Chapter 7

Holbein and the reform of images

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During the first half of the sixteenth century huge changes occurred in Europe in the way that religious images were viewed. The Protestant Reformation was a complex movement that began well before 1517, when Martin Luther famously pasted his 95 'theses', or objections to the Roman Catholic practice of purchasing indulgences for the remission of sins, onto the door of the castle church in Wittenberg. This protest movement had serious implications for the Church and national politics, but it had consequences for art as well, and in Switzerland – very much in the vanguard of religious reform – this was apparent as early as the 1520s.

Whereas both painted and carved images were an essential part of the practice of the late medieval and Renaissance Catholic Church, Protestant reformers regarded religious art at best with great suspicion and at worst with outright hostility. The audience for religious art declined sharply in areas dominated by the Reformation, and many experienced bouts of iconoclasm: that is, the destruction of religious images. Other art forms such as portraiture profited by their relative religious neutrality, and survived and prospered during the Reformation period. The career of the artist Hans Holbein the Younger straddled two reformations: the Protestant Reformation in Basle in the 1520s and the beginnings of the Protestant Reformation in England in the 1530s and early 1540s. The commissions he received reflected the changing demand for art in these two countries. Although he is now renowned as one of the greatest portraitists of western European painting, this very reputation is predicated on a certain Protestant religious context that favoured some art forms and condemned others. In fact, his artistic practice extended far beyond portraiture, and his artistic talents were used in the production of both conventional Catholic religious art and propaganda images serving the cause of religious reform. This chapter examines the changing ways in which religious art was viewed in parts of northern Europe, and the impact those changes appear to have had on Holbein's career as an artist.

Hans Holbein the Younger (1497/8–1543) was born in Augsburg in southern Germany, the son of a painter of the same name. He left the city at the age of 17 or 18 and, together with his brother Ambrosius, arrived in Basle in Switzerland by 1515, becoming a member of the painters' guild in 1519. Augsburg was a cosmopolitan centre in prosperous southern Germany, one of Europe's three main industrial zones. The city was the home of a fabulously wealthy banking family, the Fuggers, and lay on one of the major trading arteries of western Europe. Augsburg promised good patronage opportunities though also, without doubt, a degree of artistic competition. A member of the Swiss Confederation from 1501, Basle also held considerable promise of work for a young artist. It lay on the River Rhine and hence boasted important trading links and all the associated crafts associated with a flourishing trading city; it had a cathedral and a university, founded in 1454. Crucially, it was also a centre of the book trade,

Plate 7.1 (Facing page) Hans Holbein the Younger, detail from a study for a portrait of Sir Thomas More and his family (Plate 7.22).

with 70 book printers established in the city by 1501. The Catholic humanist reformer Desiderius Erasmus (*c.*1466–1536) first settled in the city in 1514 because his Greek New Testament was to be published by Froben, one of the city's most eminent printer publishers; from 1521 he lived in the city more or less permanently.[1] Since Hans the Younger and his brother Ambrosius are known to have done designs for woodcut book illustrations, it could be that the lure of the book industry attracted them to the city as well.

By the mid-1520s, lucrative commissions for religious art were much more difficult to come by in both Augsburg and Basle. Augsburg was affected by reforming religious ideas and suffered iconoclasm from 1524. Although the city emerged from the religious turmoil resolutely Roman Catholic in persuasion, this did not happen until the late 1540s, after Holbein's death. Basle also became a hotbed for reform, and by the late 1520s, the Catholic Church and with it religious art were facing fundamental challenge from reformers. By 1532, when Holbein finally settled in England, religious art was a thing of the past in Basle. Within about two decades of his death, religious art had been all but eradicated in England as well.

1 The vanishing world of religious images

For centuries, much of the staple work of artists had been provided by the Church, either directly or from individuals, lay or clerical, commissioning work to donate to a church, chapel or monastery or for use in private worship. From the 1520s onwards, this market for art was severely threatened by the Reformation. Religious art was of necessity implicated in the particular religious mindsets of the patrons for which it was designed. Once this mindset was discredited, so too was the religious art associated with it. The more extreme reformers had fundamental objections to any religious imagery at all on the grounds that it was intrinsically idolatrous and offended against the second commandment, which forbade the making of 'graven images' (Exodus 20:4) (see also Chapter 5). Even moderate voices criticised the way in which art had been used. An examination of some different works of art connected either with Holbein's adopted country of Switzerland or with his father and the Augsburg area demonstrates that religious art was anything but neutral in the reforming debates.

The Heilspiegel altarpiece

Roughly a contemporary of Jan van Eyck (*c.*1395–1441), Conrad Witz of Rottweil entered the painters' guild in Basle in 1434 and was dead by 1446. During these years he produced at least two monumental altarpieces, and may have been responsible for the *Dance of Death* series painted on the walls of the Dominican cemetery there. His Heilspiegel altarpiece, or altarpiece of the mirror of salvation, was broken up during the iconoclasm in Basle, but several painted panels from its movable shutters survive.[2] The use of oak panels and meticulous painting technique are among many elements of Witz's work that are strongly reminiscent of Netherlandish painting, though his training remains a mystery. The complicated and very unusual programme of the altarpiece is drawn from the *Speculum humanae salvationis* or *Mirror of Human Salvation*, a late medieval picture book dating from before 1324, available initially in manuscript form and later as an illustrated printed book. On each page, Old Testament, historical or legendary narratives were presented alongside New Testament events they were believed to anticipate. This form of comparison, or typology as it is called, regarded Christ's life and death as the high point in human history which significant prior events had unwittingly foreshadowed in a prophetic way, and it had a long history.

Since not all sections of the Heilspiegel altarpiece survive, its original layout, content and even shape can only be reconstructed hypothetically. On the outer face of the two shutters were representations of the Angel Gabriel and the Annunciate Virgin, personifications of church and synagogue, and standing figures of saints, placed in either two or three vertical tiers. Each inner face comprised four or perhaps five panels, on which were represented classical and Old Testament narratives that mirrored episodes in the redemption story. The rather obscure scene of Abisai, Sabothai and Benaja bringing water to David (2 Samuel 23:15–22; see Plates 7.2–7.3) was considered a type for the Adoration of the Magi.[3] Witz represents the three men offering vessels containing water in much the same way as the Magi are usually represented offering gifts to the Christ Child. Other surviving panels include the Roman Emperor Augustus

Plate 7.2 Conrad Witz, Heilspiegel altarpiece panel showing King David and Abisai, *c.*1435, oil on oak panel covered with cloth, 102 × 81 cm, Kunstmuseum, Basle. Photo: Kunstmuseum, Basle/Martin Bühler.

Plate 7.3 Conrad Witz, Heilspiegel altarpiece panel showing Sabothai and Benaja, *c.*1435, oil on oak panel covered with cloth, 98 × 70 cm, Kunstmuseum, Basle. Photo: Kunstmuseum, Basle/Martin Bühler.

receiving a vision of Christ through the Tiburtine sibyl (a type for the Nativity); Esther before Ahasuerus (Esther 5:1–8, a type for the Virgin interceding for humanity); the meeting of Solomon and Sheba (1 Kings 10:1–13, occasionally also a type for the Adoration of the Magi); Antipater showing his wounds to Caesar (a type for Christ showing his wounds to God); and Abraham meeting Melchisedek (Genesis 14:18, a type for the Eucharist). In each scene, Witz inscribes the characters' names on the fictive damask background to help the viewer identify what otherwise might in some cases be indecipherable narratives. Nothing is known of the lost central section, but it might have been an Adoration of the Magi and could have been carved rather than painted.

The precise history of the altarpiece remains unknown. One suggestion is that it might be the carved and painted altarpiece commissioned for the Augustinian church of Saint Leonard, for which Bern architect and sculptor Matthäus Ensinger sought final payment in 1450, though it had been delivered some time before and hence probably in Witz's lifetime.[4] If so, Ensinger presumably supplied a carved central section and subcontracted the painted shutters to Witz.

With its highly programmatic typological approach, it is not difficult to imagine how antiquated and inappropriate this altarpiece might have appeared as the Protestant reformers introduced a more literal and straightforward approach to interpreting the Bible. Although works of art are often said to have instructed the illiterate, all but the simplest paintings also required prior knowledge of the narrative in order to make sense. Viewers could only have understood the complex didactic programme of the Heilspiegel altarpiece if they were already familiar with the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, or had been introduced to this sort of typology through sermons, for example. Its significance might otherwise have passed them by entirely. The inscriptions identifying the characters were useful only for those could read. Many Swiss reformers rejected the didactic function of images and instead stressed exclusively the spoken word of Scripture.

The *Large Einsiedeln Madonna*

The abbey church of Einsiedeln near Zurich was a centre of annual pilgrimage to celebrate the 'Engelweihe' (literally, angel consecration), the miraculous consecration of the initial church built on the site where Saint Meinrad was martyred in the ninth century. In 1466, 500 years after the papal bull granting indulgences to pilgrims to Einsiedeln, some 130,000 pilgrims made their way to the church, where they were served by 400 confessors.[5] Pilgrim shrines often sold souvenir woodcuts to visitors, but to celebrate the Einsiedeln anniversary a very much more sophisticated and without doubt more expensive souvenir engraving was commissioned from the accomplished Upper Rhenish printmaker Master ES (Plate 7.4). The upper part of the engraving shows Christ, to the left of God the Father and surrounded with the company of heaven, blessing the altar below with holy water taken from a bucket held by an angel. The prominent tiara and crossed keys – the insignia of the papacy – advertise the papal ratification of the Einsiedeln pilgrimages. The inscription in German around the arch through which the lower part of the scene is viewed suggests that the print was targeted at the more prosperous lay pilgrims visiting the shrine who might read German but not Latin. It says: 'This is the angel consecration of Our Lady of Einsiedeln hail [Mary] full of grace.'[6]

