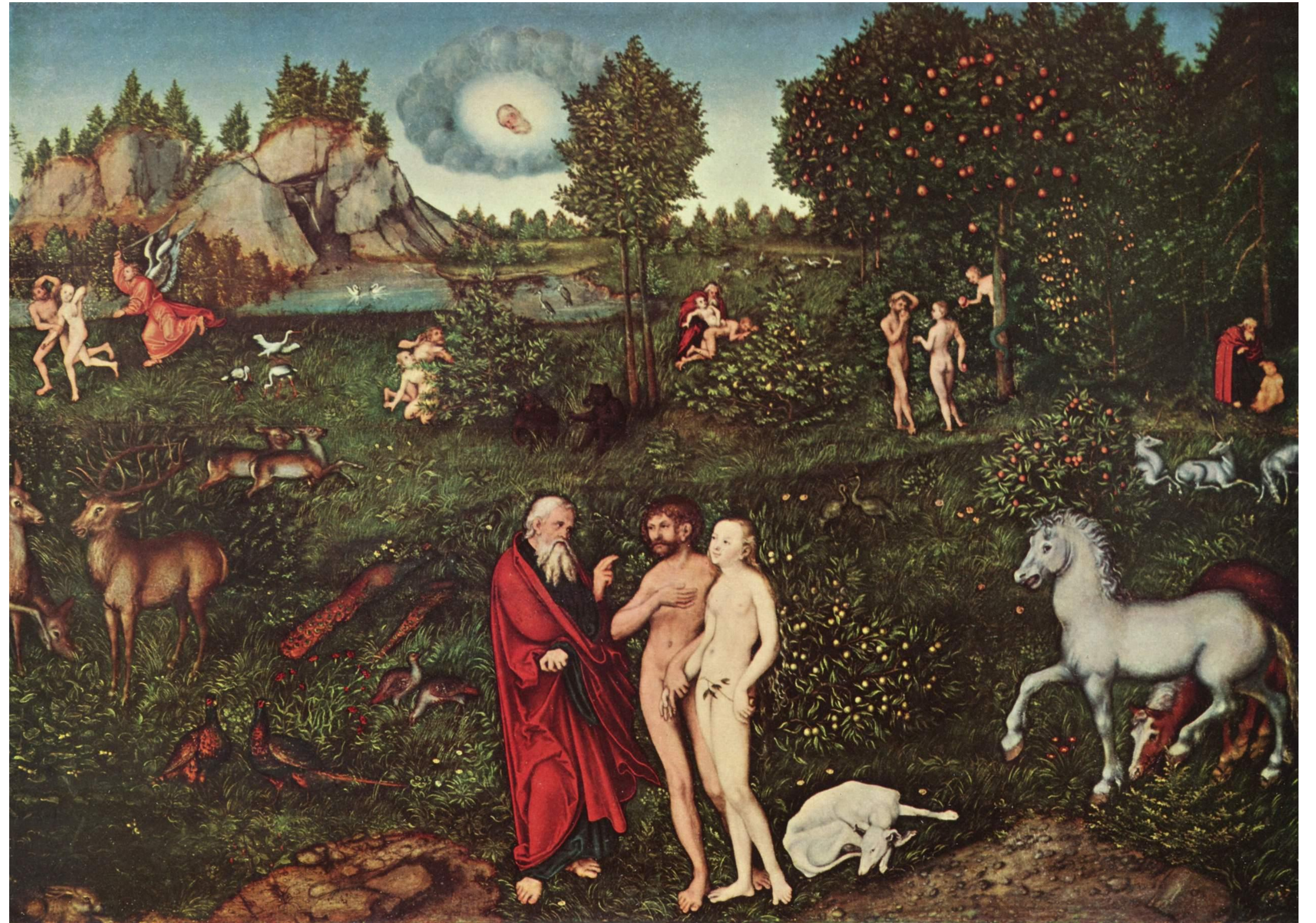
Lucas Cranach (I) - Adam and Eve-Paradise 1530- Kunsthistorisches Museum

Visual Storytelling: Cranach's depiction is rich in symbolic details, reminiscent of the layered storytelling in comic books. The serpent, wrapped around the Tree of Knowledge, interacts directly with Eve, while Adam stands nearby, looking hesitant yet complicit. This visual arrangement creates a moment of narrative tension similar to the buildup in a comic book scene.

Moral Ambiguity: Like many comic book narratives, Cranach's *Adam and Eve* presents moral complexity. The act of reaching for the fruit is portrayed not simply as a fall from grace but as a moment of human curiosity and temptation. This aligns with Renaissance interpretations of the Tree of Knowledge as representing human desire for knowledge, paralleling modern comic book heroes who often grapple with ethical dilemmas.

Symbolic Dynamism: Cranach's use of the serpent and the Tree of Knowledge as central figures reflects the Baroque period's focus on emotion and narrative drama. The temptation scene feels active and alive, much like the dynamic action sequences found in comic books. The interaction between Eve, Adam, and the serpent adds to this sense of movement and decision-making, as if we are witnessing a pivotal moment.

Duality of Good and Evil: Similar to comic book narratives where characters often face binary choices between good and evil, the Tree of Knowledge symbolizes the duality present in the human experience. Cranach's representation of Adam and Eve captures the tension between innocence and transgression, paralleling modern comic book themes of power, responsibility, and the consequences of choices.





The Tree of Knowledge is central to the narrative, and Michelangelo presents it as a literal bridge between innocence and sin. The serpent, depicted as half-human, entwines the tree, emphasizing the intertwined nature of human curiosity and temptation. This marks a shift from earlier depictions of the tree as merely symbolic; here, it becomes a dynamic part of the action, reinforcing its role in humanity's fall.

Michelangelo's figures are highly dynamic, capturing both the moment of temptation and the forceful expulsion. Adam and Eve's physicality contrasts sharply between the two scenes—first, they are bent toward the tree in desire; then, they are bent by the weight of sin and shame, physically driven from Eden by the angel's sword. This sense of movement is typical of Michelangelo's ability to depict dramatic human experiences through physical form.

