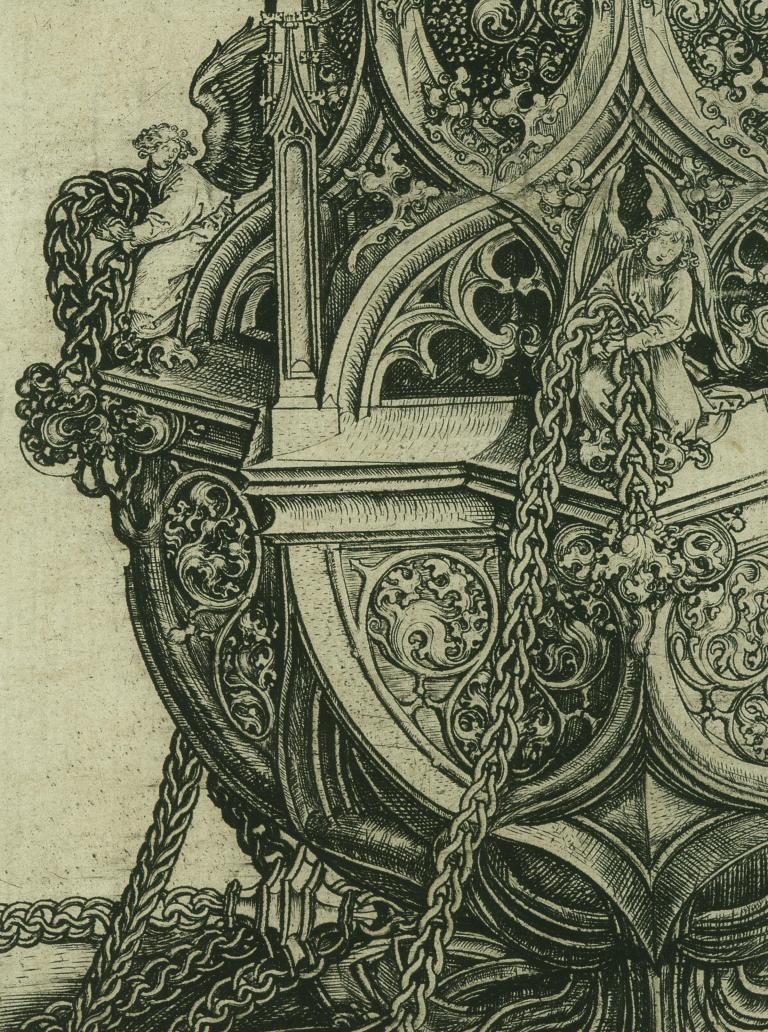


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# The Print in the Dorth

The Age of Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden

SUZANNE BOORSCH NADINE M. ORENSTEIN

The Metropolitan Museum of Art



#### **Director's Note**

Shortly after his appointment in 1916 as the Metropolitan's first curator of prints, William M. Ivins Jr. wrote, "One of the most charming and amusing aspects of the study of prints, because their medium is printer's ink, is that they throw open to their student with the most complete abandon the whole gamut of human life and endeavor, from the most ephemeral of courtesies to the loftiest pictorial presentations of man's spiritual aspirations." Such sentiments might apply to the works illustrated in this Bulletin, published in conjunction with the exhibition "The Print in the North: The Age of Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden," opening in early May. From the courtly lovers portrayed by Master ES to Dürer's bold apocalyptic vision and praying saint, from an engraved "thistle" to a sultan's journey, these works are important not only for "what they represent," as Ivins noted of his charges, but also for "the manner in which they represent things." Indeed,

many of these German and Netherlandish works-produced in northern Europe between about 1440 and 1550, the period when woodcut, engraving, and etching came into their own as artistic media-are masterpieces of printmaking.

The Metropolitan has one of the finest collections of northern Gothic and Renaissance prints in the world. Particularly strong in the works of Martin Schongauer, Dürer, and Lucas, the holdings also include a number of unique images, such as the leaf ornament by Master W with Key and Master bxg's The Lovers. Many of our finest prints entered the collection under Ivins's curatorship (1916-46) and formed the basis of the collection. An excellent group by Dürer and his school was the bequest of Junius Spencer Morgan in 1919, and aided by the Fletcher Fund, the Museum purchased the intaglio prints from Morgan's collection. In 1941 Felix M. Warburg and his family enriched the collection with some of our greatest works by Lucas and a

selection of beautiful chiaroscuro woodcuts, including Hans Baldung's Witches' Sabbath. One of our most recent important acquisitions is a rare landscape by Albrecht Altdorfer, purchased in 1993 with Elisha Whittelsey and Pfeiffer funds.

Aside from Dürer and Schongauer exhibitions in the last twenty years, much of the Museum's northern Gothic and Renaissance material has not been shown as a group since the 1950s. "The Print in the North: The Age of Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden," organized by Suzanne Boorsch, associate curator, and Nadine M. Orenstein, assistant curator, the authors of this publication, is the first at the Metropolitan to be focused entirely on Netherlandish and German prints of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Philippe de Montebello Director

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#### ON THE COVERS

Details of Melencolia I, by Albrecht Dürer (page 36), Censer, by Martin Schongauer (page 20), Witches' Sabbath, by Hans Baldung (page 34), and The Poet Virgil in a Basket, by Lucas van Leyden (page 45).



## Introduction

In June 1521, in the diary that Albrecht Dürer kept of his journey to the Netherlands from July 12, 1520, to July 15, 1521, he wrote that he had met "Master Lucas ... a little man, born in Leyden in Holland." On that day he drew Lucas's portrait in metalpoint (now in Lille, Musée des Beaux-Arts), and a few days later the two exchanged prints. This terse account is the only surviving written document of the meeting between the German artist and his younger Netherlandish counterpart, an encounter that brought together two consummate printmakers who were to leave their mark on the development of the medium in Europe for the next century.

Dürer was the first to bring together the separate traditions of woodcut and engraving, and his prints in both these media, the product of his apparently inexhaustible imagination, began to attract notice almost as soon as he started making them in the 1490s. Well before the end of the decade, with a print such as *Samson Rending the Lion*, Dürer had elevated woodcut to the level of engraving. Lines as lively and free as these, and compositions as dense and complex, had never before been executed in woodcut (see figs. 1, 2, and pages 24, 25). By 1500, with his engravings *The Prodigal Son* and, especially, some esoteric allegorical subjects, such as *The Dream of the Doctor* and *Hercules at the Crossroads*, he had established the medium as a bearer of highly sophisticated images and meanings. In 1521 Dürer was fifty, and he had created most of his more than three hundred prints (indeed, throughout his trip to the Netherlands he stayed ahead of his expenses by selling a number of them). His extraordinary production established the possibility of the print as a medium for artistic ideas in an unprecedented way.

Lucas van Leyden, close to twenty years younger than Dürer, was a prodigy who was said to have begun making prints when he was nine years old. He also was famous by 1521, and his engravings, such as the poignant *Saint Paul Led Away to Damascus* (page 32), were admired both for their unusual or unexpectedly treated subjects and for their refined, delicate style. Both artists' innovations had a striking influence on Renaissance printmaking and on subsequent developments of the medium.

Remarkably, their creative inventions were built on techniques for suggesting form and tone in a purely black-and-white medium that had only recently been invented and honed by Gothic artists such as Master ES and Martin Schongauer, who had guided the print from its roots as a comparatively coarse craft and workshop by-product to a refined and noble art. At the time of Lucas's and Dürer's meeting, printmaking had only a fifty-year history as a medium capable of producing the type of sophisticated artwork that these two men created. The intaglio processes of engraving (cutting lines into a metal plate with a sharp tool) and etching (biting lines into a metal plate with acid) developed out of the art of metalworking, which had existed for centuries. The burin, a tool used by smiths to cut designs into the surface of armor or metal vessels, was likewise used for prints. The relief process of woodcut (carving







#### FIG. I

Albrecht Dürer, Samson Rending the Lion, woodcut, detail

#### FIG. 2

### Albrecht Dürer, Samson Rending the Lion, woodblock, detail

Dürer drew on a woodblock almost as freely as on a piece of paper, and with his animated lines and rich and lively detail he brought the woodcut medium to the level of engraving. away the surface of a wooden block so that the lines to be printed stand in relief) also evolved from a long-established technique, that of printing textiles.

The progression from engraving metal objects or printing textiles to cutting plates or blocks for printing on paper must have been clear from an early date, but it would have been neither worthwhile nor profitable for a fourteenthcentury craftsman to take that step as long as paper was not available in quantity and at reasonable prices. Paper had been invented about A.D. 105 in China, but the methods for its manufacture reached Germany only during the final decade of the fourteenth century. Mills then gradually opened throughout northern Europe, and with each new mill, paper became more widely accessible as well as relatively less expensive. Thus, while the basic technology for making prints had existed for centuries, producing the same image on hundreds of sheets came into common practice in Europe only in the fifteenth century. And it was not until the final half of that century that engraving, etching, and woodcut gradually began to move from the workshops of artisans into the studios of painters, sculptors, and draftsmen.

The beginnings of printmaking's technological and artistic development can be located in the cities along the Rhine River (now in Germany, France, and The Netherlands). The many anonymous and frequently rare prints dating to the final decades of the fifteenth century testify to the step-by-step advancement of the medium—each artist's experimentation with tools and techniques led to new methods of producing more naturalistic and convincing tones and textures.

The most accomplished of the so-called first generation of printmakers,

#### FIG. 3

## Attributed to the Master of the Playing Cards, Saint Sebastian, detail

The shadow that indicates the volume of the archer's back is composed of a series of fine parallel lines; the Master of the Playing Cards and his followers used a stylus on metal, much as they might have drawn with a pen on paper, to create such gradations in tone.

#### fig. 4

#### Master ES, The Visitation, detail

Master ES made use of varied metalworker's punches and the burin to suggest three-dimensionality and texture; he employed cross-hatching here to produce dark pockets in the intricate twistings of Gothic drapery. active in the 1430s and 1440s on the Upper Rhine, is the Master of the Playing Cards, one of the first engravers to introduce tone, that is, variation in the frequency and character of lines to suggest shading and differences in hue within the black-and-white medium (see page 13). He and his followers cut into the copperplate with a sharp stylus, a tool that drew on the surface of the plate rather than carving into it, as a burin would. The parallel lines they employed for modeling forms were similar to those used in contemporary silverpoint and brush drawings rather than those found in metalwork (fig. 3).

The more complex, iconographically innovative engravings by Master ES, active about 1450–67, took the medium even further (see page 14). Probably trained as a goldsmith, as were many engravers of the period, possibly in Strasbourg or Constance, he also used a stylus to shade with parallel strokes but introduced metalworking punches for additional effects. More importantly, Master ES employed cross-hatching, which allowed him to create a more convincing appearance of three-dimensionality (fig. 4). Although he was one of the most productive printmakers of the period, his engravings are known in relatively few impressions because his lightly cut plates wore down rather quickly.

Martin Schongauer, active in the 1470s to the 1490s in Colmar, is the first German engraver whose name and biography are known. He brought the technique to a new level of sophistication, conceiving of the print as a complex and refined work of art. In its large size and varied tones and textures his *Christ Carrying the Cross* (page 17) attempts to rival painting. As a painter from a family of goldsmiths, Schongauer saw the greater pictorial potential that engraving could offer. He used carefully controlled cross-hatching to produce the darkest shadows,







#### FIG. 5 Martin Schongauer, Christ Carrying the Cross, detail

Schongauer's virtuoso engravings are puzzlelike arrangements of black and white tones; his intricate convergences of flecked lines with cross-hatching and of dark areas with light rival the complex compositions of contemporary panel paintings. variations in line, such as short flicks and long wispy strokes, and entire areas defined only by outlines to create a myriad of shades between black and white (fig. 5). In addition, his deep-cut technique allowed him to pull a larger number of strong impressions. The 116 prints in his oeuvre were in demand and highly esteemed by contemporary collectors, as is apparent from the many impressions of each print that survive, the many copies made of his work, and the quotations from his prints in painting, sculpture, and metalwork.

Israhel van Meckenem, who probably studied with Master ES and was active in the town of Bocholt on the Lower Rhine, realized printmaking's full potential as an enterprise (see pages 22–23). He bought or inherited and then reprinted the copperplates of fellow artists such as Master ES and copied the work of many others. Considered now by some to have been the greatest pirate of the fifteenth century, Israhel's contemporaries did not view him as a dishonest forger—in fact, he was highly regarded as one of the great founders of printmaking. Copying was not laden with the negative connotations it has today—prints were frequently intended to serve as models for artists, and by reproducing well-known works by Schongauer and others, Israhel was making them available to an even wider audience. He was certainly conscious of his status as an artist; he was the first to sign his full name on prints, and he did so boldly, even on his numerous copies.

At the same time that Schongauer was at work in Germany, printmakers, such as Master IAM of Zwolle and Master W with Key, were also active in the Netherlands, and each took the medium in a slightly different iconographic or technical direction (see pages 19 and 15, respectively).

Dürer, however, fundamentally changed the conception of printmaking. His father was a goldsmith, and thus Albrecht had been trained in metalworking, but because of his innate artistic gift he was apprenticed to the leading Nuremberg painter, Michael Wolgemut. Wolgemut was also a designer of woodcuts, and Dürer's godfather was Anton Koberger, the leading publisher in the German lands, so the young artist was uniquely placed to learn and work in engraving, woodcut, and painting. Without his brilliance, of course, these opportunities would have remained unfulfilled, but Dürer was the greatest artistic genius of the northern Renaissance and probably the greatest the German lands have ever produced. His decision to focus on prints more than on paintings gave extraordinary impetus to the course of printmaking.

In the early 1490s, when he was about twenty, Dürer made designs for woodcut book illustrations, both in Basel, when he traveled there in 1492, and in Nuremberg, where Koberger published the famous Nuremberg *Chronicle*, which included some designs by Dürer, in 1493. Five years later, his tumultuous *Apocalypse*—fifteen woodcuts, each about 15<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> by 11 inches, illustrating the Book of Revelation—burst upon the world with an originality and energy that carried his renown across Europe.