Central to the lower part of the print is an image of the Virgin and Child with Saint Benedict to one side and an angel to the other. All are set beneath architectural canopies as if they were carved statues within an altarpiece case, placed on an altar and protected by curtains to either side (as was the convention), yet the 'statues' appear alive rather than crafted. Gazing at these figures are lay pilgrims carrying their pilgrim staffs (which they would need for the 35 kilometre lakeside walk from Zurich to Einsiedeln). On one level this engraving appears to provide an insight into the devotional imagination of pilgrims venerating sacred images as surrogates for real holy people, but statues were sometimes rumoured to come to life more literally as well. Purportedly miraculous images that moved or wept stimulated pilgrimages in their own right, and were a valuable source of income for the Church. Inevitably there were a few much-publicised incidents of fraud, such as a statue of the Pietà in Bern alleged to weep tears of blood, but exposed as a fake devised by a Dominican monk and trickster named Jetzler and his co-conspirators in 1507.[7] Miracles were also attributed to statues that did not move; indeed, Saint Meinrad, on whose place of martyrdom the Einsiedeln church was built, is reputed to have owned such a statue later installed there.[8]

The practice of pilgrimages, and the images associated with them, came in for criticism not just from Protestant reformers but from moderate Catholics: Erasmus was sharply critical of cult images associated with pilgrimage shrines, for example, and wrote a colloquy on the subject in 1526 while resident in Basle.[9] The famous Swiss reformer Ulrich (or Huldrych as he styled himself, meaning rich in grace) Zwingli (1484–1531) served as priest in the village of Einsiedeln from 1516 to 1518, and hence would have been well acquainted with the practice of pilgrimages. From 1518 he took up a post at Zurich Minster, where his reforming views rapidly crystalised and gained influence not just in Zurich but in other Swiss towns, including Holbein's Basle. As we shall see, the sorts of prints produced in support of Protestant reform in Switzerland to designs by Hans Holbein the Younger and others could not have differed more sharply from the devotional Einsiedeln engraving.

The Kaisheim altarpiece

Holbein's father Hans the Elder (*c.*1460/5–1524) was a respected Augsburg painter who depended for his livelihood primarily on the production of large-scale narrative altarpieces. Apparently in constant demand, he travelled widely to fulfil commissions. In 1493 he produced wings for a now destroyed carved altarpiece for the monastery of Weingarten by Ulm sculptor Michel Erhart (active 1469–1522). In 1501 Hans the Elder and his brother Sigmund completed the wings for an altarpiece commisioned by Johannes von Wilnau to decorate the high altar of the Dominican church in Frankfurt, the same church for which Jakob Heller commissioned Dürer to paint the *Assumption of the Virgin* altarpiece only a few years later.[10] In 1502 Hans the Elder signed and dated the painted shutters for an altarpiece for the Cistercian abbey of Kaisheim near Augsburg. This altarpiece had a carved central section with statues by Michel Erhart's son Gregor (active from 1494; d.1540) and a case by Gregor's brother-in-law Adolf Daucher (d.1524).

Plate 7.4
Master ES,
Large Einsiedeln Madonna, 1466,
engraving,
21 × 13 cm,
Art Institute of Chicago, Kate S. Buckingham Fund, 1972.1.
Photo: © The Art Institute of Chicago.

Plate 7.5 Gregor Erhart, *Virgin of Mercy*, *c.*1502, polychromed limewood, height 216 cm, formerly Deutsches Museum, Berlin (destroyed). Photo: Bildarchiv Foto Marburg.

The only statue to have survived from the Kaisheim altarpiece was destroyed in World War II but is known from photographs. The *Virgin of Mercy* (Plate 7.5) shows Cistercian monks sheltering beneath the robe of the Virgin, who holds a sprawling Christ Child. The moon at the Virgin's feet identifies her with the apocalyptic woman from the New Testament book of Revelation, 'clothed with the sun and with the moon under her feet' (12:1). The focus here is not so much on the Christ Child as on the Virgin and her protective powers. Such iconography, and indeed such beliefs, were absolutely standard in the fifteenth-century Catholic Church, but they were abhorrent to the Protestant reformers, who denied any biblical basis for the veneration of the Virgin Mary and rejected the idea of her mediation on behalf of humanity.

On the outer shutters of the altarpiece were 16 paintings narrating the Passion of Christ by Hans Holbein the Elder. Decorating the inner shutters was a narrative cycle of the life of the Virgin, each scene set under fictive tracery (Plate 7.6). Some of the themes were taken from apocryphal rather than biblical sources, like the *Death of the Virgin* (lower right side). The story of the death of the Virgin is found in the *Golden Legend*, written *c.*1260 by the Dominican Jacopo da Voragine. It was arguably the most-read devotional book in western Christendom, translated into every major European language and popularised through the printing press from the mid-fifteenth century.[11] According to the *Golden Legend*, the Virgin requested the presence of the Apostles at her deathbed, to which they were subsequently miraculously transported. In Hans the Elder's painting, Saint James is identified by the pilgrim shell in his hat, for example. From the mixed sources on which Voragine drew came some of the best-loved themes of the late Middle Ages. The Protestant reformers, however, advocated a return to scriptural authority, which firmly excluded apocryphal legends, however distinguished their pedigree in ecclesiastical tradition. Even apart from the problem of subject matter, altarpieces were condemned by the reformers as part of the trappings of the Mass. They were systematically dismantled and destroyed in many Protestant areas, and the altarpiece makers all but disappeared.

Plate 7.6 Hans Holbein the Elder, right wing panel from the Kaisheim altarpiece, 1502, oil on panel, 179 × 81 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich. Photo: Blauel/Gnam – Artothek.

The reliquary of Saint Sebastian

Some time prior to 1497, Hans the Elder was probably responsible for the sketched design of a reliquary for the Kaisheim monastery (Plate 7.7). Sebastian was a saint invoked against the plague, so he was a fitting subject for a reliquary commissioned during an outbreak of the disease. It had a companion reliquary of Saint Christopher, who was the patron saint of travellers. Setting eyes on an image of Saint Christopher was meant to protect the viewer from sudden death: hence representations of this saint were common in public places as well as in churches and monasteries. Hans the Elder's metalpoint drawing shows the saint as a real figure tied to an abbreviated but convincingly simulated tree. The final reliquary (Plate 7.8) is dated 1497 and bears the name of the abbot of the monastery, Georg Kastner, though a chronicle of the monastery suggested that Frederick the Wise, ruler of Saxony from 1486 to 1525, also contributed to the cost.[12] The tiny drawing was adapted somewhat – first in the tree but more importantly in the pose, for Saint Sebastian appears to step off the base, indicating with his foot his own relics, which are stored behind glass in the base below. This base does not appear in the drawing. For all that it is fashioned in the rather artificial medium of gilded silver

Plate 7.7 Attributed to Hans Holbein the Elder, design for reliquary of Saint Sebastian, before 1497, metalpoint, 13 × 10 cm, British Museum, London. Photo: © The Trustees of The British Museum.

Plate 7.8 Unknown goldsmith, reliquary of Saint Sebastian, 1497, silver-gilt, base set with glass, pearls, sapphires and rubies, height 50 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (M.27–2001). Photo: © V&A Images/ Victoria and Albert Museum.

rather than carved and polychromed wood, the reliquary figure is convincingly lifelike by virtue of the carefully described musculature and pose of the figure.

Saints, their relics and their images were a powerful force in the Catholic Church. Protestant reformers abhorred the practice of interceding to saints and the traffic in their relics. Although Catholic churchmen were concerned to make a distinction between the veneration of saints represented through art and the unacceptable worship of representations of those saints, which would constitute idolatry, to the more extreme Protestant reformers like Zwingli and Karlstadt, all images invited idolatry and should be removed.

Location meant everything for the survival of art over the Reformation period. The central panel of the Heilspiegel altarpiece by Conrad Witz evidently perished along with so many other altarpieces in reformist Switzerland. That a number of panels have survived from the wings is surprising and suggests that as much of the altarpiece as possible was concealed from the iconoclasts. Although several cities in southern Germany, including Augsburg, suffered iconoclasm, the Kaisheim monastery apparently escaped for the altarpiece survived and instead fell victim to the vagaries of fashion. In 1673, a new Baroque altarpiece was acquired, but even then, the old altarpiece was dismantled and dispersed rather than discarded.[13] The reliquary probably stayed in the Kaisheim monastery until it was secularised by French troops in 1802. Fortunately, it was purchased and preserved by a well-known collector of late Gothic art. If location made all the difference to the preservation of works of art, equally it made all the difference to the fortunes of the artists who made them.

2 The case against images

Though critical of idolatry, the Wittenberg reformer Martin Luther (1483–1531) was opposed to the iconoclasm recommended by fellow reformer Andreas von Karlstadt (*c.*1480–1541) while Luther was in hiding. Karlstadt defended his views in a tract entitled *On the Abolition of Images* (1522); Luther refuted Karlstadt's arguments in *Against the Heavenly Prophets* (1525). Although certainly not an advocate of religious art, Luther was prepared to concede that some biblical images might be acceptable: 'whether I will or not, when I hear of Christ, an image of a man hanging on a cross takes form in my heart, just as the reflection of my face naturally appears in the water when I look into it. If it is not a sin but good to have the image of Christ in my heart, why should it be a sin to have it in my eyes?'[14]

The standard defence of images – that the honour paid to an image is transferred to its prototype – was first made by Saint Basil in the fourth century, reiterated by the eighth-century Syrian saint, John of Damascus, in opposition to the iconoclasts of the Byzantine Empire, and reused in succeeding centuries.[15] Karlstadt rejected this argument out of hand. He considered all images as intrinsically idolatrous, and his solution was that recommended in the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy 7:5: 'You shall overturn and overthrow their altars. You shall break their images to pieces. You shall hew down their pillars and burn up their carved images.' What is more, he counselled against waiting for the Church to remove images itself 'for they will never begin to do it'.[16] Instead, magistrates should take matters into their own hands, and this is exactly what happened in the Swiss city of Zurich.

In Zurich the dominant reforming voice was that of Ulrich Zwingli, who used his appointment as preacher by the city council in 1522 to air increasingly radical views, including a stance on images. According to Zwingli, religious images were a substitution for the direct worship of God. In his *Answer to Valentin Compar* of 1524, he dismissed the visual tradition of the Catholic Church as a symptom of inadequate faith and the degeneration of spiritual life.[17] Although those who had donated images to churches in Zurich were initially given the opportunity to remove them, from July 1524 the remaining images were forcibly removed and destroyed on the instructions of the city magistrates.