**The Garden of Eden
with the Fall of Man**
*Jan Brueghel the Elder
and Peter Paul Rubens*
(c. 1615)

Sensuality & Emotion:
Focus on the beauty of
nature and the emotional
pull of temptation.

Dramatic Tension: The
Tree of Knowledge
becomes the focal point
of a dynamic, theatrical
moment.

**Naturalism &
Abundance:** Rich detail
emphasizes the bounty of
Eden, contrasting human
frailty with divine
perfection.

Moral Ambiguity:
Represents both human
desire for knowledge and
the tragic loss of
innocence.

Sin & Salvation:
Reflects Baroque themes
of human weakness and
the need for divine grace,
foreshadowing
redemption.



Snowwhite and the 7 dwarfs – the poisoned apple for the most beautiful in the land

In the tale of *Snow White*, a young princess is pursued by her jealous stepmother, the Evil Queen, who envies Snow White's beauty.

Fearing that Snow White will surpass her as the "fairest of them all," the Queen attempts to kill her. After several failed attempts, the Queen disguises herself and offers Snow White a poisoned apple. Though it looks beautiful and tempting, the apple is deadly.

Snow White, unaware of the danger, takes a bite and falls into a death-like sleep.

The apple symbolizes deception, temptation, and the loss of innocence, marking a pivotal moment in Snow White's journey.

She is eventually revived by a prince's kiss, symbolizing rebirth and triumph over the Queen's envy.

The apple serves as a key element in the story, highlighting the themes of betrayal, temptation, and transformation.



Master Isaac Newton in His Garden at Woolsthorpe, in the Autumn of 1665

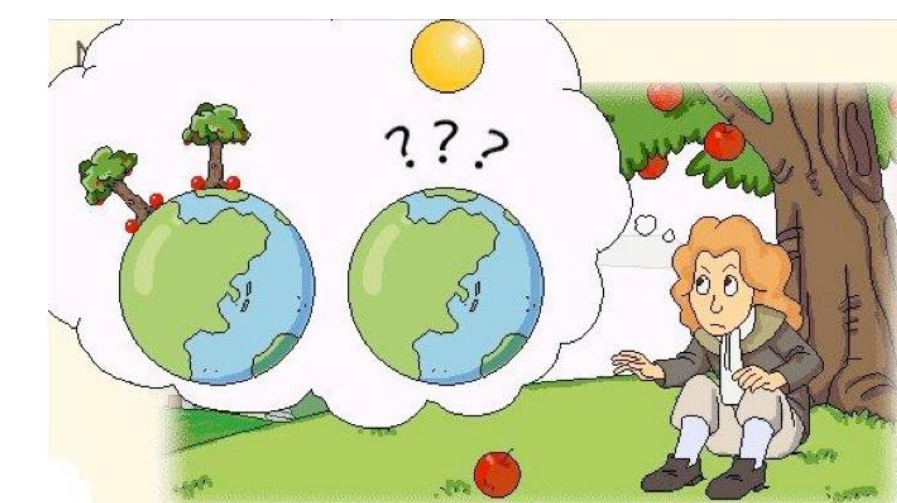
Robert Hannah (1812–1909)

The Royal Institution



Image credit: The Royal Institution

Newton understood gravity sitting under an Apple tree, pondering on why they fall down





Still life and Abstract Art

Paul Cézanne - The Basket of Apples - 1926

Jeff Koons, Made in Heaven (1990–1991)



[The Son of Man](#) (1964) by [René Magritte](#) (1898-1967)
Oil on canvas painting From a private collection.





Mangoes

Enjoyment

O Lord, may the chain of the stigmas
of contradictions perish.

May absolute freedom flash forth in
my heart.

May the image made of consciousness
Be flooded with the nectar of bliss.

(Shivastotravali 7.3)



Key Art Historical Methodologies in the Indian Context

Iconographic Analysis

Focus: Study of religious symbols, motifs, and figures.

Source: Shilpa Shastras, Agamas (texts outlining rules for sculpture and temple architecture).

Goal: To understand the spiritual and religious significance behind the forms (e.g., mudras, postures) in temple art and sculpture.

Example: Analysis of deities' hand gestures (mudras) to interpret divine powers like protection, compassion, or wisdom.

Formal Analysis (Iconometry)

Focus: Study of proportions, symmetry, and measurements based on strict guidelines (Talamana).

Source: Shilpa Shastras (prescribed proportions for deities and temple architecture).

Goal: To understand how the physical dimensions of art reflect cosmic principles and metaphysical concepts.

Example: Measuring the ratio of head to body in sculptures of deities to ensure alignment with cosmic order and spiritual ideals.

Rasa Aesthetic Theory

Focus: Understanding the emotional experience (rasa) an artwork is meant to evoke in its audience.

