

MASTER DRAWINGS

From the middle ages



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20 January - 4 February 2023

SAM FOGG



Introduction

Cennino Cennini's early fifteenth-century handbook for artists dictates that all aspiring makers should begin their training by learning to draw. It is, he said, *this* medium that most surely guides the mind and eye of the artist. As has become widely argued in contemporary discussions about historic drawings, they offer a unique point of contact with the past, affording us a glimpse of the artist in the very act of creation, invention, and physicalized thought.

Ink, pigments, paper, vellum. The present catalogue and its accompanying exhibition pay homage to the concise array of materials that medieval artists turned into drawings of breathtaking variety, and highlights their wide-ranging applications across the diverse arts of the period. The drawings we have been fortunate to gather together for the occasion were all created by European artists in a period spanning the years between around 1160 and 1520. They range from patterns and designs from model books that offered a travelling reservoir of inspiration, to diligent studies of famous images by Martin Schongauer and his contemporaries, which had themselves become a seemingly limitless source of inspiration for draftsmen and underscore the tightly knotted relationship that exists between drawing, painting, and printmaking. Loose sketches executed with incredible brevity and sureness of hand rub shoulders with fully worked-up presentation drawings of the most refined character. Spare, linear evocations of silhouette and contour sit alongside others with meticulous concern for the plasticity and three-dimensionality of their forms. Rare examples of manuscript illumination have been included where the artist responsible either left their work unfinished, allowing the primacy of the drawn design to shine unimpeded, or restrained themselves from overpowering their draftsmanship with paint. Finally, we have also included works that showcase the translation of drawing into other media, notably stained glass, where surviving examples reveal the hands of great masters who worked at the very interstice between drawing and painting - craftsmen who were once central players within larger artistic communities, but who are all too often relegated to the peripheries of art historical discourse today.

United by their intimacy and immediacy, the seventeen works illustrated in the pages to follow spring from a drawn line that stretches out to us through the intervening centuries like a handshake with the artists at work.

Matthew Reeves



1 A water fountain, perhaps from a model book

A slender water fountain fills the full height of this thick vellum sheet, its tapering columnar base rising from a stepped mound and culminating at the top of the composition in an elaborate lobed terminus emblazoned with the Christian trigram 'yhs' and sprouting a fleur de lys and fine spiral ornament from its outline. Two spouts formed as dragons' heads project from either side of this terminus and spew water from their mouths which falls in slender streams into the basin below, resulting in a series of eddies and ripples. Waterspouts of exactly this type have survived from the medieval period; predominantly cast in metal, their hardwearing material made them standard additions to fountains (fig. 1). The basin below is supported on the backs of two lions, which project like consoles from the sides of the central column and which are shown at bust length, their front paws braced below them for strength. A coat of arms with trefoil cusps emanating from either side punctuates the column just under the upper terminus, its shield decorated *Per pale a pair of wings in lure counterchanged*.¹ A partially illegible inscription in a fifteenth-century hand at the top left of the sheet reads 'Empedocles onyx(?)[...]us'. A philosopher from Agrigento who lived and worked in the fifth century BCE, Empedocles sought to encapsulate all known matter within a framework of four essential 'roots' or elements (air, water, earth, and fire). He equated each of these four elements with divinities, associating water with Persephone whom he called Nêstis:

*Hear first of all the four roots of all things:
Zeus the gleaming, Hera who gives life, Aidoneus,
And Nêstis, who moistens with her tears the mortal fountain.*

Nêstis' 'mortal fountain' is often described as a spring, and by the Middle Ages Persephone had come to be associated with springs - those ever-issuing sources of water that have long been given miraculous significance. It seems plausible from the inclusion of the name Empedocles in an inscription so physically proximate to an image of an elaborate fountain that the sheet was either designed or came to be owned by a person with an acute grasp of classical literature, and who sought to associate the image of a flowing fountain with the life-giving spring that finds its form in the Greek philosopher's writings.

Context and Function

Our drawing is executed on a sheet of vellum so large and thick that it must almost certainly have functioned as the front section of a book binding. This is also supported by its condition; the left-hand edge is very cleanly and neatly trimmed, suggesting that it was cut from a spine, while soiling, creasing, and nicking to the other three edges evidence a long history of handling and turning as part of a book. There was a particularly strong tradition across Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries of compiling so-called 'model books' (compilations of patterns for use by artists during their travels) using thick sheets of parchment like ours. However, owing to their scarcity today we can build a comparatively richer picture of their use

¹ Our thanks to Peter O'Donoghue for his kind help in categorizing and researching the possible identity of this coat of arms.

Northern Italy
c. 1375-1400

29 x 20 cm / 11 1/2 x 7 7/8 in.; ink on vellum. Creases to the lower right-hand corner and diagonally in both directions across the upper register of the sheet. Staining and discolouration across the sheet. A single circular (woodworm?) hole to the right of the drawing. Evidence of alteration, abrasion, and additions in other mediums (now largely invisible). The reverse plain.

Provenance

Art market, London, 1992;
Private collection, Switzerland, acquired 2000, their inventory number MS 1208 ES;
Christie's London, 20 November 2013, lot 33;
Private collection, London

Fig. 1
Bronze waterspout
Italy, Lucca
c. 1490-1520
46 cm (depth)
London, Victoria and Albert
Museum, inv. 7391-1860



in Italian contexts than anywhere else. The so-called Fairfax Murray model book² now in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, executed by an associate of Tomaso da Modena in around 1370-80, as well as a series of Lombard, Siense, and Florentine examples³ offer a fitting context in this regard. Our draftsman utilized the same vanishing point as that used to structure a more highly finished design for a fountain in a Lombard model book now in the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica di Roma, which has been attributed to an artist active around 1420-30 in the workshop of Michelino da Besozzo.⁴ Larger than the famous Giovannino de' Grassi book in the Biblioteca Civica in Bergamo by almost 3cm in both directions, and almost 10cm taller than the mid fifteenth-century Rothschild model book in the Louvre, our sheet was evidently disbound from a volume of unusually grand scale and design.⁵ Other sheets of comparable size have been considered as either record drawings or preparatory models for largescale mural and architectural schemes, and it is certainly possible that ours served a role in a similar context, evidently recording a structure of monumental proportions.⁶

The spare and sketchy draftsmanship of our sheet also aligns it closely with north Italian drawings dated to the late fourteenth century, including examples from the so-called Moscardo Album, which scholars believe was put together from earlier drawings by a Veronese artist working around 1500 (fig. 2).⁷ Unlike the predominantly untouched leaves of the Moscardo Album however, there is ample evidence that our sheet was lovingly used, added to, and adapted by amateur draftsmen in multiple stages. The letters 'yhs' in the decorative upper terminus were at one point partially erased and subsequently redrawn. A small trefoil motif in an ink of different composition was added to the sheet beneath the surviving inscription, though it is now largely invisible except with the aid of ultraviolet light. Perhaps most intriguingly, two figures, one on either side of the fountain, were added to the scene before being erased again at an unknown date to leave only ghostly palimpsests on the sheet. The heavy cloth hat studded with large circular motifs along its edge and the full-length garment gathered into pleats by a belted waistline which together constitute the costume of the left-hand figure help affirm a date in the late fourteenth century – for them if not for the drawing as a whole.⁸ It is unclear whether they were integral to the original design but their forms may either have been used or added



Fig. 2
Attributed to Altichiero da Zevio (active Verona, c. 1369-1388)
Soldiers Storming a Town
c. 1369-1388
24 x 18.2 cm / 9 7/16 x 7 3/16 in.; pen and brown ink and brown wash on laid paper mounted on pale blue paper
Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, Woodner Collection, inv. 2000.25.2

as a device for giving scale to the structure. Enough of their forms can be discerned to say that their heads came up to the level of the water basin, which if true to a real structure would have meant that our fountain rose to over five metres in height – a commission too massive and monumental for all but the most important metropolises and religious houses of the period. The prominent position of the coat of arms high on the structure might also suggest that we are looking at a record of an actual object commissioned by a religious house (which would explain the prominent inclusion of the letters 'yhs'), a civic body, or a family of noble standing. A similar use of arms characterizes the decoration of the *fontana grande* with its lion-head spouts in Viterbo, carved between 1206-1279 and restored in 1424 (fig. 3).



Fig. 3
The fontana grande in the piazza fontana grande, Viterbo, photographed c. 1885
Carved 1206-79, restored 1424

2 Rhoda Eitel-Porter and John Marciari, *Italian Renaissance Drawings at the Morgan Library & Museum*, New York, 2019, no. 2.

3 Albert J. Elen, *Italian Late-Medieval and Renaissance Drawing-Books: from Giovannino de' Grassi to Palma Giovane: A codicological approach*, Leiden, 1995, cf. nos. 2-18.

4 Anna Delle Foglie, *Il Libretto degli Anacoreti e il Libro di Giusto: Due taccuini di disegni tra Tardogotico e Rinascimento*, no. 13, p. 82 and plate 26, p. 117.

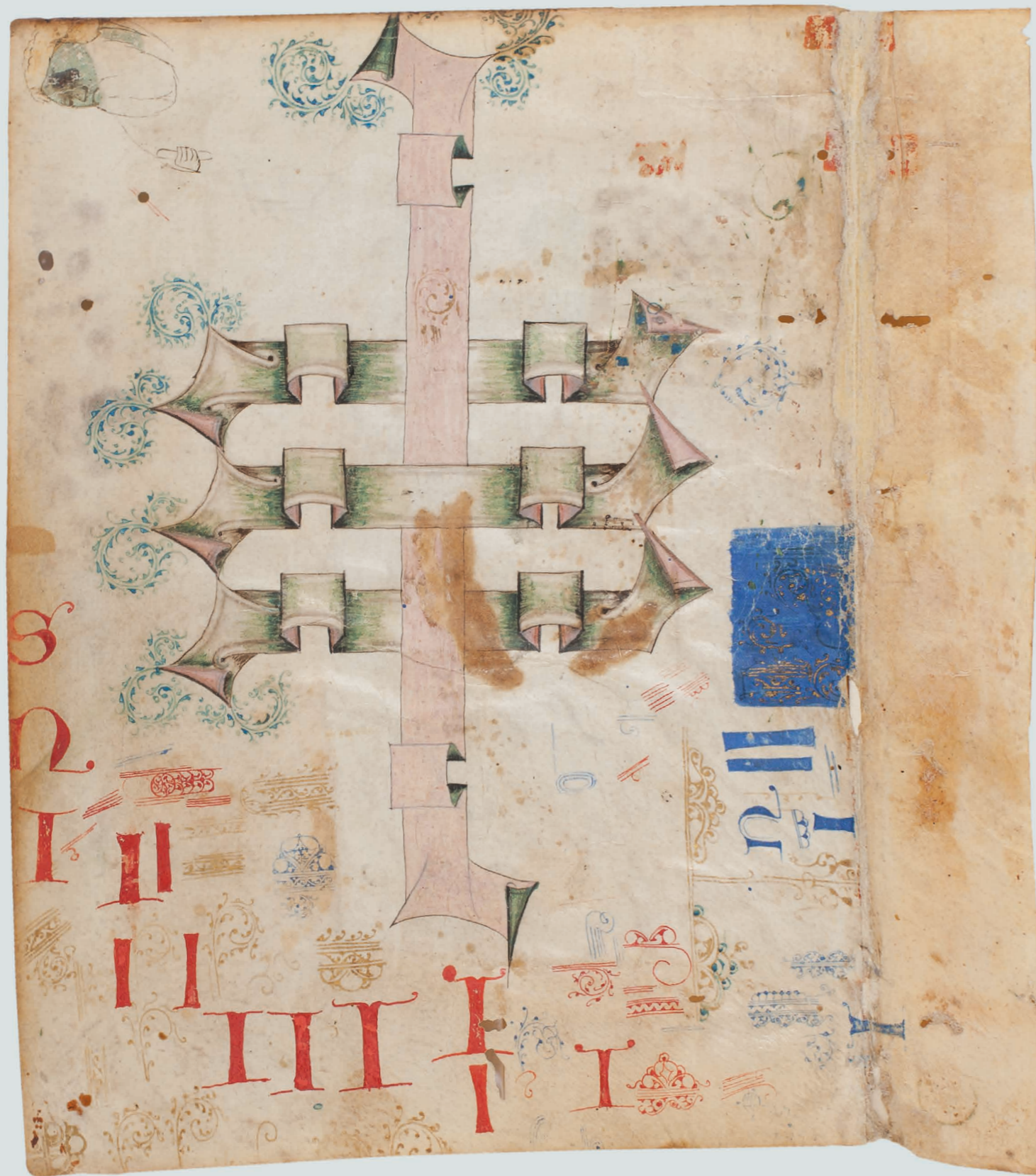
5 Cf. R. W. Scheller, *A Survey of Medieval Model Books*, Haarlem, 1963, no. 21, pp. 142-154, and no. 28, pp. 191-201.

6 For instance the much earlier model-book depicting the Credo of Jean de Joinville in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, ms. lat. 11907, discussed in Scheller 1963, no. 12, p. 97 ff. We are grateful to Livia Lupi for her comments on the possible contexts that our drawing might have operated within.

7 *Woodner Collection: Master Drawings*, Exh. Cat. New York, 1990, pp. 22-3.

8 The cloth hat has a high brim that splits at the side in a manner that can be found used to almost identical effect on the figure of Zachariah from Claus Sluter's so-called 'Well of Moses' carved in the 1390s for the Ducal Charterhouse at Champmol outside of Dijon, for which see Susie Nash, 'Claus Sluter's 'Well of Moses' for the Chartreuse de Champmol reconsidered: part III', in *The Burlington Magazine*, No. 1268 Vol. CL (November 2008), pp. 724-741, p. 734, fig. 13.

2 A test sheet with patterns, sketches, and pen trials



A rare and intimate glimpse over the shoulder of a late-medieval artist at work, this vellum sheet is filled with pen and brush trials that show a mind eagerly experimenting with colours and letterforms, from the most abbreviated to the most refined. It is also an unusual example of a test sheet later repurposed as part of a book binding, probably in the seventeenth century; the physical evidence of a long crease with remnants of paper and evidence of worming on both sides shows that it was folded and inserted into a manuscript as a front flyleaf. Although doodles and pen trials are frequently found on flyleaves in bound manuscripts, this example, with its large central pattern and unfinished figural sketches, almost certainly existed as a loose sheet before it was repurposed.¹

Based on the style of its patterns and the method of applying pigments, our leaf is firmly attributable to an artist active in northern Italy at the turn of the fifteenth century. The verso shows a large calligraphic pink and green scroll pattern with swirling sprays of delicate penwork, representing the entwined initial 'I' and 'M.' This class of ribbon-like letter design is found in surviving Renaissance pattern books from Milan, for example in the *Alphabet Book* by Giovannino de Grassi made in the late fourteenth century (fig. 1). Dozens of pen trials surround this central calligraphic pattern, including sixteen letters and around forty designs of ornate penwork in red, blue, green, and shell gold. A figural sketch of a bearded man appears in the upper lefthand corner, unfinished but prepared with a base layer of green earth, or *terra verde*, with noticeable dark flecks.