In Basle, where Holbein lived, Erasmus gathered around him a group of supporters of moderate reform during his sojourn in the city from 1521 to 1529, but more extreme reforming views were being disseminated through the Basle printing presses. Iconoclasm hit Basle in 1528 largely as a popular movement initially resisted by the city magistrates.[18] On 10 April 1528 protesters stripped images from two Basle churches, which frightened the city authorities into agreeing to the

dismantling of images in the five city churches that had already espoused reform. Iconoclastic pressure continued, however, and on 8 February 1529 a crowd gathered at the town hall demanding the wholesale removal of images. The following day the storeroom was discovered where images from the cathedral had been placed for safekeeping. The crowd ransacked it, then ransacked the cathedral too. On Ash Wednesday the debris of the images was burnt in the public square. By the end of 1529, the images were gone, the Catholic Mass officially banned, the bishop dismissed and the cathedral chapter dissolved. Erasmus was among those who lamented the wanton destruction of the city's artistic treasures, and he left the city as a consequence, though he returned in 1535.

The only suggestion of Holbein's personal response to religious reform was his failure to attend the new communion service in 1530, of which he stated he needed a better explanation. His name later appeared among those conforming, but whether this was expediency or conviction is impossible to say.

3 Holbein and the reform of images in Basle

Holbein's activities in Basle up to his first visit to England in 1526 were extremely varied, and he quickly revealed himself to be a cosmopolitan artist, conversant with Netherlandish art, with the work of the famous painter and printmaker Dürer of Nuremberg, and with the Italian Renaissance. Holbein worked for conventional Catholic, humanist and Protestant patrons. His own allegiances are uncertain and, in the context of an artist responding to patronage opportunities, probably largely irrelevant. The most that may be said is that he cannot have felt it to be against his conscience to work for the range of patrons that he did; nor can his varied patrons have felt his religious views and activities to be an impediment to the placing of commissions, which was in any case a business arrangement.

A testimony to his rapidly increasing prestige is the 1521 commission for wall paintings for the council chamber of Basle town hall, which were designed to have an improving effect on council business.[19] Now known only through original drawings, copies and small fragments of some of the paintings, these didactic narratives were all taken from classical sources such as the fifth-century BCE Greek historian Herodotus, and Holbein drew on Italian Renaissance prints for his compositions. The scheme was completed only in 1530, when Holbein painted not classical narratives but two Old Testament subjects on the south wall of the chamber; it is tempting to wonder whether this represents a change of programme on the part of the city council, which had shifted in the interim from fashionable humanist interest in the classical past to Bible-conscious reform.

Like his father, Holbein painted large-scale altarpieces including the so-called Passion altarpiece (1520s, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basle). With its two-tier structure and fictive carved and gilded scrolls separating the eight scenes, it is strongly reminiscent of his father's Kaisheim altarpiece, the outer shutters of which showed almost the same scenes, though Holbein's are not set within fictive carved frames.[20] Unusually, five out of Holbein's eight narratives are night scenes, but in all other respects this appears a conventional Catholic commission that, as a representation of the life of Christ, might not offend a Lutheran but would hardly have met with approval among the harder-line Zwingliists gaining influence in Basle.

By contrast with these respectable commissions, Holbein's skills were also in demand as a designer of woodcuts of reformist literature, which was printed in some quantities in the relatively liberal context of Basle. He designed the title page for the Basle edition of Luther's translation of the New Testament, first published in Wittenberg in 1522 (Plate 7.9). The woodcut itself stresses the biblical word so emphasised by the Protestant reformers. To either side are Saints Peter and Paul, both New Testament writers as well as heads of the early Christian Church, and in the corners are an angel, eagle, lion and winged bull, symbols of the four Gospel writers Matthew, John, Mark and Luke. Although not controversial in itself, this title page was done at a time when the translation of the Bible into the vernacular for the benefit of ordinary literate laypeople was still deeply contentious. In the same year, it may have been Holbein who designed a woodcut of Luther as Hercules trampling the philosophers underfoot. Sometimes interpreted as a criticism of Luther rather than a compliment, this may reflect humanist rather than Protestant reforming sensibilities.[21]

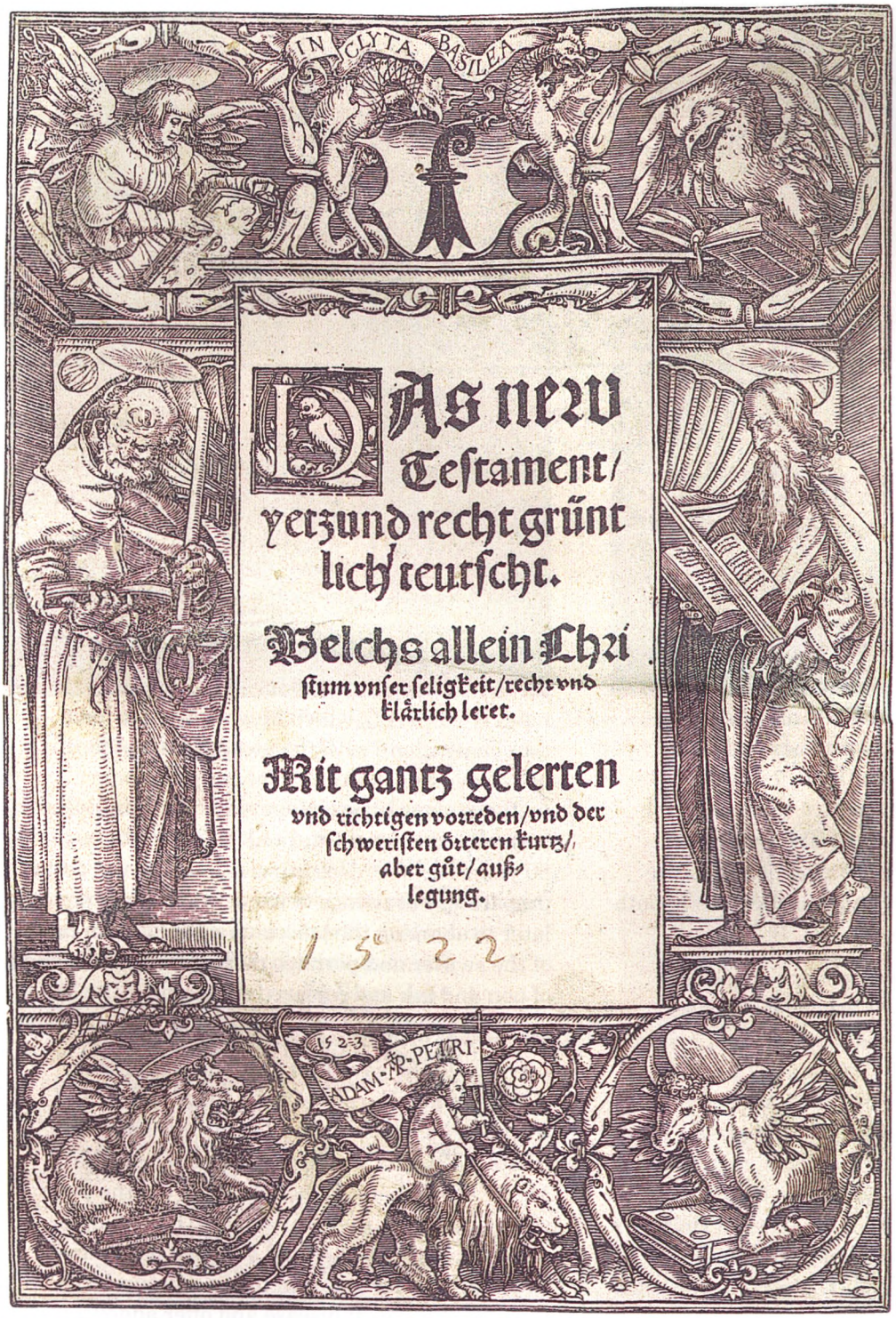

Plate 7.9 Hans Holbein the Younger, title page of Martin Luther's translation of the New Testament printed in Basle, 1523, woodcut, Zentralbibliothek, Zurich. Photo: Zentralbibliothek, Zurich.

Holbein seems also to have served as a hired designer for the block-cutter Hans Lützelburger (d.1526).[22] It was probably Lützelburger himself who commissioned designs for a series of woodcut *Pictures of Death* in 1523–5, in which death is represented as the constant companion to life, with the message that the moment of death is unpredictable. Around the same time, Lützelburger also cut, and perhaps commissioned, Holbein's designs for an alphabet of death, produced as one print with a biblical message inscribed underneath each letter. Although both sets of prints had anticlerical undertones, a degree of satire was inherent in the *danse macabre* with which Holbein's *Pictures of Death* most closely compare, and the programme does not necessarily

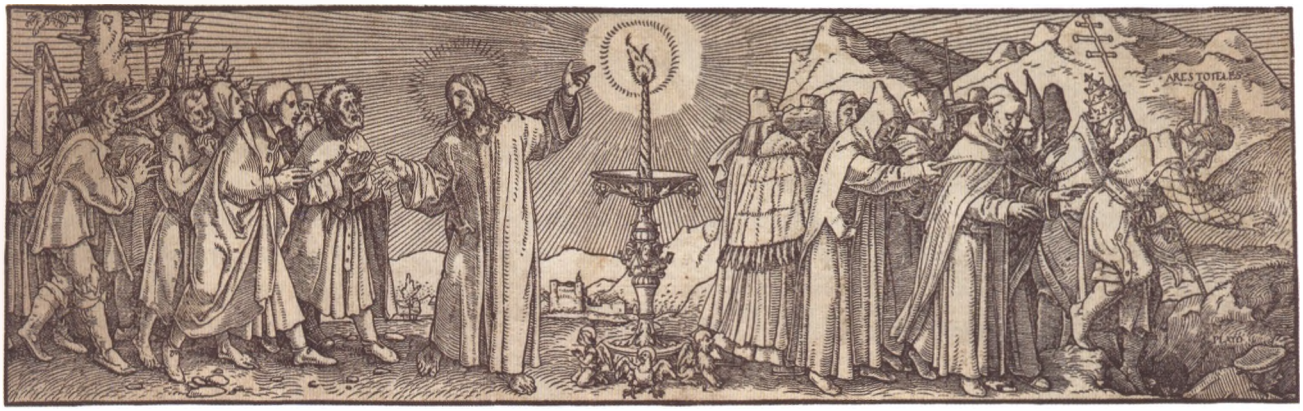

Plate 7.10 Design attributed to Hans Holbein the Younger, *Christ the True Light*, *c.*1522–3, woodcut, 9 × 28 cm, British Museum, London. Photo: © The Trustees of The British Museum.

imply reforming views.[23] Two woodcuts dating from around the early 1520s and again cut by Lützelburger have much more overt reforming themes that Oskar Bätschmann and Pascal Griener have identified as Lutheran.[24] The first depicts *Christ the True Light* showing the light to the faithful gathered to his left, while to his right the pope, a bishop, canons and monks together with ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle turn their backs on the light and, stumbling in darkness, fall into a ditch (Plate 7.10). The second, the *Selling of Indulgences*, shows the sale of remissions of sin by the pope and monks to the right contrasted with three true penitents to the left. It has been suggested that the designer of both these woodcuts was Holbein.