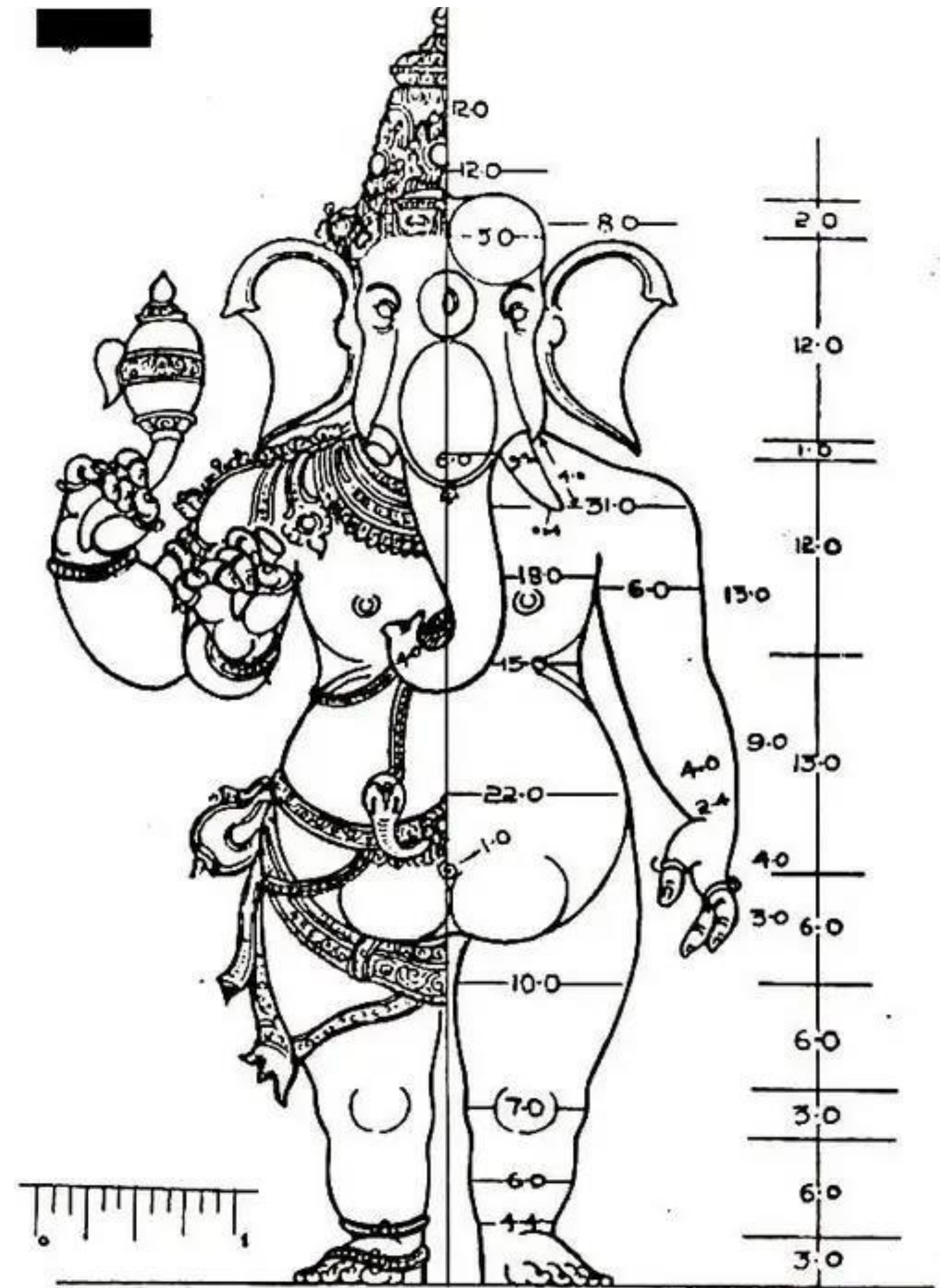
Source: Natyashastra (classical text on aesthetics and performance).

Goal: To analyze how an artwork's form, content, and style generate emotional responses, such as love (Shringara), compassion (Karuna), or wonder (Adbhuta).

Example: Interpreting the emotional impact of Krishna's playful form to evoke Shringara (love) in devotional art.

In the context of Advaita Vedanta and the overcoming of dualism, Anandashakti can be understood as the non-dual force of bliss that dissolves the subject-object distinction. It is not just a creative energy but also a manifestation of the absolute, where the experience of bliss (Ananda) transcends any separation between the individual self (Atman) and the ultimate reality (Brahman). This aligns with the Advaitic assertion that all distinctions, including joy and its experiencer, ultimately collapse into a singular, non-dual consciousness.

Devin Proportions: Is there an iconography for Anandashakti?



Map Of Creation

MACROCOSMOS (Nirguna Brahman)

Physics:
Proton and Neutron -> Quarks

Physics:
Electron -> Quasiparticles

A - Orbiton (orbital location)
U - Spinon (spin)
M - Holon (charge)

SHIVA pure consciousness (light)
SHAKTI pure energy (awareness of light)

Tathagatagarbha - Hiranyagarbha
Kṛṣṇa/Chrise Consciousness
Mahavishnu - Adiparashakti
Sivasakti - Ardhanarishwari
Radha-Kṛṣṇa

Siva Tattva Sakti Tattva

SadaSiva Tattva (Nirāṇanda/Sāśvata Tattva) Aham (self)
Sivara Tattva (Rāga Tattva) Idam (objectivity)
Suddha Vidya Tattva (J) (Sāśvata/Kṛpā tattva)
Aham and Idam in equilibrium

ICHCHHA willing force A
KRIYA activating force U
JNANA knowing force M

VIDYĀ knowledge
MĀYĀ illusion
NIYATI fate
KĀLĀ time
KĀLĀ action

Vidya Tattvas (Suddhasuddha Tattvas)

Tantra:
Nirbija Samadhi (Nirvikaipa, Asamprajnata, Nirvana)
Tripiti - knower, known and knowledge - is absent

Taoism:
Wūji -> Tàiji and Bāguà

Resting in the centre of everythingness equals Tàiji (or Wūji, Xing, Dào, Yoga)

FUXI (Earlier Heaven)

Sāṃkhya:
Guna

A - Tamas (inertia)
U - Rājas (dynamism)
M - Sattva (luminosity)

Tantra:
Five kanchukas (limitations of Maya)

Kalaa - limited doer
Vidya - limited knower
Raga - clinging
Kaala - limited by space/time
Niyati - limited freewill

MICROCOSMOS (Saguna Brahman)

PURUSHA individual soul
"Chitta"
PRAKRITI creatrix

SATTVA guna (0)
RĀJAS guna (+)
TAMAS guna (-)

BUDDHI intelligence
MANAS mind
AHAMKĀRA ego/identity

Tantra:
Sabija Samadhi (Savikalpa, Samprajnata)
Tripiti - knower, known and knowledge - is present

Taoism:
Bāguà

KING WEN (Later Heaven)

Atma Tattvas (Asuddha Tattvas)