While on his travels as a young man, because of his admiration for Schongauer's engravings Dürer was inspired to go to Colmar, although unfortunately he arrived after Schongauer's death. But he paid homage to Schongauer's memory in his own engravings, which gained steadily in control and refinement throughout the decade. In 1504 he engraved *Adam and Eve* (page 30), which he clearly regarded as exceptional, since he signed it on a plaque hanging from a tree, with his full name, his city, and the date, in Latin, in imitation of Antonio Pollaiuolo's famous *Battle of Nude Men*. Not only was this print conceptually the first major manifestation of Dürer's lifelong study of human proportion and an encapsulation of the medieval idea of the four temperaments, but technically it marks the time when Dürer had brought the medium to a point where few further refinements were possible. In the detail shown here (fig. 6) Adam's shin and the veins of his foot, the cat's head—eyes closed but ears alertly pricked up, with the fur shorter on its face and longer above and behind—the uneven ground, and the gnarled tree are rendered using an extensive repertoire of strokes: lines of different lengths and widths, crosshatching of varying regularity, and a panoply of flecks and dots.

Dürer made paintings throughout his career, but because these were done on commission, by designing prints he could keep his autonomy and—at least in some cases—earn more money. In 1509 he wrote a well-known letter to a patron complaining about the care and time he had to put into the painting he had made for him: "Henceforth I shall stick to my engraving, and had I done so before I should today have been a richer man by 1000 florins."

Dürer's most immediate influence was on those who worked with him in Nuremberg: Hans Baldung, Hans Schaufelein, Hans Springinklee, Georg Pencz, and the brothers Sebald and Barthel Beham—the last three known as the "Little Masters" because of the small size of most of their engravings. Of the Little Masters, Pencz was the most strongly influenced by Italian art, having traveled twice to Italy (see page 53). Sebald Beham (see pages 40, 49) was highly prolific, if a less interesting artist than Barthel, who, of the three, was most influenced by Dürer, although Barthel put unusual iconographic twists on his subjects (see page 60). The Little Masters made designs for woodcuts, which, unlike their engravings, were of substantial size and were meant to be displayed on walls. Because of this use, unfortunately, far fewer large prints have survived.



#### FIG. 6 Albrecht Dürer, Adam and Eve, detail

Dürer varied his burin strokes in width, length, direction, and density to render the wide range of diverse textures in Adam's foot and shin, a cat's head, trees, grass, and forest ground.





#### FIGS. 7, 8 Hans Burgkmair, *Lovers Surprised by Death*, details of two different impressions

Three separate blocks were printed sequentially to create the image, which is found in a number of color variations, each with two tones close in range. For both these impressions the lighter tone was printed first, then the darker, and finally the black line block. In the German-speaking areas art was produced in prosperous commercial cities like Nuremberg, publishing centers such as Strasbourg and Basel, and the imperial city of Augsburg, where the council of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I met. Artists needed patronage, which could be had only in places of culture and wealth. No one made a living by printmaking; Dürer came closest—his prints sold across Germany and the Netherlands as well as in Italy and France—but he also produced paintings, and he needed his imperial stipend. In fact, his trip to the Netherlands in 1520–21 was made in order to petition Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor after Maximilian's death in 1519, to continue paying it.

Baldung, after spending some time in Nuremberg in his youth, returned to Strasbourg, near his birthplace. There he prospered as a painter and as a designer of book illustrations and stained glass. Baldung was an early and immensely effective practitioner of the technique of chiaroscuro woodcut, a major innovation in printmaking that began about 1508 or 1509 (see page 34). Another Strasbourg artist, Hans Wechtlin, also made chiaroscuro woodcuts (see page 34), by far his most interesting work. Basel was also a major publishing center, where Hans Holbein contributed hundreds of designs for book illustrations, although the examples included here (page 48) were finally produced in the nearby French city of Lyons.

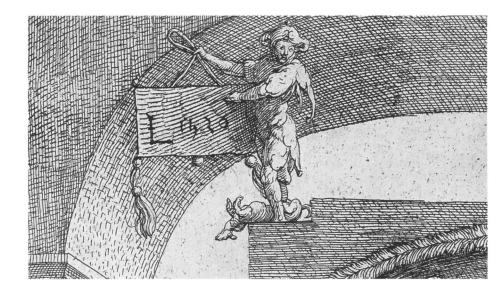
Augsburg, the location of the court of Emperor Maximilian I and the Fugger banking family, one of the richest in Europe, had long been a center for the armor industry and by extension other metalworking trades. Daniel Hopfer, an armorer who worked in Augsburg, was the first to use the technique of etching on a metal plate to create images to be printed on paper, although the iron plates he used had the serious drawback of being susceptible to rust (see page 31).

Maximilian, more than any ruler before or since, based his artistic patronage on printmaking, commissioning multiblock woodcuts of a Triumphal Arch—the decoration of which was overseen by Dürer—and a Triumphal Procession, a lavishly ornamented prayer book, and numerous allegorical books representing him in the guise of various heroes, to carry his glory to posterity. The Triumphal Arch, the only one of these projects to be completed in Maximilian's lifetime, consists of 192 blocks and when put together measures nearly twelve by ten feet. For the Triumphal Procession, designed and carried out by numerous artists, 139 blocks were completed; if assembled, these would stretch fifty yards in length. Maximilian's decision to entrust his fame to monuments on paper was forced by his relative lack of funds, but it was not foolish: ironically perhaps, a large percentage of the more substantial—and more expensive—paintings or sculpture commissioned by other rulers has been destroyed, whereas the works glorifying Maximilian are known to this day.

Hans Burgkmair was Maximilian's chief artist, and between about 1508 and 1519 he designed hundreds of images for the emperor's projects. About 1508 he and Lucas Cranach began to print in color. Their earliest experiments involved hand-colored paper, a line block printed in black, and tonal areas using silver or gold leaf or inks. When such experiments were subsidized by the emperor or the elector of Saxony at Wittenberg, for whom Cranach worked, these materials could be afforded, but a less expensive and less time-consuming method was necessary before the medium could be made available to a larger audience. A system soon evolved of using a black line block and one or two tone blocks in color (see figs. 7, 8, and pages 33, 34).

Chiaroscuros were not Cranach's first prints. Near the turn of the century, before he had entered the service of the elector of Saxony, he made a few large woodcuts, which are masterpieces of expressive power (see pages 27, 28). Cranach had a strong influence on the artists of the Danube school, whose work was characterized by an interest in nature not manifested by the other artists under discussion here. Albrecht Altdorfer, the chief proponent of that school, lived and worked in Regensburg, receiving commissions from Duke Wilhelm IV of Bavaria, in Munich, and also from Maximilian. Altdorfer's etched landscapes (see page 41) are the earliest prints to treat this subject, and one of his etchings is also the only visual record of the Regensburg synagogue, which was destroyed in 1519 (page 38). The large woodcut by Michael Ostendorfer, another Regensburg artist, represents the model for the new church that was built on the site of the synagogue (page 39).

The Netherlands did not begin to play host to a large number of active and original printmakers until the 1520s. Patronage from Maximilian and his successor, Charles V, and Charles's family was as important for Netherlandish artists as it was for those in the German lands. These artists worked relatively independently of one another, however, in widespread cities such as Leiden, Amsterdam, Utrecht, Liège, Mechelen, and, most importantly, Antwerp. Despite the rather diffuse working environments of the Netherlands, the prints produced there during the 1520s to 1550s share a delicacy of line and tone and a mannered rendering of the human figure very different from the bold contrasting of darks and lights and the straightforward delineation of forms more typical of contemporary German works. This distinction can already be found in the late fifteenth century among the Netherlandish prints by artists such as Master IAM of Zwolle (see page 19), whose subtle shifts of hue within a limited range of grays make Schongauer's sudden jumps from areas of black to white seem almost brash.



The most innovative Netherlandish engraver of this period, both iconographically and technically, was Lucas van Leyden, who was, as his name suggests, active primarily in the Dutch city of Leiden. Inspired by masters such as Schongauer and Dürer, he looked at the latter's work as a particular challenge; he often quoted motifs from Dürer, assimilating them into his own stylistic idiom. In his late engravings Lucas tried to surpass Italian models in much the same way. His inventive and audacious spirit extended to reconceiving traditional religious and mythological subjects. He turned certain common themes inside out by relegating the main activity to the background and filling the foreground with a crowd of varied and exotic onlookers, as in his engraving The Poet Virgil in a Basket (page 45). Such compositional devices were highly regarded by northern artists throughout the next century, most notably Rembrandt van Rijn. Lucas was also the first to etch on copper rather than on iron plates, which allowed him to create a single print employing freely drawn etched lines and sharp, controlled engraved ones. This technique also permitted quick last-minute additions with the engraving tool. Iron plates, which were etched by artists such as Hopfer, Dürer, and Altdorfer, had often yielded unsatisfactory results-the metal was much too hard for engraving and rusted rather quickly. In his portrait of Maximilian (page 40), Lucas was able to combine for the first time the precision of engraving with the freedom of draftsmanship that etching allowed (fig. 9).

The most important printmaking city in the Low Countries was the shipping port of Antwerp, a center for trade of goods from around the world. In the 1550s the city would come to dominate the European market for prints. By the 1520s Antwerp already hosted many engravers and woodcutters and a large number of painters and draftsmen, who also created designs for prints. Among the earliest Antwerp artists to produce intaglio prints was Dirk Vellert, a designer and painter of stained glass. Between 1522 and 1526 he made nineteen meticulous compositions, each inscribed with the precise date, with the result that his development can be traced practically from month to month. Unlike Lucas, Vellert made undifferentiated use of the varying qualities of etched and engraved lines—they fill the entire space but take second place to the ornamentation and complex poses of the figures adopted from Italian art. His greatest

#### FIG. 9 Lucas van Leyden, *Emperor Maximilian I*, detail

The animated lines of this jester and the playful dog displaying the artist's monogram were created with etching, which allowed him freedom of draftsmanship. He reserved the controlled handling afforded by engraving in this print for a precise rendering of Maximilian's face. work, the densely packed *Deluge* (page 56), almost a catalogue of classically inspired figural poses, was created some twenty years after all his other prints.

Although the artists of the Low Countries were not as innovative in the woodcut medium as the Germans—Netherlanders tended to favor handpainted impressions over chiaroscuro prints, for example—they produced some of this period's great woodcuts, such as Pieter Coecke van Aelst's *Customs and Fashions of the Turks* (see pages 50–51) and *The Deluge* by Jan van Scorel (page 46). One of the most important figures for the print market in the Netherlands at this time was the woodcutter and publisher Hans Liefrinck, whose artistic input is often mentioned only secondarily. A Netherlander who went to Augsburg to work for Maximilian, Liefrinck returned to Antwerp about 1528 to set up a business. His shop printed and probably also carved many of the important woodcuts of this period, such as Jan Swart van Groningen's series *Süleyman and His Cortege* (see page 47), which was printed by Liefrinck.

Many artists were attracted to the Netherlandish city of Mechelen by the promise of patronage from the court of Margaret of Austria, Maximilian's daughter, who became regent of the Netherlands in 1507, or her successor, Mary of Hungary, the sister of Charles V, regent between 1531 and 1552. Some of the more unusual Mannerist printmakers of this period worked in Mechelen, among them the Munich-born Nikolaus Hogenberg and the Mechelen native Frans Crabbe (see pages 44 and 43, respectively). Their peculiar and closely related styles of etching, engraving, and woodcut were steeped in the tradition of Gothic imagery and the preciosity of its forms but were injected with novel Italianate and classical motifs.

Jan Vermeyen painted in Mechelen from about 1525 to 1530 but did not take up printmaking until a decade later, following his travels to Tunisia, Italy, and Spain in the service of Charles V. Vermeyen's idiosyncratic etchings depict exceptional secular subjects, for instance the portrait of a woman holding a cat,



FIG. 10 Lambert Suavius, The Raising of Lazarus, detail

Suavius engraved with a diamond point to produce the subtle shifts of light and dark on his highly sculptural figures; this unusual tool enabled him to define shading with dense networks of exceptionally fine hatching. or the essentially documentary images of monuments (see pages 56 and 55, respectively) or exotic peoples from his far-reaching travels, which reflect the intense fascination that Eastern subjects held for artists of this period. His work is dominated by large, highly sculptural figures and striking lighting effects that emphasize every wrinkle of skin and fold of drapery. His calm and even style of etching with parallel hatching has much the quality of drawing.

A harbinger of the next phase in the history of northern prints can be found in the work of Lambert Suavius (see page 57), who was active at about the same time as Vermeyen in Liège. Trained as a goldsmith, Suavius created engravings distinguished by smooth, shimmering surfaces composed of extraordinarily fine fields of hatching (fig. 10). He is said to have achieved this delicate effect with a diamond point instead of a burin. He looked to the classically inspired work of his close associate Lambert Lombard, whose designs he reproduced in print. Suavius adopted a similar taste for Italianate and classical models in his own compositions, directed at a humanist audience, which feature friezelike arrangements of elegant figures draped in clinging togas, usually accompanied by lengthy inscribed verses—features more typical of the next generation of prints.

The field of printmaking underwent a marked change in the Netherlands and Germany about 1550. Methods of engraving, etching, and woodcut had by then become regularized, and it was precisely the success of the medium that constricted the flourishing of technical artistry that characterized its previous hundred years. The original but unreliable techniques of artists such as Vermeyen and Suavius gave way to more standardized methods that would yield larger editions. Such changes responded to the demands of print publishers such as Liefrinck, Hieronymus Cock, and Gerard de Jode, who began to dominate not only local but international markets. They commissioned more and more reproductive prints (those by one artist after the works of another); they hired draftsmen to make designs and brought engravers into their service as skilled cutters. The Reformation, which first swept through many German cities during the 1520s, also contributed to the end of the preceding fertile period in the development of printmaking. The iconoclastic policies of the reformers were hostile to any form of religious art, and the conflict funneled many artists into the production of propaganda for the opposing sides. The medium of woodcut, which had seen so many bold innovations in color printing during the previous decades, was increasingly relegated to the production of somewhat coarse popular material, such as political and religious broadsheets. The patronage of prints, once centered in courts such as that of Emperor Maximilian, became the province of a private humanist clientele. A new era in the history of printmaking was unfolding in which artistic genius and innovative spirit were directed more than before toward iconographic and market concerns. Less essential would be the technical brilliance and virtuoso handling of artists such as Schongauer, Dürer, Altdorfer, and Lucas, who had elevated printmaking from a craft to an art.