If Holbein's print designs served the cause of reform, he still worked for Catholic patrons as a portraitist and painter of altarpieces. On his election as burgomaster (or mayor) of Basle in 1516, the staunchly Catholic Jakob Meyer (1482–1530/1) and his wife Dorothea Kannengiesser sat for their portraits with Holbein, when the painter was only 19 years of age and not yet a member of the Basle guild (Plate 7.11). A shield with Holbein's initials and the date is included in the simulated frieze over the head of Jakob. The coin Meyer holds may allude to Basle's right to mint coins, granted in 1516. The portraits are somewhat reminiscent of those by Dürer in the informal, slightly dishevelled clothing of Jakob and the curious anatomy of the artificially broad and sloping shoulders of his wife. For the illusionistic architectural setting, Holbein could have taken inspiration from Augsburg printmaker Hans Burgkmair, whose work he must have known from his youth in the city: Burgkmair's 1512 portrait of Hans Paumgärtner has a similar architectural background and oblique viewpoint.[25] The setting gives the illusion of continuity through Holbein's two portraits, and the coffered barrel vault, simulated marble columns and simulated gilded frieze are fashionably Italian Renaissance in character. Presumably plausible likenesses, the portraits were carefully rehearsed through detailed silverpoint drawings including colour notes (Plate 7.12), which Meyer seems to have purchased along with the picture. Except for his use of coloured chalks, Holbein's preparatory methods show little change since Jan van Eyck's portrait drawing of Cardinal Albergati, done some 80 years earlier.[26] Holbein continued to use detailed preparatory drawings to his death, though he was later to abandon the laborious silverpoint in favour of the swifter and perhaps more expressive medium of pen and ink and coloured chalks.

Meyer was evidently pleased with Holbein's services, for he gave him a second commission *c.*1525 for an altarpiece of the Virgin and Child with donors, the so-called *Darmstadt Madonna* (Plate 7.13). The Virgin of Mercy shelters the Meyer family beneath her cloak, as did the central statue of the Kaisheim altarpiece (Plate 7.5) for which Holbein's father had supplied painted shutters. The fig leaves in the background were thought to ward off disease and offer added protection. As befits the Queen of Heaven, the Virgin wears a lavish gold crown resembling that of the Holy Roman Emperor, decorated with figures of seated saints, pearls and rubies.[27] On the right, Meyer's deceased first wife, second wife and daughter carry rosaries with which to recite set prayers to the Virgin. Set within a classicising shell niche, with glimpses of plants and blue sky behind, the picture is also reminiscent of some

Plate 7.11 Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portraits of Jakob Meyer and Dorothea Kannengiesser*, 1516, oil on panel, 39 × 31 cm each, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Kunstmuseum, Basle. Photo: Kunstmuseum, Basle/Martin Bühler.

early Italian Renaissance *sacre conversazione* paintings, here adapted to include not saints but full-size donors.[28] The identity of the clothed young boy on the left remains uncertain; perhaps he was an undocumented son who died young.[29] The curious nudity of the foreground child may identify him as the young Saint John the Baptist, who was commonly included with the Christ Child by Leonardo da Vinci and a number of other Italian Renaissance artists, including Raphael and Michelangelo. It seems likely that Holbein knew Leonardo's work, and the cleverly foreshortened hand of Christ has been likened to that of Leonardo's famous Virgin in the *Virgin of the Rocks*.[30] Conversely, the rucked carpet in the foreground, painted in glorious *trompe l'oeil* detail, and the verissimilitude of the portraits are reminiscent of the Netherlandish tradition.

Although classed as an altarpiece, this work is also a memorial to the Meyer family, and it

Plate 7.12 Hans Holbein the Younger, preparatory drawing of Jakob Meyer, 1516, silverpoint and chalk on paper with white priming, 28 × 19 cm, Kupferstichkabinett, Kunstmuseum, Basle. Photo: Kunstmuseum, Basle/Martin Bühler.

Plate 7.13 Hans Holbein the Younger, *Darmstadt Madonna*, *c.*1525–8, oil on panel, 147 × 102 cm, Schlossmuseum, Darmstadt. Photo: Bridgeman Art Library, London.

is perhaps significant that his daughter Anna wears rosemary and carnations in her hair, both symbols of remembrance. It is generally believed that the work was begun but perhaps not finished before Holbein first left for England in 1526. X-rays reveal significant changes to the female donors, particularly to Anna, whose long hair was originally loose in both the preparatory drawing and the initial painting, and to her mother, whose headdress was also altered. This is consistent with the artist and patron returning to and rethinking a work of art after some lapse of time, particularly since Anna was betrothed by 1528 and loose hair may no longer have been thought appropriate, but there is no proof.[31] What is certain is that it took some time and effort to finalise the composition, and that it must have been completed by *c.*1528–9, for it is most unlikely that anyone was still working on altarpieces in Basle after the iconoclasm. How this painting came to survive is uncertain, but it has been suggested that it might still have been in the artist's studio during the image breaking.[32] Meyer himself remained a staunch Catholic, and evidently ensured the preservation of the painting thereafter. The *Darmstadt Madonna* is an unreformed image about the veneration of the Virgin and belief in the efficacy of her intercession on behalf of humanity. While no one could have objected to Holbein's portraits, the overall theme of the *Darmstadt Madonna* would have been most offensive to the reformers.

In addition to his conventional Catholic contacts, Holbein was also on good terms with leading Basle humanists. As early as 1519, he painted a small portrait of the scholar Bonifacius Amerbach (1495–1562), the son of one of Basle's most important printers and a friend and eventually heir of the famous humanist Erasmus (Plate 7.14). Many of the paintings that survive from Holbein's Swiss sojourn belonged to or were rescued by Amerbach or his son Basilius. To the left of the

Plate 7.14 Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of Bonifacius Amerbach*, 1519, oil on panel, 29 × 28 cm, Kunstmuseum, Basle. Photo: Kunstmuseum, Basle/Martin Bühler.

Plate 7.15 Hans Holbein the Younger, *Dead Christ*, 1521, oil on panel, 31 × 200 cm, Kunstmuseum, Basle. Photo: Bridgeman Art Library, London.

sitter, a fictive plaque is represented hanging from a tree, with a dated Latin inscription written by Amerbach himself, identifying the sitter and the artist and praising the artist's powers of lifelike representation: 'Although a painted face, I do not differ from the living visage, but I have the same value as my Master, drawn with the help of exact lines. At the time when he had completed eight cycles of three years, the work of art represents me, with all the exactitute that belongs to Nature.'[33] This plaque is reminiscent of the Latin inscription included in Dürer's engraved portrait of Albrecht of Brandenburg printed in the same year, which reads: 'Thus were his eyes, his cheeks, his features at the age of 29.'[34] The two portraits essentially serve the same purpose: to record for posterity an accurate likeness at a particular moment.

Amerbach is set against a blue sky, and on the horizon the tips of snow-covered mountains can just be glimpsed. Albrecht Dürer occasionally included a landscape background in his early portraits. The artist may also have made the short journey to Italy, and it is possible that this work reveals a knowledge of the portraits of leading Venetian painters Giovanni Bellini and Giorgione. Holbein's credentials, therefore, were of the most cosmopolitan kind.

Amerbach later owned, and it has been suggested perhaps even commissioned, a painting of the *Dead Christ* by Holbein in which the emaciated figure is lying on a rumpled cloth within the restricted space of a tomb, eyes wide open in death (Plate 7.15). A simulated inscription at Christ's feet, painted as if chiselled out of the end wall of the tomb, gives the date, 1521, and the artist's monogram. In its stark realism the *Dead Christ* recalls Matthias Grünewald, whose work Holbein's father probably encountered while working at Isenheim, though Holbein himself is not known to have done so. The original framing of the panel is lost, though a Latin inscription on paper, 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews', interspersed with putti holding instruments of the Passion of Christ is incorporated into the present setting above the image of Christ, and according to John Rowlands could be contemporary with the painting.[35] Sometimes assumed to have been the predella of a lost altarpiece, it has also been suggested that this panel was an independent devotional work of art. Recently it was proposed that it was designed to form part of an epitaph planned by Bonifacius Amerbach for the family altar in the small cloister of the Carthusian monastery in Basle but never installed because of the Basle Reformation.[36] An engraved epitaph was finally placed in the chapel in 1544 that is very close in width to the *Dead Christ*, and Christ's pointing finger might well have been designed to draw attention to something below. The original setting and function remain uncertain, but what is certain is that from whatever ensemble the *Dead Christ* comes, it must inevitably have been an unconventional and disturbing image.

Carved Entombment groups were relatively common in northern Europe, but they usually included figures of the Virgin, Saint John and other mourners and bystanders. Very occasionally, a carved figure of Christ was 'entombed' within a recess in a church or chapel, as in the Jerusalem church erected by the Adornes family in Bruges in the fifteenth century. To represent Christ in such harrowing detail, enclosed within a claustrophobic tomb, was, so far as is known, unprecedented in painting. X-rays reveal that originally the roof of the tomb was curved, which might increase the sense of claustrophobia still more (and,

inexplicably, that the date was altered from 1522 to 1521). Whether it was patron or artist who devised this ground-breaking image, the picture suggests that Holbein's abilities as a painter of religious works of art were considerable. They were not, however, to be very much exercised. This was partly because of the pressures of the Reformation within Basle, but also because the contacts Holbein made and the sort of art his new patrons required did not necessarily favour religious art.