Northern Italy
c. 1400

18.8 x 16.8 cm; 7 1/2 x 6 1/2 in.; pen, ink, and pigments on vellum. A worn and partially repaired crease down one side. Worm holes and staining in places, the latter predominantly around the edges of the sheet. The recto, repurposed as a front flyleaf, with folio number '1' and catalogue number 'MS XXIX' in pencil and inscribed in black ink A[uctor] Incognitus A 236'.

Provenance

With H. P. Kraus, 1955, cat. 75, no. 1071; Collection of Mark Lansburgh (d. 2013), acquired from the above, his inventory number 'MS XXIX' inscribed in pencil on recto; Deposited on loan to Colorado College, Colorado Springs; Collection of John Russell (1919-2008), art critic for the *Sunday Times* and *New York Times*; Private collection, acquired from the above c. 1981; Their sale, Sotheby's London, 22 June 1993, lot 33; Private collection, Switzerland, until their sale, 20 November 2013, lot 37

Published

Mark Lansburgh, 'The Drawing Collection at the Colorado College' in *The Art Journal* 29 (1970), pp. 341-48, as 'vellum leaf with sketched figures and blue-tinted faced', p.



Fig. 1
Giovannino de Grassi (doc. 1389-1398)
Taccuino di disegni, *Alphabet Book*, with initials 'M' (left) and 'N' (right)
Milan
c. 1389-1398
Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica, MS Cassaf. 1.21, detail with initials 'M' and 'N'

¹ By comparison, another fifteenth-century test sheet repurposed as a fly leaf is found in Leiden, UBL, BPL 3327, 22, for which see <https://medievalbooks.nl/2018/10/05/doodles-in-medieval-manuscripts/> (accessed 1.12.22); Cf. also J. J. G. Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators and Their Methods of Work*, New Haven, 1992.

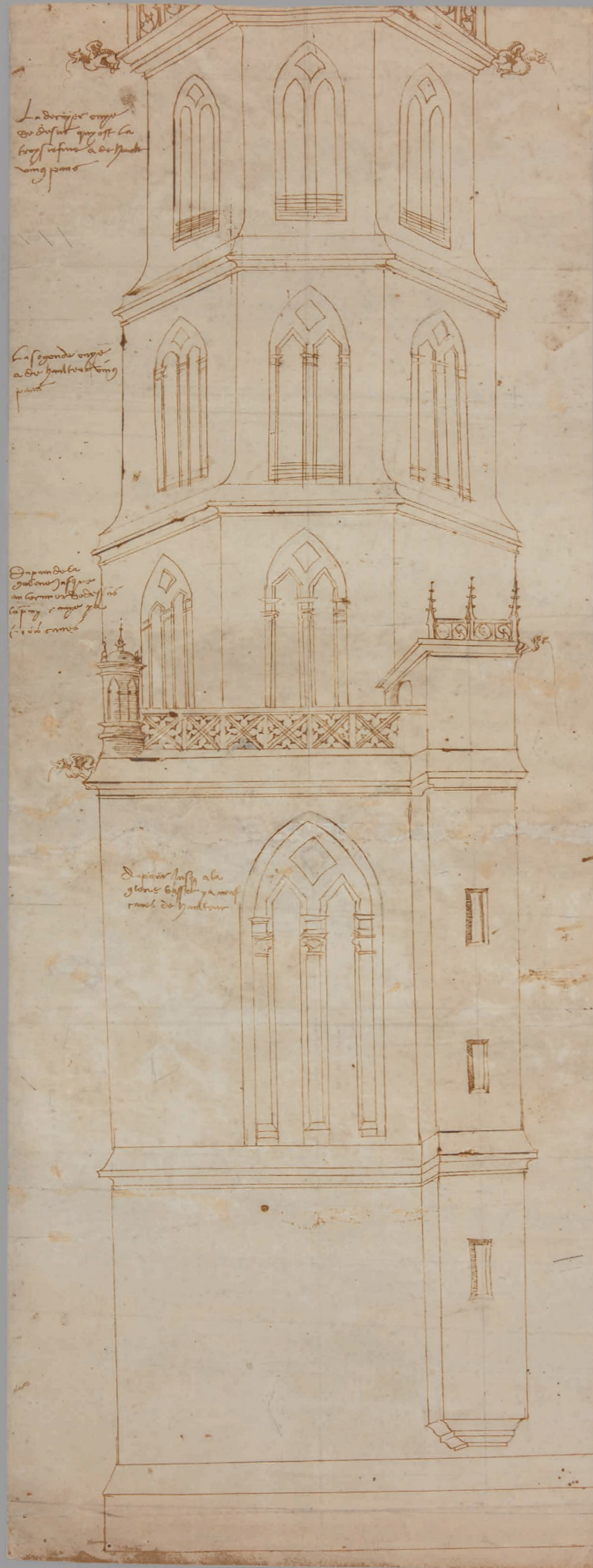


On the recto are sketches of two figures in brown and black ink: a man in robes with a long beard, identified as “Moises” (Moses) on an inscribed banderole, and a crowned woman with a girdle book or book bag in her left hand. Like the verso, the faces are painted with green earth, in this case clearly making use of the method described in the famous *Libro dell’Arte* by Cennino Cennini (c. 1370-c. 1440) involving base layers of earth and lead white to which vermillion was applied for flesh colour.² Inscribed above are two columns with simple arithmetic (adding numbers 7 plus 3 for 10 and 1 plus 12 for 13) in the same brown ink as the figures, with the words “filius meus” at right in black ink, partially rubbed. The sketch of Moses can be compared to the scenes in the so-called Paduan Bible Picture Book (fig. 2)



Fig. 2
Moses, from the Exodus
Cycle in the Paduan Bible
Picture Book
Northern Italy, Padua(?)
c. 1400
London, British Library, Add
MS 15277, f. 11v, detail

² Cennino Cennini, *The Craftsman’s Handbook: The Italian “Il Libro dell’Arte,”* trans. Daniel V. Thompson, Jr., New York, 1960; Cf. especially the chapter on ‘How to paint faces’, p. 93 ff..



3

An architectural drawing of a tower

This extraordinary architectural drawing for a monumental tower is the only known medieval design for a building to have survived from Southern France. The tower depicted here is composed of four levels. While the top section has been cut off, we can assume that the tower would have terminated with a balustrade, and perhaps also a spire. The ground floor is the tallest level here and its shape suggests a rectangular ground plan, which was probably dictated by the shape of the westwork of the church. A window is depicted above the thick stringcourse that runs along the base of the building. Although the opening is framed by a pointed arch, the two lancets inside the window are crowned with mitre arches and topped with a diamond-shaped opening. A spiral staircase is attached to the right side of the tower, jutting out of the building like a buttress, though hovering above ground. Narrow windows bring light to the staircase and a semi-circular opening at the top allows for an exit on the first level of the tower. It is at this level that the tower changes from a rectangular to an octagonal shape, narrowing with each subsequent step. There is an opening on each face of the octagon (except for the face that abuts the spiral staircase). The openings mirror the ground floor in that they are framed by a pointed arch but then contain lancets crowned by mitre arches. Capitals with bulbous crockets are roughly sketched to frame the lancets. This changes only in the top level which has two pointed arch lancets framed by a larger pointed arch. No capitals are included on this level. Delicate sketches of gargoyles, their mouths spouting water, are positioned on the edges of the cornices just below the balustrades at the top and bottom of the drawing. The balustrades are decorated by late medieval tracery forms, including mouchette wheels and cusped saltire turrets. On the first level, there is also a round turret crowned by a small dome. Although the bottom of the drawing alludes to the building that the tower would have been attached to with a long horizontal line, the top is not linked to the building.

The inscriptions to the left of the tower record the measurements of the structure. The units of measurement used here are called canna, which is the equivalent of c.1.6 metres in southern France, although this measurement varied greatly in other countries (1.6 – 2.9 metres). In southern France, this unit was then divided into pans, where 1 canna = 8 pans.¹ Such inscriptions, although very rare, can be found on a small number of other architectural drawings. One example is a drawing of a micro-architectural monstrance from Ulm, which also has inscriptions that refer to the height of the object – though much less specific than ours.²

Stylistically, the architecture of this structure belongs to a specific group of towers built in and around Toulouse from the late thirteenth to early sixteenth centuries. Octagonal and constructed mainly in brick, the mitre arch, which features prominently in the fenestration of our drawing, became a characteristic feature of these towers. Probably the most famous of this group was the tower atop the crossing of Saint Sernin in Toulouse (fig. 1). Although the lower part of the tower is Romanesque, the upper part with its mitre arches was completed in the late thirteenth century and the spire was finished in the fifteenth. Similarly, the church of the Jacobins

Southwestern France, Toulouse?
c. 1500-20

72 x 27 cm / 28 3/8 x 10 5/8 in.; brown ink on laid paper, backed with a modern paper support. Schematic ruling (in chalk?). A repaired tear running horizontally across the pediment of the lowermost window opening.

Provenance
Private collection, France

Published
Etienne Hamon, 'Le dessin d'architecture gothique en France: perspectives pour la constitution d'un corpus', in *Bulletin monumental* 179-2 (2021), pp. 99-108.

Inscriptions:	Translation:
La dernier [ovryre] de [glesire] quy est la troysieme a de haute ving pans	The top floor of the [church? glesir / ecclesia], which is the third, has a height of twenty pans
La seconde [ovryre] a de haulter p[ro] ving pans	The second floor has a height of twenty pans
Du parm[i] de la galerie jusque au terin or de dessus la primy[e]r [ovryer] y a trois cannes	From the middle of the covered passage until the floor or the top of the ground floor, there are three cannes
Du parmi jusque a la g[a]lerie basser y a neuf cannes de haulteur	From the middle [of the ground floor] to the base of the covered passage there are nine cannes in height



Fig. 1
Saint Sernin, Toulouse
France, Toulouse
Late 13th century (tower
upper parts)

1 Eduard Döring, *Handbuch der Münz-, Wechsel-, Maß- und Gewichtskunde* (Koblenz, 1854), pp. 339, 349.

2 Published in Josef Böker, *Architektur der Gotik Ulm und Donauraum* Vienna, 2011, pp. 116-117.

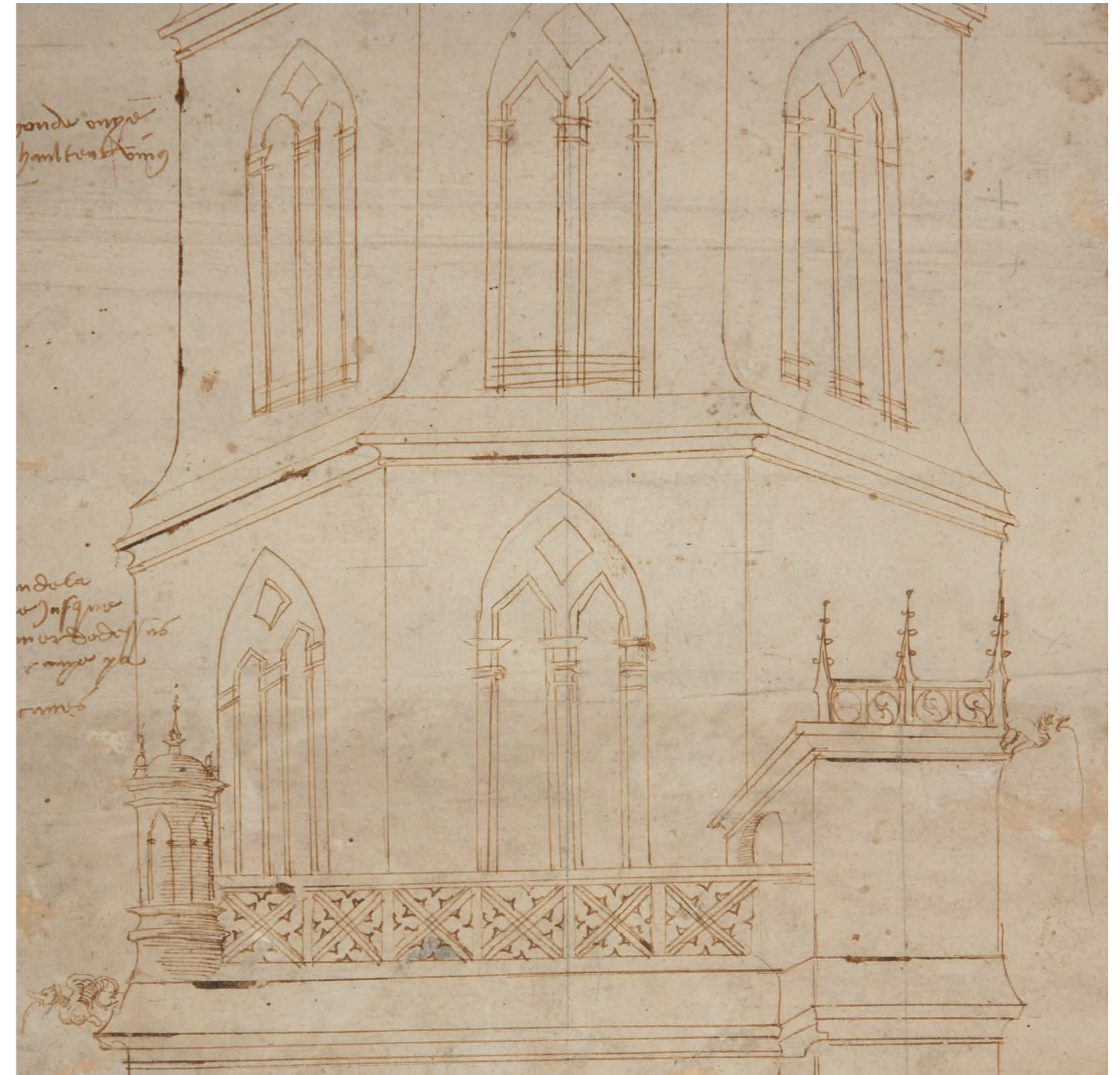




Fig. 2
Tower of the Church of the
Jacobins
France, Toulouse
c. 1300

also has a similar tower featuring mitre arches and bulbous crocket capitals (fig. 2). Other structures, such as the towers at the church of Saint-Jacques in Montauban, the church of the Assumption in Beaumont-de-Lomagne, Palmiers Cathedral, and Rieux Cathedral, also offer parallels with our drawing. The use of the mitre arch and bulbous crocket capitals, as well as the general form of the octagonal tower that rises from a rectangular base are all evidence that the structure recorded in our drawing belongs firmly to this group: in the disposition of its features, it is perhaps most closely related to the tower of the church of Notre-Dame des Miracles at Avignonet-Lauragais (fig. 3), where a square lower section gives on to two octagonal storeys topped by a mouchette-wheel balustrade and a crocketed spire, though its mitre arches (absent at Avignonet-Lauragais) are replicated more closely on the early fourteenth-century tower at Saint-Félix-Lauragais (fig. 4). However, there are also notable differences – especially the use of later medieval forms, such as the domed turret at its left corner. This must push the date of our drawing into the years around 1500, a fact that is also confirmed by the script used in the inscriptions, which can be dated to the early sixteenth century.³

While our drawing was not known to scholars prior to its presence on the art market, it has since been mentioned in an article in the *Bulletin Monumental* by Etienne Hamon, a scholar who has published extensively on sixteenth-century Gothic architecture in France.⁴ Although the drawing was not the focus of the article, Hamon agreed with our conclusion that the drawing originates in the Midi and that it should be dated to the early sixteenth



Fig. 3
Avignonet-Lauragais, Église
Notre-Dame des Miracles
Early 14th century

³ We would like to thank Jenny Stratford for her advice in suggesting that the inscription can be dated to the sixteenth century.