> Suzanne Boorsch Nadine M. Orenstein

# Selected Prínts

#### Attributed to the Master of the Playing Cards

German, act. ca. 1425–50. Saint Sebastian, ca. 1440(?). Engraving, first state, sheet  $5\frac{5}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$  in. (14.3 × 20.9 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1934 34.38.1

This lively and finely printed engraving, one of only two known early impressions, has traditionally been assigned to the Master of the Playing Cards, an anonymous artist probably active in Alsace. The rather unstable poses and the muddled formation of the small hill on the left have led some recent scholars to call the attribution into question, yet the overall polished technique and details such as the naturalistic rendering of the saint's chest suggest that the engraver, if not the Master himself, was certainly an accomplished artist closely familiar with his work. As in the Master's more securely attributed prints, the technique

approaches that found in contemporary drawings—strongly outlined forms modeled with extremely fine parallel strokes. These thin, sharp, and slightly fuzzy lines were probably created with a drypoint stylus rather than a burin, the tool more typically associated with engraving, which produces slightly broader and more tapered lines. Saint Sebastian, a frequent subject of prints from this period, was regarded as one of the main guardian saints against the plague. NMO





#### **Master ES**

German, act. ca. 1450–67. *The Visitation,* ca. 1450. Engraving, sheet  $6\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{5}{8}$  in. (15.5 × 11.9 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1922 22.83.2

Almost nothing is known about the life of Master ES, the first printmaker to initial his plates and one of the most prolific and varied engravers of his day. It is thought that he was Swiss or south German in origin and was active in the Upper Rhine region. *The Visitation* is the earliest of three engravings of the subject that he produced between about 1450 and 1460. In this version, set in an expansive landscape, the forms are angular and the modeling is spare. He combined both the fine parallel hatching characteristic of earlier engravers, such as the Master of the Playing Cards (page 13), and the more novel technique of crosshatching to create a sculptural sense of volume, particularly evident in the Virgin's cloak. Master ES is considered to have based this version on a now-lost painting, because in traditional representations of the subject the positions of the Virgin and Saint Elizabeth are reversed. NMO

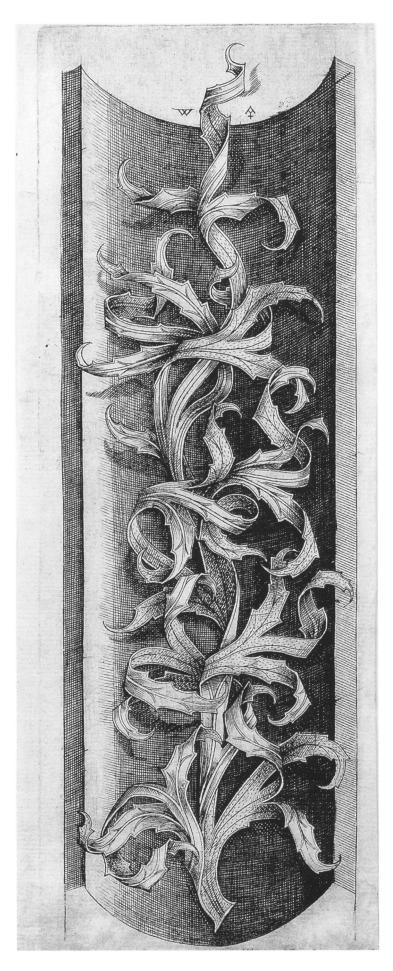
#### Master ES

German, act. ca. 1450–67. *The Knight and the Lady,* ca. 1460. Engraving, sheet  $6^{3}/_{8} \times 5^{1}/_{16}$  in. (16.3 × 12.9 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1922 22.83.15

Master ES was one of the most iconographically varied printmakers of his day and was particularly innovative in his depictions of love imagery. The engraving has been explained by some as a lady bidding farewell to her knight, the ostrich feather in his helmet seen as a farewell token, a sign of steadfastness. It is more likely, however, that the couple, arranged in a commanding X-shaped composition, symbolically declare their betrothal. In this representation of chivalric courtship, each holds something belonging to the other: the woman carries the knight's lance and helmet, and he in turn places his foot under her dress and grabs the lap area of her skirt, a demonstration of sexual proprietorship. In this context the feather in his helmet can more likely be read as denoting his availability in love; in a continuation of this scene she would probably pluck the feather from his helmet, making it clear that he is no longer free.

Master ES, most likely trained as a goldsmith, often used a goldsmith's punch in his engravings, in this case to make the little circles on the fluttering drapery and the shield. The flowers and the lips of the figures in this impression have been colored in red, and a Latin inscription was written in ink below; such additions were typically made by contemporaneous collectors. NMO





#### Master W with Key

Netherlandish, act. ca. 1465–90. *Foliate Ornament,* ca. 1470. Engraving, sheet  $11\frac{1}{2}$ ×  $4\frac{1}{4}$  in. (29.2 × 10.6 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1929 29.16.1

This Gothic leaf design, known only in this impression, is the Master's most beautiful and monumental ornament print. More than half of the eighty-two engravings by this anonymous artist, presumed to have been active as a goldsmith in Bruges, represent designs for objects and constructions-Gothic chapels, ornate vessels, altarpiece frames, and saints set within elaborate architecture. Certainly many of the artist's prints were intended to serve as models for fellow artists and artisans, but, whereas some of his creations seem quite practical, others, like this one, appear to have been rather whimsical inventions. Master W with Key was unusually naturalistic in this delineation of a twisting, thistlelike leaf, so characteristic of Gothic decoration. He treated the sprig almost as though it were a saint standing in a niche, placing it, strongly lit, within a simple hollow and gently suggesting the shadow cast by the plant on the background. имо





#### opposite

**Martin Schongauer** 

German, ca. 1445–1491. Saint Anthony Tormented by Demons, ca. 1470–75. Engraving, first state of two, sheet  $11\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{5}{8}$  in. (29.1 × 22 cm). Rogers Fund, 1920 20.5.2

Saint Anthony serenely gazes out at the viewer as frenzied demons grab at his limbs, clothes, and hair and pound him with sticks. Schongauer depicted these imagined creatures in a remarkably convincing way. His realistic description of their scales and fur point to his direct observation of animals, yet he compiled these naturalistic details to produce some of the most fantastic and grotesque fabrications in the history of printmaking. Although this is one of Schongauer's earliest prints, it was probably his most influential: Vasari recounted that even Michelangelo made a color drawing of the work at the age of thirteen.

The creation of this image of Saint Anthony probably coincided with Schongauer's early work for the Antonite order in Isenheim, Germany. The artist's monogram normally displays the *M* with vertical outer lines that is typically found in works thought to date to his early period. In the case of this impression, in which the printed monogram has been trimmed off, an unwitting restorer mistakenly added by hand a version of the *M* with slanted outer lines characteristic of Schongauer's late work. NMO

#### Martin Schongauer

German, ca. 1445–1491. *Christ Carrying the Cross,* ca. 1475–80. Engraving, sheet  $11^{3}/_{8} \times 16^{7}/_{8}$  in. (28.8 × 43 cm). The Sylmaris Collection, Gift of George Coe Graves, by exchange, 1935 35.27

The largest and most painterly of Schongauer's prints, *Christ Carrying* 

the Cross is his masterpiece. This engraving depicting Christ's procession to Golgotha is the artist's most visually complex. He created a spectrum of tones from white to gray to black by altering the density of the hatching. Throughout the print he masterfully offset light and dark areas, placing, for example, the fully shaded figures on the right against a landscape delineated only by outlines and doing almost the reverse with the boy in the lower left, situated in front of an area of shadowed ground. Schongauer was inspired by a now-lost painting of the subject by Jan van Eyck, known only through copies, and similarly created an image packed with lively characterizations of exotic figures and incidental detail. Yet he pushed the entire procession to the foreground and, as in devotional icons, he turned Christ's head to confront the viewer, emphasizing man's identification with Christ's suffering. имо



#### Master bxg

German(?), act. ca. 1470–90. *The Lovers*, ca. 1480(?). Engraving, sheet  $7 \times 6^{1/4}$  in. (17.8 × 15.9 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1934 34.38.6

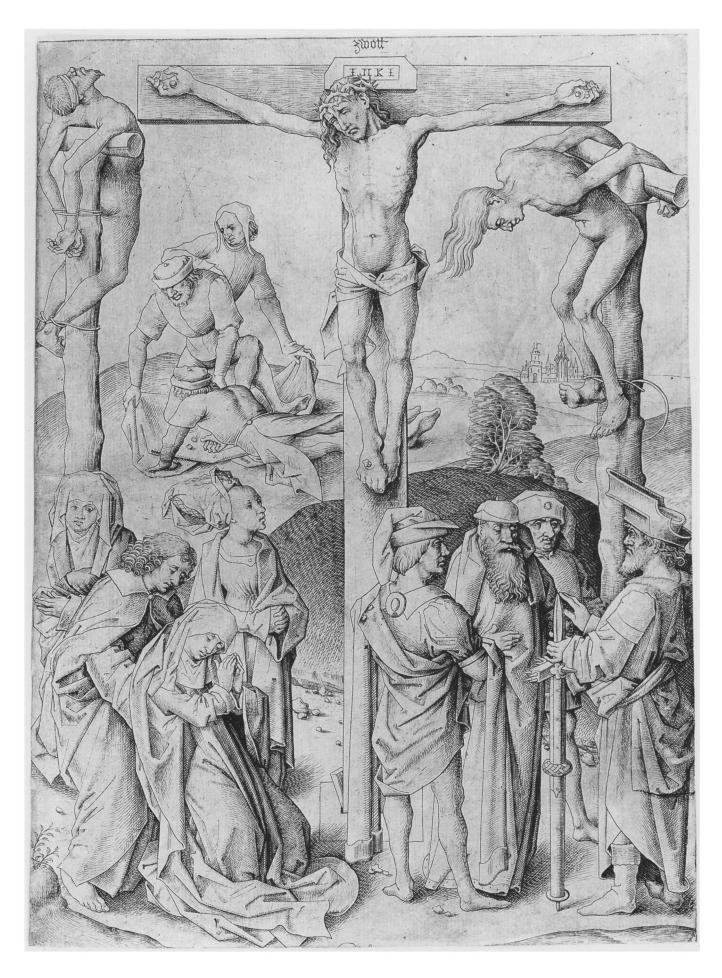
A woman looks knowingly out of the picture frame, offering no resistance to the man, who embraces her and slips his hand into the bodice of her dress. This is the only surviving impression of Master bxg's *Lovers*, the largest and most impressive engraving by this anonymous artist, who is thought to have been active in Frankfurt and was probably trained as a goldsmith.

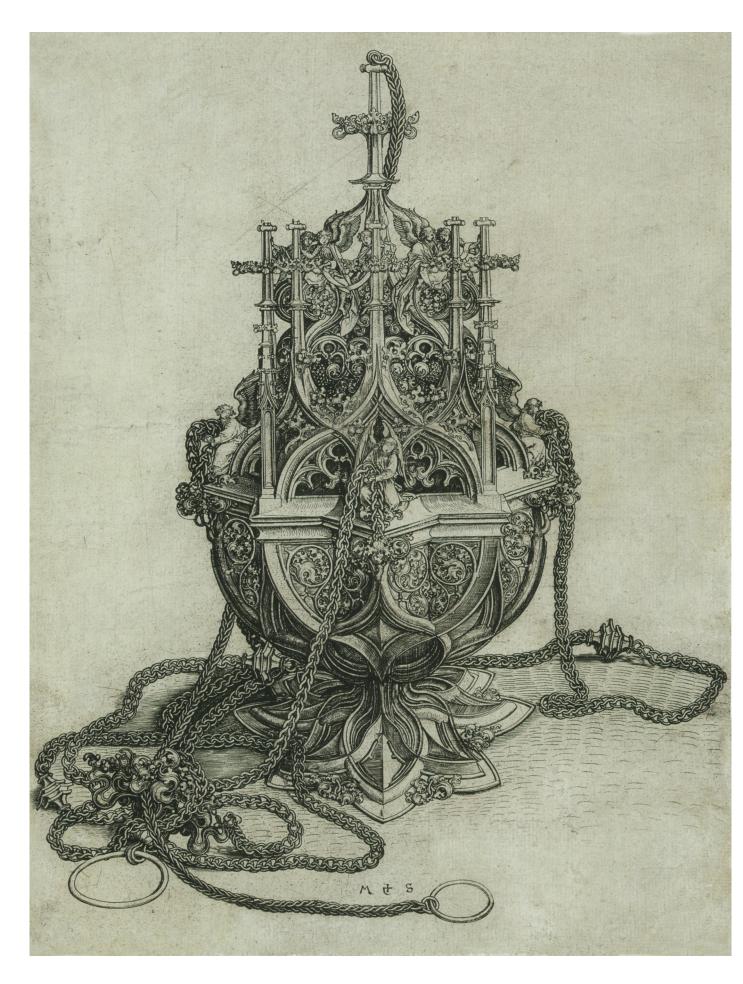
Despite their courtly attire, this couple is far from symbolizing a virtuous ideal of chivalric love such as that depicted by Master ES (page 14). They represent, rather, a related facet of the pictorial tradition of love imagery; the sin of lust was often shown in this period as an amorous courtly couple. Yet the Master has left the moralizing point of this image intentionally ambiguous: the large figures that burst forth from the picture frame engage the viewer, but do they warn against the temptations of lust, or is the woman's glance supposed to entice? NMO