Amerbach was a close friend of Erasmus. Holbein designed the woodcut title page for Erasmus's *Enchiridion* in 1521, and enjoyed the patronage and friendship of Erasmus himself. Holbein had encountered Erasmus's writings much earlier, though, for shortly after their arrival in Basle he and his brother Ambrosius did pen and ink marginal drawings in a copy of Erasmus's *In Praise of Folly* owned by schoolmaster and theologian Oswald Myconius, who was perhaps teaching them Latin. The book survives and an inscription in the first page states that it gave Erasmus himself great pleasure.[37]

Erasmus took a critical attitude towards religious images, but he was interested in portraits, which he sent to his friends elsewhere in Europe as mementos to remember him by. In 1523 Holbein painted no fewer than three portraits of Erasmus, two of which were sent to England, the third to France. The most elaborate surviving version (Plate 7.16) is probably the portrait sent as a gift to Archbishop Warham, to whom Erasmus wrote: 'I presume that you have received by way of tribute a painted rendering of my features so that, should God summon me from here, you might have a bit of Erasmus.'[38] Holbein was later to paint Warham's own portrait in 1527 during his first trip to England (Louvre, Paris).[39]

Erasmus is represented in three-quarter view as a Renaissance scholar, his hands on a book inscribed on the edges in Greek and Latin: 'the Herculean labours of Erasmus of Rotterdam'. This portrait follows to a limited degree the tradition of the scholar in his study derived from the iconography of Saint Jerome, but the oblique viewpoint, the half-drawn curtain and the Renaissance-style column to the left are original touches. The capital of the column is taken from Book 4 of Cesare Cesariano's 1521 edition of the treatise on architecture by Vitruvius, showing off Erasmus's (and Holbein's) Renaissance credentials.[40] The artist is acknowledged in a Latin inscription on the edge of one of the books on the shelf in the upper right: 'That I, Johannes Holbein, will less easily find an emulator than a denigrator.'[41] This, according to Bätschmann and Griener, is a reference to Pliny the Elder's life of Zeuxis, in which Zeuxis stated that carping was a great deal easier than imitating, and also to a similar saying of Plutarch. Hence, for those clever enough to be conversant with the references, Holbein is tacitly comparing himself with these great ancient Greeks, one a fellow artist. On the front of this book is the date, 1523.

The association between Erasmus and Holbein seems to have soured later, but in 1526 it was sufficiently strong for Erasmus to recommend Holbein to the service of his English humanist friend Sir Thomas More. In a letter of August 1526, Erasmus wrote of Holbein to a friend in Antwerp: 'Here the arts are freezing, [so Holbein] is on his way to England to pick up some angels [coins] there.'[42] Even before the dismantling of images began in Basle, it appears that the demand for art was in decline.

As already noted, the Protestant Reformation created problems for artists. In 1525, following the start of the destruction or removal of images the previous year, the painters and sculptors of Strasburg famously made an appeal to the civic authorities for employment:

> since the veneration of images has, through the word of God, now sharply fallen away and every day falls away still more, at which we are well content, inasmuch as they were indeed misused and still are misused; but as we have learned to do nothing else but paint, carve and the like, by which means we have until now fed our wives and children through our own labour, as is proper to good citizens, we will sorely lack even this scanty provision for us and ours, so that we await nothing more sure than final ruin and the beggar's staff.[43]

Since Holbein painted portraits and supplied designs for woodcuts, it would probably be an exaggeration to suppose that he faced the 'beggar's staff' in 1526 through the decline in religious commissions. But when he returned to Basle two years later, the situation was such that he left again for England in 1532, this time for good.

From the time of his arrival in Basle to his departure, portraiture was but one aspect of

Plate 7.16 Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of Erasmus*, 1523, oil on oak panel, 76 × 51 cm, National Gallery, London, on loan from a private collection. Photo: Bridgeman Art Library, London.

Plate 7.17 Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of Jean, Duc de Berry*, 1524, black and coloured chalk on paper, 40 × 28 cm, Kupferstichkabinett, Kunstmuseum, Basle. Photo: Kunstmuseum, Basle/Martin Bühler.

Holbein's varied activity, and it cannot yet have been obvious that he would end up primarily a portrait painter. There is one indication that portraiture might have been more than an expedient for him. Holbein made a trip to France in 1524, apparently in the hope of finding work at the French court. In Bourges he sketched the carved portraits of Jean, Duc de Berry and his wife Jeanne de Boulogne attributed to Jean de Cambrai, now heavily restored and in the cathedral but at that time placed to either side of an altar in the Sainte-Chapelle, Bourges (see the map of key artistic sites in France, Plate 4.4). The figures are no more than pencilled in; it was the faces that interested Holbein, particularly the fleshy, elderly face of the duke (Plate 7.17), which in Holbein's drawing looks alive rather than carved of stone.[44] This drawing is also celebrated as the first time he used coloured chalk, which he could have learned in France and continued to use throughout his career in England.

4 Religious art in England on the eve of Holbein's arrival

The England that Holbein first visited in 1526 was in many ways a cosmopolitan country in which a foreign artist would by no means feel out of place. London, where he settled, was a major trading port, then still navigable via the River Thames, and foreign merchants and ships were an integral part of the life of the city. From the numbers of continental craftsmen working in England during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, it is also clear that there was a demand for foreign skills, particularly Netherlandish, though from the second decade of the sixteenth century the demand for Italian Renaissance art and artists was growing. Many of these foreign craftsmen lived in Southwark in south London. Southwark was an area of liberty, which meant that residents were exempted from membership of the craft guilds, and since membership could prove problematic as well as expensive for foreigners, this was a huge advantage.

Continental craftsmen also worked beyond London, both for the royal family and for other wealthy patrons, and dynastic links between the Low Countries and England during the fifteenth century probably encouraged such artistic interchange. Edward IV's sister Margaret of York was married in 1468 to Charles the Bold, ruler of Burgundy and the Netherlands, and Edward himself took refuge in the Low Countries in 1470 during the ill-fated coup of the Duke of Clarence. Netherlandish craftsmen were employed on his behalf in the furnishing of Saint George's Chapel, Windsor. Documents reveal that in 1477–8 Flemish carvers Dirike van Grove and Giles van Castell produced statues of Christ on the Cross, the Virgin and Saint John, presumably for the rood screen, together with images of Saint George and the Dragon and Saint Edward. They were paid the fair sum of 11 pounds and 10 shillings at a rate of 5 shillings a foot. To warrant such a fee, these lost statues were probably over life-size, and the Saint George and the Dragon might even have been a monumental group along the lines of, for example, Bernt Notke's *Saint George* in Stockholm Cathedral, carved only about ten years later.[45]

Wall paintings of a very Netherlandish character were being painted at nearby Eton College Chapel at almost the same time as the Windsor statues.

Plate 7.18 Unknown artist, *The Woman Who Held an Image of the Christ Child as Hostage*, *c.*1480–7, oil on stone, north wall, second scene from the west, Eton College Chapel, Windsor. Reproduced by permission of the Provost and Fellows of Eton College. Photo: Malcolm Daisley, e-motif.

Although Henry VI's foundation dated from 1440, the chapel was built over a long period of time and its design much modified, so it was probably not until the early 1480s that work began on the wall paintings. The overseer of the project was Bishop William Waynflete (*c.*1394–1486), the executor of the will of Henry VI (ruled 1422–61, 1470–1). One William Baker was paid for pigments in 1486–7, and although it is not certain that he was also one of the artists, it is likely that the wall paintings, executed in semi-grisaille, were finished around this time, and hence during the reign of the new king, Henry VII (ruled 1485–1509).[46] What seems certain is that they were done either by Netherlandish painters or by English painters trained in the Netherlands and working in the tradition of Rogier van der Weyden, Hugo van der Goes and Dieric Bouts. The Eton paintings are remarkable for their *trompe l'oeil* grisaille technique, their narrative flair and the fact that they are painted in oils directly onto the primed masonry rather than on plaster (Plate 7.18).

The wall paintings run along both north and south walls of what used to be the nave, or public part, of the chapel. The chapel was originally conceived as the chancel of a huge church that was drastically curtailed in the building, and it was subsequently divided in two to form a choir and a nave for parish

purposes. Scenes from the posthumous miracles of the Virgin Mary fill the lower tiers, the south wall being entirely devoted to one narrative of a wronged empress delivered by the intervention of the Virgin. Each scene has an explanatory text in Latin and is set within a continuous, fictive stone setting and divided by simulated statues set within fictive niches. A second tier of paintings of male saints, prophets and miracles – now lost – was set above to counterbalance the female programme. Clearly didactic in content, the story lines are taken from two popular medieval texts, the *Golden Legend* and the *Speculum historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais (part of his encyclopaedic work, the *Speculum maius*).

The narrative of the second scene on the north side offers an insight into the power of religious images (Plate 7.18). According to the *Golden Legend*, a widow, despairing of having her prayers for the release of her captive son answered, took the image of the Christ Child from a statue of the Virgin and Child, and held it hostage until the Virgin heard her prayers. The woman is reported to have said to the image of the Virgin: 'O Virgin blessed, I have often asked you for the liberation of my son, and so far you have not come to the aid of this pitiable mother. I have sought your patronage for my son and see no return for my prayers. Therefore, as my son has been taken away from me, I will take your son away from you and hold him in custody as a hostage for mine.'[47] Here the statue is clearly identified with the Virgin herself.

It goes without saying that the remarkable subject matter of the Eton paintings is based on legend rather than biblical text, and is somewhat like manuscript illumination writ large for the general public. Indeed, perhaps the closest parallels in terms of subject matter and grisaille technique are the surviving manuscripts of *Les Miracles de Notre Dame* or *The Miracles of Our Lady* compiled by the Burgundian courtier Jean Miélot for Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy and the Netherlands. In both content and its didactic function, the Eton series reflects a pre-Reformation mindset, and like so many other church wall paintings, they were whitewashed over during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I in 1560.