⁴ Hamon, Etienne. 'Le dessin d'architecture gothique en France: perspectives pour la constitution d'un corpus', in *Bulletin monumental* 179-2 (2021).

century. The late-medieval tracery forms and the rounded structure on the first level, with its strong Renaissance characteristics, fit this later date well. These details can be compared not only to church architecture but also to castles, such as the Château at Amboise, which is characterised by balustrade detailing and round turrets (fig. 5). Still, some of the details, such as the crocket capitals and mitre arches, suggest that the architect employed here was working on additions to an earlier tower – perhaps a new spire (now missing from the drawing) and elaborate late gothic balustrades were being added to a late thirteenth-century tower. As such, the project was to transform (or update) a building that may already have been 200 years old. As testified by other buildings in the area, including Saint Sermin in Toulouse, which received a new crossing spire in the fourteenth century, this would not have been unusual. Moreover, if this was the case, it would also explain why the later medieval elements of the tower are drawn with comparatively greater detail and shading.

A remarkable survival, this drawing of a western tower can be added to a small handful of architectural drawings that survive from late-medieval France, including a drawing of a church porch from Normandy (now at the Cloisters), the façade drawing by Pierre Montoloys from Clermont-Ferrand Cathedral, and the Rouen Crossing Tower (now at the Museum of Fine Art, Houston).⁵ Perhaps most significantly, this object represents the only known medieval architectural drawing to have survived from southern France.

Jana Gajdošová



Fig. 5
Details of the Château at
Amboise
France, Loire Valley,
Amboise
1491-1498



Fig. 4
Église Saint-Félix-Lauragais
Early 14th century

⁵ Illustrated in Robert Bork, *The Geometry of Creation: Architectural Drawing and the Dynamics of Gothic Design*, Farnham, 2011, p. 390 ff.

4

The Coronation of the Virgin

A meticulously finished drawing from the orbit of Hans Holbein the Elder



The Coronation of the Virgin constitutes the final episode in the *Life of the Virgin*, following her Dormition and Assumption into Heaven, and describes the moment in which she is crowned (usually by Christ, the Holy Spirit, and God the Father) as Queen of Heaven. Although not explicitly described in the New Testament, it is a theme drawn from passages in the Song of Songs (4:8), Psalms (45:11-12) and Book of Revelation (12:1-7). Its reception broadened over the course of the Middle Ages with the publication of popular texts such as the Golden Legend, which elaborated greatly upon the various aspects of the Virgin's life.

Our drawing focuses specifically on the moment of the Virgin's Coronation, staging the event in a space lit from the right and tightly demarcated by an elaborate carved throne with outswept arms on either side and broad steps bounding its lower edge. Parallel rows of horizontal hatching imply that the object is positioned against a wall, the central part of which is obscured by a tall cloth-covered throne back rising out of sight at the sheet's upper edge. In front of the cloth of honour, its fabric crisscrossed with fictive fold lines, the figures of the Virgin, Christ, and God the Father appear together in a triangular arrangement, accompanied immediately above the Virgin's crowned head by the Holy Spirit in the guise of a haloed dove. The figures all wear long mantles that wrap around both shoulders and fall in heavy, buckling folds around their lower bodies. Those of God the Father and the Virgin cover their feet and pool on the ground around them, but Christ's robe is purposefully drawn to one side to expose his feet and emphasize his visible nail wounds. The Virgin, who sits on the upper of the throne's two broad steps, touches her hands together in prayer at the level of her chest. Her counterparts both support orbs surmounted by metalwork crosses on their laps while extending their right to touch the Virgin's crown, physically linking all three figures in a composition balanced by a carefully considered and symmetrical arrangement of details.

While keying his work into late-medieval pictorial conventions surrounding the depiction of the Coronation of the Virgin in Northern Europe (see for instance, Dieric Bouts' c. 1450 version of the scene; fig. 1), our draftsman took painstaking efforts to maximize the symbolic and compositional potential of this meticulously finished and highly resolved drawing. It is unclear whether it was executed as a record of a painted altarpiece or as a design for one, but in either case it has features that suggest a direct link to panel painting in the second half of the fifteenth century. Details such as the creased fold lines of the cloth of honour, which in painted form would have been intimated through the gradation of pigments, have been translated into linear shadows instead reminiscent of billowing or quilted cloth. Evidently, the legibility of the three figures' closely arranged draperies also depended on their being rendered in oil paint, yet it is a mark of just how sensitive and skillful our draftsman was that their fabrics are quite so successfully differentiated from one another even in the absence of colour. He was able to achieve this in two ways; first through the subtle manipulation of shading techniques using a wide variety of marks and pen and pencil, and secondly by applying white body colour to create textured areas of highlight and reinforce hemlines and dominant drapery folds.

Southern Germany, Swabia, Ulm or Augsburg
c. 1490-1500

14.5 x 13 cm / 5 3/4 x 5 1/8 in.; Pen and black ink on laid paper, heightened with white bodycolour. A vertical crease at centre. A short tear at upper edge in the centre of the sheet, and another at top left. Trimmed slightly along the upper edge. Ink and pencil markings on verso, including an inventory number '15.73'.

Provenance
Collection of Jacques Bacri, Paris



Fig. 1
Dieric Bouts (c. 1415-1475)
The Coronation of the Virgin
c. 1450
83 x 86 cm; oil on panel
Vienna, Akademie der
bildenden Künste



Fig. 2
Martin Schongauer (Colmar
c. 1435/50-1491 Breisach)
The Coronation of the Virgin
c. 1470-91
15.9 x 15.3 cm; engraving on
laid paper
New York, Metropolitan
Museum of Art, inv. 46.5

The disposition of the figures' draperies, with their complex buckling patterns and switchback folds that terminate in long trailing pools of fabric, are so strongly evocative of the work of the prolific Colmar painter and engraver Martin Schongauer, that it is clear our draftsman had close and sustained access to his designs, most likely as part of a stock of workshop models (figs. 2).¹ The use of white bodycolour as a shorthand for areas of highlight became a popular draftsman's tool in Northern Europe during the second half of the fifteenth century, though it was a particularly common feature of Swabian drawings from the period around 1500.² Bernhard Strigel used it in a similar fashion, applied both in dense parallel lines, and in serpentine curls around the edges and folds of draperies, on a drawing of the Presentation in the Temple widely dated to the years around 1500 and now in the British Museum.³ Hans Holbein the Elder, active in Ulm and Augsburg, utilized it on a number of his surviving drawings, most successfully perhaps on a highly finished double portrait of saints Margaret and Dorothy, also in the British Museum (fig. 3).⁴ His evocation of buckling draperies pooling over the ground owe as much to Schongauerian models as our drawing seems to. Moreover, the tight gathering of both figures' hair behind their necks in Holbein's drawing is a feature that finds a strong



Fig. 3
Hans Holbein the Elder (c.
1460-1524)
St Margaret and St Dorothy
c. 1494-96
21 x 15.3 cm; Pen and black
ink, grey wash, and white
bodycolour on prepared
paper
London, British Museum,
inv. 1926,0713.8

1 Cf. our artist seems to have drawn inspiration from those in a number of engravings by Schongauer, including also Lehrs V.268.61 and V.287.68.

2 John Rowlands, *The Age of Dürer and Holbein: German Drawings 1400-1550*, London, 1988, p. 36.

3 Rowlands 1988, no. 15, pp. 34-35.

4 For a recent discussion of this drawing and its relationship to a series of similar designs, see Elsbeth Wiemann, *Hans Holbein d. Ä.: Die Graue Passion in ihre Zeit*, Stuttgart, 2010, no. 60, pp. 282-3. We are sincerely grateful to Till-Holger Borchert for his guidance and advice in localizing our drawing to a Swabian context, and to Fritz Koreny for his kind help as this catalogue went to press.

parallel on our sheet. It is an approach that most explicitly informed the Virgin's hairstyle, which forms an hourglass shape around her ears and over her shoulders in the same way that Dorothy's hair does, but to only a marginally lesser extent is it true also of God the Father and Christ, both of whom have hair that sweeps inwards sharply behind the ears before spreading out above the shoulders. In around 1497, Holbein also executed a drawing that scholars now recognize as a study after a goldsmith's model (fig. 4). Although utilizing the technique of metalpoint rather than pen and ink, its figure's sharply triangulated face and beard mirror our drawing's figure of Christ extremely closely. Even finer details in our drawing seem



Fig. 4
Hans Holbein the Elder (c.
1460-1524)
Saint Sebastian
c. 1497-1500
13.1 x 9.6 cm; metalpoint on
prepared paper
London, British Museum,
inv. 1885,0509.1612



Fig. 5
Hans Holbein the Elder (c.
1460-1524)
The Virgin and Child with
Saint Anne
c. 1500
43.7 x 34.6 cm; oil and
gilding on panel
Formerly Kreuzlingen,
Kisters Collection

also to evidence a link to Holbein's workshop activity and the circulation of imagery within his orbit. The unusual design of the throne arms on our drawing, which consist of colonettes textured in two places by a crisscrossed embellishment, are almost certainly drawn from the same source as those on a panel painting of the Virgin and Child with Saint Anne signed by Holbein the Elder and formerly in the Kisters Collection, Kreuzlingen (fig. 5).⁵ During his lifetime Holbein was one of the leading painters in southern Germany, and operated a large and highly successful studio. It is not beyond the realms of reason to imagine our draftsman spending time in his workshop, where the influence of Schongauerian models would naturally have merged with Holbein's own pictorial approach in the way it seems to so vividly on our Coronation.

5 Cf. P. Strieder, assisted by D. Stemmler, *Sammlung Heinz Kisters: altdeutsche und altniederländische Gemälde*, Exh. Cat., Nuremberg 1963, no. 15, pp. 15-16.



5

Samson rending the lion's jaws

In a sparse, rocky landscape the figure of Samson rends the jaws of a lion with both hands as he rides on the creature's back in an effort to subdue it. He wears a long flowing garment tied at the waist with a length of fabric whose two loose ends flutter in the breeze. The fictive inscriptions on his sleeves, and the scimitar-like sword hanging from his belt, are undoubtedly intended to archaicize the Old Testament hero who, seized by the spirit of God, 'tore the lion into pieces as if it were a kid' (Judges 14:6).

The inspiration for this meticulously worked drawing is an engraving executed in the last quarter of the fifteenth century by a printmaker known by the provisional name 'Master FVB' (Lehrs VII.115.1.II; Bartsch VI.80.1), after a group of engravings which all bear the initials FVB along their lower edge. His surviving works consist of 59 engravings covering subjects including scenes from the Old Testament, the lives of the Virgin and saints, genre scenes, and ornamental sheets. No works in other media have been concretely attributed to him, though his prints are so stylistically related to the work of Flemish painters such as Dirk Bouts and Hans Memling that most scholars believe he must have trained or worked in the Southern Netherlands.¹

While following the source print with a meticulous level of care and attention to detail, our draftsman nevertheless injected this sheet with enough individualization that we are afforded a forceful glimpse of the human hand at work. He brilliantly corralled the pen to suggest even the deepest of shadows without at any moment overwhelming his hatching with ink's tendency to pool or obliterate the delicacy of his lines. Evidently this was a challenge, since outline and contrast had to be sacrificed and subdued for the sake of evenness of tone and detail. In places his desire for unity of texture meant that he 'corrected' the style of hatching present in the source; the radiating marks of shadow which describe the curvature around Samson's proper-right elbow in the engraved version have been turned into a more delicate passage of hatching. In other places his focus seems to have drifted. For instance, he rather swiftly and sparingly paraphrased the stinging nettle which grows in the lower right-hand corner of the composition, replacing most of its spiky-tipped leaves with a brisk series of frenetic zigzags. He also strove to clarify and resolve features of the engraving which were at risk of being misunderstood. So the letters decorating Samson's sleeves, which occasionally overlap in the Master FVB's composition, were carefully parted and reinforced. Those on his proper left side disappear into darkness and proved too difficult to copy with accuracy; the engraving includes a majuscule letter 'A' which has been quirkily reinterpreted by our draftsman as two diagonal downstrokes whose upper termini no longer meet.

Southern Netherlands
c. 1480-90

15.8 x 10.8 cm / 6 1/4 x 4 1/4 in.; Pen and black ink on laid paper. A tear runs horizontally through the centre of the paper and has been repaired with a paper backing pasted in place. Further creases running vertically left and right of centre, and horizontally near top edge. A small repaired tear running near and partially through the upper section of the feather at the top of the sheet. Another short tear running into the sheet from the lefthand edge, level with the figure's elbow. The sheet partially outlined in black ink along its edges – slight trimming along top edge through the tip of the feather.

Provenance

Sir John Charles Robinson (1824-1913), London, his handwritten initials at top left corner of sheet;
Pierre Épiphané Guéraud (1870-1948), Paris, Lugt 3521, his stamped collector's mark at lower right corner of sheet;
Private collection, Austria

¹ T. Pfeifer-Helke, *Mit den Gezeiten: frühe Druckgraphik der Niederlande: Katalog der niederländischen Druckgraphik von den Anfängen bis um 1540/50 in der Sammlung des Dresdener Kupferstich-Kabinetts*, Petersberg, 2013, pp. 168-9.

The Master FVB's engravings evidently proved popular across the Southern Netherlands during the final decades of the fifteenth century, and several painters are known to have copied his designs.¹ Our drawing may well have been set by a painter as a training exercise for one of his assistants, and would very likely have continued its life in service as a workshop model or pattern. Others like it now survive in public collections around the world, and though in early scholarship were occasionally associated with southern German workshops, like ours they can now more confidently be given to artists active in the Southern Netherlands. Among them is a sheet depicting a group of figures from a larger Calvary scene, now in the Städel Museum in Frankfurt (fig. 1). It is executed with a markedly similar stylistic and technical approach, with a comparable weight of line and linear texture, and with the highlights of drapery folds reduced in many places to the same thin tube-like spaces absent of ink. Both drawings also incorporate a similar approach to the curls of the male figure's hair; in the Frankfurt drawing John's locks end on the right of the face in tight circular whirls, and on the left in loose flicks of ink which float detached from the rest of the hair. Our drawing incorporates the same features, with tight whirls flowing over the sleeve on the left, and a number of floating flicks extending the hair's main outline on the right. It is important that neither feature is present in anything like the same concentration in the Master FVB's engraving. And just as in the Frankfurt drawing our draftsman carefully underlined his figure's lower lip, while the engraver did not, preferring instead to evoke this boundary using the hair of the beard. Such characteristics indicate that both our drawing and the Frankfurt sheet were executed in the same artistic orbit, and perhaps at a similar moment in time.