#### Master IAM of Zwolle

Netherlandish, act. ca. 1470–95. *The Crucifixion,* ca. 1480. Engraving, sheet  $11^{3/4} \times 8^{3/8}$  in. (29.8 × 21.2 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1926 26.64.3

Master IAM produced delicate printed effects with a fine and careful engraving line; he created subtly shifting shadows to mold the body of Christ and the two thieves and to set off the standing figures in the lower right by placing a dark, curving mound behind them. Despite this rather tonal approach—associated with painters rather than goldsmiths, who tend to work in a more linear fashion—the anonymous Master IAM from the Dutch town of Zwolle is thought to have been active as a metalworker, since he frequently added a small rendition of a goldsmith's drill to his monogram (clipped from the bottom of this impression). One of two distinct versions of The Crucifixion by Master IAM, this engraving is considered an early work because of his reliance on contemporary southern Netherlandish painting for the group of Mary and Saint John, inspired by the work of Rogier van der Weyden, and the figure of the Bad Thief, taken from that of the Master of Flémalle. ммо









#### opposite Martin Schongauer

German, ca. 1445–1491. *Censer,* ca. 1480–85. Engraving, sheet  $10^{3/4} \times 8^{1/8}$  in. (27.3 × 20.7 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1926 26.41

With a masterful handling of the fall of light, Schongauer gave this censer a degree of physical presence entirely new to engraving of this period. Light emanates from an unseen source on the right; the shadow it creates on the left provides the only clue to the presence of the flat surface on which the object rests. The intricate intertwining of Gothic leaf patterns reveals Schongauer's technical perfection. Details, such as the chains that fall in an artful arrangement around the base, attached to the body of the censer by the open-armed grasp of tiny angels, illustrate the artist's visual inventiveness. Was this created as a model for goldsmiths, as many such object prints were at that time, or is it a reproduction of an actual piece of gold work? This as-yet-unanswered question, the subject of much scholarly debate, indicates the unique nature of Schongauer's depiction. NMO

#### **Martin Schongauer**

German, ca. 1445–1491. *The Angel Gabriel* and *The Virgin*, ca. 1490(?). Engravings, sheet (.1)  $6^{3/4} \times 4^{3/4}$  in. (17 × 12 cm); (.2)  $6^{3/4} \times 4^{3/4}$  in. (17 × 11.9 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1934 34.94.1,.2

Schongauer chose to represent the Annunciation in a diptych, a format typical of painted altarpieces but unusual for engravings. The figures are posed against a minimally defined background, an abstract space that serves to monumentalize them. Each is accompanied by only the most limited attributes: the archangel Gabriel holds a scepter with an empty banderole that flutters around it and the Virgin stands beside a vase that contains a large lily. The presentation of the image on separate sheets of paper points to Schongauer's inspiration from his own early work, two painted panels representing the Annunciation in the Orlier altarpiece (Musée d'Unterlinden, Colmar, France). Yet the weightiness of the figures under their animated drapery, their realistic situation in space, and the clear sense of inner emotion suggest that within the much-disputed chronology of Schongauer's prints, this pair should be placed among the artist's more mature works. ммо



#### Israhel van Meckenem

German, act. ca. 1457–95. *Hares Roasting the Hunter*. Engraving, sheet  $1^{3}/_{4} \times 9^{3}/_{4}$  in. (4.3 × 24.8 cm). Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1917 17.50.635

Fifteenth-century prints did not depict exclusively serious subject matter. This playful ornamental frieze shows hares taking their revenge on a hunter. The bound human is being roasted on a spit, eagerly turned by a hare on either side. His hounds are being boiled in nearby pots, while a hare on the left returns from the hunt with another hound slung over its back. Lively curling vines weaving in and out among the "characters" add to the lighthearted animation of this narrow print. This humorous scene belongs to the popular medieval tradition known as "the world turned upside down," in which the normal order of things is reversed. Israhel probably used an earlier illuminated manuscript as the source for this small image, but, as an engraving, his depiction was made available to a wider audience. Indeed, it was copied by a number of subsequent printmakers as well as by several manuscript illuminators for use as marginalia. NMO

#### Israhel van Meckenem

German, act. ca. 1457–95. Lute Player and Harpist, from Scenes from Daily Life, ca. 1490–95. Engraving, first state of two, sheet  $6^{1/4} \times 4^{1/4}$  in. (15.9 × 10.9 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1927 27.5.2

The delicate engraving of a couple playing music belongs to one of Israhel's most original and intriguing works, a group of twelve prints showing couples in apparent scenes of daily life, datable to near the end of the artist's career. The series depicts lovers and married couples from various classes, each in a different attitude of love. Obvious erotic symbolism appears in several of the prints, whereas the meaning in others is more ambiguous. Here a couple in courtly dress, archaic even in Israhel's time, accompany each other on the harp and lute. Their old-fashioned clothing may have signaled to a contemporary viewer that an allegorical or a moralistic meaning was intended. Music-making couples often symbolized harmony in love and marriage, yet in this case the objects placed deliberately in front of the figures suggest a further sexual aspect to the scene. On the ground before the woman lies a closed coffer, and an open lute case sits by the feet of the man. These unassuming items would have been understood by the artist's contemporaries as visual puns referring to the woman's virginity and the man's lustful intentions toward her. ммо





#### Albrecht Dürer

German, 1471–1528. Samson Rending the Lion, ca. 1497–98. Woodcut, sheet  $16 \times 11^{7/8}$  in. (40.6 × 30.2 cm). Gift of Georgiana W. Sargent, in memory of John Osborne Sargent, 1924 24.63.111

Dürer elevated the medium of woodcut to an unprecedented level of technical virtuosity. In Samson Rending the Lion he achieved striking pictorial effects that vie with those created in contemporary engravings. Remarkable gradations of tone were realized in the lion's mane-all the more amazing if one considers that each tapered black line in the print was formed in the woodblock by chipping away the wood on either side of the intended line. Such expert and self-assured handling is particularly characteristic of Dürer's early woodcuts, dating to the 1490s. A print engraved about twenty years earlier by Israhel van Meckenem served as the source for Dürer's powerful depiction of the Old Testament hero, who here sits on the lion's back, one foot pressed into its neck as he forces open its mouth. ммо



#### Albrecht Dürer

German, 1471–1528. *Woodblock for "Samson Rending the Lion,"* ca. 1497–98. Pearwood, 15<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 11 in. (39 × 28 cm). Gift of Junius S. Morgan, 1919 19.73.255

Whether Dürer cut his own woodblocks or drew the design on the block and commissioned a highly skilled woodcutter to do the actual carving remains an open question. The unparalleled subtlety with which the image was chiseled into the surface has been used as evidence both for and against Dürer's participation. The intricacies involved in shaping the patterns of curving and tapering lines in order to create pictorial effects never before achieved in woodcut must certainly have required Dürer's close supervision if not his hand on the knife. The block, still in use more than a century after the artist's death, was recut in places to strengthen the image, which had begun to wear away. This is one of two Dürer blocks in the Metropolitan Museum's collection. NMO



#### Albrecht Dürer

German, 1471–1528. The Whore of Babylon, from The Apocalypse, 1498. Woodcut, sheet  $15^{5/8} \times 11^{1/4}$  in. (39.5 × 28.6 cm). Rogers Fund, 1918 18.65.8

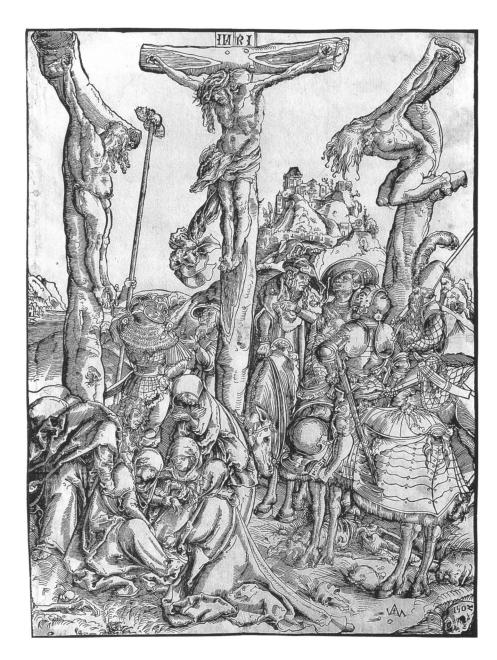
By 1498 Dürer had published more than two dozen prints, which brought him to the attention of artists and connoisseurs not only in his native Nuremberg and other German-speaking areas but also across the Alps in Italy. It was the prodigious woodcuts of The Apocalypse, however, published in 1498, that made him enormously famous. There was a long tradition of Apocalypse illustrations in manuscripts, which continued in printed books, so images to accompany the startling words of the Book of Revelation were familiar, but nothing like Dürer's galvanizing imagination had ever been brought to bear on the text. In previous printed Bibles, illustrations had been put on pages along with the words, but Dürer gave precedence to the image, taking the entire large page of what he himself called a "superbook" for each of his fifteen subjects. These unforgettable compositions are coherent and yet brimming with imaginative detail.

The text of Revelation reads: "And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of names of blasphemy with seven heads and ten horns. The woman was garbed in purple and scarlet, and gilded with gold, gems, and pearls, and bearing a golden goblet in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (17:3,4). Babylon burns with huge explosions of flame and smoke in the distance, and from the upper left come the armies of heaven, led by the knight Faithful-and-True. sb

#### Lucas Cranach the Elder

German, 1472–1553. *Calvary,* dated 1502. Woodcut, sheet  $16^{1/8} \times 11^{1/2}$  in. (40.8 × 29.3 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1927 27.54.2

Cranach's earliest prints were made in the first years of the sixteenth century in Vienna—an unlikely location, as no other printing activity is known to have taken place there at that time. Apparently, few impressions were pulled from these blocks, for this is one of only two known to survive of *Calvary*, and the *Agony in the Garden* (see page 28) is unique. The halfdozen woodcuts of these years are Cranach's most personal and expressive. The turbulent emotion of the death of Christ on the cross is expressed in this image through the unrealistic swooping, curved forms: the bunched cloth that falls down from Christ's side swings away from the cross; the figure of the Bad Thief is bent and forsaken, his cross almost curling down over his body to keep it in this degraded position. The group of mourners around the Virgin at lower left curves inward, too, with the weight of grief, while the mountain in the background juts upward as though thrust by a supernatural force. sB







#### Lucas Cranach the Elder

German, 1472–1553. *The Agony in the Garden*, 1502–3. Woodcut, sheet  $15^{3}/_{8} \times 11^{1}/_{8}$  in. (39 × 28.2 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1927 27.54.3

This impression of *The Agony in the Garden* is the only one known. In Cranach's composition the roiling rocks and vegetation add to the emotional agitation of the moment when Christ—shown with his mouth open to speak and his arms flung wide—cries out to God, "Father, if it be thy will, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). Although the cup of which Christ speaks is metaphorical, by the Renaissance this scene was often depicted including an angel holding the cup of the Eucharist; here a young angel perched on the steep hill above Christ solemnly proffers both the wafer and the cup. The disciples Peter, James, and John are asleep at the foot of the mountain, and in the background the soldiers of Pontius Pilate, led by Judas, are arriving to take Christ to judgment.

As is characteristic of works of the Danube school, the figures are rendered almost as part of the landscape, and the humans as well as the elements of nature are seen as subject to universal cosmic forces. sB

#### Master MZ

German(?), act. ca. 1500. *The Embrace*, 1503. Engraving, sheet  $6^{1/4} \times 4^{3/4}$  in. (15.7 × 11.9 cm). Gift of Felix M. Warburg and his family, 1941 41.1.173

In this enigmatic depiction, the artist's last dated print, a couple embraces in a well-appointed interior. The fine engraving technique and the elongated figures in a slightly skewed setting are characteristic of the idiosyncratic work of Master MZ, who may have been the Munich goldsmith Martin Zasinger (act. 1505ca. 1555). We can see only the man's back, whereas the woman faces us, glancing out of the image from the corner of her eye with an unenthusiastic expression. Who are these people? Are they having an illicit rendezvous, or is this a depiction of a nobleman embracing a courtesan? Was this scene meant to pass on some moralizing message to the beholder? The objects in the room-the chandelier in the shape of a woman holding antlers, often a symbol of cuckoldry, and the mirror, frequently denoting vanity-give the viewer only tantalizingly unspecific clues. Master MZ has left the meaning of this unusual moment open to the viewer's speculation. NMO



#### Albrecht Dürer

German, 1471–1528. Adam and Eve, 1504. Engraving, fourth state of five, plate  $9^{7}/_{8} \times 7^{7}/_{8}$  in. (24.9 × 19.5 cm). Fletcher Fund, 1919 19.73.1

Throughout his life Dürer was in thrall to the idea that the perfect human form corresponded to a system of proportion and measurements and could be generated by using such a system. Near the end of his life he wrote several books codifying his theories: the *Underweysung der Messung* (Manual of measurement), published in 1525, and *Vier Bücher von menschlichen Proportion* (Four books of human proportion), published in 1528, just after his death.

Dürer's fascination with ideal form is manifest in *Adam and Eve*. The first man and woman are shown in nearly symmetrical idealized poses, each with the weight on one leg, the other bent, and each with one arm angled slightly upward from the elbow and somewhat away from the body. The figure of Adam is reminiscent of the Hellenistic Apollo Belvedere, excavated in Italy late in the fifteenth century. The first engravings of the sculpture were not made until well after 1504, but Dürer must have seen a drawing of it.

