Victoria & Albert Art & Love

Prince Albert's German pictures

Susan Foister

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In 1848 Prince Albert travelled by train on a newly opened railway line to lay the foundation stone for the new dock walls at the booming port of Grimsby near Hull. On this public occasion, a celebration of nineteenth-century British industrial progress, Albert's carriage entered the docks as a great spectacle, pulled by navvies rather than a steam engine. But inside the privacy of his carriage was a reflection of a very different age, a print by the great German Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer: Henry Cole, who had secured the Prince's backing for the Great Exhibition in 1851, in the knowledge of Albert's enthusiasm for early German art, had specially arranged to have Dürer's print hung on the walls of the carriage for the Prince's private pleasure.[1] It was one of a number of occasions which indicate Albert's particular interest in the work of early German artists.

For Christmas 1840, Queen Victoria gave Albert a present of a portrait by Cranach of the Electress Sibylla of Saxony (fig. 1; now believed to be a copy after Cranach rather than an original), one of many such gifts of works of art throughout their marriage.[2] At the time of his death in 1861 Prince Albert owned 25 fifteenth- and sixteenth-century German paintings, 12 of which derived from his acquisition of the collection of his relative the Prince of Oettingen-Wallerstein in 1847. This was particularly notable for the outstanding quality and importance of the earlier German 'primitives', the founders of the German school of painting. Following Albert's death five of these works were presented to the National Gallery by Queen Victoria in 1863, along with five early Netherlandish and 14 Italian paintings.[3]

What German works were owned by the National Gallery, founded in 1824, early in Queen Victoria's reign? The first four German paintings to enter the Gallery included two which might legitimately be categorised as Dutch rather than German. One was a pastiche of Adriaen van Ostade by the German painter Christian Wilhelm Ernst Dietrich (1712–74): dated 1745, it was a bequest by Richard Simmons in 1846. The second was a painting by the late eighteenth-century painter Heinrich Wilhelm Schweickhardt (1746–97), a Dutch-trained artist who became a British resident; it was the bequest of Mrs S.F. Hodges in 1852. The other two German paintings were quite different in character. One was a Crucifixion by the late fifteenth-century Cologne painter, the Master of the Aachen Altarpiece, which was given to the Gallery in 1847 by Edward Shipperdson as a work then believed to be by the sixteenth-century German printmaker Aldegrever. The other was a portrait now known to be the work of Hans Baldung Grien (1484/5–1545) but bought in 1854 as a Dürer,

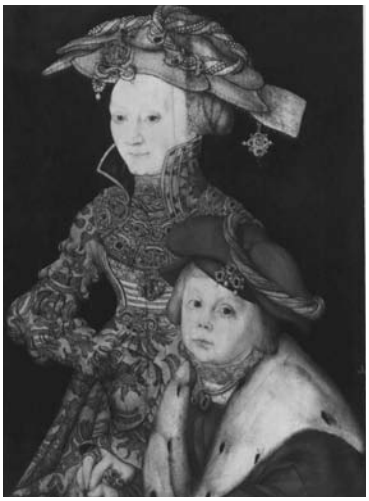

Fig. 1
Lucas Cranach the Younger (1515–86),
Portrait of the Electress Sibylla of Saxony, 1510
Oil on panel, 82.6 × 66.4cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 403373