Fig. 1
Grieving under the cross
Southern Netherlands
c. 1480-90
16.7 x 14.1 cm; pen and ink
on laid paper
Frankfurt, Städel Museum,
inv. 627



¹ Dirk de Vos, *Rogier van der Weyden: Het volledige oeuvre*, Antwerp, 1999, pp. 242-248, no. 15.

6 A cycle of drawings depicting the Passion of Christ

This astonishing book, complete and still in its original binding, is unusual among medieval manuscripts in containing not illuminated miniatures, as was traditional, but fully worked-up drawings, executed with breath-taking skill and left almost totally in grisaille – their forms developed using subtle but luminous pigmented washes. Two draftsmen worked together on their execution; neither has been identified in other manuscripts, making this psalter a unique artistic testimony for their careers. Between them, they utilized what must have been a prized collection of prints and engravings (including several by the Colmar painter and printmaker Martin Schongauer) to inform a series of seven extraordinary drawings (ff. 68-90) that visualise the most important events of the Passion of Christ. Schongauer's engravings, dating c. 1475-80, informed the Arrest of Christ (f. 68r) and Ecce Homo (f. 79v)¹, and number among the greatest northern-Renaissance prints for their clarity of composition, their handling of space, and the emotional expression of their characters. The other five meticulously executed drawings in our manuscript appear to have drawn their inspiration from woodcuts, most likely a printed Passion cycle or a *Biblia Pauperum*, a type of picture Bible that was widely published and disseminated in the fifteenth century.

Our manuscript's many large illustrations, especially the full-page Arrest of Christ, pay homage to the drawing medium's move towards graphic aestheticism in the years around 1500, with figures rendered in shades of grey and pigmented with deft and careful restraint. Firm, decisive outlines give the impression that these designs might merely copy the engraved sources from which they were taken, but closer inspection reveals that they were in fact executed freehand, and that numerous details were added, removed, or adjusted as necessary by two artists who sought to inject their work with vital individualism. Nowhere is this more apparent than on the faces of each scene's many figures, the soft modelling of which is of extraordinary subtlety and at a far remove from their origins in Schongauer's hard-line engravings. The expert application of wash – where thick pigment would have obscured details – allows the primacy of the drawn line to glow.

In Catholic liturgy, a feria is any day of the week other than Sunday, and ferial psalters were a class of liturgical book produced for daily use. In our manuscript, as with most ferial psalters, the Psalms are not arranged in their numerical order but rather according to the order of their occurrence in the Ferial Office. The various sections within the text are usually marked by a large initial. All painted initials in our version are on a golden field and the larger ones are surrounded by a frame of alternating colours. The historiated initial of King David on a fine, thick burnished gold ground is in untouched and luminous condition. The smaller initials predominantly incorporate border decoration extending over two margins, the larger have decoration surrounding all four sides of the text, consisting of painted acanthus, blue, green, red and pink, with gold bezants surrounded by decorative penwork flourishes. The full borders are historiated, sometimes with a small figure of man, bird, rabbit, deer or musician angel.

Psalter
Southern Germany, Constance
c. 1480-90

25.5 x 17.5 cm; pen and ink, pigmented washes and gilding on vellum bound in sixteenth-century pigskin over the original wooden boards, bound in 102 leaves, quires of mostly 10 bifolia (complete), collation: 18, II-VII10, VIII-IX8, X-XI10, some catchwords partly visible (complete). Ruled in black ink (double lines for calendar) for 30/31 lines (17 x 10.5 cm), written by several hands in a textualis script, fols. 1-48v, fols. 49r-102r, added notes in cursive script. Numerous one- and two-line plain initials alternating in red and blue, many larger (three- to four-line) initials in red, blue or green (some with calligraphic extensions, once a monk's portrait perhaps referring to the scribe?, fol. 77v), with simple penwork decoration in red; 19 large painted initials, six to eleven lines high, with tracery in white, all on a field of gold, most surrounded by a bi-coloured frame of green and blue, or red and blue and with border decoration extending over two borders, 7 of which over three or four borders, consisting of curling acanthus leaves, golden dots, burnished gold and silver, and floral designs in pink, blue, green, and historiated with playing men, a bird, rabbit, deer or an angel playing music, 1 large historiated initial (King David), 7 pen-and-wash illustrations (1 full-page: 18 x 13 cm, 6: 12 x 10.5 cm) highlighted with colours and gold. With neatly added, learned, near contemporary comments and notes – mostly citing St. Augustine – in Latin. Several prickings in outer margin preserved, some medieval quire foliation in lower right corner still present, indicating the binder cropped only slightly. First folio stained, last half cut, otherwise in fine condition.

Provenance
Very probably produced in Constance (the calendar and litany are for the use of the diocese Constance); Georg Hartmann (1870-1954) collection, Frankfurt; Private collection; Europe

¹ See *Spätmittelalter am Oberrhein. Maler und Werkstätten 1450-1525*, Exh. Cat. Staatliche Kunsthalle, Stuttgart, 2001, pp. 204-211, nos. 107b and 107f.



De cruce deponit hora vespertina: fortitudo latuit in mente
 diuina: Talem mortē subiit vite medicina: heu corona glie
 iacet hic supina: p̄ quo ē dñe ihu xpe sit t̄ laus et glia p̄ in
 finita secula seculor̄. am̄: v̄ p̄rio filio suo nō peccat deus
 Sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum:
 Domine ihu xpe qui hora vespertina discipulis tuis
 corporis et sanguis tradidisti mistia et de caute
 deponit es. deponē q̄m̄s dñe n̄re m̄tis tenebras et p̄
 peccata scela cū pura cōstia ead̄ sumam̄ q̄ nobis sūt
 remedia hic et in p̄petuū. p̄. Domine ihu xpe:



D ad completorium seq̄t̄
 um inuocarem exaudi
 uit me deus iusticie mee:
 in tribulacōne dilatasti
 michi. Misere mei: et
 exaudi orōnem meā. In
 hi hoīm vsq̄quo graui
 corde: vt quid diligitis
 vanitatem et queritis me
 daciū. Et scitote qm̄
 inuificauit dñs sc̄m̄ suū: dominus exaudiet me
 cum clamauero ad eum. **T**rahe me in et nolite pec
 care: que dicitis in cordibus v̄ris et in cubilibus
 v̄ris conpugini. **S**acrificate sacrificium iusti
 cie et sperate in dño: multi dicunt quis ostendit
 nobis bona. **S**ignatum ē sup nos lumen vultus
 tui dñe: dedisti læticiam in corde meo. **F**ructu
 frumenti et vini et olei sui: multiplicati sunt. **I**n
 pace inuē ip̄m: dormiam et requiescam. **Q**m̄ tu
 domine singulariter in spe: cōstitulisti me. **G**lia.
Inte domine nō confundar in eternū: in iu
 sticia tua libera me. **I**nelina ad me aurē tuā:
Accelera vt euas me. **E**sto michi in dñm pro
 tectorem et in domū refugii vt saluū me facias.
Dñm fortitudo mea et refugium meū es tu: et p̄pter
 nomen tuum deduces me et enutries me. **A**du
 ces me de laqueo hoc q̄ absconderunt michi: qm̄
 tu es p̄tector meus. **I**n manus tuas cōmendo
 sp̄m̄ meū: redemisti me domine d̄s veritatis. **G**la.
Qui habitat in adiutorio altissimi: in p̄tecto
 re dei celi cōmorabit̄. **O**uet dño susceptor

Organisation of images within the manuscript

1. Fol. 8v **King David playing the harp** - historiated initial *B(eatus vir, Ps. 1)*; David is shown with blond curly hair and red blushes to his cheeks, painted in colours on a thick burnished gold ground punched with a pattern of file lines, stars, flowers and other small figures. In the border decoration, curled acanthus leaves, blue leaves and tendrils, flowers and gold bezants; a braided motif painted in blue and red outlined in white filled in with burnished gold.
2. Fol. 68r The **Arrest of Christ**, almost full page (180 x 130 mm) Accompanied by title heading, in rubric: *Est fera plebs ausa dampnare Jhesum sine causa.*
3. Fol. 75r **Christ before Pilate** (*Hora Prima ducunt Jhesum ad Pilatum....*)
4. Fol. 79v **Ecce Homo** (*Crucifige, crucifige clamitant Hora Tertia*), *Ecce homo*, literally "Behold the man", illustrates the episode when Pontius Pilate, shown at the left, delivers Jesus to the people demanding his crucifixion. On the right, the scowling hangman already holds the rope that will be used to tie Jesus's hands (after Martin Schongauer, c. 1495-1480).
5. Fol. 82v **Christ nailed to the Cross** (*Hora Sexta in cruce conclavatus*)
6. Fol. 85r **Christ on the cross**, (*Hora nona dominus Jhesus expiravit*). The Virgin supported by St. John, the centurion pointing his hand (after the Master of the Berlin Passion, see Weekes, p. 366)
7. Fol. 87v The **Deposition and Lamentation** (*De cruce deponit Hora Vespertina*)
8. Fol. 90r The **Entombment** (*Hora Completorii datur sepulture*)

During the Middle Ages, the repetition of a psalter was a favourite form of suffrage for the dead. Illustrated psalters were, at an early date, made for kings and queens. Later, many were also made for lay patrons, usually belonging to the wealthy noble and mercantile classes. Most psalms in our manuscript are identified by their number in Arabic ciphers added in red, all written by the same, somewhat later, hand, who may also have supplied a series of additions to the calendar. Our psalter in Latin, with illustrations to contemplate and with added Augustinian comments, suggests that it found use by a learned cleric. Far from transcribing printed images by rote, the artists responsible for its decoration endowed their work with a searing sense of dynamism and life.



Hora completorii dat sepulture: Corp⁹ xpi nobile vite spes fute: Cōdit² aomate oplen² scripture: Jugis sic memorie mors hec tue cure: Has horas emonitas cū deuo- cōne: Tibi xpe recolo pia ratōne: Ut sic tu pass⁹ es peas i agone: Sic labore donās o fors simi corone: P q^o tibi dñe ihu x^e sit laus et glia p̄ finita sc̄a sc̄loy⁹ p̄o filio z o ñe i x^e q̄ hō opletory sepulto es. 4 a mlierib⁹ plācto et lamitatu⁹ fac nos q̄s gemētes 4 lamitātes tuā duotissime plāge palliōez cō nos mēoriaz recolētes d̄ exilio ad p̄iaz. d̄ labore ad req̄ē. d̄ meiore ad b̄tillie visiōez o solatoz p̄ueire o cede. p̄. Dñe z

7 A double-sided cutting from the Speculum Humanae Salvationis



A refined double-sided cutting depicting two scenes from an early, handwritten version in Latin of the popular medieval theological treatise *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*. On the recto side, a garment-shedding Antipater, the Macedonian general, and Julius Caesar (shown seated on the right with a crown and sceptre), appear with the inscription 'Antipater ostendit julio cesari cicatrices suas' (Antipater showed his scars to Julius Caesar) picked out in red ink above their heads. On the verso, the Virgin kneels before the image of her son seated in a mandorla of light, identified by a similarly placed inscription reading 'Maria ostendit filio suo ubera et orat pronobis' (Mary shows her breasts to her son and prays for us'). Beneath each scene five lines from the accompanying passages of the *Speculum* are written in a German textura hand using black ink (on the verso the fifth line is clipped).

The *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* or Mirror of Human Salvation, was the most important medieval text to deal with the theme of typology, the Christian doctrine that Christ's incarnation and the salvation of mankind had already been 'performed' (prefigured) in the Old Testament.¹ First published in the early fourteenth century, it was among the most widely copied and distributed books of the period, yet its author remains unknown. Its forty-five chapters revolve around Man's Salvation through the lives of Christ and the Virgin, using text and image together to draw parallels between ancient and biblical histories. Most versions of the manuscript are structured around the repetitious linking of three prefigurations or 'types' (which also incorporated incidents from secular history) to each Biblical scene or 'antitype'. Illustrations are commonly deployed across openings, with an episode from the New Testament (anti-type) facing three scenes from the Old Testament (type). Pictorially and symbolically, the episodes of the Old Testament pre-figure those of the New Testament.

The stylistic treatment of our cutting, with figures clad in draperies whose folds wriggle and sprawl in complex pools, offers strong parallels to Southern German pen and ink drawings from the first third of the fifteenth century (fig. 1), as does the treatment of its pigmented washes and the style of its accompanying text.² A prayer book commissioned by Canon Georg, Graf von Löwenstein around the years 1420-25 and now in the British Library, London, offers some of the closest parallels in this regard (fig. 2). It has been associated in the surrounding scholarship to Bavarian painting of the period, with strong links to the Master of the Bamberg Altar (fl. c. 1420-40) a painter active in the Nuremberg area.³

Southern Germany, most likely Nuremberg
c. 1420-30

15.5 x 19.1 cm 6 1/8 x 7 1/2 in.; ink and pigmented washes on fine laid paper. A pencil annotation in right margin of recto.

Provenance
Private collection, Germany



Fig. 1 (above)
Detail of The Virgin Mary intercedes with Christ and Esther's intercession with Assuerus
Southern Germany
Early 15th century
Neustift bei Brixen (Novacella), Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 166, fol. 42r

Fig. 2 (below)
Prayer Book of Canon Georg, Graf von Löwenstein, detail
Southern Germany, Nuremberg
c. 1420-25
27.7 x 19.5 cm; pen and ink with coloured washes, silver and black chalk on paper
London, British Library



1 Adrian Wilson and Joyce Lancaster Wilson, *A medieval mirror: Speculum humanae salvationis, 1324-1500*, Berkeley, 1984.

2 Cf. Sönke Lorenz and Thomas Zotz, *Spätmittelalter am Oberrhein: Alltag, Handwerk und Handel 1350-1525*, Exh. Cat., Karlsruhe, 2001, no. 305, pp. 165-6, no. 556, p. 278; see also similarly coloured versions localized to Swabia, c. 1415-1440 (Amberg, Provinzialbibliothek, 2 Ms. 46) and southern Germany, 1441 (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 385).

3 John Rowlands, *The Age of Dürer and Holbein: German Drawings 1400-1550*, London, 1988, no. 7, pp. 53-4.



8

The Angel of the Annunciation



The Archangel Gabriel turns in three-quarter pose to our right, his right arm raised in announcement, and his left delicately supporting a fleur-de-lys staff wrapped by a fluttering banderole. He wears a full-length garment tied at the waist, most likely an alb, beneath a mantle pinned across the chest by a circular morse. On his head is a wreath of olive braches with a central cross rising above the forehead. His wings partially unfurl behind his shoulders.

This is one of a number of very early drawings that take as their inspiration contemporaneous printed impressions of engravings by one of the absolute masters of northern European printmaking, Martin Schongauer (c. 1435/50-1491). Working in Colmar for much of his adult life, Schongauer developed an incredibly refined career as a printmaker alongside his practice as the city's foremost painter of largescale altarpieces. He executed two Annunciation scenes during the 1480s; a single image with the Virgin and Archangel shown before a tent, and another in which the figures are split across two separate plates of identical size. Our drawing corresponds to the latter (see figs. 1-2), with the angel shown in isolation, his gaze and attention directed towards the right. The size of the present drawing corresponds identically to Schongauer's engraving, suggesting that it was first outlined by way of a tracing, before being shaded freehand by the draftsman for use as a workshop pattern or even a finished presentation drawing.