Physics:
Energy

A - Tamas - inertia
U - Rājas - kinetic energy
M - Sattva - potential energy

Taoism:
Wū Xing (The Five Phases), Bāguà

Heaven ☰ Qián (Tiān) ← Metal
Lake ☱ Dui (Zé) ← Wood
Wind ☴ Xùn (Fēng) ← Fire
Thunder ☳ Zhèn (Léi) ← Water
Fire ☲ Lí (Huǒ) ← Earth
Water ☵ Kǎn (Shuǐ) ← Metal
Mountain ☶ Gèn (Shān) ← Wood
Earth ☷ Kūn (Dì) ← Fire

5 MAHĀBHŪTAS gross elements (Natural Force)

Ether (Ākāsha)
Air (Vāyu)
Fire (Agni/Tejas)
Water (Āpas/Jalam)
Earth (Pṛithvi)

5 TANMATRAS subtle elements (Force Carriers)

sound (hearing)
touch (touching)
form/sight (seeing)
taste (tasting)
smell (smelling)

JNANENDRIYAS organs of sense ("Entrance doors")

ear
skin
eye
tongue
nose

KARMENDRIYAS organs of action ("Exit doors")

mouth (speaking)
hands (grasping)
feet (moving)
sex organs (procreating)
anus (eliminating)

Tantra:
Five Lower Chakras, Five Prānas

Ether - Vishuddhi - Uḍāna
Air - Anahata - Prāna
Fire - Manipura - Samāna
Water - Svadhithana - Vyāna
Earth - Muladhara - Apāna

Physics:
Elementary Particles, Forces

Ether (Fifth Force)
Gluon (Strong Force)
Photon (Electro-Magnetic Force)
W, Z bosons (Weak Force)
Graviton (Gravitational Force)

Body

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Shuddha Tattvas (Pure Tattvas)

These five tattvas represent the most subtle and purest levels of reality, connected to the divine consciousness.

Shiva – The purest consciousness, beyond all limitations, associated with the Supreme Self.

Shakti – The dynamic, creative energy of Shiva.

Jnana corresponds to the power of pure knowledge or awareness

Kriya represents the power of action, where the divine energy begins to manifest and shape the universe.

Ichha is the power of will or desire, the initial impulse that sets the creative process into motion.

Shuddhashuddha Tattvas (Pure-Impure Tattvas)

These tattvas bridge the pure divine reality and the material, manifest world. They involve both spiritual and material components.

Maya – The principle of illusion or limitation that causes the experience of duality.

Kala – Limitation of authorship and ability; time and limitation in action.

Vidya – Limitation of knowledge; partial knowledge of reality.

Raga – Limitation of desire and attachment.

Kala (Time) – Limitation of time; the experience of sequential time.

Niyati – Limitation of causality; the principle of cause and effect or destiny.

Ashuddha Tattvas (Impure Tattvas)

These tattvas represent the manifest world and the individual experience of duality

Mental (Antahkarana) Tattvas

Purusha – The individual soul or self, experiencing individuality.

Prakriti – The primal nature or materiality from which the physical world arises.

Mental Faculties

Buddhi – The intellect or discrimination, responsible for making decisions.

Ahamkara – The ego, or sense of individual identity and "I-ness."

Manas – The mind, responsible for processing sensory data and desires.

The Five Cognitive Senses (Jñanendriyas)

Shrotra – Hearing.

Tvak – Touch.

Chakshu – Sight.

Rasana – Taste.

Ghrana – Smell.

The Five Active Senses (Karmendriyas)

Vak – Speech.

Pani – Hands (grasping, holding).

Pada – Feet (movement, locomotion).

Payu – Anus (excretion).

Upastha – Genitals (procreation, sexual function).

The Five Subtle Elements (Tanmatras)

Shabda – Sound.

Sparsha – Touch.

Rupa – Form or sight.

Rasa – Taste.

Gandha – Smell.

The Five Gross Elements (Mahabhutas)

Akasha – Ether or space.

Vayu – Air or wind.

Agni – Fire or light.

Apas – Water.

Naradha and the Mango fruit

Naradha, the celestial sage and troublemaker, presents the golden mango to Shiva, Parvati, and their sons Ganesha and Kartikeya.

- The fruit becomes the center of a divine contest, where intellect and devotion triumph over physical effort.

Anandashakti and the Divine Play (Lila)

- Anandashakti refers to the energy of bliss that permeates creation—an inherent force in all divine actions.
- The story embodies lila, or divine play, where the contest is not about winning a prize but unfolding joy, wisdom, and insight through an effortless act of devotion.

Ganesha's Victory as a Manifestation of Anandashakti

- Ganesha's simple, yet profound act of circling his parents—Shiva and Parvati—as the embodiment of the universe, reflects the power of blissful knowledge over worldly action.
- His wisdom, guided by anandashakti, transcends the physical and reveals a deeper cosmic order, where devotion aligns with the blissful energy of the universe.

The Mango as a Symbol of Bliss

- The mango fruit symbolizes the sweetness of life, prosperity, and spiritual knowledge.
- In the story, it also represents the fruit of anandashakti, a gift that is only attainable through the realization of divine wisdom and inner joy, not by mere physical exertion.