Dürer was a complete master of engraving by 1504: human and snake skin, animal fur, and tree bark and leaves are rendered distinctively. The branch Adam holds is of the mountain ash, the Tree of Life, while the fig, of which Eve has broken off a branch, is the forbidden Tree of Knowledge. Four of the animals represent the medieval idea of the four temperaments—the cat is choleric, the rabbit sanguine, the ox phlegmatic, and the elk melancholic. Ten years after producing this image Dürer would personify Melancholy in the print that is his masterpiece in engraving (see page 36). SB

#### Daniel Hopfer

German, ca. 1470–1536. **Death and the Devil Surprising Two Women**, 1500–10(?). Etching, first state of two, plate  $6^{1/4} \times 9$ in. (15.7 × 22.6 cm). The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1951 51.501.383

Hopfer, a contemporary of Dürer and Cranach, worked in the imperial city of Augsburg, where he may have gone

initially because of his profession as an armorer. Hopfer was the first to etch designs onto plates to make printed images. His plates, however, were of iron rather than copper, and the hardness of the iron gives the image a rougher look than etchings on copper (see, for instance, Lucas van Leyden, Emperor Maximilian I, page 40). In some of his earliest etchings, made about 1500, Hopfer practiced a method of tonal printing, creating distinctive effects with black fields of a continuous film of ink, articulated by white lines, as seen in the figure of the devil at the right; his later works use this effect less as it fell from fashion.

Hopfer has chosen the subject, common at the time, of Death's unexpected arrival (see also pages 33, 48): two women catch sight of the skull held above and behind their heads as they look in a mirror. Several of the elements of this image became standard in the *vanitas* depictions made later in the sixteenth century and, especially, in the seventeenth: on the one hand the accoutrements of bodily vanity—the mirror and the cosmetics in front of the women—and on the other the memento mori of the skull and the hourglass. sB



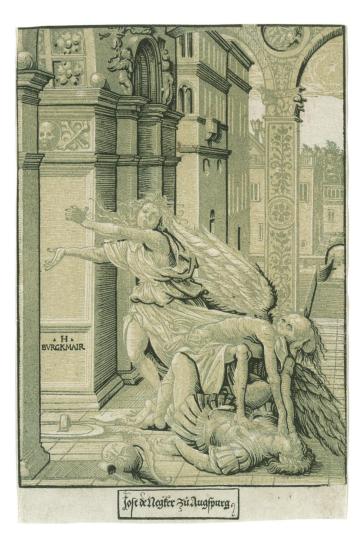
#### Lucas van Leyden

Netherlandish, 1494–1533. Saint Paul Led Away to Damascus, 1509. Engraving, sheet  $11\frac{1}{8} \times 16$  in. (28.3 × 40.7 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1934 34.94.4

In a tiny vignette in the left background Lucas depicted the dramatic moment when Saul of Tarsus (Saint Paul), on a journey to Damascus to arrest the followers of Christ, is confronted by God, who strikes him blind. In this extraordinary print the artist chose to focus on a less traditional but more emotionally poignant and human aspect of the story. Saul, now blind, is shown in the foreground, his head bowed as he continues on his way to Damascus, helplessly leaning against his companions for guidance.

The busy horizontal procession, in front of a peculiar rocky outcropping and under a partially defined sky, full of exotic gesticulating figures who animatedly discuss the event, indicates Lucas's familiarity with Martin Schongauer's engraving *Christ Carrying the Cross* (page 17). Yet, in contrast to Schongauer's work of about three decades earlier, Lucas invites viewers into the composition rather than confronting them with it. In addition, his style is marked by a shallow engraving line, which, when printed, produces an overall soft, atmospheric, and flowing tone. NMO







#### Hans Burgkmair

German, 1473–1531. *Lovers Surprised by Death*, 1510. Chiaroscuro woodcut in three blocks, printed in light olive, dark olive, and black; sheet  $9 \times 6$  in. (22.9 × 15.1 cm). Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1917 17.50.39

*Lovers Surprised by Death*, 1510. Chiaroscuro woodcut in three blocks, printed in light brown, medium brown, and black; sheet  $9^{1/8} \times 6^{1/8}$  in. (23.1 × 15.6 cm). Gift of Felix M. Warburg and his family, 1941 4I.1.72

Two artists, Burgkmair and Lucas Cranach, pioneered the technique of chiaroscuro printing, which developed over just a few years beginning in 1507. Some extraordinary experiments with printing in gold and silver inks and black lines on colored paper—which survive in only a handful of impressions—soon evolved into the classic chiaroscuro method. This consists of printing a composition with multiple blocks: one or more tone blocks, each inked in a different color, and a line block, usually in black, that defines the composition and often could stand alone. The tone blocks establish light and shadow (*chiaro* and *oscuro* in Italian), and the areas of white paper left unprinted become the highlights in the image.

Lovers Surprised by Death, the best known of Burgkmair's woodcuts, is the first chiaroscuro woodcut to be made with three, rather than two, blocks. It is found in numerous color variations, all, like these, with the tones in the same range. Unusually for a northern European print, the line block is not sufficient to define the image. Both of these impressions are of the third edition, in which the name of the extremely skillful printer Jost de Negker (act. ca. 1510–44) has been added underneath.

In this woodcut Burgkmair has put a subject common in northern European art-the sudden, terrifying arrival of Death—in a classical architectural setting evocative of Venice. The young man dressed in armor, his shield and helmet strewn nearby, is presumably already dead, since he seems not to be struggling, but Death, unsatisfied, is violently ripping open his jaws. The young woman tries to flee, but her skirt is held in Death's teeth. Death is emaciated but not yet a skeleton, and his eyes, still in their sockets, look out toward the viewer, warning us that we, too, shall not escape his grasp. Although most of the architectural ornament is from a standard classical repertoire, the frieze of skull and crossbones at upper left proclaims that the setting is the realm of Death. SB

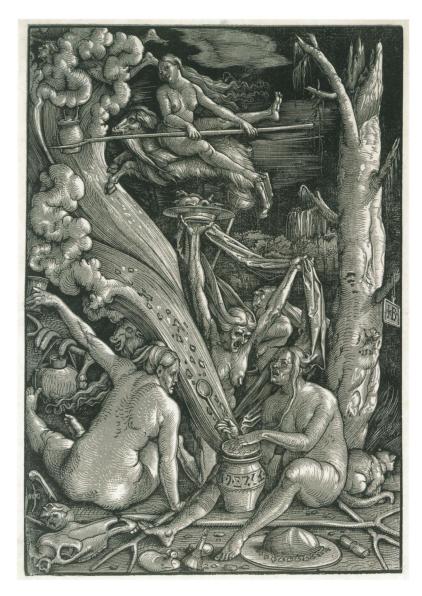
#### Hans Baldung, called Grien

German, 1484/85–1545. Witches' Sabbath, 1510. Chiaroscuro woodcut in two blocks, printed in gray and black, sheet  $15^{3/8} \times$  $10^{5/8}$  in. (38.9 × 27 cm). Gift of Felix M. Warburg and his family, 1941 41.1.201

Baldung, who went to Strasbourg after a few years as a journeyman with Dürer in Nuremberg, was not the first artist to produce prints in the new chiaroscuro technique—Hans Burgkmair (see page 33) and Lucas Cranach experimented in the technique between 1507 and 1510—but with this powerful, eerie composition, dated 1510 in the tree at the right, Baldung brought the medium to an expressive level that has never been surpassed.

Interest in witchcraft was strong in German-speaking areas at the beginning

of the sixteenth century; the Malleus Maleficarum, a tract against witches by Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, published in Strasbourg in 1487, was reprinted fourteen times before 1520. In Baldung's highly dramatic scene three witches are gathered around a large vase with pseudo-Hebraic lettering that spews out vapor containing a few small creatures-lizards or frogs?---and other undefined matter; one of the women lifts high a dish containing what seems to be dead fowl. Above them is a witch seated backward on a goat, a motif that derives from an engraving by Dürer of about 1500. The tone block of this print is found in orangebrown, which gives the scene a hellish light, or in gray, as in this impression, which increases the sense of vile activities taking place in darkest night. SB





#### Hans Wechtlin

German, ca. 1480/85–after 1526. Virgin and Child, ca. 1510. Chiaroscuro woodcut in two blocks, printed in gray-green and black, sheet  $10^{3/8} \times 7^{1/8}$  in. (26.5 × 18 cm). Rogers Fund, 1920 20.84

Wechtlin, like Baldung, worked in Strasbourg, which was at the crossroads of Flanders, Italy, France, and central Europe and was a major publishing center. Much of Wechtlin's output consisted of fairly routine designs for book illustrations. The dozen single-sheet chiaroscuro woodcuts that he made about 1510, however, have an arresting and lively charm. They show both a skillful command of the new chiaroscuro technique and-in many cases-unusual choices of subject. For this traditional depiction of the Virgin and Child on a bench within a closed garden, Wechtlin repeated many of the elements of a woodcut by Dürer of about 1497, the Holy Family with Three Hares, but Wechtlin's distinctive approach is seen in the way the child grabs at the pages of the book the Virgin holds, seeming to be avidly reading what is written. Wechtlin's signature tablet, with the letters Io V (Ioannes Vechtlin) and crossed pilgrims' staves, is on the ground at the left. SB

# Albrecht Dürer

German, 1471–1528. Saint Jerome by a Pollard Willow, 1512. Drypoint, upper left corner restored, sheet  $8^{1/4} \times 7^{1/8}$  in. (21 × 18.1 cm). Fletcher Fund, 1919 19.73.67

Dürer experimented with drypoint technique briefly about 1512, when he had become frustrated with the limited luminaristic effects that he could realize with the more traditional form of engraving. Saint Jerome by a Pollard Willow is tonally the richest of Dürer's three drypoints. The greater painterliness that could be achieved with this medium is due in particular to the burr produced by the small bits of copper turned up on either side of the line as it is scraped into the plate. When the image is printed, the burr translates onto the paper as velvety areas of tone. Such areas are most visible in the darkest parts of the design, for instance, on the artist's monogram and the branches of the willow. The soft quality of the lines allowed Dürer to bathe the penitent saint in a subdued light while also creating very deep shadows where his velvety ink-laden strokes can barely be distinguished. NMO





# Albrecht Dürer

German, 1471–1528. *Melencolia I,* 1514. Engraving, second state of two, plate  $9\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{8}$  in. (24 × 18.5 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1943 43.106.1

Dürer's *Melencolia I* is one of three large prints of 1513 and 1514 known as his *Meisterstiche* (master engravings). The other two are *Knight, Death, and the Devil* and *Saint Jerome in His Study*. The three are in no way a series, but they do correspond to the three kinds of virtue in medieval scholasticism—moral, theological, and intellectual—and they embody the complexity of Dürer's thought and that of his age.

*Melencolia I* is a depiction of the intellectual situation of the artist and is thus, by extension, a spiritual self-portrait of Dürer. In medieval philosophy each individual was thought to be dominated by one of the four humors; melancholy, associated with black gall, was the least desirable of the four, and melancholics were considered the most likely to succumb to insanity. Renaissance thought, however, also linked melancholy with creative genius; thus, at the same time that this idea changed the status of this humor, it made the self-conscious artist aware that his gift came with terrible risks.

The winged personification of Melancholy, seated dejectedly with her head resting on her hand, holds a caliper and is surrounded by other tools associated with geometry, the one of the seven liberal arts that underlies artistic creation-and the one through which Dürer, probably more than most artists, hoped to approach perfection in his own work. An influential treatise, the De Occulta Philosophia of Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim, almost certainly known to Dürer, probably holds the explanation for the number *I* in the title: creativity in the arts was the realm of the imagination, considered the first and lowest in the hierarchy of the three categories of genius. The next was the realm of reason, and the highest the realm of spirit. It is ironic that this image of the artist paralyzed and powerless

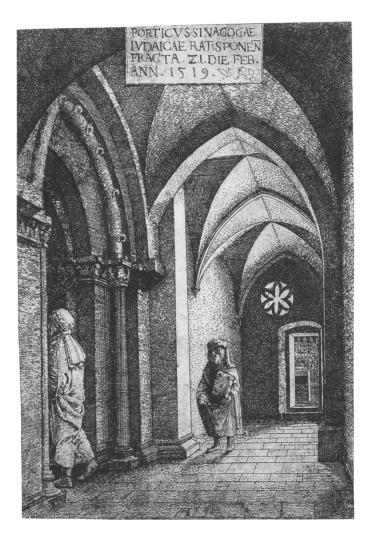


exemplifies Dürer's own artistic power at its superlative height. sb

# Lucas van Leyden

Netherlandish, 1494–1533. Abraham Going to Sacrifice Isaac, 1517–19. Woodcut, sheet  $11\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{5}{8}$  in. (29 × 21.8 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1925 25.2.63

Abraham Going to Sacrifice Isaac is one of Lucas's most accomplished woodcuts. He managed to create, in a medium traditionally recognized for its sharp contrasts, a soft, flowing pictorial effect similar in many ways to that produced in his engravings. Abraham, who had been commanded by God to make an offering of his son, is shown looking sadly at Isaac as they wend their way to the scene of the sacrifice. Lucas chose to focus on the more poignant part of the story leading up to the sacrifice, while relegating to the mountain in the far background the moment of high drama when the angel stays Abraham's hand, which is poised to strike Isaac with the sword. Isaac, carrying the sticks and a jug of coals for his own sacrifice, was considered a prefiguration of Christ carrying the cross to Calvary. NMO



## Albrecht Altdorfer

German, ca. 1480–1538. The Entrance Hall of the Regensburg Synagogue, 1519. Etching, sheet  $6^{1/4} \times 4^{3/8}$  in. (15.9 × 11.1 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1926 26.72.68

In the muted light of an open doorway and rosette window two Jewish men are shown walking through the entry porch of the Regensburg synagogue. Altdorfer made two etchings of the temple just before it was destroyed on February 22, 1519: this view and one of the interior nave. Emperor Maximilian (see page 40) had long been a protector of the Jews in the imperial cities, extracting from them substantial taxes in exchange. Within weeks of his death, however, Regensburg, which blamed its economic troubles on its prosperous Jewish community, expelled the Jews. Altdorfer, a member of the Outer Council, was one of those chosen to inform the Jews that they had two hours to empty out the synagogue and five days to leave the city.