The paper on which our drawing was executed corresponds closely to stock produced in the Southern Netherlands during the 1480s, though there is reason to believe that it was exported to the upper Rhine Valley, where our drawing is likely to have been produced by an artist working in the region of Schongauer's hometown of Colmar, or else travelling to that centre with a stock of Flemish drawing papers. The fragmentary tail of a gothic 'b' in the watermark surviving on our drawing (partially clipped by the right edge of the sheet) was used to mark papers made in Flanders and known to have been used by book makers, illuminators, and artists during the 1480s, with little evidence that it continued in use well past c. 1500.¹ As a result, the present drawing offers a key document for understanding the spread of Schongauer's influence in the exact moment at which he was still active, or only very shortly afterwards. It also beautifully revisits one of Schongauer's most important and enduring images.

Upper Rhine Valley
c. 1490

17.3 x 11.8 cm / 6 3/4 x 4 5/8 in.; ink on laid paper in very rich and legible condition. The cross on the angel's headband very slightly cropped at top. The paper marginally discoloured. Fragment of a watermark with the top of a letter 'b' in the right margin indicative of a Flemish paper stock of c. 1490. Some thinning to the paper in areas, though with no detrimental aesthetic effect on the drawing. An old collection annotation in pencil on the reverse.

Provenance
Collection of Jacques Bacri (1911-1965), Paris, and by descent



Fig. 1
Martin Schongauer (Colmar,
c. 1435/50-1491 Breisach)
The Angel of the
Annunciation
c. 1480
16.9 x 11.9 cm; engraving on
laid paper



Fig. 2
Martin Schongauer (Colmar,
c. 1435/50-1491 Breisach)
The Annunciate Virgin
c. 1480
16.9 x 11.9 cm

¹ Cf. for example <http://watermark.kb.nl/search/view/id/04220#>. All of the corresponding watermarks found on incunabula of the late fifteenth-century are dated or otherwise securely dateable to the 1480s.



9

Saint John of the Crucifixion

Although presumably intended to function as a workshop exemplar, the draughtsman responsible for this refined and highly finished rendering of the figure of Saint John (his pose and upwards glance suggest that he is a study for a larger Crucifixion scene) turned his work into something far more akin to a presentation drawing through the subtle and sensitive application of coloured accents and grisaille washes. The figure's face, hands, and bare feet are all warmed by a delicate red hue, while the cuffs and lower hem of his full-length garment appear trimmed with gold through the use of yellow wash. A forceful left to right light source burnishes the figure's hair to a broad highlight, and casts strong contrasting shadows deep into the folds of his garments, outlining the figure's belted waist against the enclosing spread of his mantle. The space in which he stands is defined with a beautiful and poetic sense of economy, through the addition of a soft shadow trailing backwards from the figure's left foot, and with a single broad-leafed plant which sprouts from the ground near the lower edge of the sheet.

The inspiration for this impressive drawing is likely to have been an engraving since its character is marked by a strong sense of graphic linearity. A version of the Crucifixion by the anonymous copper engraver known as the Master E.S. offers a fitting context for the kinds of images to which our artist must have had recourse (Lehrs 44). Active in the Middle Rhine from the middle of the fifteenth century to around 1467, the Master E.S. was one of the most important and productive copper engravers of his age, developing a new technique introduced by the slightly earlier Master of the Playing Cards. Like the latter engraver, he often included plant motifs in the lower registers of his compositions, as in his depictions of Augustus and the Tiburtine Sibyl (Lehrs 192) and Saint George and the Dragon (Lehrs 144). These motifs are a stroke of astute ingenuity, since they offer the figures both a sense of scale, and an anchor in a wider landscape, one brilliantly abbreviated to a single plant. The dense head of hair on the figure in our drawing also resembles the stylistic approach of the Master E.S.

Our draftsman evidently had first-hand knowledge of contemporary drawing practice in the region spanning southern Germany and Switzerland, where washes and tinted highlights were used by a number of artists in the years before 1500. The dissemination of prints by the Master E. S. and his contemporaries in the westernmost part of this region, and particularly along the Upper Rhine, helps to narrow the localization of our drawing further. It can be dated to the years around 1490 thanks to stylistic and technical parallels to a corpus of similarly-dated drawings and manuscripts; for instance, the rectilinear fold on the arm and shoulders, the regular dense folds on the lower torso, and the modelling and the plasticity of the figure conform to a manner of drawing resembling that in the Strasbourg Chronicle, dated 1492/93 (Washington, National Gallery of Art, formerly Ian Woodner Collection, f. 30, including similar plants in the foreground).¹

**Upper Rhine Valley, Switzerland?
c. 1480-90**

18.9 x 10 cm / 7 1/2 x 4 in.; Pen and black and black-brown ink on laid paper over a preparatory drawing executed with charcoal and chalk, washes with brush in grey and ochre; yellow tint in the hair and the borders of the garment (particularly its sleeve and hem), and the lips, cheeks, and eyelids accentuated with red. Incised in places. Several creases through the sheet. Traces of pasted paper carrying brown ink writing in a sixteenth-century hand on the verso.

Provenance

Collection of Joachim Gustav Heinrich Winckler (1822-1888), Hamburg and London;
By descent until his posthumous sale, F. A. C. Prestel, Frankfurt am Main, 15 November 1920, lot. 1849;
Collection of Iohan Quirijn van Regteren Altena (Amsterdam, 1899-1980), his stamp of intertwined letters 'R A V' in a circular frame (L.4617) on the verso;
By descent until his posthumous sale Christie's, Amsterdam, 13 May 2015, lot 93

Published

100 Jahre Kunst-Auktionen, Versteigerung 82: Alt-Frankfurter Sammlung und anderer Besitz: Gemälde, Moderne Graphik, Handzeichnungen Neuerer Meister, Graphische Werke Alter Meister aus der altberühmten im 18. Jahrhundert begründeten Sammlung Winckler, Kostbare Handzeichnungen Alter Meister, Sale Cat., F. A. C. Prestel, Frankfurt am Main, 1920, p. 174 ill. Plate 13.

¹ Margaret Morgan Grasselli, *The Touch of the Artist: Master Drawings from the Woodner Collections*, Exh. Cat., Washington D.C., 1995, no. 14. We are grateful to Fritz Koreny for his research and expertise on our drawing.

10

Maso Finiguerra (Florence 1426-1464)

The head of a man looking to our right



A man of late middle age with dense, curly hair, looks to our right with a subtly frowning expression, his forehead rucked by wrinkles. His features are defined with relatively clipped and fluid strokes, occasionally applied with tangible speed (as around the crown of the head for example), while meticulous and delicate washes of ink accentuate the contours of the face, the converging grooves of the neck below the Adam's apple, and the heaviest shadows cast by the sitter's hair, all of which are lit by an almost horizontal left-to-right light source suggestive of a man standing by a window, rather than seated below it. His eyes are depicted open but without pupils or irises, lending him the air of an antique portrait bust, rather than the study of a life model that the evidence we have of Finiguerra's drawing practice would suggest it must be. A single line delineates the camber of his far shoulder.

The method of drawing, with swift outlines defining the forms and the sparing use of wash to lend them a sense of volume, is a hallmark of a large corpus of drawings associated with the Florentine artist Maso Finiguerra. The brother, son and grandson of goldsmiths, Finiguerra ran a productive and successful painting workshop despite dying at the age of only thirty-eight. At his death, he left behind an impressive corpus of drawings (in fourteen volumes!) which scholars believe must have been intended as teaching tools and model books for his students, not least since they are generally drawn at the same scale so that they could be easily transposed together to form complete designs. They include a large number of deft life drawings like ours, which probably make use of workshop assistants and garzoni. Vasari personally consulted the albums during his research into the lives of Florentine painters, and correctly attributed them to Finiguerra's hand, though by the nineteenth century most had been wrongly reattributed to the more famous painter and sculptor Antonio del Pollaiuolo (1426?-1498), and it was only with Lorenza Melli's 1995 study that Finiguerra's authorship was properly reinstated.² Nearly a hundred companion sheets are preserved in the Uffizi, while an album of twenty-three drawings is now in the Louvre (part of a larger album from which our drawing is believed to have come), and still others are scattered among collections including the Szépművészeti Múzeum in Budapest, the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana in Milan, the British Museum and the Courtauld Gallery in London, the Pierpont Morgan Library and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica in Rome, and the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm.

c. 1450-60

7.1 x 5.3 cm: 2 3/4 x 2 1/8 inches; traces of black chalk below pen and brown ink with a light brown wash, cut along the right edge and torn across the lower edge, both squared up with laid paper.

¹ Provenance

Kept among the contents of Maso Finiguerra's studio in Florence, and by inheritance to his brother Francesco Finiguerra; By descent in the artist's family until at least 1507; By repute, in the Medici collections by the late 1500s; Collection of Ignazio Hugford (1703-1778), Florence, acquired as part of an album of forty-six drawings at that point attributed to Antonio del Pollaiuolo; Royal Gallery of the Uffizi, Florence; the album acquired in 1779 along with the rest of Hugford's collection; The album stolen from the Uffizi in July 1793; Thought to have been acquired by Giuseppe Pelli Bencivenni (1729-1808), director of the Uffizi, and thence by descent; The album broken up and partly dispersed in the late 1700s or early 1800s (other sheets from the album are now in the Louvre); The present sheet part of an album of eighteen drawings by Finiguerra and his studio in the Pelli-Fabbroni collection, Florence, by 1946; The album purchased in that year by Leo Planiscig (1887-1952), Florence; De Sanctis Collection; W. S. Kundig, Geneva, 22 November 1947, lot 206, pl. XXII (SF 2100, as Antonio Pollaiuolo); with Colnaghi, London (Exhibition of Old Master Drawings, 1949, no. 15), where acquired by; Robert Landolt (1913-2008)

Published

B. Degenhart and A. Schmitt, *Corpus der italienischen Zeichnungen, 1300-1450, I, Süd und Mittelitalien*, Berlin, 1968, II, p. 597, fig. 866, note 62 (as Florence circa 1460-1470, from the 'Finiguerra Group').

R. Kubiak, *Maso Finiguerra*, Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1974, p. 184.

L. Melli, *Maso Finiguerra. I disegni*, Florence, 1995, no. 139, fig. 155.

F. Grisolia, "Per Maso Finiguerra. Sulle tracce di un "libretto in quarto di disegni", in *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, LX, 2018, no. 2, fig. 17, p. 305 and 308.

¹ Our thanks to Stephen Ongpin for allowing us to draw on his research into the provenance of a related Finiguerra drawing from the same album.

² L. Melli, *Maso Finiguerra. I disegni*, Florence, 1995, pp. 43-45.

Pseudo-Joachim of Fiore's collection of prophecies, with sixty-one large miniatures

This unpublished manuscript is unique: in addition to its inclusion of a full cycle of imposing drawings accompanying its main text – the famous Vaticinia of Joachim of Fiore – it includes previously unknown image cycles for two other very rare accompanying texts, one on the Schism and the other on the prophecies of the Erythraean Sibyls. Its sixty-one illustrations over fifty-five of its pages, all delicately coloured by hand and picked out with liquid gold, were executed by an acutely skilled draughtsman working in northern Italy, and most likely in Venice. These fascinating images, on the fringes of heresy and the occult, were conceived as an integral part of the text, but completely dominate the visual and symbolic texture of the book and have an important place in the history of medieval spiritual life.

The construction of the manuscript – its authors, texts and meanings

The core of our manuscript details a series of mystical prophecies that foretell a saviour-emperor who will unite the Christian world, and it combines the occult, fantasy, and a chronology of the popes.¹ The first of its three sections comprises mystical prophecies associated with Joachim of Fiore, which circulated throughout the Middle Ages; the text was so popular that it remained in print well into the seventeenth century. Joachim (d. 1202), a Calabrian abbot, was the most celebrated prophet and mystic to be condemned for heresy in the thirteenth century. He was a layman who entered the religious life after a personal experience of conversion while on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. His theological output took the form of three great works, the Book of Concordance of the Old and New Testaments, the Exposition of the Apocalypse, and the Psalterium. He was thought to be a prophet by some of his followers, but he regarded himself as working out the hidden meaning of the scriptures. He taught that after the periods of the Old and New Testament, corresponding to the Father and the Son, there would be a third, corresponding to the Holy Spirit, which would begin in 1260 after a series of calamities. In this new age the Roman and Greek churches would be reunited, the Jews converted, and monasticism would become the dominant form of life. This age would be inaugurated by an angelic pope. A group of his followers drew the conclusion that the Old and New Testaments had already lost their authority and that Joachim's texts were the 'Eternal Gospel' of the new age. They were encouraged in their belief by the widespread suspicion that Emperor Frederick II, who was tolerant towards Jews, Muslims and philosophers, was the Antichrist. In their revulsion at the worldliness of the church they became heretics,

Italy, most likely Venice
c. 1425-50

29 x 21.5 cm / 11 1/2 x 8 1/2 in; ink, pigments, and gold on paper; v + 49 + v leaves, the original manuscript foliated in late-medieval arabic numerals in ink, the flyleaves foliated in modern pencil: i-v, 1-54; lacking a single leaf, else complete; last leaf blank; collation: i8-2 (1st leaf is the pastedown, 7th and 8th cancelled; fols. i-v) | 18-2 (2nd leaf missing, 7th mis-bound as fol. 15; fols. 1-6), 28 (fols. 7-14) | 38+1 (1st leaf belong after fol. 1; fols. 15-23) | 414 (fols. 24-37), 510 (fols. 38-47), 62 (fols. 48-49) | vii8-2 (the 1st and 2nd leaves cancelled; fols. 50-54 and pastedown); written in a variety of scripts of varying formality, from formal book-hand to semi-cursive, and with a varying number of lines per page, in varying shades of brown ink, rubrics in red; decorated with forty large miniatures of popes and mystical symbols, and four cityscapes, one per page, and a further seventeen large miniatures in the Telesphorus text, typically each one-third to one-half of the page in size, with from one to three separate images per page, all drawn in dark brown ink and coloured with washes of various colours, with details in gold (crowns, sceptres, coins, halos, etc.). The gutter fold and some edges reinforced with later paper strips; some cracking of the paper at the edges, not affecting the text or decoration, bound in plain undecorated parchment over pasteboards.