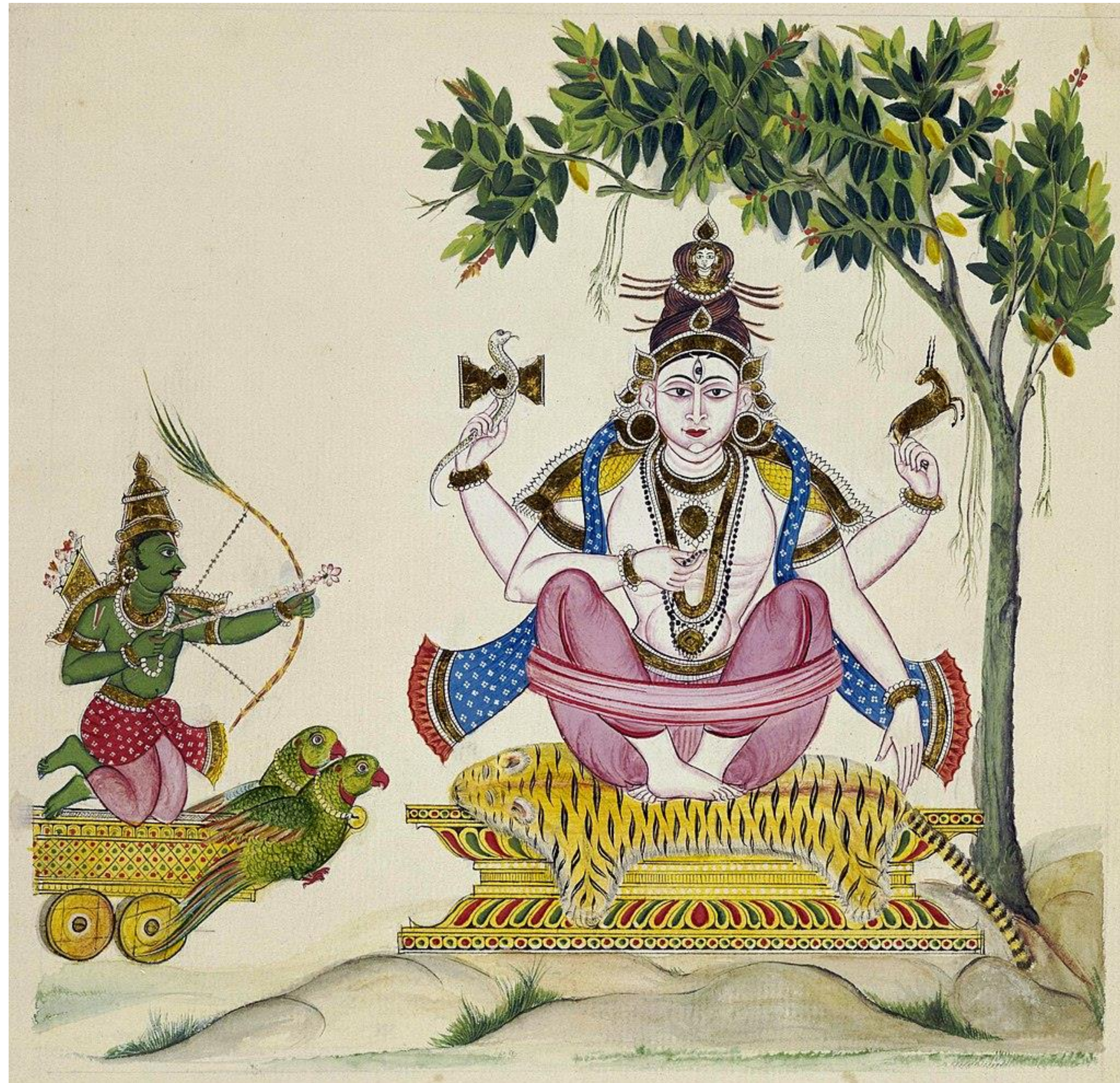
Kāmadeva

Kāmadeva, the god of love, is represented as a young, handsome man who wields a bow and arrows. His bow is made of sugarcane, and his arrows are decorated with five kinds of fragrant flowers. The five flowers are white lotus, Ashoka tree flowers, **Mango tree flowers**, Jasmine flowers, and blue lotus flowers.

After Brahma creates all the prajapatis (agents of creation) and a maiden named Sandhya, an extremely handsome and youthful man emerges from his mind and enquires Brahma about the purpose of his birth. Brahma names him Kama and orders him to spread love in the world by shooting his flower arrows.

Kama attempts to disturb Shiva's meditation to spark love between Shiva and Parvati. Parvati needed Shiva to emerge from his deep meditation for their union to take place, which was necessary for the birth of their son, Kartikeya, who would defeat the demon Tarakasura.

At the request of the gods, Kama shoots his arrows at Shiva to awaken desire in him. However, this act enrages Shiva, who opens his third eye and burns Kama to ashes.



A gouache painting of Kamadeva, circa 1820

Yakshi - Free form, fluid, open sexuality

1st century BCE to First century CE

- Yakshi as Female Nature Spirit: Yakshi (or Yakshini) is a female nature spirit linked to fertility, prosperity, and abundance.
- Association with Trees and Fertility: Frequently depicted with trees, rivers, and plants, Yakshis symbolize life-giving forces of nature.
- Mango Tree Symbolism: The mango tree, seen as sacred and auspicious, is closely associated with Yakshis due to its representation of fertility and abundance.
- Sālabañjikā Motif: Common in early Indian temples, Yakshis are carved on pillars or gateways in the Sālabañjikā motif, where their touch makes the tree blossom, representing life and growth.



Iconometry - Celestial Woman Beneath a Mango Tree

Proportions: The Yakshi or celestial woman is typically shown with idealized proportions—slender yet curvaceous—reflecting her fertility and life-giving nature. The head-to-body ratio, height of the torso, and placement of limbs follow guidelines outlined in texts like the Manasara Shilpa Shastra.

Posture: Yakshi figures often stand in a tribhanga posture, a graceful triple-bend position, which is common in Indian art for female figures. This adds to the sensuousness and flowing movement typical of Yakshi representations, and this aspect would have been prescribed by iconometric guidelines.

Mango Tree: The association of Yakshis with trees, particularly mango or Sala trees, is an established motif in Indian art, symbolizing fertility, abundance, and natural growth. The presence of the tree in the sculpture would align with the symbolic representations that the Shilpa Shastras suggest for depicting Yakshis in relation to nature.

Jewelry and Ornamentation: In many cases, the depiction of a celestial woman would include detailed ornamentation, as described in iconometric texts. These elements are not merely decorative but are symbolic of her role as a figure of prosperity and abundance.

Location: Originally from the Ghatesvara Temple, Baroli, Rajasthan.