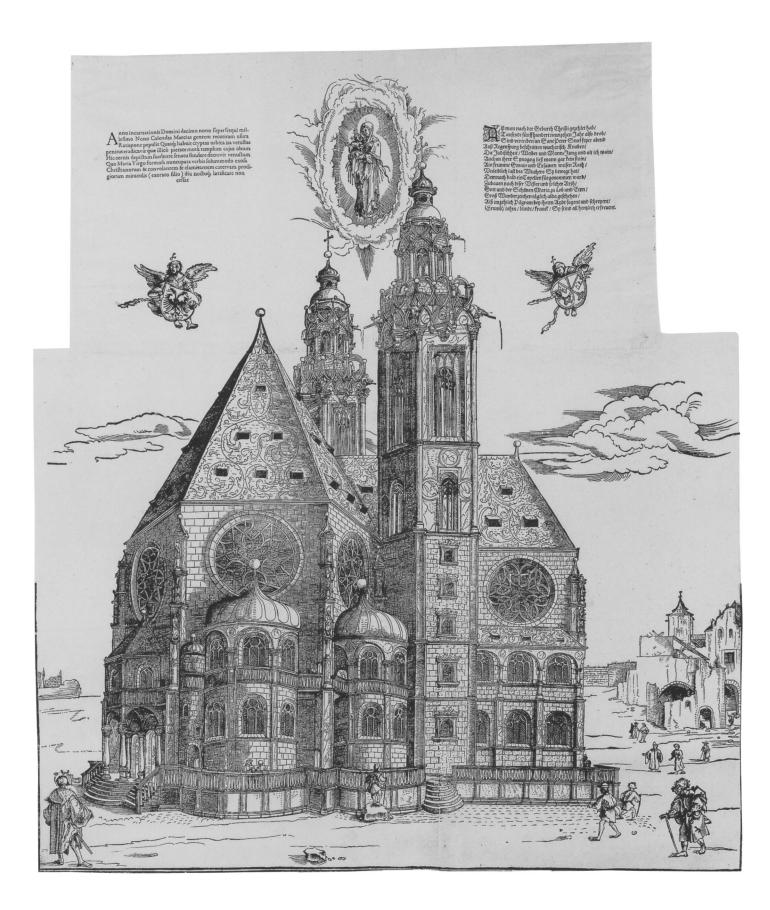
The date of the demolition inscribed at the top of the print suggests that Altdorfer made the preparatory sketches, as well as the etchings themselves, with the knowledge that the building was to be destroyed. The prints appear to have been quickly produced, quite possibly during the five days prior to the temple's destruction: the plate was not evenly etched, particularly in the areas of dense hatching, where the individual lines lose clarity. In addition, the slightly tipsy vaults appear to have been traced freehand rather than with a compass. Despite the seemingly sensitive portrayal, it was not intended as a sympathetic rendering of an aspect of Jewish culture, but rather as a much more dispassionate recording of the site. It is thus the first portrait of an actual architectural monument in European printmaking. NMO

### Michael Ostendorfer

German, act. 1520–49. The New Church of the Beautiful Virgin at Regensburg, ca. 1519–20. Woodcut on three sheets, overall  $25 \times 21$  in. (63.5  $\times$  53.2 cm). The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1959 59.570.43

This remarkably large woodcut depicts the proposed Church of the Beautiful Virgin designed by the architect Hans Hieber for the former site of the Regensburg synagogue. Only a year after the destruction of the synagogue in 1519, Regensburg had become an important Catholic pilgrimage site. It was said that while the synagogue was being torn down, a stonemason had made a miraculous recovery after a severe fall from its vault. The citizens of Regensburg saw this miracle not only as a divine endorsement of their expulsion of the Jews from the city but also as an omen of the town's imminent economic recovery due to the vast number of pilgrims who would, and eventually did, visit the scene of the miracle.

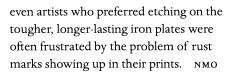
The ruins of the Jewish quarter are depicted in the right background, and the Beautiful Virgin of Regensburg, a cult image that had long been venerated in the city, shown to have miraculous powers by the mason's experience, hovers above the church building. Ostendorfer produced several woodcuts relating to the cult of the Beautiful Virgin, intended for the thousands of pilgrims who flocked to the city. Among the artist's largest works, this print would probably have been hung on a wall, whereas smaller works often were mounted in albums. NMO



### Lucas van Leyden

Netherlandish, 1494–1533. *Emperor Maximilian I*, 1520. Etching and engraving, plate  $10^{3/8} \times 7^{5/8}$  in. (26.2 × 19.5 cm). Purchase, Jacob H. Schiff Bequest, 1919 19.53

This sensitive portrayal of Maximilian, produced in commemoration of the Holy Roman Emperor's death in 1519, is technically one of Lucas's most innovative works. Here, for the first time in northern European printmaking, an artist combined the techniques of etching and engraving. Etching allowed him greater freedom of draftsmanship, but, since its use as a technique for making prints (as opposed to incising metal objects) was still rather new, Lucas turned to engraving in the areas that required greater precision. Thus, the artist engraved Maximilian's face with very fine, sharp lines, but the less rigid, wavering, and slightly more animated strokes in the rest of the composition were etched. This combination of techniques was a novelty in itself, but it also indicates that Lucas was the first to produce an etching from a copper plate rather than iron, for while copper could be used as a surface for both etching and engraving prints, iron could not. Iron was much too hard a metal for engraving techniques of that time and had the added disadvantage of rusting rather quickly when exposed to moist air, so





#### **Barthel Beham**

German, 1502–1540. *Bending Soldier Leaning against a Tree*, 1520. Engraving, plate  $17/8 \times 15/8$  in. (4.8 × 4.1 cm). The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1981–1981.1146

Between 1520 and 1525 Beham made five small engravings of Landsknechten, or mercenary soldiers, who were the main fighting components of contemporary armies. Beham's virtuosity as a printmaker is evident in this small figure, stooped over in a difficult foreshortened pose, engraved onto a plate not much larger than a postage stamp. The Landsknechten, whose presence was common even in times of peace, were notorious among their contemporaries for their dangerous and immoral behavior, a fact frequently commented upon in prints and poems of the period. Beham represented this soldier in a graceless pose, bent over and leaning on his lance for support. Although the figure has been previously identified as an elderly man, stooped by disease or old wounds suffered over a long, violent career, his face and body show few signs of age. It is more likely that this engraving is a comical representation of a Landsknecht who is suffering the effects of a particularly severe bout of carousing. NMO





### Albrecht Altdorfer

German, ca. 1480–1538. Landscape with a Double Spruce in the Foreground, ca. 1520–22. Etching, sheet  $4\frac{3}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$  in. (11 × 16 cm). Purchase, Gift of Halston, by exchange, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, and Pfeiffer Fund, 1993 1993.1097

Within the confines of a small etching plate, Altdorfer created an expansive Danube valley vista with large mountains, nestled villages, and a river that winds its way beyond the two pines that command the foreground. A prolific printmaker, he produced many etchings and woodcuts during his career but only nine landscape prints, all of which date to a relatively short period of time between about 1518 and 1522. These vibrant images, lacking any traditional historical or religious insignia, were the first western European prints to allow landscape to take pride of place as subject rather than background. Altdorfer appears to have originally produced these now-rare landscapes for a limited audience of connoisseurs with a taste for intimate and unusual subjects. The remarkable spontaneity and freedom of draftsmanship in this etching echoes that of the artist's numerous landscape drawings, and no doubt both drawings and prints were meant for the same type of collector. Altdorfer's introduction of pure landscape to the field of printmaking was quickly taken up by artists in his circle, such as Augustin Hirschvogel (see page 59). NMO Attributed to Jan Wellens de Cock Netherlandish, ca. 1480–before 1527. *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, 1522. Woodcut, sheet  $10^{1/4} \times 15$  in. (26.1 × 38.2 cm). Samuel D. Lee Fund, 1940 40.40

Although the identity of the designer of this woodcut cannot be verified, it is thought to be Jan Wellens de Cock, who is recorded in the painters' guild in Antwerp during the first quarter of the sixteenth century. The artist evidently admired Hieronymus Bosch, as he invented the same kinds of monstrous demonic creatures and illogical architectural structures. The group in the air clearly derives from Schongauer's engraving of the same subject (page 16), in which the airborne saint is tormented by similar grotesque demons.

The composition adheres to the medieval tradition of including more than

one event in a story. In the foreground, as Saint Anthony kneels before a crucifix, he is defiled by a demon above, while in front of him a woman—beautiful and fashionably dressed but with reptilian feet—tempts him with wealth. Depicted at the left is the visit of Saint Anthony to Saint Paul the Hermit; at the right, naked women bathing beckon to the holy man, but he walks past them undeterred. SB

# opposite

Attributed to Frans Crabbe Netherlandish, ca. 1480–1553. Scenes from the Life of Saint John the Baptist, ca. 1522. Woodcut, sheet  $11\frac{3}{4} \times 15\frac{5}{8}$  in. (29.6 × 39.6 cm). Rogers Fund, 1920 20.34.3

While Albrecht Dürer was traveling through the Netherlands in 1520–21, he visited Mechelen, where Crabbe lived and worked, in June 1521. His presence in the area almost certainly inspired the spurt of printmaking that ensued. As with the woodcut The Temptation of Saint Anthony, the designer of this image has not been identified with certainty; this is the only woodcut attributed to Crabbe. It has also been suggested that the artist was Nikolaus Hogenberg (see page 44), who was associated with Crabbe and whose workshop Crabbe took over at Hogenberg's death in 1539. Several episodes are included within the same composition, as in the Temptation, although here the landscape is more unified and the architecture is entirely rational. The principal scene is that of Saint John preaching in the wilderness, a subject that received new emphasis with the advent of Protestantism; at right is his baptism of Christ and at left, his beheading. SB



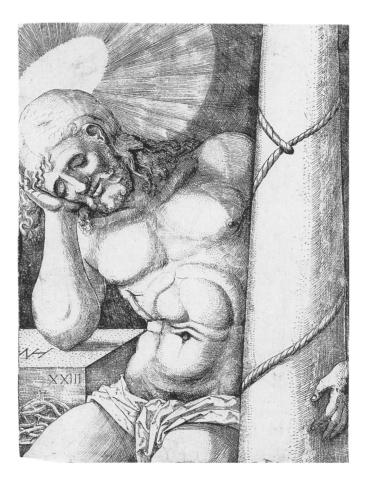


## Master H.L.

German, act. ca. 1511–26. *Saint Peter*, 1522. Engraving, plate  $7 \times 4^{3/4}$  in. (17.8 × 11.8 cm). Rogers Fund, 1919 19.11.3

The Master H.L., a sculptor and printmaker, is known for an elaborately detailed carved limewood triptych altarpiece in the cathedral at Breisach, Germany, twenty-four engravings, and seven woodcuts, as well as other sculpture related by style. Various attempts have been made to identify the artist by name, but none has proved convincing. All of the works attributed to the Master manifest the same barely contained energy that is conveyed here. In this relatively small print the artist has created an image in which the viewer looks steeply up to see the anguished face of Saint Peter as he concentrates on his open book, the underside of the crossbar of his staff, from which hang his symbolic keys, and the tablet on which the date and monogram are inscribed, and also down at the ragged fabric around the holy man's knees, his sandaled feet standing on a rocky promontory with a mountainous landscape behind, and the base of the staff, which turns out to be a gigantic key. In the center, billowing around the saint, is his voluminous, highly animated cloak, with deep folds and a scalloped silhouette. The disjointed viewpoint, the strong volumetric forms, the decorative effect of the rhythmic movement of the cloak, and the odd conceit of the key combine to give this image a singular, emotive power. SB





## Allaert Claesz.

Netherlandish, fl. ca. 1520–25. *Allegory with Two Naked Young Men in a Shell-Boat*, ca. 1524. Engraving, plate  $11\frac{1}{2} \times 9$  in. (29 × 22.7 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1937 37.38.1

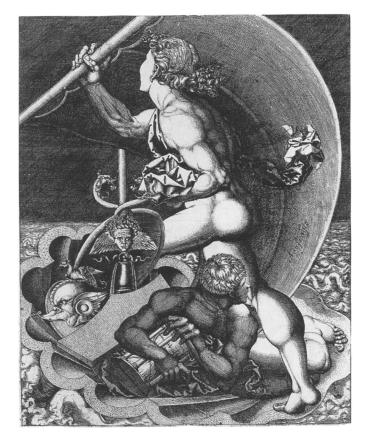
Claesz. is a puzzling figure, whose life and oeuvre have yet to be sorted out. He is credited with some two hundred engravings, many of which, like this one, show highly unusual subjects, and many others of which are copies of prints; in this combination of factors his work is reminiscent of that of the earlier engraver Israhel van Meckenem (see pages 22, 23).