Provenance

Either Jean du Matz (d. 1625) sieur de Montmartin, or one of his descendants (most likely Philippe or Amaury de Montmartin), Chateau de Terchant, Ruillé-le-Gravillais, Brittany;
As-yet unidentified seventeenth- or eighteenth-century Italian owners: many of the popes in the Vaticinia section are identified in Italian seventeenth-century cursive script; and at the end of the nineteenth century a sheet was loosely inserted incorporating Italian eighteenth-century handwriting;
Jacques Rosenthal, Munich;
Private collection, Italy, until 2014



¶ *Thomas de Saccarus de quino deinde Nicolus. s. p. 219*
Vulpina figurasti amicitia patente sensum restenans sicut multa Senex et canus hms
 sensum veniens at dupliciter uoluptates septies uoluntarie oes dimisisti confringēdos
 ad inuicē et effusioēs ual sanguinū effundendas Tu pp uictoria expandisti manus
 bene gratiosas et brauiū accepisti in fine septi

¶ **B**ona gratia simonia cessabit

¹ For other manuscripts of its texts see Hermann Grundmann, 'Die Papstprophe-
 tien des Mittelalters' in *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 19 (1928), pp. 77-138; Emil Donkel,
 'Studien über die Prophezeiung des Fr. Telesphorus von Consenza, O. F. M.' in *Archivum
 Franciscanum Historicum*, 25 (1933), pp. 25-104; and 26 (1934), pp. 282-91; Marjorie
 Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism*, Oxford,
 1969; Kenneth Pennington, 'The Libellus of Telesphorus and the Decretals of Gregory IX' in
The Courier, 9 no. 1 (1973), pp. 17-26; Richard Spence, 'MS Syracuse University von Ranke
 90 and the Libellus of Telesphorus of Consenza' in *Scriptorium*, 33 (1979), pp. 271-74; Delno
 C. West and Sandra Zimdars-Swartz, *Joachim of Fiore: A Study in Spiritual Perception and
 History*, Bloomington, 1983; H.W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy*, London & New
 York, 1988; R.E. Lerner, 'On the Origins of the Earliest Latin Pope Prophecies: A Reconsid-
 eration' in *Faelschungen im Mittelalter*, Hannover, 1988, V, pp. 611-35; R.E. Lerner and O.
 Schwartz, 'Illuminated Propaganda: The Origins of the 'Ascende calve' Pope Prophecies' in
Journal of Medieval History, 20 (1994), pp. 157-91, with an edition of the text at pp. 187-91;
 Christian Jostmann, *The Sibilla Eritrea: A Historiographical Sketch*, Florensia, 15 (2001),
 pp. 109-141.



Vetibi ciuitas septicolis qm̄. Q̄ h̄a laudabilis et̄ mem̄bz̄ tuis tē appinquabit cāus et destructio
 tuoz̄ potentū et̄ iudicantiū iusticiā qui h̄t̄ digitos tuos falcatos q̄ est falx desertitudinis et̄
 in altissimis blasphemabunt te que M. E. D. P. T. Exu. Machios sinchopa cedit sanguis Ioh̄is
 bona gratia constantinus pauperis vide at̄ tu qui sc̄a consideras et sc̄a ferrens sup̄ humerū
 nepulius tuus fiat obydium in barba p̄funda. Iuste incidet et maxie uitupaberis It̄ consiliū
 mortis cuius nomē. Io. ob.

Potestas unitus erit



Dns Alfonso Bogha de sabina diocesis Valente; Deinde Calistus 3.

Et reuelabitur uictus qui habet pronomē monachi petra habitans cya uenit mihi aliene
 luctus relinquens et uigū agreste et uno innocuus et gerchundus congregans bona
 dissipans oē bramū iniquitatis et iustificatū. Qm̄ maior stella aparebit nigra tē eris
 nudus It̄ uado ad inferiora terre.

Bona operatio thesaurus pauperibus erogabitur

awaiting the end of the established Papacy. Joachim never actually uttered the prophecies on the popes that became ascribed to him; their texts, which are intentionally enigmatic, may in fact have had an earlier Byzantine origin, but by the late thirteenth century they were being disseminated by Joachimite disciples as being associated with his authorship. They gained particular currency among the movement of the Franciscan spirituals, an aggressive group of Franciscans who entered into a sharp conflict with the ruling popes by radical obedience of the rules of the order.

The textual narrative of our Vaticinia comprises two sections commonly circulated together in the fifteenth century. The older portion (fols.7r-14r) begins 'Genus neque ursa' but appears second in the present manuscript, as in most others. It consists of fifteen prophecies that are essentially a Latin translation of the Greek Oracles of Leo the Wise, and which circulated from about the time of the death of Benedict XI (1304). They open with a picture of a pope with three bears, taken to mean the Orsini pope Nicholas III (1277-80), because the symbol of the Orsini was a bear, and Ursus in Latin means bear; and they carried the prophecies far into the future. In the second half of the fourteenth century, however, another fifteen similar prophecies and images were composed, beginning 'Ascende calve...' From the early fifteenth century these were placed before the older series, to keep the future predictions further from the present. Thus the part composed second occupies fols.1r-6r here (plus the misplaced fol.¹⁵), and ends with a blank page. When arranged like this, the identifications with specific popes had to be moved forward by fifteen. The series still begins with Nicholas III, but the pope with the bears is now Boniface IX (1389-1404), and so on.

The images and texts following fol.14r are not part of the canonical two series, but are clearly a form of extension or amplification that spring off from their model. Prof. Robert E. Lerner, who has written several studies of the Vaticinia and other prophetic texts, notes that the non-canonical images and texts in our version are entirely new to him and quite remarkable, albeit with similar imagery and prophetic texts: they could thus be considered as a reworking of ideas from the canonical series, rather than entirely original visual and literary compositions.

The second main text in the volume sometimes opens with a letter addressed by Telesphorus, a Franciscan hermit and follower of Joachim of Fiore, to the Doge of Genoa, Antoniotto Adorno (d. 1389). It concerns the 'present schism' (i.e. the Great Schism of 1378-1418 under pope Urban VI (1378-1389) and anti-pope Clement VII (1389-1404)) and mentions the date 1386 in its opening lines (fol. 24r line 7 after the rubric in the present manuscript). It consists of a series of prophecies, from the ending of the Schism and the punishment of the anti-pope and his followers, to a successful crusade to regain the Holy Land and convert the Jews and others to Christianity.

The rubric of the third and final main text in our volume claims that it was extracted from a book known as Vasilographus, which the Erythrean Sibyl had written at the request of the Greeks in the time of King Priam; this was translated from a Chaldean manuscript in the library of the Emperor Manuel (it says) into Greek, and then from Greek into Latin by a Sicilian. The text was in fact composed around 1241. It went on to become enormously popular: about seventy thirteenth- to sixteenth-century manuscripts survive, and it is known to have been read by Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Coluccio Salutati



among others. It exists in both abridged and extended forms, each of which has two versions; the present manuscript incorporates the extended version, which is believed to have been written in January 1249.²

Only around thirty complete manuscripts are known to exist containing the Libellus of Telesphorus, but they have hardly ever appeared for sale. In his survey of the Vasilographus, Christian Jostmann was able to identify only fifty-nine surviving manuscripts.³ Of these, four are in the UK, and no others exist either in the USA or in private hands, making the re-emergence of the present volume a moment of the utmost significance for our understanding of these remarkable and incendiary texts.

² Oswald Holder-Egger, 'Italienische Prophetieen des 13. Jahrhunderts' in *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde*, 15 (1890), pp. 155-73.

³ Christian Jostmann, *Sibilla Erithea babilonica: Papsttum und Prophetie im 13. Jahrhundert*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Schriften 54, Hannover, 2006, with an overview of manuscripts at pp. 26-69, a catalogue of manuscripts at pp. 431-89, and edition of three versions of the text at pp. 498-527.

12 A preparatory drawing for an illuminated initial of the Nativity from a Tuscan choir book



The artist of this large initial (measuring 15 x 14 cm) never completed his work, leaving us instead with a superlative master drawing from Renaissance Rome. It decorates a choir book leaf with a large initial 'h' that begins the words *hodie nobis celorum rex...*, the Response to Matins on the 25th December. The initial is historiated with a scene of the Nativity; Mary kneels on the left in prayer before the Christ Child, who lies on the ground propped up on his left elbow and raising his right arm to point towards his mother. Behind him the figure of Joseph is shown sleeping, his head in his right hand and a staff in his left. The scene takes place within a stable, its timber framed structure outlined carefully over the heads of the figures. Behind Mary the heads of an ox and an ass are rendered as if viewed in the middle distance, presumably at the back of the stable.

Unfinished illuminations with only the under-drawing visible are rare. We can differentiate between the ink of the artist for the Nativity and the slightly darker ink for the decoration of the initial. Traces of gold remain and the areas covered in brown paint, framing the initial and decorating the left border of the page with what were once burnished gold. Cleverly, the artist used the upper guide line of the letters 'odie nobis ce' in the text's second line to inform the positioning of the lower edge of the stable's foremost supporting beam. Had the initial been completed as intended, we may never have spotted such delicate evidence, but since the guide line continues through both text and miniature alike we can see perfectly how the artist adapted his design to work with, and offer geometric consistence towards, the adjacent text.

The compositional formula favoured by our draftsman, with its closely integrated cluster of figures and the forward lean of the Virgin over the figure of Christ at her knees, is strongly reminiscent of prototypes developed by Tuscan artists including Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449-1494) who is credited with a panel painting of the same subject with a closely related arrangement of figures, now in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge (fig. 1).¹ The iconographic detail of Joseph sleeping in the scene of the Nativity became a popular feature of Italian versions of this imagery by the middle of the fifteenth century. It can be found, for instance, on a lead-point drawing by Jacopo Bellini of c. 1450, now in the musée du Louvre in Paris, as well as in a panel painting of the same date by Andrea Mantegna in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Italy, Tuscany
c. 1490-1500

56.5 x 38.7 cm / 22 1/4 x 15 1/4 in.; metalpoint, red, sepia, and brown-black inks on vellum with traces of gold leaf. The gilding largely removed – the evidence of knife marks around the initial suggest that this may have been on purpose – and now revealing a preparatory coat of brown pigment. Marginal trimming along the right-hand edge of the leaf.

Provenance
Private collection, UK, since the 1980s



Fig. 1
Domenico Ghirlandaio
(1449-1494)
The Nativity
85.4 x 62.5 cm; egg tempera
and gilding on panel
Cambridge, The Fitzwilliam
Museum, inv. M.54

¹ We are grateful to Gaudenz Freuler for his advice on the localization of our leaf to a Tuscan artist.

te os unctum p. Cructa. R. i.



Dodie nobis ce



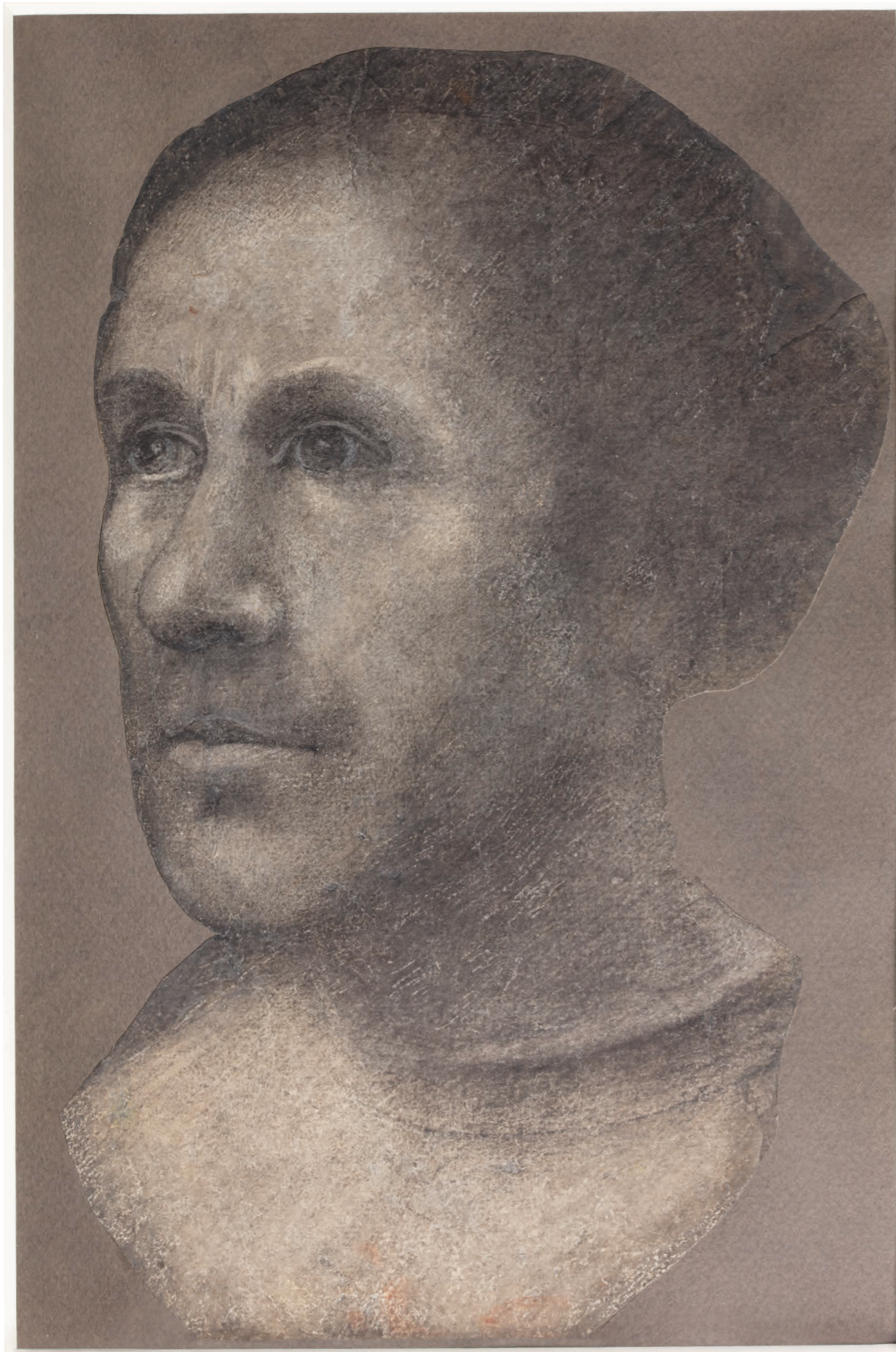
loru rex de uirgi



nema fa oi amatus e ut

13

The portrait of a man of late middle age



A cleanshaven man with a balding pate looks to our left, his features softened by a subtly smiling mouth. He looks out with eyes wide open, his chin up and forward slightly to suggest that he is gazing at an object just above eye height. His chest is intimated by subtle shading over the far shoulder, and his costume by a short, upstanding collar encircling the neck without embellishment or ostentation. His features were put in place with fine, crisp linear outlines, before being blended and contoured using black washes executed with an almost dry brush – the resultant effect is one akin to a chalk drawing, though microscopic analysis shows what is instead a heavily desiccated liquid medium. The retention of the sheet's lower edge, which remains untrimmed, underscores how our artist pushed to fill as much of the paper at his disposal as he could.