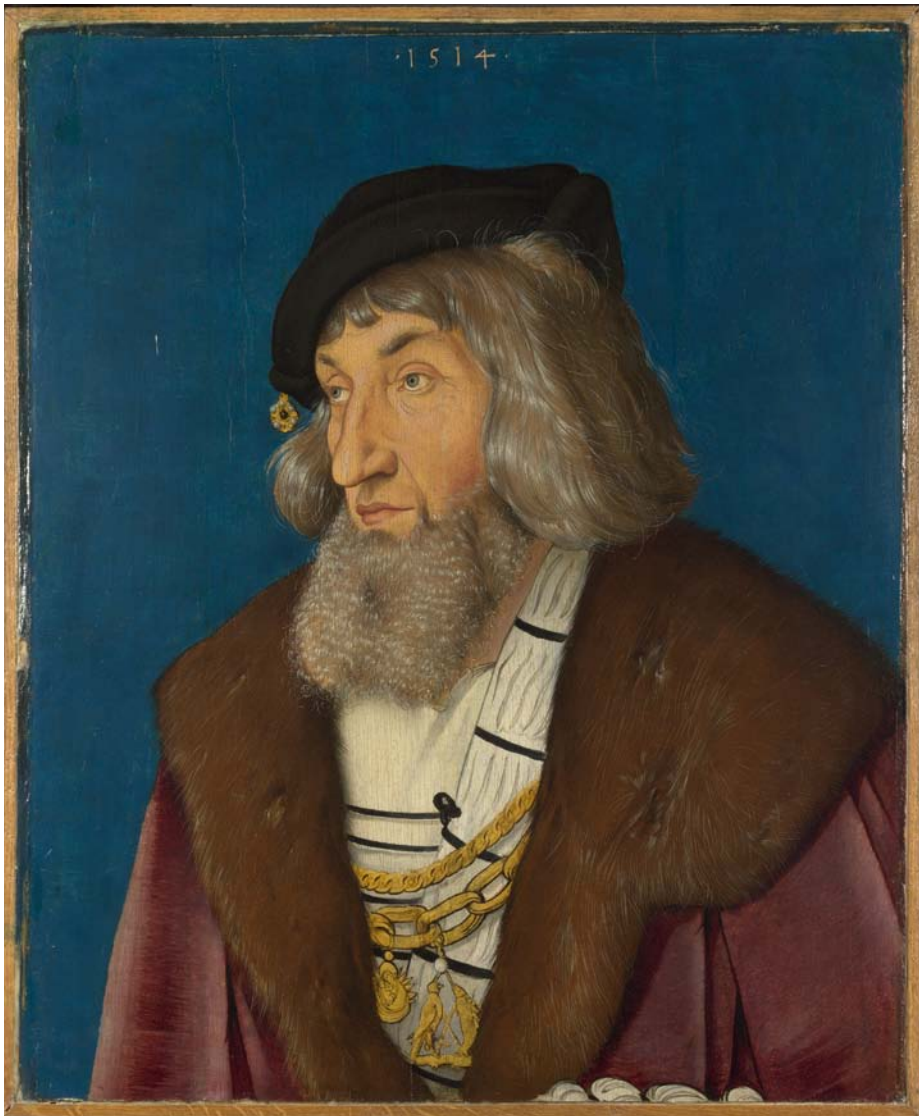

Fig. 2
Hans Baldung (Grien) (1484/5–1545),
Portrait of a Man, 1514
Oil on lime panel, 59.3 x 48.9cm
London, National Gallery, NG 245

when it bore a fake monogram (fig. 2). The painter Ford Madox Brown wrote on 5 December 1854 that he had been to the Gallery to see some 'absurd old pictures' bought by William Dyce (in fact the Krüger Collection of early Westphalian paintings, discussed further below) but he approved of the Dürer: he thought it very fine, though he remarked that it was not painted, rather mapped, perhaps an indication of the difficulty that the linearity of early German painting presented to Victorian tastes.[4]

The question of which, if any, German artists would have been regarded with admiration in 1824 is less clear. The early nineteenth century was a period of rapidly changing tastes, particularly for the art of early Northern Europe, as the contrast between these acquisitions indicates. Both Holbein and Dürer maintained a constantly high reputation from the sixteenth century right up to the early nineteenth century.[5] Holbein, of course, was well grounded in the English psyche: his portrait of Christina of Denmark, now in the National Gallery, was painted for

Henry VIII, later entering the Arundel Collection along with his *Lady with a Squirrel and a Starling*. But neither of these works came to the Gallery until the twentieth century. Holbein was certainly seen as a desirable artist by the Gallery, but the very first attempt to acquire a German painting for the National Gallery in 1845 had ended in disaster: Sir Charles Eastlake, then a trustee, had bought a 'Holbein', a portrait of a man with a skull, but it had to be admitted almost immediately, mortifyingly, that Holbein was not the author of the painting. The work has for many years been attributed to Nicholas de Neufchâtel (active 1561–7) but is now believed to be the work of Michael Coxcie (1499–1592).[6] It was not until 1890 that the first genuine Holbein entered the collection, '*The Ambassadors*', which some then believed to portray two Englishmen.

By contrast, the Royal Collection was of course very well endowed with works by Holbein – with portraits and drawings going back to the enthusiasms of Henry VIII and then enlarged by those of Charles I, who competed with the Earl of Arundel to obtain Holbeins, and who also acquired works by Dürer. That Holbein was in earlier centuries a far more desirable artist than a German 'primitive' is demonstrated by the painting the National Gallery acquired in 1991, a late fifteenth-century German portrait representing the town clerk of Landshut, Alexander Mornauer, by the eponymous Master of the Mornauer portrait. This painting had already reached England by the end of the eighteenth century but could clearly only be made of interest to a collector by being transformed into something else, in this case 'Luther, by Hans Holbein'. It was therefore duly painted over with an appropriately Holbeinesque deep blue background and acquired by the 1st Marquess of Buckingham (1753–1813); it is first recorded hanging in the Billiard Room at Stowe in 1797.[7]

Prince Albert's interest would perhaps have been piqued by this so-called portrait of Luther. He was a deeply committed Lutheran and maintained an interest in the Reformer throughout his life: in 1860 he gave his collection of almost nine hundred items of primary and secondary Lutheran literature to the Lutherbibliothek in Coburg, part of the Landesbibliothek housed in Schloss Ehrenburg, in commemoration of Luther's stay in the Veste Coburg in 1530.[8] It is not surprising therefore that, at a date unknown, he purchased his own portrait of Martin Luther, one attributed to Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553), who was close to Luther and portrayed him and his wife on several occasions. But this was not the only work of this artist that the Prince Consort acquired, introducing to English tastes an artist whose work was far less well known than that of Holbein and Dürer.

In Germany Cranach had always formed part of the canon of German painting alongside Dürer and other masters. In 1531 the humanist Philip Melanchthon had praised Dürer, Cranach and Grünewald in his *Elementa Rhetorices*: on the highest level was the 'Genus grande', Dürer; in the middle, the 'mediocre' Grünewald; and, at the lowest level, the 'humile' Cranach, often praised for his speediness above all other qualities.[9] The first monograph on Cranach was published as early as 1726

by Johann Friedrich Christ, while later in the eighteenth century the art lover and collector Carl Eberhard Reimer praised his luminosity and durability, and his use of white grounds.[10] In 1851 Christian Schuchardt published the two volumes of his research into Cranach's life and work, presenting original letters and other source materials in order to provide a serious assessment of Cranach's work, his working methods and his workshop.[11] Albert's acquisitions of works by Cranach therefore took place against a background of rapidly increasing knowledge and debate over authenticity. More examples of his work were becoming available in the nineteenth century: for example, the reverses of the shutters to the Saint Catherine Altarpiece now in the National Gallery came into England before 1875, sold in 1797 from the collections of the Electors of Saxony, though the remainder of the altarpiece is still in Dresden.