Collection: Previously part of the Denver Art Museum. The piece was repatriated to India in 2019 after it was found to have been taken from its original location.

Date: 9th–10th century.

Medium: Carved sandstone.

Provenance: The sculpture was gifted to the Denver Art Museum in 1982 by Robert H. Ellsworth in memory of Christian Humann



Ekambareswarar Temple (Kanchipuram)

Lord of the one mango tree

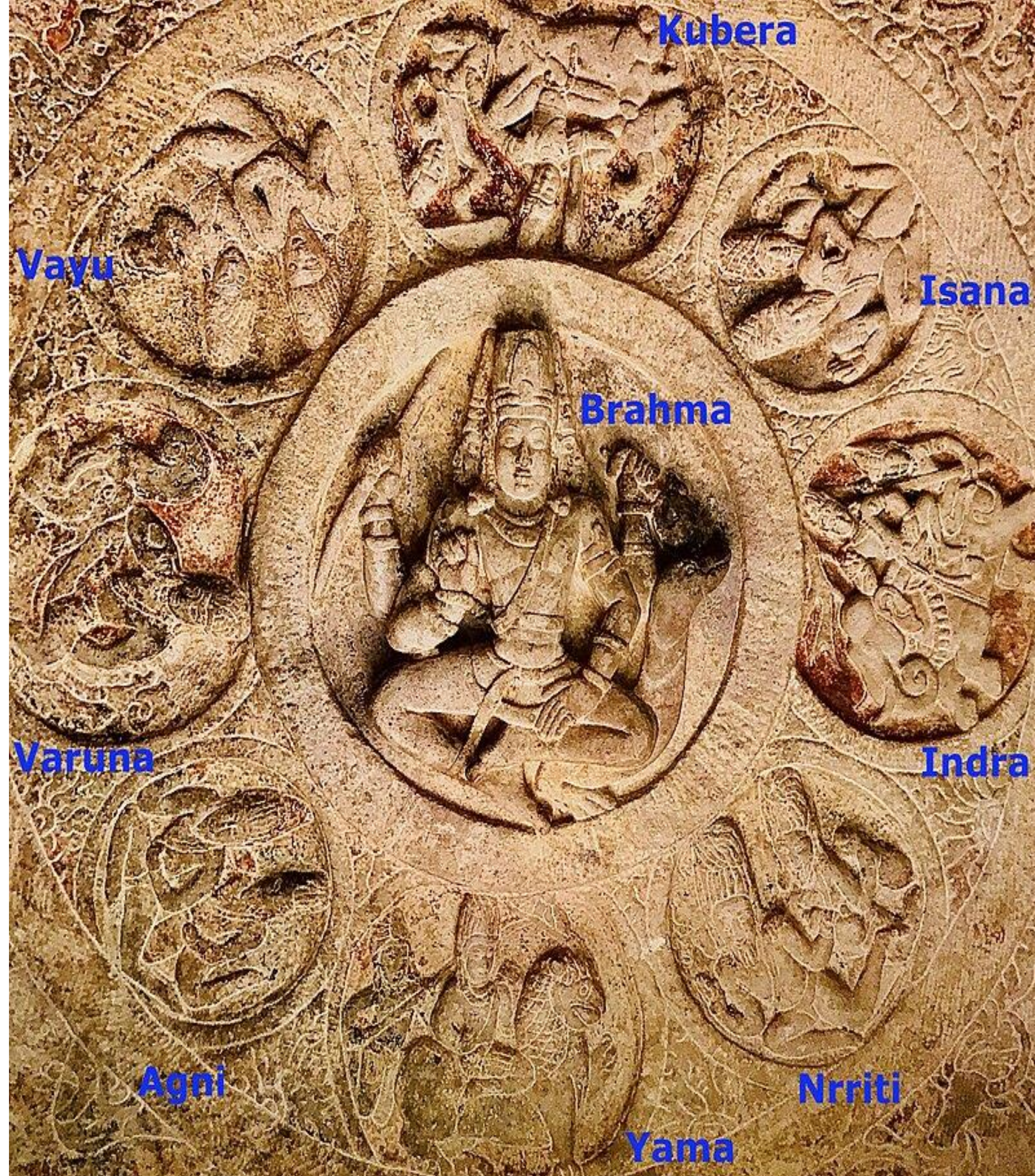
- Siva and the mango tree in Kānci, based on the twelfth-century poet Cekkilar:
- **Siva and the Vedas:** Siva commanded the Vedas (pala ma marai) to take the form of a single mango tree (tani ma) in Kānci, west of the cremation ground.
- **Siva as Linga:** Siva appeared as a radiant linga at the foot of the mango tree.
- **Parvati's Worship:** Parvati requested to practice the worship prescribed in the Agamas, and Siva sent her to the linga under the mango tree in Kānci.
- **The Flood Incident:** While Parvati was worshipping, Siva caused the river Kampai to flood as an amusement (tiruvilaiyattil).
- **Parvati's Embrace:** Fearing the flood would sweep away the linga, Parvati embraced it, causing it to soften in her arms.
- **Marks on the Linga:** The linga still bears the imprints of Devi's nipples and the bracelets from her arms, commemorating the event.



Opening the eyes of a god

Kamika Agama

68.41-43 „Having sent off the Silpi with due honors, the Acharya should design a sthandila in front of the image and place that at the center of the sthandila with the accompaniment of hrudaya mantra. He should place eight pots around the image. These pots should have been wound round with thread, closed with lid, covered with new cloth, filled up with consecrated water, furnished with a bunch of darbha-grass and tender **leaves (of mango tree)**. These are meant for the eight guardians of the directions and these should be arranged with the accompaniment of mantra pertaining to each guardian-deity. Then, the Acharya should worship these directional deities. For the images of minor deities, eight pots need not be arranged. All other rituals should be performed for the images of these deities.“



The Mango Tree: The setting under a mango tree is significant. In Indian culture, the mango tree symbolizes love, fertility, and prosperity. It enhances the familial and nurturing aspects of the scene.