Portrait drawings of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries are extremely rare. They seldom surface outside of the world's great museum collections, nor can many comparisons easily be drawn with the known corpus of published sheets, so the attribution of the small number of drawings of this type that do exist is extremely challenging. Since this acutely perceptive and engaging portrait drawing came to light, a range of hypotheses have drawn association to several of the foremost artists working in France between around 1460 and 1520, including Jean Fouquet (c. 1420-1481) and Jean Perréal (c. 1455-1530; see fig. 1).¹ Certainly, it can be discussed with conviction as the work of a master in full command of the medium, since life and realism pervade its sitter's visage. The link to both Perréal and Fouquet seem attenuated, although the density of tone and shadow are distantly reminiscent of the latter's Portrait of a Man wearing a Hat, now in the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg (fig. 2) and help cement our understanding of its origins in a French courtly context.²

Evidently made after life - its details built up with a combination of refined precision, deftness and pace - our drawing's impressive scale and level of finish suggest that it functioned as the authoritative final study for a painted version that was to be executed at length back in the workshop; An early sixteenth-century French panel painting depicting an elderly monastic sitter now in the Indianapolis Museum of Art offers a fitting analogue for the kinds of highly polished painted portraits for which our sheet must have been produced (fig. 3). It is unclear now whether it was made as a standalone portrait or as one of several interacting figures. Certainly, it could just as easily have been incorporated into a larger scheme such as an altarpiece or stained glass window³ (in which our sitter would undoubtedly have functioned as a kneeling patron/donor), or a bust-length portrait in which our sitter's subtle upwards tilt of the head would have been reconciled by its spatial relationship to an object or figure of veneration, such as a saint or the Virgin and Child. We know from the survival of Jan van Eyck's only surviving drawing (now in Dresden) that worked-up portrait drawings were integral to any subsequent painting process, and that they served a central role within artists' practises by the early years of the fifteenth century. Nonetheless, almost none have survived from any point prior to portrait drawing's emergence as a fashion during the lives of Hans Holbein the Younger (1497/8-1543) and Jean Clouet (1480-1541), making our drawing an important document from a vanishingly rare corpus of earlier material.

Northern France
c. 1510-20

27.4 x 16.8 cm / 10 3/4 x 6 5/8 in.; Point of the brush and grey wash, on grey-tinted paper, with some beige heightening and later white heightening; silhouetted above the head and on both sides, and remounted on a grey-brown paper washed with watercolour. Some sgraffito marks around the neck, perhaps intended to lighten the shading beneath the chin. Two repainted losses to the back of the head, and some very short tears to the edges.

Provenance
Private collection, France



Fig. 1
Jean Perréal
Portrait of a Man (Pierre
Marin de La Chesnaye?)
1493?
29 x 18 cm; oil on panel
Paris, musée du Louvre, inv.
RF 1993 8



Fig. 2 (above)
Jean Fouquet
Portrait of a Man wearing
a Hat
c. 1475
28 x 20.7 cm; ink and wash
on prepared paper
St Petersburg, State
Hermitage Museum, inv.
3895.



Fig. 3 (right)
Portrait of an elderly sitter
France
c. 1525
23 x 17.3 cm; oil on oak panel
Indianapolis Museum of Art,
Newfields, inv. 2014.92

1 We are grateful to Nicholas Herman for his advice on the French authorship of this drawing.
2 See also Françoise Avril, *Jean Fouquet: Peintre et enlumineur du XV^e siècle*, Exh. Cat., Paris, 2003, no. 12, p. 144.
3 We are grateful to Frédéric Elsig for his suggestion that our sheet could have served as a *carton* for a window scheme.

CC 10

IN PARASC
M L I P



14 A young woman amongst scrolling foliage inhabiting an initial 'Q'

This magnificent manuscript leaf's large initial (measuring over four inches in diameter) houses an astonishing early drawing of vital spirit and forcefulness. Executed with a fine pen in brown and orange inks, it shows a female figure standing among a forest of scrolling tendrils and looking towards our right. She may represent the 'daughter of Zion' mentioned in the opening lines of the text, and she is here fashioned as a noble woman with a long-sleeved garment and a tightly cropped haircut parting in the middle. The two flowering branches which she supports in her hands are in fact the extensions of a tail, which knots itself around the letter's circular frame and erupts into the form of a fire-breathing winged dragon which doubles as the letter's lower extension.

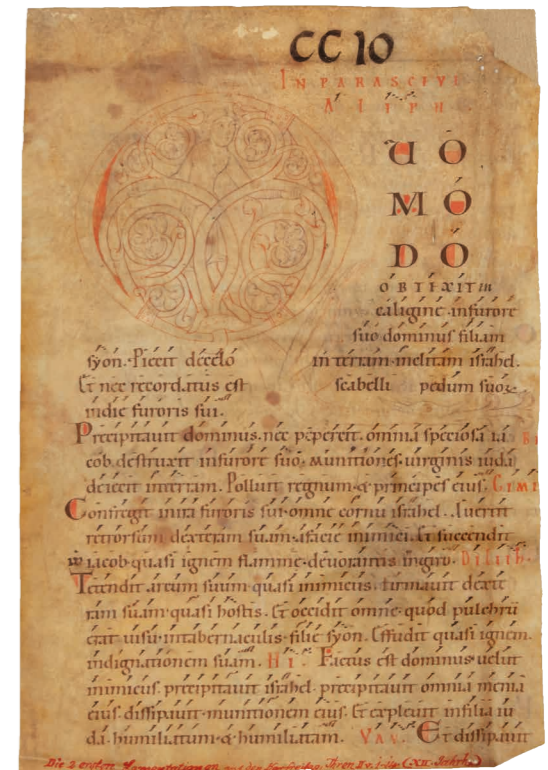
The present leaf is also decorated with the text of Lamentations II, 2, 1-14 opening 'Quomodo obtexit caligine', the text and music fashioned in St Gall neumes (the earliest Western form of musical notation), along with 22 further lines on the verso. It once formed part of a Passionary – a manuscript containing musical settings of the Gospel accounts of Christ's Passion, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and the Blessing of Candles, to be performed successively on the days of Holy Week. Presented here, as in examples from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries, as a monophonic composition, Lamentations II was typically performed on Good Friday.

The small, decorated initials embedded in the text of our leaf are characteristically Austrian in style and can be compared to work in manuscripts from the Abbey of Saint Peter in Salzburg. The figure in the inhabited initial is compellingly close to some to others in the Abbey's three-volume Bible and may be by the same hand (Salzburg, Stiftbibliothek St. Peter, Cod.a.XII.18-20); for example see G. Swarzenski, *Salzburger Malerei*, ii, Pl.CXVI, fig. 393, and *Hl. Rupert von Salzburg 696-1996*, Exh. Cat., Salzburg, 1996, no. 157.

Leaf from a Passionary for Easter
Austria, probably Salzburg
c. 1160

32.1 x 21.8 cm / 12 5/8 x 8 1/2 in.; orange-red and brown-black inks on vellum, rubrics in orange-red, one- and two-line initials of brown with orange infilling (recovered binding fragment: vellum darkened, some spotting, the upper and lower right-hand corners cut away, eight wormholes, a small cut in one line of text).

Provenance
Perhaps from the Abbey of Saint Peter, Salzburg, or another important religious house connected with the city; The parent manuscript dismembered and our leaf reused as a binding for a later volume. It is annotated with the shelfmark 'CC 10';
Collection of Carl von Frey (1826-1896). It was part of the extensive, varied collection he kept in Freyburg, the 'Gothick' reconstruction on Mönchsburg in Salzburg that was his favourite residence;
In 1893 the leaves were shown to Pater Willibald Hauthaler, later Abbot of Saint Peter's in Salzburg, who annotated it in red ink. It remained in Freyburg in the possession of the descendants of Frey until their purchase by the previous owner;
Christie's London, 23 November 2010, lot 1;
Private collection, London



15

A leaf from the 'Hungerford Hours'
with Christ and All Saints in an initial 'S'

England, East Anglia
c. 1330

16.5 x 10 cm 6 1/2 x 4 in.; single folio from an illuminated manuscript on parchment, ruled in brown ink for 17 lines of text written in a fine gothic bookhand, verso with large historiated initial 'S' with foliate extensions around all four sides of the leaf. The recto prayer has a two-line illuminated foliate initial with long marginal extension. Line-fillers in tooled gold, pink, and blue, with white ornament, verso initials alternately gold with blue penwork (faded on the verso) or blue with red penwork.

Provenance
Alan G. Thomas (1911-1992) and Charles Ede (1921-2002), by December 1969;
Private collection UK

Few English drawings have survived from the early fourteenth century, fatally obscuring our understanding of their importance and position within the arts of the period. Drawings in manuscripts – like this remarkable, figurative initial – offer a tiny but brilliant glimpse of the medium's refinement and centrality in the period.

Framed within the sinuous curling form of an initial S, the almost entirely unpigmented bust-length image of Christ looks straight out at the viewer, surrounded by a plethora of figures who direct their gaze towards him. He is picked out from the crowded gathering by a large, cruciform nimbus and by long locks of hair that cascade down to the level of his shoulders. He is cast with a worried, anxious expression, a downturned mouth highlighted in red pigment, and wide-open eyes.

Medieval manuscripts are filled with figures, animals, and hybrid creatures, often shown in uncompromising acts and in the most surprising places. English illuminators working in the 1330s, when this manuscript page was decorated, were keenly interested in the possibilities of grisaille (meaning grey, or monochromatic) imagery, paring back their palette to its most restrained and economical ingredients – pen and ink. Offsetting the vivid lapis lazuli blue of the initial S with the graphic qualities of the figurative imagery nestled amongst its forms allowed both elements to be perfectly legible side by side, an incredible feat at such a tiny scale – the illumination measures barely three centimetres in height and width.

This leaf belongs to the highly celebrated and much studied Hungerford Hours, so named after the obits of Robert Lord Hungerford (d.1459) and his wife Margaret Botreaux (d.1478), added to the manuscript's calendar by its late fifteenth-century owner.¹ It is a fine and impressive example of the desirable East Anglian school of illumination, and though the text of the manuscript is predominately written in Latin, this leaf includes parts of two, probably unique, Anglo-Norman texts.

Michael A. Michael² identified the artist with that of a Psalter at Schloss Herdringen in Germany (Fürstenburgische Bibliothek, MS 8), to whom Lucy Sandler has also attributed the Beatus page of a Psalter at Oxford (All Souls College, MS 7)³, and the Canon of the Mass in the Tiptoft Missal (New York, Morgan Library, MS M.107)⁴. Sandler remarks that the illuminator 'drew faces with square jaws, arching eyebrows, jutting noses

1 J. Backhouse, 'An English Calendar circa 1330.' in *Fine Books and Book Collecting: Books and Manuscripts Acquired from Alan G. Thomas and Described by His Customers on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. by C. de Hamel and R. Linenthal, Leamington Spa, 1981, pp. 8–10 (ill. of fol. 1v). We are grateful to Peter Kidd for his research on the present leaf and its parent manuscript.

2 M.A. Michael, 'Destruction, Reconstruction and Invention: The Hungerford Hours and English Manuscript Illumination of the Early Fourteenth Century.' *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, 2 (1990), pp. 33-108, passim and pls. 1-5.

3 L. Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts, 1285-1385*, London, 1986, no. 82 and fig. 209.

4 Sandler 1986, no. 78 and full-page colour fig. 199.

and stubborn mouths⁵, as seen on the present leaf. That he worked only on the two most important pages of the Tiptoft Missal and the All Souls Psalter clearly indicates his privileged status among contemporary illuminators.

The dating and localization of our leaf's parent manuscript is supported by the dating of other manuscripts attributed to the same hand. The Tiptoft Missal is datable to between 1311 and 1332, and includes clues that suggest it was intended for use in the diocese of Ely; one of its illuminators also contributed to the Stowe Breviary (London, BL, Stowe MS 12), which is datable 1322-25 and has a calendar for use in the diocese of Norwich. The All Souls College Psalter is not precisely datable or localisable, but it does contain clues that point to intended use in the diocese of Norfolk or Ely: feasts of Sts Wilfred, Etheldreda, and Winwaloe. Thus all three manuscripts point to a date in the 1320s-30s and a localization in East Anglia, which is further corroborated by other leaves from the Hungerford Hours: the calendar includes an exceptionally unusual feast of St Guthlac of Crowland Abbey, and the litany of saints includes "Seynte Audree" (i.e. St Etheldreda, of Ely).⁶



⁵ Sandler 1986, p. 85.

⁶ C. de Hamel and S. Cooper, 'The Hungerford Hours', in *Tributes to Adelaide Bennett Hagens: Manuscripts, Iconography, and the Late Medieval Viewer*, ed. by J. K. Golden, Turnhout, 2017, pp. 355-69, at pp. 355-58 and Fig. (col. ill.).

16

Circle of Dirk Vellert (c. 1480-1547) The Prodigal Son cavorting with harlots



Just as Caravaggio and his followers at the beginning of the seventeenth century would exploit the moral quicksand of cardsharps and their ability to trick hapless victims out of their money with sleights of hand, or Hogarth would later with the downfall of the rich young man in *The Rake's Progress*, stained-glass painters like ours were doing the same many years earlier with the Biblical parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15, 11:32), about a young man conned out of his inheritance by the false advances of female attendants and by his own irresponsible decisions. His tale offered a moral message that all strata of the late-medieval populace could understand, but it also allowed artists (and their audiences) freedom to play with sexual pun-making and themes that straddled the knife-edge of indecency.¹

Around a large dining table covered with cloth and strewn with bread, fruits, and playing cards, five figures engage in a complex exchange in which a hapless, fashionably-dressed young man – the prodigal son – appears to be the focus of everyone's attention. While he reclines on a bench and allows himself to be distracted by the whispers of a female cardsharp bending his ear and wrapping an arm over his shoulder from the left, another keeps up the charade by drinking theatrically from a beaker while surreptitiously handing a young boy a pear from the large plate of fruit that our protagonist has purchased for the table. A third woman appears to be about to tip the contents of a large silver wine jug on to the floor, as if to waste the man's money further. The little boy being offered the pear reaches for his satchel with his free hand, suggesting that he is about to pocket the sequestered spoils for divvying up with his fellow conspirators after the party is over. Our gaze is carefully directed through the opening between the woman in the foreground, whose back is turned towards us and offers a stage for an incredibly subtle interplay of shadows, and the attendant on the far left, who in a beautifully conceived exchange that must have taken place just before we arrived, has removed the man's hat from his head and flirtatiously placed it on her own. The designer's wit seems to extend even to the smallest details of the scene; the yellow-handled knife resting on the prodigal son's plate is carefully positioned in order to double as a tongue-in-cheek reference to his genitals, in a manner reminiscent of the gold daggers worn suggestively by the attendants of Jean de Berry in the January miniature of the *Très Riches Heures* (fig. 1). Playing with the theme further, the attendant on the left rests her hand on her deck of cards but splays her fingers out towards the tip of its blade, as if reinforcing the notion that sexual promiscuity and the gambler's art go hand in hand in the ruination of the individual.

This miraculously preserved roundel is a forceful exemplar of how the art of stained glass occupied a prominent position at the intersection between drawing and painting during the late Middle Ages. Were this roundel to have been executed in pen and ink on a sheet of paper, it would be hailed as a masterpiece of northern-Renaissance draftsmanship, but so historically

Southern Low Countries, Antwerp
c. 1520

25 cm diameter; green-tinted clear cylinder glass with vitreous paint and several hues of silver stain. Some abrasion or fading due to underfiring on the table and the foreleg of the female attendant in the foreground. Otherwise, perfectly intact.