The first example of Cranach's work entered the National Gallery in 1857. This was a portrait of a woman, bought in 1857 from the Alton Towers sale: Eastlake called it 'a very agreeable specimen of the master'.[12] The painting had entered the collection of the 16th Earl of Shrewsbury (1791–1852) by 1835.[13] The Earl probably acquired it directly from Friedrich Campe of Nuremberg (1777–1846), a bookseller and publisher who collected early Northern paintings.[14] How did Eastlake come to the view that the National Gallery needed a specimen of Cranach's work? Clearly he might have been influenced by German writings on the early canon, and by works such as Schuchardt's monograph. In the 1850s he travelled extensively in Germany, visiting Dresden in 1852, where he would probably have had the chance to see the Saint Catherine Altarpiece.[15]

Prince Albert had personal reasons for his interest in the acquisition of paintings by Cranach: the Prince was of the house of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, and Cranach had spent his career painting the Electors of Saxony. Therefore, just as Holbein had portrayed the court of Victoria's English ancestors – in his great sequence of preparatory drawings now safely housed in Albert's print room at Windsor as well as in his paintings – so Cranach had depicted Albert's ancestors, their castles and their way of life. This, at least as far as hunting was concerned, was not so different from practice in the nineteenth century, and Prince Albert acquired a Cranach workshop painting of this subject from the Oettingen-Wallerstein Collection (**fig. 3**).

Several of Albert Cranach's paintings were portraits of rulers of Saxony, although the portrait of the Elector Frederick the Wise that Albert had brought from Germany in 1840 was in fact a modern copy.[16] Albert also brought from Germany a portrait of Frederick's nephew, the Elector Johann Friedrich, dated 1535. To the portrait of Johann Friedrich's wife Sibylla of Saxony given him in 1840 by Queen Victoria (**fig. 1**) were added a porcelain image of Johann Friedrich by Carl Schmidt after Cranach, while on 26 August 1858 at Babelsberg the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha gave Albert another porcelain portrait by Carl Meinelt of the three sons of Frederick, 2nd Duke

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Fig. 3
Workshop of Lucas Cranach the Younger (1515–86), *Hunting Scene*, c.1550
Oil on panel, 14.9 x 20.9cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 402332

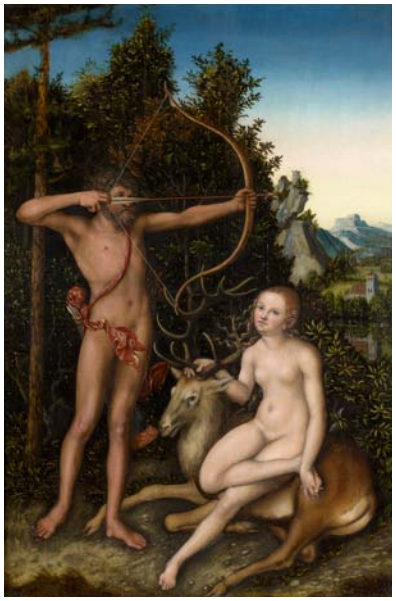

Fig 4
Attributed to Lucas Cranach the Younger (1515–86), *Nicholas de Backer*, 1509
Oil on panel, 76.2 x 63.2cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 405736

Fig 5
Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553), *Apollo and Diana*, c.1526
Oil on beech panel, 83.8 x 56.5cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 407294

of Saxony.[17] In 1846 Victoria herself gave Albert yet another portrait attributed to Cranach, this one of Nicholas de Backer dated 1509 (**fig. 4**).

But there was more to Albert's collection of Cranachs than family portraits, or even just portraits. His art advisor Ludwig Grüner was put on the lookout for works by Cranach and was rewarded in June 1844 by the acquisition for £105 of his most notable work by the artist, the outstandingly beautiful *Apollo and Diana*, thought at first to represent Adam and Eve (**fig. 5**).[18] Cranach's *Apollo and Diana* is one of a small number of his mythological works of great quality, including the National Gallery's *Venus and Cupid* and the Getty Museum's *Faun Family*, which might conceivably have been painted as a suite at the time of the marriage of Johann Friedrich and Sibylla of Saxony in 1527.[19] The *Apollo and Diana* was purchased from the collection of Friedrich Campe in Nuremberg, the same collection from which the National Gallery's portrait of a woman by Cranach was apparently acquired by the Earl of Shrewsbury, as already mentioned.[20] The Earl had probably bought his Cranach by 1835, but Albert's was almost certainly the first mythological work of this type by Cranach in England and the most outstanding work by the artist in the country. It was hung at Osborne in the Page's Waiting Room with four other Cranachs, and took its place in the house with the other painted and sculpted nudes that Victoria and Albert had collected.[21]

One of its companions, another Cranach nude acquired by Albert, was the *Lucretia*, bought for £500 in May 1844 from a Mrs Nicholls, perhaps the widow of Mr Nicholls the collector whose works were auctioned in 1839.[22] Albert had *Lucretia* and *Apollo and Diana* framed in the same manner.[23] He also acquired a religious work by Cranach, the *Virgin and Child*, on 7 June 1854 at the Christie's sale of the collection of the brother of Edward Bulwer Lytton, Lord Dalling, a much-travelled diplomat

who had returned to England after two years in Italy; ill health and separation from his wife appear to have prompted the sale. Of Albert's remaining Cranach works, the school of Cranach *Adoration of the Magi* was first recorded in Queen Victoria's inventory of 1859, while the *Judgement of Solomon* was bought in 1860 for £106, as Queen Victoria's accounts record. The *Salome* was acquired in 1847 as part of the Oettingen-Wallerstein Collection, discussed below. It was judged by Gustav Waagen to be 'a tame and wretched performance': Cranach's reputation had suffered somewhat from accusations that his work was rough, speedy and simple, and by the period at which Albert was buying his paintings there was much debate as to which were by the master himself and which by the workshop or by the younger Cranach; this one appears to be the work of a follower or imitator.[24]

It is remarkable that Albert believed he was acquiring Britain's first work by Grünewald, a rare and much-admired artist who had been placed above Cranach and second after Dürer in Melanchthon's pantheon.[25] Albert acquired the painting from the sale of the politician Horatio Walpole, 3rd Earl of Orford (1783–1858), at Christie's in June 1856. An altarpiece representing the Coronation of the Virgin with saints, and now attributed, ironically, to Cranach (fig. 6), it had been purchased in Bavaria.[26] Although Grünewald was highly praised in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, his works were in fact difficult to identify and the works associated with him early on were not necessarily those that became most famous later.[27] The Isenheim Altarpiece was brought to Colmar for safety in 1793/4, but only in 1843 did Jacob Burckhardt recognise it as the work of Grünewald. In 1852, only four years before Albert's purchase, it was exhibited in the Musée Unterlinden, Colmar. The first monograph on Grünewald, by Alfred Schmid, was not published until 1911.[28] Albert's purchase arguably put him at the forefront of the modern appreciation of this artist.