Family Unity: The depiction of the divine family together emphasizes the importance of family bonds, harmony, and the balance of cosmic forces. It reflects the interconnectedness of different aspects of life and the universe.

Artistic Style: Created in the mid-18th century, the painting likely reflects the regional artistic styles of the time, possibly influenced by Rajput or Pahari schools of art, known for their intricate details and vibrant colors.

Shiva, Parvati, Ganesh and Karttikeya

Painting ca. 1760 (made)

Shiva & his Family under a Mango Tree | Collection of the V&A



"**Buddha Preaching the First Sermon under the Mango Tree**", dating back to the **3rd century CE**, is a significant artifact housed in the **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS)** in Mumbai, India. This artwork captures a pivotal moment in Buddhist history—the Buddha's first sermon after attaining enlightenment.

Time Period: The 3rd century CE corresponds to the **Kushan period**, a time when Buddhist art flourished in regions like Gandhara and Mathura. This era saw the fusion of Greco-Roman artistic influences with Indian styles, leading to the creation of profound religious iconography.

The First Sermon: After achieving enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree in Bodh Gaya, Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha) traveled to the **Deer Park in Sarnath**. Here, he delivered his first sermon to five ascetic companions, setting in motion the **Wheel of Dharma** (Dharmachakra).

Under the Mango Tree: While traditional accounts place the sermon in a deer park, the depiction under a mango tree adds layers of symbolism:

Mango Tree Symbolism: In Indian culture, the mango tree signifies love, prosperity, and spiritual growth. It may represent the sweetness of enlightenment and the nurturing aspect of the Buddha's teachings.

Iconography:

Buddha's Pose: The Buddha is likely depicted in the **Dharmachakra Mudra**, a hand gesture symbolizing the teaching of the Wheel of Dharma.

Attendants: The presence of the five ascetics symbolizes the formation of the **Sangha** (the Buddhist monastic community).

Wheel Motif: The **Dharmachakra** or Wheel of Law may be incorporated to emphasize the significance of the teachings.

Artistic Elements:

Style: The sculpture or relief might exhibit characteristics of the **Gandhara school of art**, known for its detailed carving and Greco-Roman influences, or the **Mathura school**, which emphasized indigenous Indian features.



Buddha Preaching the First Sermon under the Mango Tree | Collection of CSMVS Mumbai India 3rd century CE

Under the mango tree – Documenta 14



The structures of formal education systems are increasingly reaching their limits due to their outmoded and inflexible foundations. However, informal and artist-led educational initiatives are taking root.

documenta 14's aneducation and ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) are organizing the gathering of Under the Mango Tree—Sites of Learning, which addresses current educational shifts by inviting different artistic initiatives and schools from multiple geographies to come to Kassel. These different organizations are critically positioned both within and outside the Western canon.

"Mango-Shaped Flask, Mid-17th Century"

The **Mango-Shaped Flask** from the mid-17th century is an exquisite example of Mughal artistry, reflecting the opulence and refined aesthetic sensibilities of the Mughal Empire in India. Crafted with meticulous attention to detail, this flask embodies both the technical prowess of Mughal artisans and the cultural significance of the mango in Indian society.

Mughal Dynasty: The mid-17th century was a period of immense cultural and artistic flourishing under the Mughal emperors, particularly during the reigns of **Shah Jahan** (1628–1658) and **Aurangzeb** (1658–1707).

Artistic Innovation: This era witnessed a fusion of Persian, Indian, and Islamic art forms, leading to innovative designs and the use of luxurious materials in decorative objects.





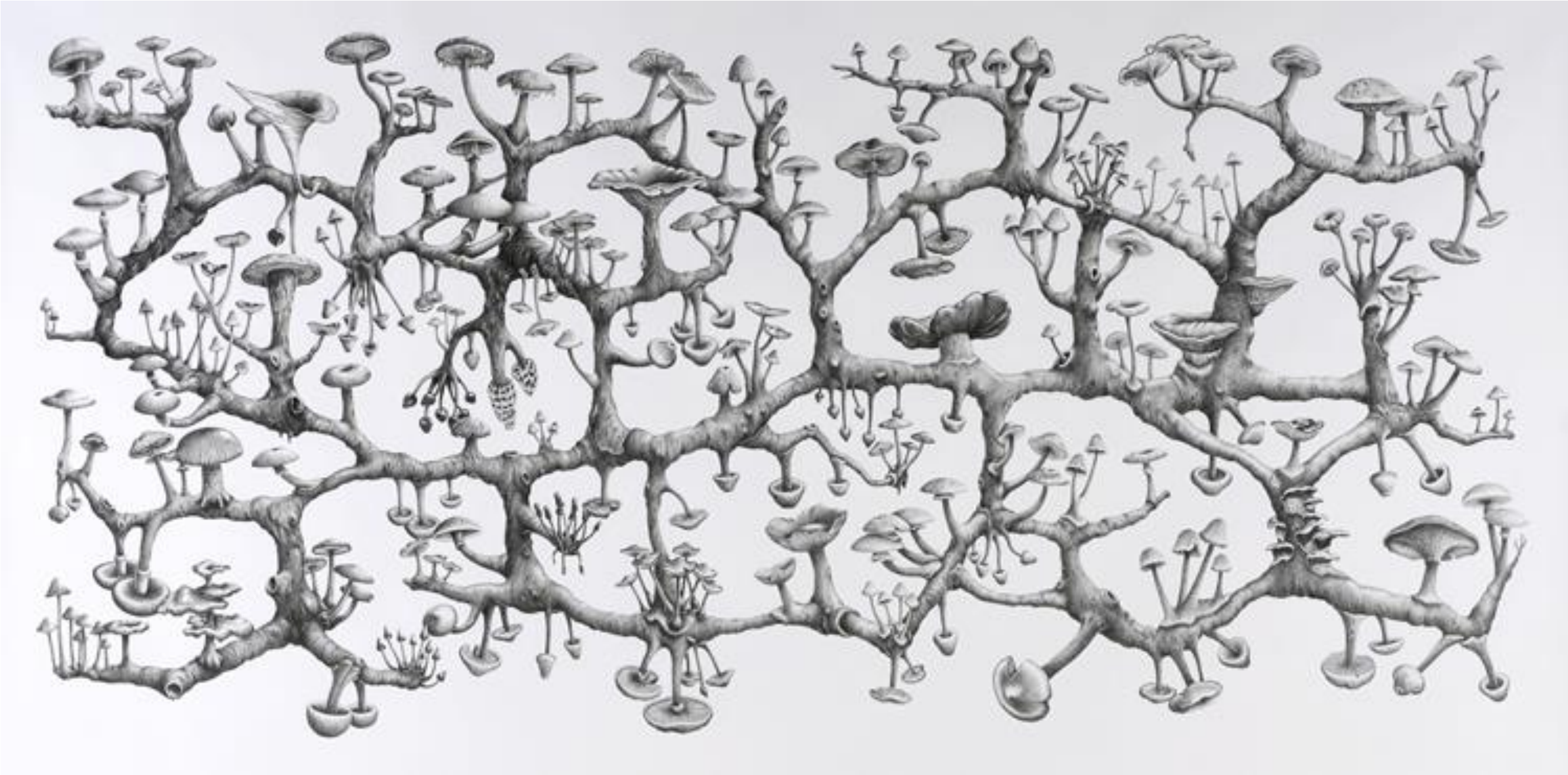
[Caspar David Friedrich](#) (1774–1840)
German: Der Wanderer über dem
Nebelmeer
Wanderer above the Sea of Fog