No hypothesis has yet been offered to explain this presumed allegory. The print shows a young man in a striding pose holding aloft the sail that propels a curious shell-shaped boat. Another young man is half-lying on the bottom of the craft, looking off to the side, his arm around a huge hourglass. Also in the boat are a helmet in the shape of an animal head with a basilisk(?) on top and some objects that are hard to decipher: is the winged head, with hair standing on end, supported by the object with a baluster, or is it meant to be on the shield behind it? What is the object that looks like a piece of shaped wood behind the arm of the reclining man? The scene seems to take place at night, which adds to the sense of mystery. The Italian word *Naufragio* (shipwreck) has been written on the sail in pen and ink, perhaps as early as the sixteenth century. SB

## Nikolaus Hogenberg

German, worked in the Netherlands, ca. 1500–1539. *The Man* of *Sorrows at a Column*, 1523. Etching, plate  $6^{1}/_{4} \times 4^{3}/_{4}$  in. (16 × 11.8 cm). Rogers Fund, 1919 19.11.4

Hogenberg spent his first years in southern Germany, but in the early 1520s he moved to the Netherlands, where, during the later part of his life, he worked for Margaret of Austria, regent of the Netherlands, in Mechelen. He made about thirty etchings in his distinctive style between 1522 and 1525, probably responding to the resurgence of interest in printmaking that followed Albrecht Dürer's visit to the Netherlands in 1520-21. Hogenberg's choice of subject, or of iconographic detail in common subjects, was idiosyncratic, and an etched three-panel composition of the Holy Trinity flanked on the left by a group of patriarchs and on the right by saints, which measures about twenty by forty inches when the three sheets are side by side, was unprecedented in northern Europe for an intaglio medium. The artist's uncommon touches are also apparent in this print. Christ is seated, as is usual for a Man of Sorrows, but the crown of thorns is next to him rather than on his head, and his left arm encircles the column of the Flagellation, around which is wound the rope used to tie him there. Hogenberg typically put robust figures in crowded, shallow spaces, as here, giving his images a powerful immediacy. SB





#### Lucas van Leyden

Netherlandish, 1494–1533. The Poet Virgil in a Basket, 1525. Engraving, sheet  $9^{5/8} \times 7^{1/2}$  in. (24.5 × 18.9 cm). Gift of Felix M. Warburg and his family, 1941 41.1.23

According to medieval legend, Virgil fell in love with the Roman emperor's daughter. One night she promised to raise him to her bedroom in a basket but left him dangling halfway to be mocked by passersby the following day. The tale of the poet Virgil in a basket belongs to a popular fifteenth- and sixteenth-century theme, the power of women. Lucas produced two series of woodcuts and several engravings on this theme, illustrating woman's ability to make fools of even the wisest of men. He placed the main subject of the image in the background, inviting the viewer to join the onlookers in the foreground, who discuss the event. This print is one of the artist's most delicately engraved and spatially elaborate works. He was a master at creating subtle variations in tone using only black lines; this is particularly evident in the way he set apart back-, middle-, and foregrounds, distinguishing the intensity and direction of the lighting just by varying the density of the hatching. The elaborate detail in the drapery and certain facial types were inspired by the work of the older southern Netherlandish artist Jan Gossaert, with whom Lucas traveled in 1526. NMO



#### Jan van Scorel

Netherlandish, 1495–1562. *The Deluge,* ca. 1524. Woodcut on two sheets, overall  $18\frac{5}{8} \times 26^{\frac{1}{4}}$  in. (47.1 × 66.5 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1935 35.19a,b

Scorel was among the first generation of Netherlandish artists to go to Italy, fount of the classical art that was being revived in the Renaissance. He traveled through numerous cities in the German-speaking areas and then to Venice, from there to Jerusalem, and then to Rome, where he served as curator of the Vatican collection of antiquities in the Belvedere for the Dutch pope Adrian VI (r. 1522–23).

This large woodcut of the Deluge, printed from two blocks on two sheets of paper, so embodies Italianate forms that until as recently as the 1980s it was thought to have been designed by an Italian artist. The influence of Michelangelo, who had finished the Sistine Chapel ceiling in 1512, is particularly strong, and Scorel was also affected by the work of Raphael (1483–1520) in the Vatican Stanze and Logge. The sheets on which the image is printed were first covered in yellow wash; after printing, white highlights were added, giving the whole the look of chiaroscuro, a technique that was being practiced at this time in Italy as well as in the north (see pages 33, 34). The print may well have been made in Italy, or possibly in the Netherlands just after Scorel's return in 1524. SB

# Jan Swart van Groningen

Netherlandish, ca. 1500–ca. 1560. *Mamluks,* from *Süleyman and His Cortege*, 1526. Woodcut, sheet  $15 \times 11^{3/4}$  in. (37.9 × 29.7 cm). Rogers Fund, 1922 22.67.19

Since the beginning of the sixteenth century, long friezes of processions, modeled ultimately on Roman triumphs, had been made in woodcut. Such friezes ranged in size from relatively small ones like this, consisting of five blocks, to the 139 blocks of the Triumph of Maximilian I by Hans Burgkmair and others, which was begun in 1512 and never finished. The completed blocks were published in 1526, the same year as Swart's *Süleyman and His Cortege*.

Since the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, Ottoman power had been gaining in both the Near East and Europe, and in 1526 the Turks conquered Mohács in Hungary. Paralleling fear of the Turks on the part of western Europeans, however, were curiosity and a fascination with the exotic, which a frieze like this would satisfy. The frieze begins with a block of three trumpeters, followed by Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, then Jews, the Mamluks pictured here, and Arabs. The Mamluks, a warrior class, had been the ruling sultans in Egypt for several centuries but were defeated by the Turks in 1517. SB



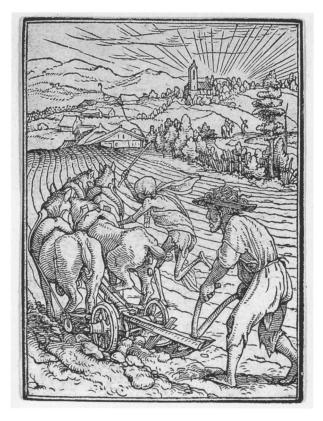
## Hans Holbein the Younger

German, 1497/98–1543. *The Plowman* and *The Abbot*, from *The Dance of Death*, ca. 1526, published 1538. Woodcuts, (.37) sheet  $2^{5/8} \times 1^{15/16}$  in. (6.6 × 5 cm); (.14) sheet  $2^{9/16} \times 1^{15/16}$  in. (6.6 × 4.8 cm). Rogers Fund, 1919 19.57.37,.14

Because Holbein is renowned for his commanding painted portraits—especially those of the royal family and their close associates, made while he worked in England in 1526–28 and from 1532 until his death—his prodigious production of designs for woodcuts is less well known. His work with prints began when he was a young man in Basel, which, as the site of a university and a substantial publishing industry, was a center for humanist thought. Erasmus moved there in 1521 and was Holbein's most important patron before the artist went to England.

The theme of the ubiquity of death and the possibility of its appearance at any moment was common in northern Renaissance prints in the German areas (see pages 31, 33) as well as in France; in fact, Holbein's series of fifty-eight designs was finally published in Lyons in 1538, by Melchior Trechsel. The cutting of Holbein's designs into the blocks was done in Basel by the masterful Hans Lützelburger (act. ca. 1514–26) shortly before his death.

Even at this small scale (the images are shown here larger than actual size) Holbein manifested both a superb sense of composition and an ironic imagination: the tired, bent plowman is supplanted in guiding his team of horses by Death, who cuts in front of him and whips them onward, and the fat abbot is pulled away by Death, who is depicted with the miter and crosier of a bishop. SB





## **Barthel Beham**

German, 1502–1540. *Leonhart von Eck*, 1527. Engraving, first state of two, sheet  $4^{3}$ / $8 \times 3^{1}$ /4 in. (10.9 × 8.2 cm). The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1981 1981.1087

Leonhart von Eck, 1527. Engraving, second state of two, sheet  $4^{3/8} \times 3^{1/4}$  in. (11 × 8.2 cm). Rogers Fund, 1918 18.90.2

Shortly after his arrival at the Bavarian court in Munich, Beham made this engraving of Leonhart von Eck (1480-1550), then aged forty-seven, chancellor to Duke Wilhelm IV. The print is shown here in its markedly different first and second states (a state change occurs every time the artist makes an addition to or a subtraction from the plate). The first state, which shows Von Eck wearing a simple skullcap, is similar to Beham's three-quarterlength painted portrait of the chancellor, also in the Metropolitan Museum's collection (acc. no. 12.194). Both were probably based on a now-lost drawing by the artist; the portrait type derives from the late style of Albrecht Dürer, with whom Beham may have studied. In the second state Beham made several prominent changes to the copperplate, most noticeably dressing Von Eck in a fur coat and adding a wide-brimmed beret over his skullcap. Making these alterations forced Beham to re-engrave the inscription in order to accommodate the broader hat; the faint traces of his erasures can still be distinguished. These adjustments probably reflect the different audiences for the impressions of the first and second states. The version that shows the chancellor dressed in the type of skullcap often worn by scholars and men of learning was probably made for Von Eck's private use, to be sent to family and friends. Impressions of the image showing the chancellor in a fur coat and wearing not one but two hats, since they feature expensive and formal attire, were clearly intended for public and official purposes. NMO







#### Pieter Coecke van Aelst

Netherlandish, 1502–1550. Procession of Sultan Süleyman through the Atmeidan, from Customs and Fashions of the Turks, drawn 1533, published 1553. Woodcut, sheet  $115\% \times 32^{3/4}$  in. (29.5 × 83.2 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1928 28.85.7a,b Jan Swart's procession of Turks published in 1526 (see page 47) provided a costumebook image of the sultan and some of the peoples under his dominion in the sixteenth century, but Coecke's sevensection frieze (cut on ten blocks), measuring about fifteen feet (four meters fiftyseven centimeters) in length when put together, is an eyewitness report, with an immense variety of descriptive detail, of the artist's trip to Constantinople in 1533. Coecke may have been in the entourage of the ambassador sent by Ferdinand, brother of the Holy Roman Emperor, on his mission to the sultan to try to decide the fate of Hungary. Carel van Mander wrote in his Schilderboeck (Painters' book),

published in 1604, that Coecke hoped to get a commission for tapestries from the sultan, and the designs look as though they were made for that purpose. Apparently no commission materialized, and Coecke's images were finally published as woodcuts by his widow nearly twenty years after his return to Antwerp, and three years after his death. The images form a continuous panorama behind terms in Turkish dress that divide the sections, and the viewer makes the journey from the left, beginning in a wild Balkan landscape, across the plain of Macedonia, to Constantinople.

This last section shows the sultan, preceded by mounted spahis and his



personal guard, the janissaries, on foot, parading through the city. The poses of the sultan and of his horse derive from Dürer's engraving *Knight, Death, and the Devil* of 1513, but the sultan's face is a realistic portrait. Coecke rendered the monuments of the city with a high degree of accuracy, although there are some variations from actuality, and the frieze may have been composed from sketches after Coecke's return to Antwerp. Nonetheless, the image has proved an immensely useful document for archaeologists and historians.

The open space in the foreground is the second-century hippodrome, the Atmeidan. On the horizon the mosque of Muhammad II is at upper left and Hagia Sophia is to the right of center. The obelisk with hieroglyphs immediately in front of the sultan is that of Theodosius, and the one farther right is that of Constantine VII. A freestanding column consisting of three intertwined serpents, still an attraction today, although the snakes' heads are now missing, is just behind the sultan, and at the far right is the semicircular portico at one end of the antique hippodrome.

The detail with the most particular interest is of the three bronze statues of pagan deities on columns in the middle distance in the open area to the right of center. These were displayed in Constantinople for only a ten-year span: looted from the royal castle of Ofen in Hungary in 1526, they were looked on with disapproval by pious Muslims and were melted down in 1536. Coecke thus was one of the few Europeans to have witnessed them in Constantinople and was perhaps the only one to have made a visual document of their brief presence in this setting. SB

# Hans Baldung, called Grien

German, 1484/85–1545. *Fighting Horses,* 1534. Woodcut, sheet 8<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 12<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (21.8 × 32.6 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1933 33.54.2

In 1534 Baldung made three extraordinary woodcuts of wild horses in a dark and dense forest, a subject unique to the artist that had neither precedent nor following. The prints are so idiosyncratic that they must have had strong personal meaning for him, then in about his fiftieth year. Even though the horses and their poses do not look entirely real, they are fascinating in their strangeness and intensity. This is the least overtly sexual of the three works, but it may be guessed that the stallions are fighting for possession of a mare.

In the equestrian monument or portrait, in both antiquity and the Renaissance, the horse was deemed a noble creature, a fitting mount for the ruler or leader being glorified, and both Leonardo da Vinci and Dürer made plans for treatises on the ideal proportions of the horse. Also since antiquity, however, horses—both stallions and mares—were equally reputed to be extraordinarily lustful. Further, in Germanic folklore the horse was associated with evil forces, often having to do with witchcraft. The larger subject of these woodcuts, with their violence and pent-up energy, is the power of forces beyond man's understanding or control, specifically the overwhelming strength of the carnal instinct.

SB



# Heinrich Aldegrever

German, 1502–1555/61. *Self-portrait*, 1537. Engraving, plate  $7^{\frac{3}{4}} \times 4^{\frac{7}{8}}$  in. (19.7 × 12.4 cm). Gift of Felix M. Warburg and his family, 1941 41.1.125

It is perhaps odd that no printmaker in either northern Europe or Italy made a printed self-portrait between the production of Israhel van Meckenem's Self-portrait with His Wife of about 1490 and Aldegrever's engraving dated 1530, which was followed seven years later by this one. Printmaking was, on the whole, a commercial enterprise, however, and portraits were usually of the rich and/or famous; it could simply be that little demand was anticipated for the likeness of a printmaker. In this engraving Aldegrever, aged thirty-five, as stated in the inscription, looks directly at the viewer, projecting a strong and resolute image. His mustache and beard are well groomed, and he wears a shirt of fine material with a ruffle at the throat. Around his neck is a ribbon, from which presumably a medallion of some sort is suspended, and his coat has a wide fur collar-indications that the artist is a person of substance. His monogram, a large A with a smaller G inside, imitates that of Albrecht Dürer. SB



#### Georg Pencz

German, ca. 1500–1550. *The Triumph of Bacchus*, ca. 1539. Engraving, plate  $2 \times 11^{1/4}$  in. (5 × 28.5 cm). Rogers Fund, 1917 17.74.2

Of all the sixteenth-century German artists, Pencz was the one who most thoroughly assimilated the Italianate classical style. In 1523 he arrived in Nuremberg, perhaps from central Europe, and entered Dürer's workshop. After a brief imprisonment for his radical and atheistic views, Pencz seems to have traveled to northern Italy for a few years in the late 1520s, and at the end of the 1530s he visited Italy again, this time going as far as Rome. In 1532 Pencz was appointed by the city council official painter to Nuremberg, and he also designed woodcuts, but he is probably best known for his about 125 engravings. He and the brothers Sebald and Barthel Beham (see pages 40, 49, 60) are called the "Little Masters" because of their extensive production of engravings on a small scale.