The National Gallery still has no work by Grünewald, and Dürer was an even more elusive artist for the institution: as already mentioned, the Gallery's first attempt resulted in the acquisition in 1854 of Baldung's portrait of an unknown man. The attractive portrait of a young man in the Royal Collection now accepted as the work of Baldung (**fig. 7**), who is usually believed to have been a pupil of Dürer, was acquired from the Oettingen-Wallerstein Collection in 1847, where it had been catalogued as the work of Herri met de Bles (*c.*1510–*c.*1550). Waagen however commented in 1854: 'This good portrait belongs assuredly to the school of Albert Dürer. It recalls Hans von Culmbach – another student of Dürer- more than any other painter.'[29] It was not identified as the work of Baldung until the early twentieth century.[30]

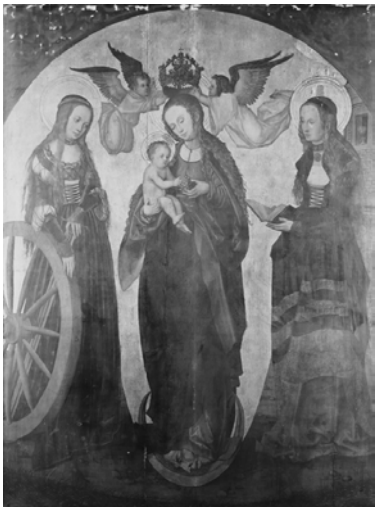

Fig. 6
Attributed to Lucas Cranach the Younger (1515–86), *Coronation of the Virgin with Saints*, 1500
Oil on panel, 217.2 x 159.5cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 406920

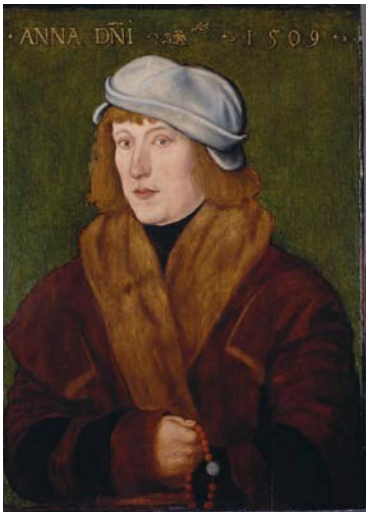

Fig. 7
Hans Baldung (Grien) (1484/5–1545), *Portrait of a Young Man with a Rosary*, 1509
Oil on panel, 51.6 x 36.9cm
Royal Collection, RCIN 4055758

So far we have examined some of Prince Albert's sixteenth-century German paintings and their counterparts in the National Gallery. We must now turn to his examples of fifteenth-century German painting, which came to him via the Oettingen-Wallerstein Collection; from these some six paintings subsequently entered the National Gallery's Collection in 1863, at the wish of Queen Victoria, following Albert's death. Albert's distant relative Prince Ludwig Kraft Ernst von Oettingen-Wallerstein (1791–1860) had already in his twenties assembled a remarkable group of early Netherlandish, German and Italian paintings, as well as some Byzantine and Russian works, all of which were catalogued in 1817–18. Many were bought in Germany and Switzerland, and some were acquired in 1815–16 when he bought the important collection of Count Joseph von Rechberg (1769–1833), a Bavarian army commander with sophisticated tastes in early Northern painting.[31]

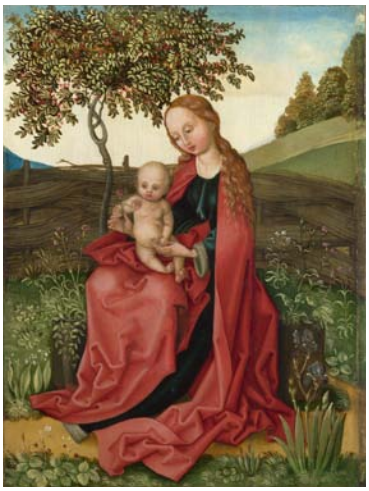

Fig. 8
Style of Martin Schongauer,
The Virgin and Child in a Garden, 1469–91
Oil on lime panel, 30.2 x 21.9cm
London, National Gallery, NG 723

The Prince visited Windsor in 1843, when Victoria found him 'gentleman-like and clever but slightly effeminate'.[32] Having married the daughter of an emigrant French officer, he was compelled to take up a political career in government service in Munich. In 1828 he sold many of his German pictures to the King of Bavaria. By 1847 he had fallen into greater financial difficulties, with the result that Albert agreed to guarantee a loan of £3,000. The loan was secured on the collection, which was sent to London and exhibited for sale at Kensington Palace, but there were no takers. As the loan could not be repaid, the pictures became Prince Albert's.[33] The dealer Henry Mogford, acting as Albert's agent, offered the Oettingen-Wallerstein pictures to the National Gallery on 8 August 1851 and again on 31 March 1852. On 5 April 1852 the Trustees declined.[34] The Prince therefore kept the paintings, many of which were exhibited at the *Art Treasures* exhibition at Manchester in 1857. One of the early German pictures which was shown was a little painting by now generally thought to be from the circle of Martin Schongauer (active 1496; died 1491): Waagen was convinced it was the work of Schongauer himself, and he called it 'one of the finest and most remarkable in this collection, and not only the only known picture by the master in England but, with the exception of those at Colmar, in Europe' (**fig. 8**).[35]