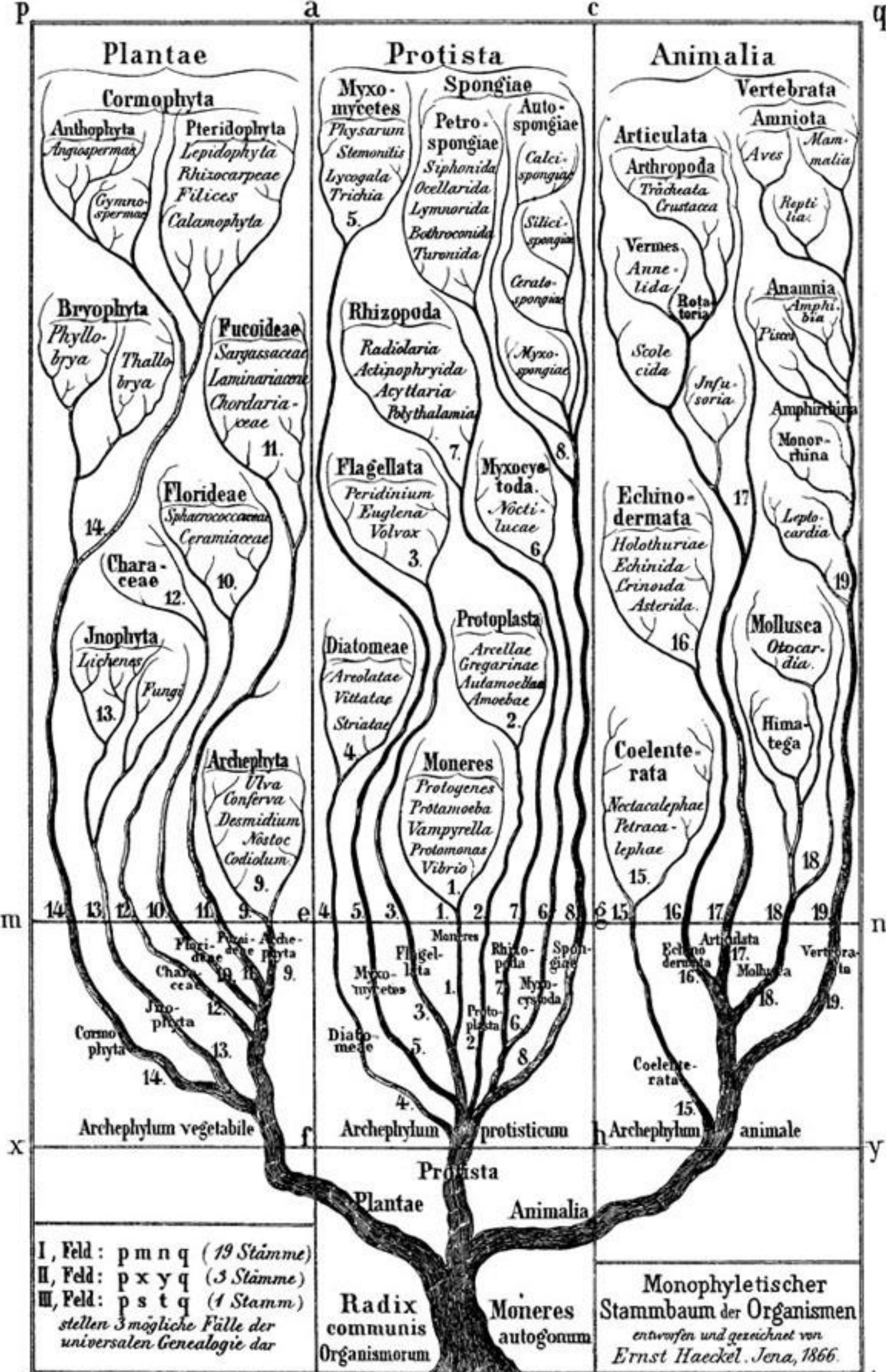
Mankolam: In South India, the Paisley pattern is known as "Mankolam", which translates to "mango design" in Tamil. This term highlights the direct association between the Paisley motif and the mango fruit in Indian tradition.



Against the arborescent mind



Richard Giblett [2008] Mycelium Rhizome. Graphite on paper, 120 x 240 cm.



Haeckel, Ernst (1866). General Morphology of the Organisms. Berlin Reimer.

Flowers, Fruits and polination

- Becoming