Pre-Reformation England is sometimes depicted as culturally backward, in need of Continental artists because of the dearth of indigenous talent. In his book *The Governor* written in 1531, Thomas Eliot complained that 'if we will have anything well painted carved or embroidered', it was necessary to 'resort to strangers'.[48] In view of the dearth of surviving pre-Reformation art by British craftsmen, this judgement is difficult to verify. English patrons were evidently discriminating, with an eager eye for quality, and the little that is known about artistic projects around the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries, whether made by Continental or English craftsmen, suggests not the unimaginative conventions of a backward culture but a degree of innovation in terms of design and iconography. The Eton paintings were only one example of several. The combination of English patrons and Continental craftsmen appears to have been a particularly fertile one.

The Mercers' Christ (Plate 7.19) is made of English Chilmark stone and so was certainly carved

Plate 7.19 Unknown Netherlandish sculptor, *The Mercers' Christ*, c.1500–10, Chilmark stone, 197 × 69 cm, Mercers' Hall, London. Photo: reproduced by courtesy of the Mercers' Company.

in England, but stylistic comparisons strongly suggest that its carver is likely to have come from the north-eastern Netherlands, the area from which the majority of Netherlandish immigrants came.[49] Although very damaged, presumably by iconoclasts, it is still possible to tell that the figure originally lay with the right arm resting across the body, the left down by the side where traces of the fingertips still remain, and just below is carved a drop of blood as if fallen from the dead hand. This harrowing image shows thorns from the crown of thorns impaling both eyebrows, the head thrown back and without a pillow, the stone completely excavated beneath stiffened knees, the small of the back and the neck. The polychromy has now disappeared, but technical analysis revealed that the flesh tones were probably designed to simulate a deathly pallor.

Impressive in its affective power, the statue is still more impressive in its original iconography. The cloth on which Christ lies was not a white shroud but a rich purple cloth. The statue does not seem to have belonged to a multi-figure Entombment group like those common in France; nor is this strictly speaking an Entombment scene at all since Christ is placed on a sort of stretcher rather than in a tomb chest. Evidently commissioned at the beginning of the sixteenth century for the church of Saint Thomas of Acon on Cheapside in London, later the Mercers' Chapel, where it was uncovered in 1954, its original function is not known for certain. Inscriptions around the edge of the bier offer some clues, however. One inscription relates to the ceremonies of Good Friday, when a cross or a Eucharistic wafer representing the body of Christ was symbolically laid in a 'grave', a temporary Easter sepulchre usually erected to the north of the high altar. This sort of re-enactment of the dramatic incidents of Christ's life at major festivals of the late medieval Church was eventually outlawed by the Protestant reformers. A second inscription, taken from one of the New Testament letters from Saint Paul to the Philippians, suggests that the image might also have been related to specific and relatively new liturgies associated with the Holy Name of Jesus and the Five Wounds of Christ introduced to England during the fifteenth century. The power of *The Mercers' Christ*, therefore, should probably not be regarded as a stylistic matter attributable to the skills of a foreign craftsman; rather, it was an image deliberately designed in a very innovative way to serve a particular, complex religious function. There was certainly nothing backward about this.[50]

Henry VII's chapel in Westminster Abbey was perhaps the most ambitious undertaking during the first decade of the sixteenth century. The first stones were laid in 1503, and the chapel was broadly complete by Henry's death in 1509, together with the 107 statues originally decorating the interior. Of these, 95 survive – partly, no doubt, because a royal chapel was out of bounds for iconoclasts. The statues reveal a heterogenous range of saints that certainly offered a vast array of potential protection for the deceased sovereign. The extent to which foreign craftsmen participated in their carving is much contested.[51] Enclosing the tomb of Henry VII is an elaborate bronze grate that was originally decorated with 32 bronze statues of saints, of which only six remain. All are known to have been cast by a Dutchman named Thomas as early as 1505–6, significantly earlier than the tomb itself (Plate 7.20).[52]

The chapel also included the bronze tomb of Henry VII's mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort, for which designs on cloth were produced by Netherlandish painter Maynard Vewicke in 1511, who was in the service of Henry VII from at least 1502. Henry VII's tastes appear to have been thoroughly late Gothic, and a Renaissance-style design for his tomb made by the Italian Guido Mazzoni in 1506 seems to have been rejected. His successor Henry VIII (ruled 1509–47) was more captivated by the Italian Renaissance. In 1512, the Florentine Pietro Torrigiano was employed to cast the tomb of Margaret Beaufort, and subsequently the double tomb of Henry VII and his wife Elizabeth of York as well. Torrigiano was also engaged to produce a Renaissance-style high altar for the chapel, with a terracotta statue of the dead Christ lying under the altar, reminiscent of the tradition of terracotta Entombment groups of Guido Mazzoni (?1450–1518) and Niccolò dell'Arca (d.1494) in northern Italy. Left unfinished when Torrigiano left the country, the altar was finally installed by the Italian sculptor Benedetto da Rovezzano (1474–*c*.1554) in 1526, the year that Holbein first arrived in England. The altar was destroyed in the seventeenth century.[53]

Despite a growing interest in the Italian Renaissance, the enthusiasm of the English court for craftsmen from northern Europe continued, for

Plate 7.20 Thomas the Dutchman, *Saint John the Evangelist*, 1505–6, bronze, grate of Henry VII's tomb, Westminster Abbey, London. Photo: © Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

Ghent painter and manuscript illuminator Gerard Horenbout was certainly in the service of Henry VIII between 1528 and 1531, and his son Lucas served Henry between 1525 and Lucas's death in

Plate 7.21 Attributed to Lucas Horenbout, *Portrait of Hans Holbein the Younger*, 1543, vellum mounted on playing card, diameter 4 cm, Wallace Collection, London. Reproduced larger than life-size. Photo: reproduced by kind permission of the Trustees of the Wallace Collection, London.

1544. According to the biographer of Netherlandish artist Karel van Mander, it was Lucas who taught Holbein the art of miniature painting. A miniature version of the self-portrait Holbein made just before his death has sometimes been attributed to Lucas (Plate 7.21). Lucas's sister Susanna, whose abilities as an artist had surprised Dürer, also settled and married in England.[54]

Far from backward, the England in which Holbein arrived in 1526 was still offering considerable opportunities, whether in the royal works or for the large, wealthy merchant and aristocratic classes. The examples presented here show that craftsmen were not just producing conventional religious works of art by rote; rather, the specific demands of a project might entail a significant degree of innovation. Nor were opportunities restricted to craftsmen working in a particular tradition or style, for by the early sixteenth century the fashion for Netherlandish art, if such it was, had broadened to include Italian Renaissance styles.

5 Holbein and the reform of images in England

Sir Thomas More (1477/8–1535), later Chancellor to Henry VIII, wrote to Erasmus at the end of 1526: 'I'm afraid [Holbein] won't find England as fruitful and lucrative as he had hoped. But I will do my best to ensure that it is not a complete waste of time.'[55] It was More himself who provided Holbein with his most important commission during his first visit to England from 1526 to 1528. In addition to a half-length portrait on panel in 1527 (Frick Collection, New York), More commissioned Holbein to produce a group portrait with his family, painted probably life-size in glue tempera on cloth. While group portraits of donors were found within altarpieces, independent secular group portraits were almost unheard of. Presumably the idea came from More himself, and as such was within the humanist penchant for portraits as mementos, like the ones Holbein had already painted for Erasmus.

The final portrait of the More family has perished, but a late sixteenth-century copy by Rowland Lockey survives, along with a full-scale annotated drawing by Holbein (Plate 7.22) that was evidently sent to Erasmus in Basle and later belonged to Amerbach. Both copy and drawing show the extended More family within an extraordinarily illusionistic domestic interior, captured in attitudes of conversation and contemplation. Erasmus commented to More's daughter Margaret Roper in a letter of 6 September 1529, apparently in relation to the drawing that he had received, 'It is so successful that if I had been in person in your home I would not have seen more.'[56]

For this painting Holbein also produced detailed preparatory drawings in coloured chalks to capture the likeness of the individual family members. A drawing of Sir Thomas More is pricked for transfer and may conceivably have been used as a cartoon for the finished group portrait.[57] Cecily Heron, More's youngest daughter, is shown seated saying her rosary in the lower right quarter of the picture (third from the right in Plate 7.22). An individual study for this sitter also survives, in which her pose differs significantly (Plate 7.23). In the final

Plate 7.22 Hans Holbein the Younger, study for a portrait of Sir Thomas More and his family, 1527, pen and ink on paper, 39 × 52 cm, Kupferstichkabinett, Kunstmuseum, Basle. Photo: Kunstmuseum, Basle/Martin Bühler.

Plate 7.23 Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of Cecily Heron*, 1526–8, coloured chalk, 39 × 28 cm. Royal Library, Windsor Castle. Photo: The Royal Collection © 2006, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Plate 7.24 Leonardo da Vinci, *Portrait of Cecilia Gallerani*, c.1485, oil on panel, 55 × 40 cm, Czartoryski Museum, Kracow. Photo: Princes Czartoryski Foundation at the National Museum in Krakow.

painting, Holbein raised her right hand. The revised gesture, turn of her head, her direct gaze and even her costume recall the portrait of her namesake, Cecilia Gallerani, by Leonardo da Vinci (Plate 7.24). Leonardo's sitter holds an ermine, but the similarities of pose and watchful elegance are unmistakable, another indication of the esteem in which Holbein held Leonardo's work.