The second chapter in the story came after Albert's death. In 1863 Queen Victoria offered the collection of 77 works to the National Gallery. However, the Trustees did not accept all the pictures: there were severe space problems, and not all were thought fit for hanging in the Gallery – Eastlake declared 'scarcely a third part consists of examples adapted for the National Gallery'.[36] Sir Charles Phipps, however, countered that the collection should be acquired as a whole so that individual pictures were not samples of Prince Albert's taste.[37] The Keeper, Ralph Wornum, recorded in his diary on 18 September 1862 that he had visited Kensington Palace to view the collection, and that all could hang in one of the late Turner rooms at Kensington, 'but there is room enough for a selection only in Trafalgar Square'.[38] Again on 14 January 1863 he inspected the pictures with Eastlake and recorded 'about half only fit to hang in the Gallery and of these many very inferior pictures'.

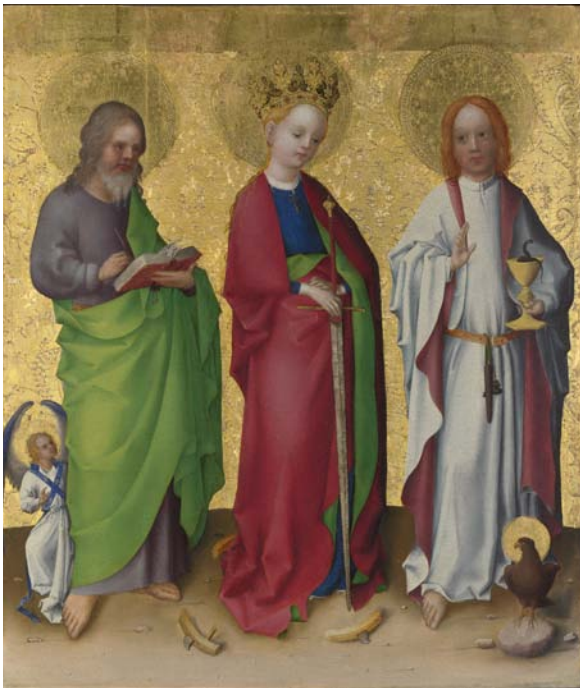

Fig. 9
Stephan Lochner (active 1442; d. 1451), *Saints Matthew, Catherine of Alexandria and John the Evangelist*, c.1450
Oil on oak panel, 68.6 x 58.1cm
London, National Gallery, NG 705

On 19 January they were taken away in two vans, and in mid-February the frames were sent way to be altered. In May the pictures were repaired, and on 16 June Wornum recorded that Caldesi was photographing those selected for the Gallery. Some 25 pictures were chosen and hung in the South Lower Room. Queen Victoria came to inspect them on 20 June 1863, and on 26 June she ordered the rejected paintings to be taken to Buckingham Palace.[39]

In addition to the small painting by Schongauer, the Oettingen-Wallerstein Collection was notable for including examples of the work of three early German artists whose oeuvre was being established amid great art historical excitement in the early nineteenth century, painters who were believed to be the most significant for the development of early German art: 'Meister Wilhelm', Israhel van Meckenhem (*c.*1445–1503) and 'Meister Christoph'. Meister Wilhelm was praised in 1380 as the best German painter: his name was soon attached to many early Cologne paintings, and Wilhelm was seen as inspiration for van Eyck and the other early Netherlandish painters, a theory which Waagen later took pains to dispel. In 1804 the famous collectors the Boisserée brothers visited Cologne with the writer Friedrich Schlegel. In Cologne town hall they admired the altarpiece of the *Adoration of the Magi* now in Cologne Cathedral, then attributed to Dürer. Goethe, however, described it drily 'as the object of so much adulation that I am afraid it will be soon be as obscured in the mind's eye by such rhapsodies as it was formerly to the physical eye by the soot of lamps and candles'.[40]

Through the Oettingen-Wallerstein Collection Prince Albert acquired a painting by the same artist, now in the National Gallery (**fig. 9**), which demonstrates the gentle and peaceful qualities that Schlegel praised in the *Adoration*, and which others compared to the work of the early Italian painter Fra Angelico.[41] The Boisserées bought this painting, one of many which came out of secularised churches after the Napoleonic invasion, but exchanged it with Count Joseph Rechberg in 1814–15 for part of an altarpiece by Bernhard Strigel which is now in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg. It was acquired from them by Prince Ludwig Kraft Ernst von Oettingen-Wallerstein as the work of 'Meister Wilhelm', and was exhibited for sale in London in 1848 as by William of

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Cologne.[42] However, Waagen identified it as the work of Stephan Lochner and wrote a learned and excited note explaining how this discovery had been made by the art historian Johann Jacob Merlo (1810–90) only the previous year from a reading of Dürer's journal: Dürer identified the altarpiece then in the Town Hall at Cologne as the work of Meister Stephan, and Merlo thus realised that this artist could be associated with the documented Stephan Lochner rather than Meister Wilhelm.[43] Thus Prince Albert and then the National Gallery acquired a work by one of the most significant German artists of the fifteenth century, one who died in 1451 and worked rather later in the century than had previously been believed.