Provenance

Wilfred Drake (1879-1949) collection, London;
R. G. de Boer collection, Laren;
Frides Laméris, Amsterdam;
Klaus Tiedemann collection, inv.17, acquired from the above in 1998

Published

R. G. De Boer, *Nederlandse primitieven uit Nederlands particulier bezit*, Exh. Cat., Laren, Singer Museum, cat. 118
Klaus Tiedemann, *Gemälde aus Glas und Licht: Kabinettscheiben der Renaissance*, privately printed, Heidelberg, 2006, p.66.
Klaus Tiedemann, *Gemalt auf Glas & Licht: Kabinettscheiben von Gotik bis Barock/Painted on glass & light: Stained glass panels from the Gothic to Baroque Period*, Dettelsbach, 2009, p.91.

Exhibited

Nederlandse primitieven uit Nederlands particulier bezit, Laren, Singer Museum, 1 July-10 September 1961
Légendes Dorées: Rondels des anciens Pays-Bas du XVe au XVIIe siècle, Romont, Vitromusée (Musée Suisse du Vitrail et des Arts du Verre), 8 June-23 November 2008, no.56
Gemalt auf Glas & Licht – Kabinettscheiben von Gotik bis Barock, Iphofen, Knauf-Museum, 29 March-2 August 2009
Gemalt auf Glas & Licht: Kabinettscheiben von Gotik bis Barock, Heidelberg, Museum für Sakrale Kunst und Liturgie, 16 July-16 October 2011
Goldene Geschichten auf Glas: Kabinettscheiben von Gotik bis Barock, Linnich, Deutsches Glasmalerei-Museum, 16 March-4 August 2013

¹ The relation between playing cards and sexual gaming is discussed further in Christiaan Vogelaar et al., *Lucas van Leyden en de Renaissance*, Exh. Cat., Leiden, Museum de Lakenhal, 2011, pp. 71-3.

tarnished has stained glass been by the label of an ‘applied’ or ‘decorative’ art, that it remains chronically undervalued in the field of art historical discourse. Details such as the female attendants’ opulent dagged robes, the banqueting room’s carefully organised perspectival recession, and the refined foreshortening of the table top and its contents, reveal a meticulous level of planning using what must have been highly finished preparatory drawings executed by the hand of an acutely skilled master. That its imagery also has to have been designed specifically for a circular format (e.g. a stained-glass roundel), is clear from the way in which the figures are arranged so that none of its details are awkwardly cropped by or overlap the roundel’s perimeter. It was almost certainly produced in Antwerp, since the artist responsible for its execution also made a group of nine others which have been localised in recent scholarship to an Antwerp workshop on the basis of historic provenance; now in the collections of the University of Antwerp, they belonged to the former convent of the Grey Sisters on the Lange Sint Annastraat in Antwerp since at least 1693.² It reproduces a number of elements first believed to have been developed on a group of paintings on linen preserved in the Kunstmuseum in Basel (fig. 2), which depict scenes from the story of Sorgheloos.³ The figure types employed in the Basel paintings were clearly extremely popular amongst painters and glaziers alike, since the figure in the foreground with her back turned towards the viewer reappears almost verbatim in quite a diverse group of contemporary stained-glass roundels and other paintings.

One of the foremost glass-painters active in Antwerp at the date our roundel was produced was Dirk Jacobsz. Vellert (c. 1480-1547), who is known from a group of surviving drawings, a handful of large-scale windows, and two signed roundels depicting *Triumphs* (one is in the Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire in Brussels and the other is in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, for which see fig. 3).⁴ He and his workshop can be credited with spreading a very precise and veristic style of glass painting that was undoubtedly



Fig.1 (above)
Limbourg brothers (fl.
1402-1416)
A detail from the January
miniature of the Très Riches
heures du duc de Berry
c.1412-16
22.5 x 13.6 cm; tempera and
gilding on vellum
Chantilly, Musée Condé,
Ms.65, f.1v

Fig.3 (below)
Dirk Vellert (c.1480-1547)
The Triumph of Faith
1517
22.2 cm; clear glass with
vitreous paint
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum,
inv.RBK-1966-58



Fig.2 (left)
Sorgheloos and Lichte
Fortune
Low Countries
c.1520
Distemper on linen
Öffentliche Kunstsammlung
Basel, Kunstmuseum



taken up and copied with rapidity by other workshops active in the same city. It remains unclear whether our roundel was produced by Vellert’s workshop or one of these associated ateliers since it bears no signature, but its connection to his figure style and to a number of roundels and panels that modern scholars have begun to group closely around him makes its attribution to his circle an enticing plausibility.⁵ Another version of the same composition is preserved in a broken state at the Institute Néerlandais (Collection Frits Lugt) in Paris, although to this author’s knowledge no others besides these two survive.⁶

² C.J. Berserik and J.M.A. Caen, *Silver-Stained Roundels and Unipartite Panels before the French Revolution, Flanders, Vol I: The Province of Antwerp*, Corpus Vitrearum Belgium, Brepols, 2007, pp. 42–50.

³ Timothy B. Husband, *The Luminous Image: Painted Glass Roundels in the Lowlands, 1480–1560*, New York, 1995, p. 91 ff; Timothy B. Husband, ‘De Productie van Gebrandschilderd Glas in Leiden’, in Vogelaar 2011, p. 165 ff.

⁴ Ellen Konowitz, ‘The Roundel Series of Dirick Vellert’ in Husband 1995, pp. 142-157.

⁵ Cf. Isabelle Lecocq, ‘Une scène inédite de l’Histoire du fils prodigue de Dirk Vellert (ca.1480/5-ca.1547)’ in *Philostrato. Revista de Historia y Arte*, no. 6 (2019), pp. 5-23.

⁶ Husband 1995, p. 92, fig. 3.



This magnificent roundel, showing the scene of the Nativity framed by an integrally composed border with scrolling vine tendrils and acanthus sprays, is among the finest examples of sixteenth-century grisaille glass painting to have come down to us. The heraldic escutcheon set at the bottom of the perimeter displays a single crab. Above it, the figure of the Virgin is placed centrally within a partially-ruinous stone building, turning in three-quarter profile to our left with her hands placed before her in prayer towards the figure of her infant son, who lies on a length of white cloth nestled atop a bundle of straw. Behind him three angels dressed in clerical robes kneel in veneration; one places his hands across his chest in the sign of the cross, another echoes the gesture of the Virgin. The Ox and Ass drink from a stone trough near the far wall, while at the far right of the scene Joseph stands behind the Virgin with his right hand lifted to his cloth cap, and his left holding a lighted taper. Two shepherds, each bearing a shepherd's crook, look on from the window opening let into the rear wall of the building, and crane their necks in an effort to see the Christ Child.

Southern Low Countries, Antwerp
c. 1525

27 cm diameter; clear glass with silver stain, vitreous enamel and pink sanguine pigment. Completely intact. Some abrasion to the paint surface and localised scratching, particularly in the lower register.

Provenance

Sotheby's London, Medieval Works of Art and European Sculpture, 6th July 1989, lot 5;
Andrew Rudebeck collection, inv. SG 43, acquired from the above

Published

Medieval Works of Art and European Sculpture, auction cat., Sotheby's London, 6th July 1989 (ill. p. 6).
William Cole, *A Catalogue of Netherlandish and North European Roundels in Britain*, Oxford, 1993, p. 223, no. 1787 (dated to c. 1525).

Tone is built up with both stippled shadows and washes of varying concentrations, a time-consuming two-stage approach associated only with the most accomplished roundel painters. A similarly meticulous level of thought was given to the evocation of different materials, with long, crisp highlights scratched back through the paint layers with the aid of a straight edge to evoke the appearance of polished, stony surfaces, alongside shorter, curvilinear hatchings that give softer shape to drapery folds. The typical glazier's palette of dark brown vitreous paint and bright silver stain is also augmented by an extremely delicate and skilful use of what is today known as 'pink sanguine' pigment, a warm, reddish enamel paint the use of which spread rapidly across northern Europe in the years after 1500. It is used selectively and with great care to imbue the faces and flesh tones of the figures with life and warmth, particularly in the cheeks of the Virgin and on the faces and hands of the praying angels and the naked Christ Child, as well as on the fur of the animals. These features tell us that we are looking at the work of an absolute master of the artform.

The choice of imagery on our roundel draws on the account of the Nativity in the Gospel of Luke, which explicitly describes the presence of shepherds and angels during this early moment in the infant Christ's life. However, it is also heavily embellished with supplementary details drawn from contemporary artistic conventions and modes of representation that had become fashionable in northern Europe at the turn of the sixteenth century. The motifs of the Virgin kneeling on the ground beside her infant son, and Joseph holding the lighted taper, are both part of a tradition of artistic representation influenced by the famous vision of the Nativity by Bridget of Sweden (d. 1373).¹ Our artist took most of their compositional inspiration from an engraving by Israhel van Meckenem after a painting by Hans Holbein the Elder in the Fürstenberg Sammlung, Donaueschingen (fig. 1). However, he evidently had access to a wide repertoire of source material, since the three kneeling angels appear in an almost identical guise on a painted Passion retable of around 1450 still preserved at Schöppingen

¹ H. Cornell, *The Iconography of the Nativity*, Uppsala, 1924, pp. 11-13.

in Westphalia.² It is not certain our painter saw the altarpiece himself, and in fact it is more likely that he was working from an intermediary model such as the drawing of this scene now in the Cabinet des Dessins at the Musée du Louvre in Paris.³ The absence of the rear angel's hands - which are clearly visible in the painting but have been repositioned in the Paris drawing and removed altogether on our roundel, would support this idea.

The presence of the large heraldic shield prominently displayed at the centre of the scene's lower register indicates that our roundel was made as a private commission, perhaps in celebration of a marriage or the founding of a private chapel. The crab may well be a visual pun on the Flemish Crabbe family (Jan Crabbe, Abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Ten Duinen, near Bruges, commissioned a triptych from Hans Memling in c. 1470⁴).

Every aspect of this remarkable roundel signals its status as a luxury object and its execution at the hand of one of the greatest glass painters of the age; the precision of line, meticulously considered approach to highlights and shadows, and ambitious scale and level of detail make it without doubt a masterpiece of the artform. In a series of unpublished notes, Andrew Rudebeck perceptively noted its debt to early Netherlandish painting, citing in particular the Mechelen-based painter Jan Gossaert (c. 1478-1532). It is indeed tempting to seek the involvement of an accomplished painter such as Gossaert in its execution, since the handling of the brush and the careful ordering of the composition utilising a repertoire of up-to-date source material implicates an inventive, accomplished and well-connected artistic personality of exactly his stature and skill. It is also clear that it must have been produced in one of the foremost trading centres of northern Europe in the first half of the sixteenth century. The manner in which the window opening is highlighted using short hatched marks scratched through the paint surface in parallel rows also offers a direct link to the work of Antwerp painters, including Jan de Beer, since this artist in particular utilised an identical approach in several surviving designs for glass roundels.⁵ The large size of the glass sheet (measuring 27cm in diameter) might also support the localisation of our roundel to an Antwerp workshop; the city enjoyed a strategic position along the trade routes for French glass travelling north through the Low Countries, and its agents routinely claimed the best and largest panes of glass from shipments destined for onward travel to the north.⁶ Yet precious few grisaille roundels of a similar type, and with an integrally composed border like ours, have survived with which it can be compared, fewer still that rival its exquisite level of quality and refinement. A large roundel of the Adoration attributed in recent scholarship to an Antwerp workshop and exhibiting a partially



Fig.1
Israhel van Meckenem
(1445-1503), after Hans
Holbein the Elder (c.1460-
1524)
The Nativity
c.1490-1500
26.8 × 18.7 cm; engraving
Bartsch VI.216.35

integral border closely related in stylistic and technical approach, was recently acquired by the Rijksmuseum from the Tiedemann collection (fig. 2), though its central figures lack the slender grace of those on our panel.⁷ Alongside this example, a group of eight roundels now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York also exhibit similarly composed borders of a comparable weight and thickness, with a central black field banded on either side with yellow stain and inscribed with phrases interspersed by delicate scrolling foliage forms (fig. 3). As with ours, they incorporate escutcheons which sit on the lower perimeter but are allowed to extend partway into the scene above. They seem in this way to be the product of a shared aesthetic idiom, but their figurative scenes are far cruder than the roundel under discussion, and have traditionally been attributed to a German workshop on the basis of the patronal identity referred to in their inscriptions.⁸ German roundels of the early sixteenth century rarely attain a level of quality comparable to those produced in the more developed and refined workshops of the Low Countries in the same period, and since ours is among the finest of its type to have survived, it stands to reason that it is more likely to have been executed by a Flemish glass painter drawing on a workshop stock of patterns that included southern German print sources, than a German glazier looking to Brabant and Flanders for inspiration.

Fig.2
The Adoration of the Magi
Antwerp?
c.1530s
25.5 cm (35.5 cm with
border); clear glass with
silver stain and vitreous
paint
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum



Fig.3
The Prodigal Bids Farewell
Southern Germany
1532
25.4 cm diameter; clear glass
with silver stain and vitreous
paint
New York, Metropolitan
Museum of Art,
inv.41.190.446

2 Alfred Stange, *Deutsche Malerei der Gotik*, 1934-1961, vol. VI, p. 4-11, pl. 8.

3 Emmanuel Starcky, *Musée du Louvre Cabinet des Dessins: Inventaire Général des Dessins des Écoles du Nord; Écoles allemande, des Anciens Pays-Bas, flamande, hollandaise et suisse XV^e-XVIII^e siècles, Supplément aux inventaires publiés par Frits Lugt et Louis Demonts*, Paris, 1988, no. 59, pp. 60-61, published as Upper Rhine, c. 1450.

4 John Marciari ed., *Hans Memling: Portraiture, Piety, and a Reunited Altarpiece*, London, 2016.

5 Dan Ewing, Peter van den Brink, and Robert Wenley, 'Truly Bright and Memorable': *Jan de Beer's Renaissance Altarpieces*, Exh. Cat., Birmingham, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, 2019, cat. 5, pp. 79-81.

6 M. Reeves, C. J. Berseik, and J. M. A. Caen, *Gilded Light: 16th-century stained glass roundels from the collection of Sir Thomas Neave and other private collections*, London, Sam Fogg, 2016, p. 24.

7 Klaus Tiedemann, *Gemalt auf Glas & Licht: Kabinettsscheiben von Gotik bis Barock / Painted on glass & light: Stained glass panels from the Gothic to Baroque Period*, 'Ergänzungsheft', Nachtrage/Addendas, 2016, pp. 20-21.

8 Timothy Husband and Madeline Caviness eds, *Stained Glass Before 1700 in American Collections: Silver-Stained Roundels and Unipartite Panels* (Corpus Vitrearum Checklist IV). Studies in the History of Art, Vol. 39. Washington, D.C.: National Art Gallery, 1991, pp. 165-6.



Published to accompany an exhibition at
Les Enluminures
23 East 73rd Street
7th Floor, Penthouse
New York, NY 10021

www.samfogg.com

20 January - 4 February 2023

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Catalogue by Matthew Reeves,
with contributions by Jana Gajdošová, Sandra Hindman
and Fritz Koreny

Design by William Fulton



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