Among the other commissions Holbein succeeded in obtaining during his first visit was one for a double portrait of Sir Henry Guildford and his wife Mary Wotton (Plate 7.25). Here Holbein imported some of the motifs he had used earlier: the suggestion of sky and tendrils of plants in the background as in the *Darmstadt Madonna* (Plate 7.13) and the portrait of Amerbach (Plate 7.14); the Renaissance-style column found in a slightly different form in the portrait of Erasmus (Plate 7.16); the architectural setting framing the sitter found again in slightly different form in the portrait of Dorothea Kannengiesser (Plate 7.11). Conversely, Lady Guildford's clothes are represented in great detail, from her cloth-of-gold sleeves to the six gold chains adorning her bodice and the complicated architectural headdress that she wears. Holbein's full-length costume study in pen and ink now in the British Museum appears to relate to this portrait, suggesting that Lady Guildford's lady-in-waiting modelled the dress for Holbein.[58]

Somewhat forbidding in the portrait, Lady Guildford holds a rosary and a copy of a popular devotional text, the *Life of Christ* by Ludolph of Saxony (d.1378), stressing her orthodox piety, and the rosemary tucked into her bodice evokes remembrance. Nothing could be further from this pious severity than the informality of Holbein's preparatory drawing, in which she faces the viewer but casts an amused glance to her right, presumably towards her husband (Plate 7.26). Holbein used this drawing as a pattern, transferring the contours of the drawing to the underdrawing of the panel, which seems to have been his usual practice in the English portraits.[59] The difference between portrait and painting lies in the facial expression and pose, for the body has been shifted to three-quarter view. This shows the degree to which a painted image might be manipulated to create the desired impression for posterity. The piety injected into the finished painting of Lady Guildford may be no more than a convention of female respectability, but since such religious trappings were by no means customary in Holbein's later English portraits, it is also possible that they reflected a real religious intention.

It is possible that Erasmus's acquaintance with Guildford effected the introduction, but Holbein may also have met Guildford at court, where the latter was master of the revels, or entertainment. In 1527, Holbein seems to have been employed by the court to decorate a temporary banqueting hall and theatre at Greenwich with two painted *trompe l'oeil* triumphal arches with Renaissance decoration and a painting of the defeat of the French at Thérouanne in 1513. A painting of the heavens on the ceiling was devised by the king's astronomer Nikolaus Kratzer, a friend of Sir Thomas More who also became Holbein's friend and commissioned a portrait by him in 1528. It was Kratzer who inscribed the identity of the various individuals in the drawing for the group portrait of the More family (Plate 7.22). Holbein was not yet typecast as a portraitist, it seems, and even on this first visit evidently had an introduction to the English court.[60]

Holbein could not be absent from Basle for more than two years without forfeiting his citizenship, and it may have been for this reason that he returned in 1528. By 1532, however, he was back in England. Initially, Holbein found employment among his fellow countrymen as a portrait painter. The community of traders from the Baltic area congregated in their headquarters, the so-called German Steelyard (the English equivalent of the Venetian Fondaco dei Tedeschi), which was situated on the north bank of the Thames west of Tower Bridge, where Cannon Street station now lies. With these men, Holbein had both language and culture in common, though oddly it does not seem to have been until his second trip that he won commissions there. For the dining room at the Steelyard, Holbein produced two Renaissance-style grisaille paintings in tempera on cloth representing the Triumph of Riches and the Triumph of Poverty, now known only through a cartoon and copies. He also produced several portraits of members of the Steelyard, possibly primarily as surrogate photographs to send home to their families.[61]

Danzig merchant Georg Gisze, whom Holbein painted in 1532, was a member of the Steelyard and is documented in England 1522–33 (Plate 7.27). In this portrait Holbein used an illusionistic setting that related to the sitter (like

Plate 7.25 Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of Mary Wotton, Lady Guildford,* 1527, oil on panel, 83 × 67 cm, Saint Louis Art Museum (museum purchase).

Plate 7.26 Hans Holbein the Younger, drawing for *Portrait of Mary Wotton, Lady Guildford*, 1527, coloured chalk on paper, 55 × 39 cm, Kupferstichkabinett, Kunstmuseum, Basle. Photo: Kunstmuseum, Basle/Martin Bühler.

Plate 7.27 Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of Georg Gisze*, 1532, oil on panel, 96 × 86 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin. Photo: © 2007 bpk/Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin/Jörg P. Anders.

the setting for his 1523 portrait of Erasmus – see Plate 7.16), surrounding Gisze with the tools of his trade as a merchant. In Netherlandish painting there was a long tradition of using the setting as a way of commenting on the identity or activities of the sitter. As early as 1449 Petrus Christus of Bruges had painted a goldsmith in an interior surrounded by his wares and receiving clients (see Chapter 1, Plate 1.8).[62] In the *Portrait of a Man with a Coin* by Hans Memling (d.1494), details of the setting provide clues to the sitter's identity.[63] Holbein's portrait of Georg Gisze has been related to a portrait by Netherlandish painter Jan Gossaert of a banker thought to be Jerome Sandelin of Zeeland, who is posed in the act of writing in a ledger in his office strewn with letters.[64]

Merchants were great letter writers, and letters bearing Gisze's name and merchant's mark are tucked behind a narrow wooden rail nailed onto the wall for the purpose, while Gisze himself is captured in the action of breaking the seal on another from one of his brothers. Gisze's identity is scribbled as if in chalk on the back wall, rather as a merchant might chalk up a list of figures later to be erased, together with his Latin motto, translated variously as 'no pleasure without regret' or 'no

joy without sorrow'.[65] Another Latin inscription is disguised as a note represented as if hastily stuck with sealing wax against the paneling at the top of the picture. This reads: 'This picture of Georg that you see records his features ... in the year of his age 34, in the year of the Lord 1532.'[66] Holbein also includes a Latin inscription almost identical to the one found in Dürer's 1519 engraved portrait of Albrecht of Brandenburg cited above (p.264): 'He has in life such eyes, such cheeks.' While this suggests that Holbein or his patron knew Dürer's print, it also confirms a more generic function of portraiture as a memorial and reminder of mortality. Pens, an ink pot and a sand shaker to dry the ink all lie on the table before Gisze; scales presumably for weighing coins are suspended from the shelf behind, while a box of coins is half open in the lower right-hand corner. Yet this is no snapshot of a merchant at work but rather a careful construction full of meaning. The table is covered with an expensive oriental rug; the vase holds carnations, believed to offer protection from illness and evil, and together with the sprig of rosemary invoke remembrance. According to Sir Thomas More, Holbein's erstwhile patron, rosemary was 'the herb sacred to remembrance and therefore of friendship'.[67]

Portraiture remained a respectable and potentially lucrative option for an artist in England during the 1530s, whereas the possibility of undertaking any religious commissions receded markedly. In 1533, Henry VIII divorced his wife Catherine of Aragon in the face of the pope's refusal to annul the marriage, and he took for his second wife Anne Boleyn. In retaliation, the pope excommunicated the king, which led in 1534 to the Act of Supremacy, by which Henry declared himself head of the Church of England. Although probably himself no out-and-out reformer, he passed measures that strengthened the hand of the reformers in England and set in motion what was to become, under his son Edward VI, the English Reformation. In 1536 Henry's minister Thomas Cromwell began the Dissolution of the Monasteries, ostensibly on the grounds of corruption, and in the same year the Ten Articles were passed warning against the dangers of idolatry. Injunctions issued at the end of 1538 demanded the removal of idolatrous images from churches at the discretion of the local bishop and banned the burning of candles before images.

Very early on in his second period in England, Holbein appears to have entered the circle of Sir Thomas Cromwell (*c.*1485–1540), Protestant reformer and architect of much of the religious change of the 1530s. He became Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1533, oversaw the king's divorce and became vicegerent of the newly constituted English Church in 1535. Holbein's portrait of Cromwell (Plate 7.28) must date from 1532–3, the year that Cromwell was keeper of the royal jewel house, for the letter on the table refers to him in this office. This poorly preserved portrait shows him, like Gisze, as a man of affairs reading and writing letters, and even, perhaps, creates the illusion that he is about to respond to an applicant waiting just out of the painting to the viewer's left. Despite the sobriety of his black robe, his stern expression and the austerely geometric composition, Cromwell is subtly revealed as a man of wealth, with a ring and a robe with a lavish fur collar, a fine brocade cloth covering the wall behind, and an expensive rug on the table to the left.

Cromwell appears to have been the motivating force behind the first sanctioned translation of the Bible into English by Miles Coverdale in 1535. Just as Holbein had provided the design for the woodcut title page of Luther's 1523 New Testament in Basle (Plate 7.9), so he also was responsible for the title page of the Coverdale Bible (Plate 7.29). The finished woodcut has none of the finesse of those of Holbein's Basle collaborator Lützelburger, and the use to which the woodcut is put is little short of propaganda, for it shows Henry seated on a raised throne as head of the Church, handing over the book to a group of supplicant, kneeling bishops. Above to left and right are four scenes, each with biblical references, contrasting the Law of the Old Testament with the New Covenant of the New Testament – very like the old system of typology used by Conrad Witz in his Heilspiegel altarpiece (Plates 7.2–7.3) but theologically worlds apart. Moses receives the Ten Commandments opposite Christ enjoining his disciples to go out into the world and preach the Gospel; all the disciples hold keys, apparently to avoid asserting the primacy of the usual keyholder, Saint Peter, who was the prototype of the despised papacy. Below Moses, the chief priest Esdras is reading the Law to the Israelites in Jerusalem; opposite is the scene of the Apostles preaching, after having received the Holy Spirit in 'tongues as of fire' at Pentecost (Acts 2).[68]

Plate 7.28 Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of Thomas Cromwell*, 1532–3, oil on panel, 78 × 64 cm, Frick Collection, New York, Henry Clay Frick Bequest. Photo: © The Frick Collection, New York.

At the top, the fallen Adam and Eve are contrasted with the risen Christ, victorious over sin and trampling the devil underfoot.

Although it is tempting to suppose that Holbein's connections with Thomas Cromwell account for his eventual employment as court painter, this is not necessarily so. Holbein had, after all, worked for Henry VIII during his first visit to England. He was made painter to the king by 1536 and perhaps earlier – incomplete documentation means that the exact date is unknown. In 1537, he completed a group portrait perhaps rather less ambitious in artistic terms than that of the More family but one of immeasurably greater prestige: a wall painting of Henry VIII, Jane Seymour, Henry VII and Elizabeth of York for the palace of Whitehall in London.