But just a year before the National Gallery's acquisition of Prince Albert's painting in 1863 Eastlake had determined to obtain a 'specimen' of the early Cologne school of painting. With Merlo's discovery it became clear that Wilhelm, not Stephan was the outstanding painter of the later fourteenth century and early fifteenth, and Eastlake had spotted an example of a work believed to be his in the collection of the Cologne architect Johann Peter Weyer (1794–1864). This painting became in 1862 the Gallery's first early fifteenth-century German purchase (fig. 10).[44] In 1857 Eastlake had already noted the picture: 'The Veronica head by Meister Wilhelm is probably genuine the same emptiness in the female head as before – the Christ's head has a Byzantine look in the eyes and altogether the specimen is worth attention.'[45] He wrote to Wornum on 20 August 1862 on the occasion of the Weyer sale: 'This is a good specimen of the early Cologne school. It is called Meister Wilhelm the predecessor of Meister Stephan.'[46] It was purchased by the Gallery's Travelling Agent Otto Mündler for the equivalent of £165.[47]

Meister Christoph is a painter whose name was associated with some highly distinctive later fifteenth-century Cologne paintings. There was little knowledge of his work in England but again the Oettingen-Wallerstein purchase brought a major example which was ultimately to come to the National Gallery. Such paintings had been appreciated uniquely in England by Carl Aders, a German merchant active in collecting early Netherlandish and German paintings, but who became bankrupt.[48] In the 1839 Aders sale, this *Virgin and Child* (fig. 11) was sold for £4 to the writer Henry Crabb Robinson (1775–1867), a Trustee of the collection. Robinson recorded his purchase of 'a Virgin and Child, on gold, by Van der Weyde', and mentioned that since his friend the poet William Wordsworth (1770–1850) liked the picture, he gave it to him.[49] The subsequent fate of Wordsworth's pictures is unclear, but the painting eventually reached the National Gallery in 1985. Meanwhile, Prince Albert acquired from the Oettingen-Wallerstein Collection a larger and more significant picture by this same artist, representing *Saints Peter and Dorothy* (fig. 12), one which was then believed to have formed part of the Saint Bartholomew Altarpiece in Munich, the work after which this artist took his modern name, the Master of the Saint Bartholomew Altarpiece.

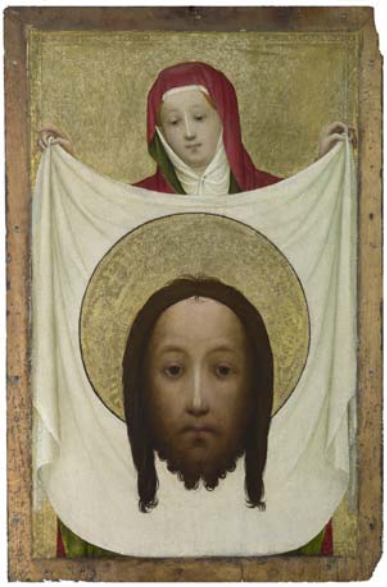


Fig. 10
Master of Saint Veronica (active early fifteenth century), *Saint Veronica with the Sudarium*, c.1420
Oil on walnut panel, 44.2 x 33.7cm
London, National Gallery, NG 687

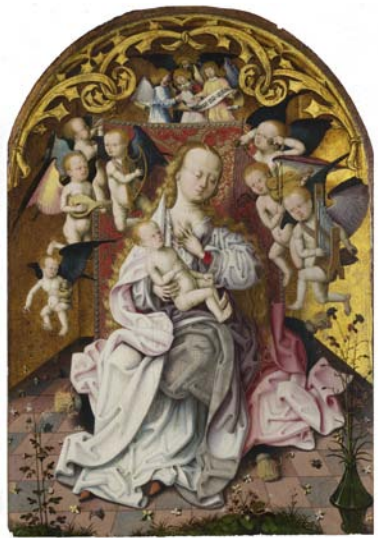
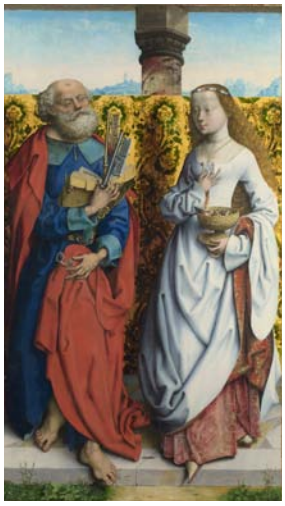
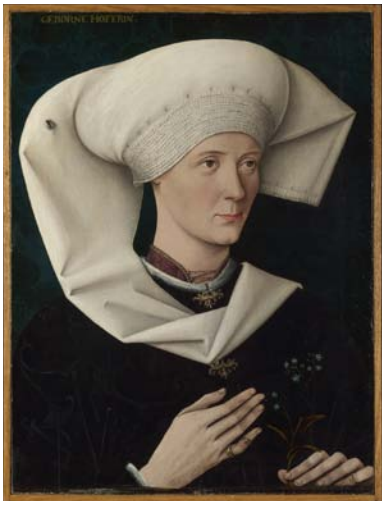
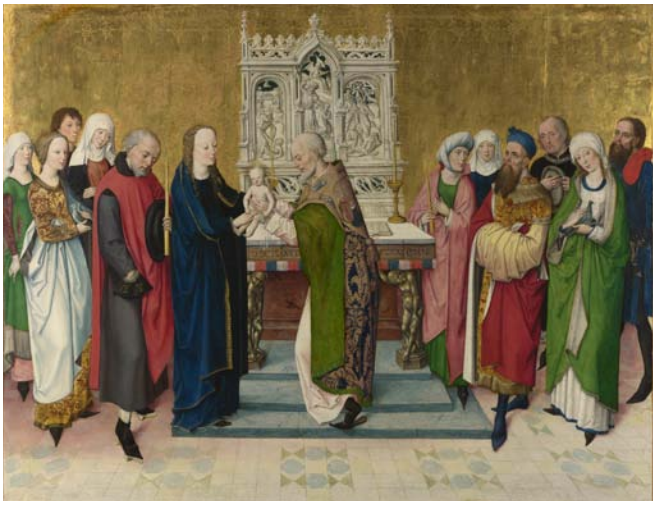


Fig. 11
Master of the Saint Bartholmew Altarpiece (active c.1470–c.1510), *The Virgin and Child with Musical Angels*, c.1485–1500
Oil on oak panel, 52 x 38cm
London, National Gallery, NG 6499







