

Workshop of Hans Klocker (fl. 1482-1500)
Head of a Bishop Saint
South Tyrol
c. 1500



41 x 20 x 16cm; polychromed and gilded wood; visible damage from inactive wood worm, repair to the mitre to support a crack in the wood, as well as rear tip of the hat was replaced.

Provenance

Daniel Katz Gallery 2004
 Private Collection, United Kingdom

An exquisitely carved head of a bishop with grey curly hair and rosy cheeks, facing forward yet looking to the right. He wears a large ornate mitre on his head, the surface of which presents surviving original gold leaf and polychromy with a floral cartouche pattern. The small dowels on the mitre suggest that originally the headdress had imitations of gems. The bishop's hair is presented in tight curls which are revealed from under the mitre. His face is characterized by firm cheekbones, large eyes and scarlet red lips in a delicate smile. Skillfully chased wrinkles add a meaningful seriousness to the bishop's cheery glance. Below the neck-line is a gold garment, which completes the display of a bishop saint. The bright polychromy delivers a living element to the wooden art piece. Originally the bishop would have formed a part of an altarpiece similar to those found in Pinzano (fig 1) and in the Bolzano Museum, both by Hans Klocker (fig 2). Although it is tricky to identify the figure, bishop saints such as St Valentine and St Wolfgang were a hallmark of the Tyrolian Medieval Altarpieces, often standing beside Virgin and Child Christ in adoration.

Although the sculptor responsible for these two figures is unknown, stylistic evidence suggests that he was most probably active in Upper Austria, working alongside Hans Klocker. As such, comparison can be drawn between this bust and the carving of the bust of a Bishop Saint in the Collection of Diocesan Museum of Brixen (Figure 3). The large, almond shape eyes and the fleshy, realistic face are all analogous here. Other sculptures such as the figure of Saint Benedict or the show clear common characteristics of Hans Klocker works (Figure 4 - 5). Analogous paintwork of eye brows and lashes can be found on the Winged Altar by Ruprecht Putsch and Philipp Diemer in the Victoria & Albert Museum, it is known that Ruprecht Putsch employed former sub-contractors of Hans Klocker.

Literature

Balderston.G, *European Sculpture Daniel Katz*, London 2004, p.26

Gullot de Suduiraut S, *Sculptures allemandes de la fin du Moyen Age*, Paris 1992, p.151-52

Muller Theodor, *Gotische Skulptur in Tirol*, Wien 1976, p 152, 154



Fig. 1
Hans Klocker
Altar of St. Stefan
Pinzano

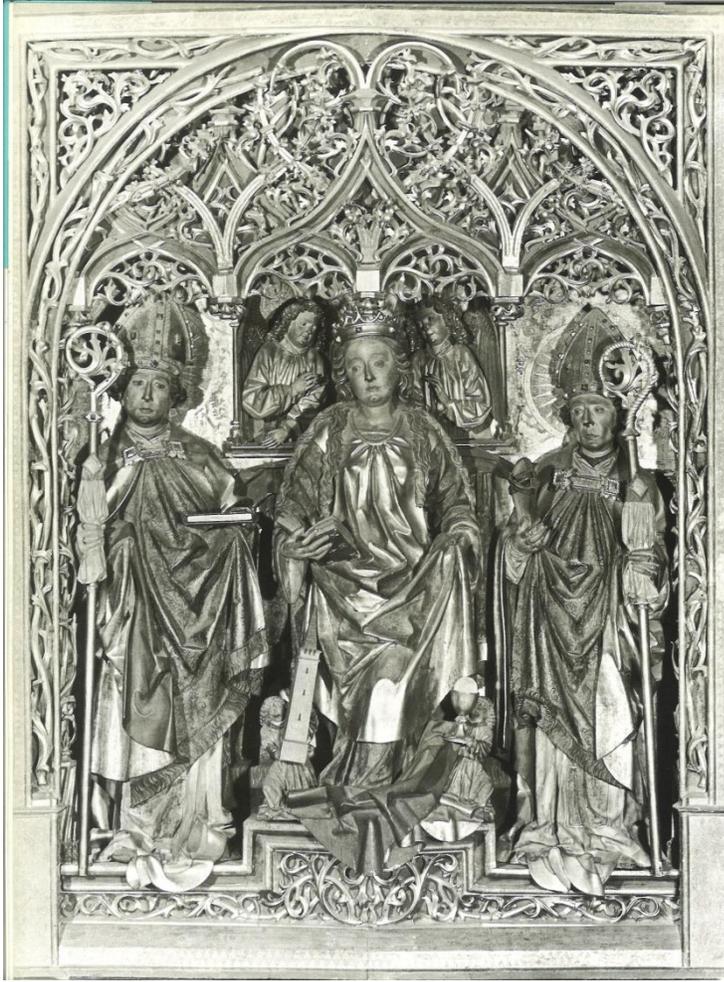


Fig. 2
Hans Klocker
Altar of the Virgin Mary
Bolzano (Bozen) Museum



Fig. 3
Hans Klocker
Bishop
circa 1490
diocesan museum, Brixen, Italy



Fig. 4
Hans Klocker
Saint Benedict
1480 – 1500
Bonnenfantenmuseum



Fig. 5
Hans Klocker
Saint Stephen
circa 1495
GNM Nuernberg