The subject here is drawn in imitation of an antique relief, although a classical sculpture would have had the figures much closer together, and a soldier in armor would not have played a part in a Bacchic scene. Pencz has injected his own whimsy in the soldier pushing the chariot and the centaur playing a viola. SB



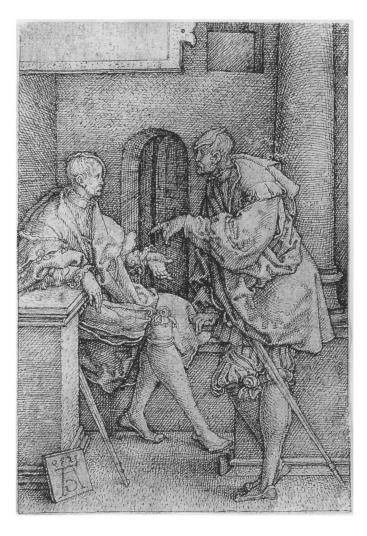
## Heinrich Aldegrever

German, 1502–1555/61. Amnon and Jonadab, 1539. Pen and brown ink, sheet  $4^{5/8} \times 3^{1/8}$  in. (11.8 × 7.8 cm). The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1950 50.605.1

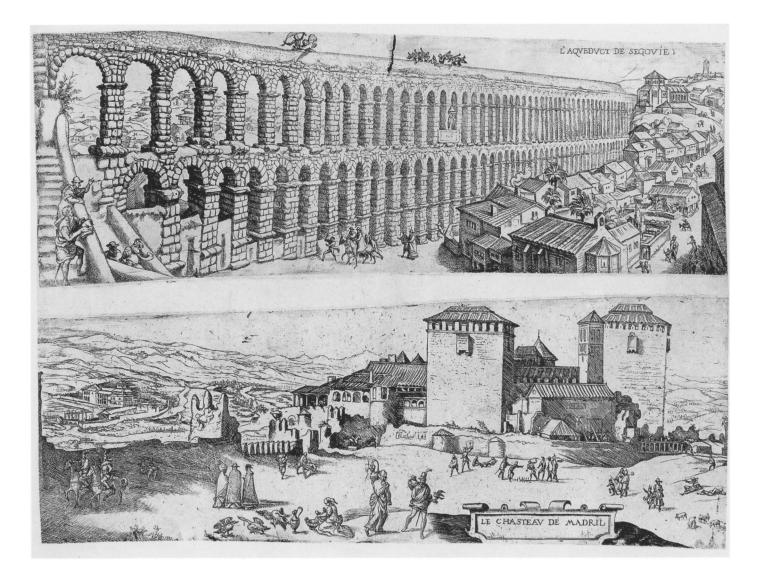
Amnon and Jonadab, 1540. Engraving, first state of two, plate  $4\frac{5}{8} \times 3$  in. (11.8 × 7.6 cm). The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1966 66.529.17

Aldegrever's careful preparatory drawings for prints survive in larger numbers than those of any other artist. Most of these are in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, but the Metropolitan has two: for *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* (1532; acc. no. 50.605.2) and for this composition. A comparison of the drawing and the print shows the very close correspondence between the two, and under raking light one can see that the main outlines of the drawing were gone over with a blunt instrument to transfer the design to the plate. There are some differences, however: in the first place, the drawing is dated 1539, but the prints evidently were not published until 1540, so the date was changed. Also, in the engraving Amnon has additional plumage on his hat and a ring on the index finger of his left hand, and his sword is shorter.

Aldegrever made approximately three hundred engravings, about one third of which are ornament designs for metalwork. Many others are series, often depicting Old Testament stories, common subjects among Protestant artists. This is the first in a series of seven illustrating the story of Amnon and Tamar (II Kings 13 in the Latin or Douay Bible; II Samuel 13 in a modern Protestant Bible). Amnon, the oldest son of David, fell in love with his half sister Tamar; his friend Jonadab suggested that Amnon feign illness—"Lay thee down on thy bed and make thyself sick," as quoted in the inscription—and request that Tamar minister to him. Subsequently, when Amnon and Tamar were alone, he raped her. Eventually Absalom, another son of David and full brother of Tamar, killed Amnon in revenge. These images of elegant elongated figures with small heads show Aldegrever working in his fully developed Mannerist style. SB







Jan Cornelisz. Vermeyen Netherlandish, 1500–1559. *The Aqueduct at Segovia* and *The Castle of Madrid*, ca. 1540. Two etchings printed on one sheet, overall  $13^{7/8} \times 19^{1/8}$  in. (35.2 × 48.4 cm). Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1917 17.50.19-134

When Charles V, the grandson of Maximilian I (see page 40) and his successor as Holy Roman Emperor, set out from the Netherlands for Tunis to reassert his hegemony there, he took in his entourage the court artist Vermeyen. Charles was also king of Spain, and the imperial expedition stopped there in 1534–35 and again in 1539 on the return journey, so Vermeyen could have made the drawings on which these etchings were based at either of those times. The etchings

themselves were almost certainly done in northern Europe, either in the southern Netherlands or in France-the identifying inscriptions are in French, and the paper on which the images are printed was made at Troyes, France. The two images were probably etched back-toback on the same plate, as their dimensions are commensurate, and both are off square, so that the shorter sides of each print differ in length. All of Vermeyen's prints are rare, but while a few other impressions of the Aqueduct at Segovia exist, this Castle of Madrid is the only one known today. The aqueduct still stands, but the castle has been completely changed architecturally, so this unique print has the additional importance of being the sole image recording the building's appearance in the sixteenth century. SB



## Jan Cornelisz. Vermeyen

Netherlandish, 1500–1559. *Girl with a Cat*, 1545. Etching with engraving, plate  $8\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{7}{8}$  in. (22.2 × 15 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1933 33.52.74

Vermeyen was a typical peripatetic northern Renaissance court artist. He worked in Mechelen, Augsburg, and Innsbruck for Margaret of Austria, regent of the Netherlands, and then in Brussels for her successor, Mary of Hungary. He also accompanied Mary's brother the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V to Spain and North Africa (see page 55). In addition to paintings and his famous designs for twelve tapestries depicting the conquest of Tunis—his best-known works—Vermeyen made more than twenty prints, mostly etchings. Some derived from the trip to Africa, some are portraits of prominent personages, and others, like this one, show anonymous sitters, mostly female. The distance imparted by the frame and the dignified posture, downcast eyes, and thoughtful expression of the young woman give this unassuming image a surprising monumentality. SB





# opposite Dirk Vellert

Netherlandish, ca. 1480–after 1547. *The Deluge*, 1544. Etching and engraving, second state of two, sheet  $11 \times 15^{3/8}$  in. (28 × 39.1 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1925 25.2.40

In the early 1520s Vellert became the first artist to take up etching in Antwerp. After producing twenty-three small-scale prints, however, Vellert gave up etching and returned to it only some twenty years later. At that time he created his masterpiece, The Deluge, by far his most monumental and complex print, a dense tapestry of patterns and textures. Some eighty muscular figures, in a wide range of contorted Mannerist poses typical of the artist's work, scramble over land and wade through water for refuge from the flood. One of the great representations of stormy weather in the history of art, the scene is filled with tempest-tossed

waves and sheets of rain that slash across the upper right corner of the scene, and the nervous rustling of the elements produced by an impending downpour is captured precisely. Meanwhile, in the left background, Noah's ark, a large triangularroofed vessel decorated with an elegant Renaissance foliate design, is shut up tight and floats peacefully, far from the chaos. NMO

## Lambert Suavius

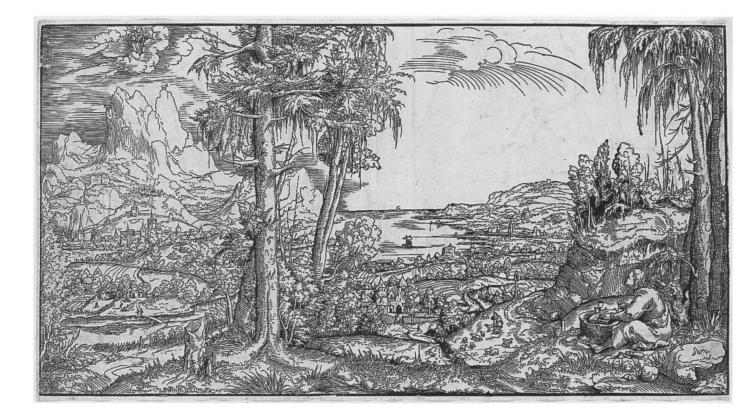
Netherlandish, ca. 1510–by 1576. *The Raising of Lazarus,* 1544. Engraving, first state of two, plate  $8^{1/4} \times 12^{5/8}$  in. (20.9 × 32 cm). The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1956 56.581.11

Lambert Zutman of Liège, known by the latinized form of his name, Suavius, was an architect, painter, and poet as well as a printmaker. His style, with its upright elongated figures displaying somewhat stilted gestures and poses in classicizing settings, followed that of Lambert Lombard so closely that their works were long confused. (Lombard may have been Suavius's brother-in-law, but the archival record is unclear.) Suavius is known to have used a glazier's stylus with a diamond point in addition to the traditional engraver's burin, thereby achieving extremely fine lines and a wide range of chromatic effects. This is his first dated engraving, but he clearly already had gained mastery of the medium. The anonymous Latin verses-perhaps by Suavius himself-emphasizing Christianity's promise of triumph over death, and the refined quality of the work would have found an appreciative audience in the humanist ambience of Liège. SB

# Virgil Solis

German, 1514–1562. Landscape with Saint John the Evangelist. Woodcut, sheet  $7^{3/4} \times 14^{5/8}$  in. (19.6 × 37 cm). Rogers Fund, 1920 20.24.77

Solis carried on the strong printmaking tradition established in Nuremberg by Albrecht Dürer and continued by the Beham brothers and Georg Pencz. During the middle third of the sixteenth century he and his workshop produced well over a thousand intaglio prints—engravings and etchings—and probably as many woodcuts. Many of the latter were for book illustrations: more than 200 for a Bible issued in Frankfurt in 1562, 178 for an edition of Ovid's works published in 1563, and 194 for an *Aesop's Fables* produced in 1566. This woodcut, much larger than those made for books, shows Saint John seated at a rock desk on a hillside overlooking a vast panoramic landscape, writing the text of the Book of Revelation; the Virgin and Child are in the clouds at upper left. Although Solis's initials are not on this print, the woodcut is monogrammed HWG at lower left; the few other woodcuts with this unidentified cutter's monogram also have that of Solis, and the compositional style is consistent with his oeuvre. sB



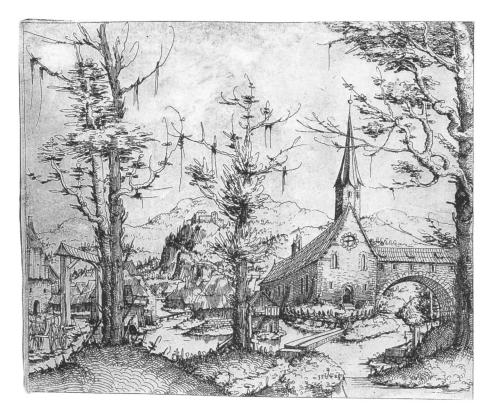
## Augustin Hirschvogel

German, 1503–1553. Landscape with Small Church and Arch over Stream, 1545(?). Etching, sheet  $6^{1/8} \times 7^{3/8}$  in. (15.4 × 18.7 cm). Purchase, Mortimer L. Schiff Gift, 1925 25.48.4

Landscape with Small Church and Arch over Stream, 1545(?). Etching, counterproof, sheet  $6^{1/8} \times 7^{3/8}$  in. (15.4 × 18.6 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1940 40.137

Hirschvogel's landscape etchings were inspired by the work of fellow Danube school artist Albrecht Altdorfer (see page 41). The depiction of a church in a river valley, set behind tall moss-laden trees, employs a compositional device similar to that often used by Altdorfer. The print is more freely drawn, however, and the playful exaggeration of the natural elements gives this vista great charm.

The etching also exists in a rare counterproof impression, which shows the image in reverse. Such a counterproof would have been made by passing a freshly pulled print through the press with a blank piece of paper. The result would be a second impression with the same orientation as the image originally etched into the plate. Counterproofs were often created solely for use in the studio for the etcher to utilize when indicating the corrections that would have to be made to the plate. With this method the artist would not have to correct the plate from an impression with a reversed image. Such proofs were often discarded after the corrections were complete. However, at least one or two counterproofs of most of Hirschvogel's landscapes exist, which suggests that he may have pulled them for interested collectors rather than for his own personal use. ммо







### Sebald Beham

German, 1500–1550. *The Virgin and Child with a Parrot*, 1549. Engraving, second state of three, sheet  $3^{1/8} \times 2^{1/4}$  in. (8 × 5.6 cm). Rogers Fund, 1921 21.1.2

In the 1540s, while living in Frankfurt, Beham engraved copies of several of his brother Barthel's prints, including this tiny Virgin holding the Christ Child and a parrot. The pear in her hand, which echoes the shape of her breast, refers to the many devotional images of Mary nursing the infant Jesus. While the composition has been appropriated, there is no sense that this is a copy: Beham was as much a master of the engraving technique as his younger brother, who had died nine years before this work was produced. Among the changes Beham made to his brother's composition is the addition of an inscription on the right stating that the print represents Saint Mary (.S. Maria). It has been suggested that, since 1549 was one year after the recatholicization of the previously Protestant city of Frankfurt, the artist may have added the inscription in order to underscore the religious aspect of this image, which otherwise borders on the secular. The composition derives from the engraving The Virgin and Child Seated by a Wall (1514) by Albrecht Dürer, whose work influenced both Behams. The monumental figure of the Virgin recalls Italian sources, which were also of interest to the two brothers. ммо

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