The last early German artist of great importance acquired by Prince Albert with the Oettingen-Wallerstein Collection was known as the Master of the Lyversberg Passion, a Cologne artist from the third quarter of the fifteenth century who was also identified with the prolific engraver Israhel van Meckenhem. The works attributed to him included a portrait of a woman, now given to the Swabian school (fig. 13), and a painting of the *Presentation in the Temple*, now considered the work of the Master of the Life of the Virgin (fig. 14). The Westphalian Israhel van Meckenhem was considered to be of major importance in the development of early German art: his work was also identified with that of the painter now known as the Master of Liesborn, which entered the National Gallery's collection via the Kruger Collection, purchased directly from Westphalia, in 1854 (fig. 15). The German art historian Johann David Passavant described Kruger's collection of Westphalian painting as for the most part of the greatest beauty and of the highest interest for the history of art in Germany. Passavant saw the Westphalian Liesborn master's work deriving from the art of Cologne, via painters such as Meister Wilhelm; he commented on the clear and soft colouring, and the way in which, although an oil painting, the effect was similar to an early Italian fresco. Waagen, however, debunked the oeuvre assembled around the figure of van Meckenhem: he wrote of Prince Albert's *Presentation in the Temple* that researches in Meckenhem in Westphalia had shown that no painter of that name existed, only the engraver and goldsmith Israhel van Meckenhem. He concluded that in giving this name to paintings the Boisserées and others were mistaken. The artist was a Cologne painter and not a Westphalian one. But he considered that the *Presentation* belonged to his best works, and he did not dispute that the portrait of a woman of the Hofer family was rightly attributed to the same artist.[50]

Fig. 12 (left)
Master of the Saint Bartholmew Altarpiece (active c.1470–c.1510), *Saints Peter and Dorothy*, probably 1505–10
Oil on oak panel, 125.7 x 71.1cm
London, National Gallery, NG 707

Fig. 13 (centre)
Swabian school, *Portrait of a Woman of the Hofer Family*, c.1470
Oil on silver fir panel, 53.7 x 40.8cm
London, National Gallery, NG 722

Fig. 14 (right)
Master of the Life of the Virgin (active second half of fifteenth century), *The Presentation in the Temple*, probably c.1460–75
Oil on oak panel, 83.8 x 108.6cm
London, National Gallery, NG 706

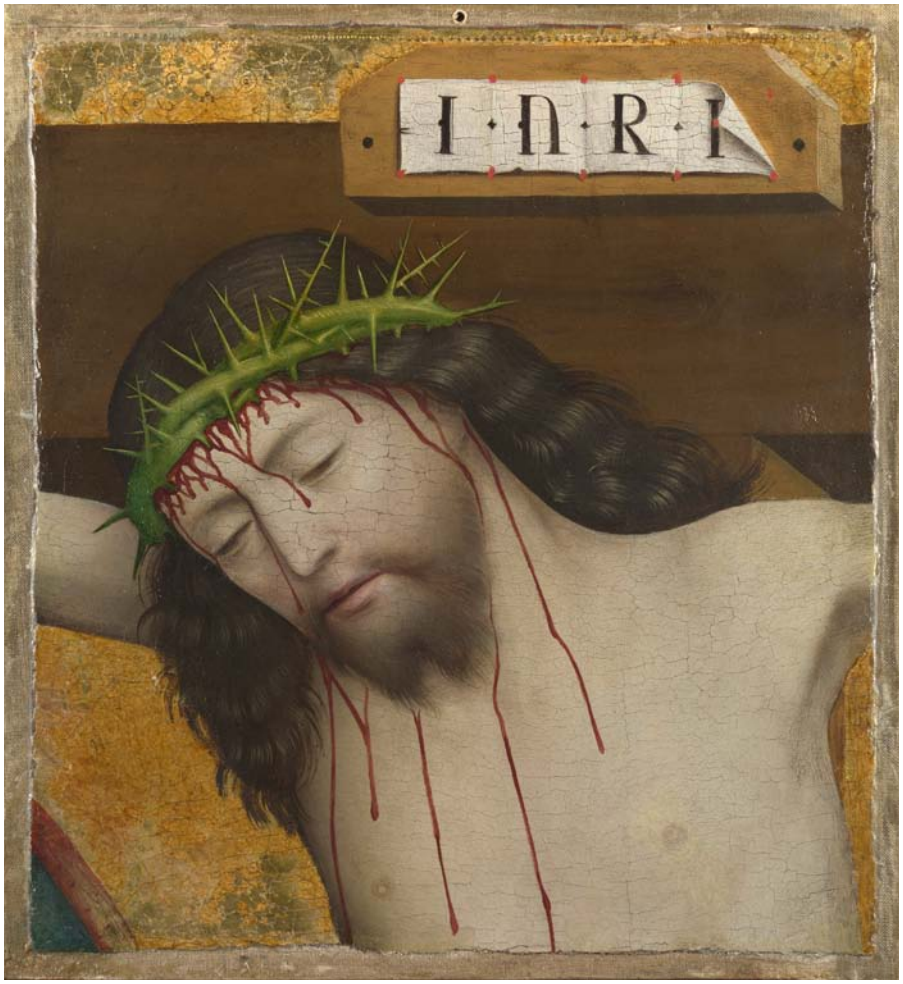


Fig. 15
Master of Liesborn (active second half of fifteenth century), *Head of Christ Crucified,* from dismembered central panel of the Liesborn Altarpiece, probably 1470–80
Oil on oak panel, 32.7 29.8cm
London, National Gallery, NG 259

The 1850s were a troubled period for the National Gallery and for the acquisition of early German paintings. In November 1853 the sale of the Krüger Collection of early Westphalian paintings came to the notice of W.E. Gladstone, then Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lord Aberdeen's coalition. He accepted the painter William Dyce's proposal to go to Minden to inspect the pictures, which were acquired for £3,500. But following Eastlake's appointment as first Director in 1855, and a special act of parliament the following year, 37 out of 64 paintings were sold in 1857, as unworthy of the national collection, leaving only 21 early German paintings to add to the five already acquired.[51]

Yet all was not lost, for in 1863 the untimely death of Prince Albert prompted the arrival of the five important early German paintings which he had acquired from the Oettingen Wallerstein Collection as Queen Victoria's gift. Although there were to be few German pictures indeed added to the National Gallery's collection for another century, the Prince's German paintings remain some of the most significant and most outstanding examples in the collection of the Gallery.

Victoria & Albert
Art & Love

Notes

1. Cole 1884, vol. 1, p. 93. I am most grateful to Dr Susanna Avery-Quash for this information.

2. Weintraub 1997, p. 114.

3. On the early Netherlandish paintings, see L. Campbell 1998, p. 14; and on the Italian paintings, see Avery-Quash 2003, pp. xxix–xxxiv.

4. Pointon 1979, p. 137.

5. On Holbein's reputation in England, see Foister 2004, pp. 266–9; on Dürer's reputation and legacy, see U. Kuhlemann in British Museum 2002, esp. pp. 39–40.

6. See Wieseman 2010.

7. Foister 1991, p. 615.

8. Hobhouse 1983, p. 9.

9. For an overview of the historiography of the appreciation of Cranach's work, see Heydenreich 2007, pp. 22–8.

10. Heydenreich 2007, pp. 24–5.

11. Ibid., p. 26. In the second half of the nineteenth century the extent to which Cranach's oeuvre was made up of many pieces by the workshop and followers was questioned by some writers including Kugler; on this point see Heydenreich 2007, p. 27.

12. National Gallery Archive, NG5/227/1857.

13. Levey 1959, p. 19.

14. Ibid., p. 19.

15. For Eastlake's trip to Dresden in 1852, see Avery-Quash 2011a, vol. 1, pp. 129–38, 144–7.

16. D. Millar 2000, p. 65.

17. Information kindly provided from Royal Collection records by Lucy Whitaker and Wolf Burchard. A second porcelain by Schimdt of Philippine Weber (d. 1580), wife of Archduke Ferdinand of the Tirol, is also recorded in the Royal Collection at this period.

18. See Marsden 2010, no. 108, p. 184.

19. See Foister 2007, p. 60. The whereabouts of the National Gallery and Getty paintings in the nineteenth century is not known: see C. Campbell 2007, nos 2 and 4, pp. 80, 88, respectively.

20. The Campe Collection was also the source of Lord Lindsay's Cranach, An Allegory of Melancholy (Brinkmann 2007, no. 97, p. 316). A religious subject, Cranach's Entombment was noted by Waagen in 1854 in the collection of W.E. Gladstone, which had been given to Gladstone by his father, John Gladstone, some years earlier; on this picture, see Pointon 1975, pp. 78–9.

21. See Marsden 2010, pp. 22–5, and nos 116–19, pp. 194–8.

22. See ibid., no. 109, p. 185.

23. See Lucy Whitaker's article in the present publication.

24. Waagen 1854a, p. 28. In 1815 Goethe and Johann Gottlieb Quandt in a joint publication attempted to distinguish between Lucas Cranach the Elder and Younger by technique as well as style, see Heydenreich 2007, p. 25.

25. In 1620 the German publisher Vincenc Steinmayer called Dürer and Grunewald the 'leading representatives of German art'; see Karlsruhe 2007 p. 17.

26. Waagen 1854a, p. 78

27. Joachim von Sandrart saw Grünewald drawings in the collection of Philipp Uffenbach in 1612–16, while Maximilian I of Bavaria bought the centre panel of the Heller Altar in 1614. Sandrart's *Teutsche Akademie* was the first to name Matthias Neithardt Grünewald in 1675 and 1679; on this point see Karlsruhe 2007, p. 17.

28. Karlsruhe 2007, p. 17.

29. Waagen 1854a, p. 27.

30. Von der Osten 1983, no. 8, pp. 54–5. Von der Osten surmises that the attribution to Hans von Kulmbach published by Waagen was supplied by Ludwig Grüner.

31. L. Campbell 1985, p. xlviii. Rechberg later acquired the Altdorfer *Christ taking leave of his Mother* which eventually came to the National Gallery in 1980.

32. Weintraub 1997, p. 173.

33. L. Campbell 1985, p. xlix.

34. Weintraub 1997, pp. 173, 449; see also National Gallery Archive, NG5/88/3 and NG6/2/45.

35. Waagen 1857, p. 20.

36. Letter from Eastlake to Phipps, dated 1 February 1863, Royal Archive, RA PPTO/PP/QV/MAIN/1862/13381, quoted in Marsden 2010, p. 33.

37. Marsden 2010, p. 33.

38. Wornum Diary, National Gallery archive, NGA2/3/2/13. This document is unpaginated.

39. Wornum Diary, National Gallery archive, NGA2/3/2/13.

40. Haskell 1993, pp. 435–6.

41. Ibid., p. 435.

42. Levey 1959, p. 61.

43. See Chapuis 2004, p. 19.

44. Levey 1959, pp. 95–6.

Victoria & Albert
Art & Love

45. Avery-Quash 2011a, vol. 1, p. 339; see also National Gallery Minutes of Board Meeting of 16 November 1857.

46. Eastlake to Wornum, dated 20 August 1862, National Gallery archive, NG5/142/1862; see also Avery-Quash 2011a, vol. 1, p. 591.

47. It was purchased together with a painting by Memling, *The Virgin and Child and Saint George with a Donor*, for which see L. Campbell 1998, p. 354.

48. On Aders, see L. Campbell 1998, pp. 12-13.

49. See entry for 26 April 1839 in Crabb Robinson 1869, vol. 3, p. 175.

50. Waagen 1854a, pp. 16–17.

51. On the Krüger sale, see Avery-Quash and Sheldon 2011, pp. 160–61.

Victoria & Albert
Art & Love

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