This mural, now only known from copies and from part of the original cartoon used to transfer the design to the wall (Plate 7.30), was painted for the privy chamber, which Susan Foister describes as 'the most privileged space in which

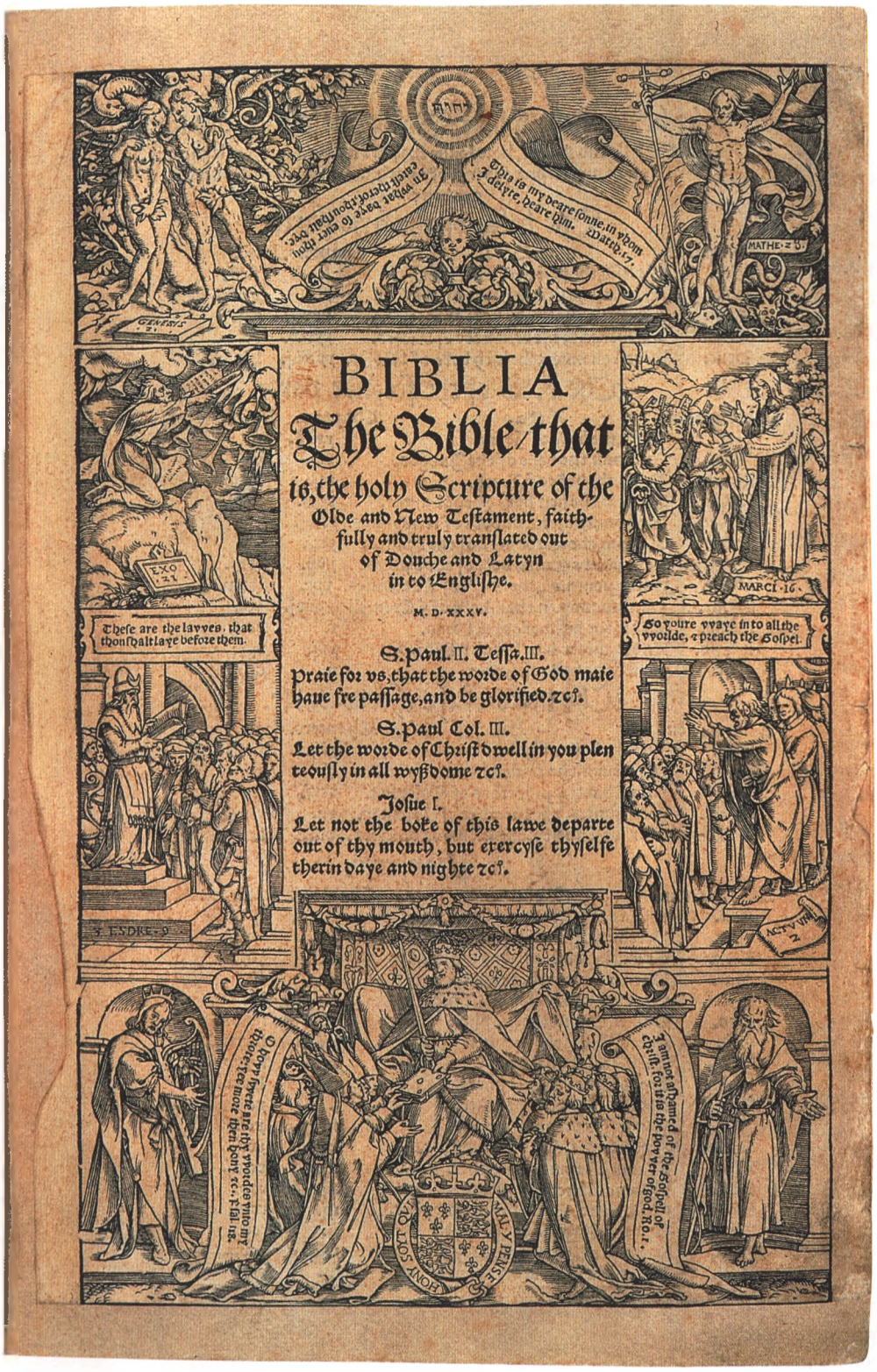

Plate 7.29 Hans Holbein the Younger, title page of the Coverdale Bible, 1535, woodcut, 32 × 18 cm, British Library, London (C.132.H46). Photo: by permission of the British Library, London.

Plate 7.30 Hans Holbein the Younger, cartoon for group portrait of Henry VIII, Jane Seymour, Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, *c.*1536–7, ink and watercolour on paper, 258 × 137 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London. Photo: © National Portrait Gallery, London.

to meet the king'.[69] It is an ingenious statement of both power and fashion. The Renaissance-style frieze decorating the cornice and capitals of the architecture, the Italianate candelabra decoration of the pilaster, and the shell niche behind the two Henries testify to the cosmopolitan, up-to-date culture of the Tudor court and evoke the illusion of a real architectural setting. Conversely, the lavish costume of Henry VIII is described with the level of painstaking detail that characterized English portraiture. Beneath his feet, the rucked carpet, reminiscent of Holbein's *Darmstadt Madonna*, adds a sense of immediacy, as if the royal family had hurriedly assembled for a particular audience. This was merely an illusion, of course, since Henry's parents were dead and Jane Seymour died in 1537, the date the painting bears. Above all, the colossal bulk and ultra-confident pose of Henry VIII impart a sense of virility and authority that must be absolutely deliberate and designed to contrast with the other three, quieter figures. Although Henry's face is seen in three-quarter view in the cartoon, the copy of the Whitehall mural shows that in the final painting it was changed to full face, an indication of the degree of care with which this dynastic image was manipulated for effect.

On the altar in the centre of the picture is a Latin inscription in which Henry's royal image is inextricably bound up with his reforming religious policies as Supreme Governor of the Church of England, for which he claims greater fame even than his father, who brought peace to the country:

> If you enjoy seeing the illustrious figures of heroes,
> Look on these; no painting ever bore greater.
> The great debate, the competition, the great question is whether the father
> Or the son is the victor. For both indeed are supreme.
> The former often overcame his enemies, and the fires of his country,
> And finally gave peace to its citizens.
> The son, born indeed for greater tasks, from the altar
> Removed the unworthy, and put worthy men in their place.
> To unerring virtue, the presumption of the Popes has yielded
> And so long as Henry the Eighth carries the sceptre in his hand,
> Religion is renewed, and during his reign
> The doctrines of God have begun to be held in his honour.[70]

Those awaiting an audience with the king in the privy chamber might view his surrogate, a remarkably lifelike image conveying powerful dynastic propaganda. The irony is that here a secular artistic image is used to shore up religious policies that would eventually outlaw religious images altogether.

Holbein's portrait of Jane Seymour's son Edward, Prince of Wales, the future Edward VI, as a small child served a rather different function (Plate 7.31). Since it is probably the portrait Holbein is recorded to have given to Henry as a New Year's gift on 1 January 1539, it had no official propaganda purpose, and its flattering programme was presumably devised primarily by Holbein. Unlike the Steelyard portraits, this is no memento of the prince's precise appearance at a particular, tender age, for, as Susan Foister points out, the sickly Prince Edward is unlikely ever to have looked as robust as he is represented here.[71] The prince's pose and attire are incongruously regal but with a witty twist: he holds a rattle instead of a sceptre. The Latin inscription below, written by one of Cromwell's supporters Richard Morison, reads as follows:

> Little one, emulate thy father and be the heir of his virtue; the world contains nothing greater. Heaven and earth could scarcely produce a son whose glory would surpass that of such a father. Do thou but equal the deeds of thy parent and men can ask no more. Shouldst thou surpass him, thou has outstript all kings the world has revered in ages past.[72]

The contrived format of this portrait probably says more about Holbein (and Morison's) desire to curry favour and appeal to an exaggerated royal self-image than it does about the young prince himself.

As well as being useful as gifts and for propaganda purposes, royal portraits also retained their traditional function of allowing prospective brides and bridegrooms too geographically remote to meet a preview of their future spouse. Just as the Netherlandish painter Jan van Eyck had traveled to Portugal in 1428 to record the likeness of Isabella of Portugal, the future bride of his master Philip the Good, so Holbein was sent to Brussels in 1538 to the court of Mary of Hungary to paint the newly widowed Christina of Denmark, Duchess of Milan. Letters written back to England at the time reveal that Holbein was granted a sitting of three hours, during which he presumably made a drawing that he later used to produce the surviving

Plate 7.31 Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of Edward, Prince of Wales*, *c.*1539, oil on panel, 57 × 44 cm, Andrew W. Mellon Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. © Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Photo: Richard Carafelli.

painting (Plate 7.32). Only a few days earlier, another artist had taken Christina's portrait for Henry, but the dispatch of this painting was halted because it was deemed inadequate in comparison with Holbein's. In the earlier portrait Christina was shown out of mourning, so it is interesting that in Holbein's version the sitter reverted to her mourning clothes. In fact, the dramatic tonal contrasts between the black fabric and Christina's white face and elegant hands all serve to enhance her beauty. Though only 16 years old, the sobriety of her clothing also lends her a certain gravitas. While most of Holbein's other portraits, and most marriage portraits by other artists, are half-length or head and shoulders only, the unusual full-length, erect pose and frontal gaze were presumably specified so that Henry could gain as full an impression of her as possible.

In Henry's quest for a new wife, Holbein was also sent to Düren in 1539 to paint Anne and Amelia of Cleves. English representatives had already been offered portraits of the sisters, one of which might be a painting of Anne now in Saint John's College, Oxford, but Holbein was sent nevertheless to provide a guaranteed likeness.[73] Although

Plate 7.32 Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of Christina of Denmark, Duchess of Milan*, 1538, oil on panel, 179 × 83 cm, National Gallery, London. Presented by the National Art Collections Fund with the aid of an anonymous donor. Photo: © National Gallery, London.

Henry went ahead with the marriage, it is well known that when Anne arrived in England he took a strong dislike to her, perhaps suggesting that Holbein erred on the side of flattery rather than

Plate 7.33 Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of Anne of Cleves*, 1539, bodycolour on vellum, diameter 4.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Reproduced larger than life-size. Photo: © V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum.

verisimilitude. One of the two surviving versions by Holbein is a portrait miniature (Plate 7.33), and exceptionally the ivory box in the form of a Tudor rose in which it was designed to be kept survives. Holbein's rare use of the expensive pigment ultramarine testifies to the preciousness of this tiny portrait, designed for private scrutiny. In Henry VIII's England, portrait miniatures offered an alternative format to conventional half-length or head and shoulders works, and Holbein produced many of them.

Holbein's skills as a portrait painter were clearly heavily in demand not only from his employer Henry VIII but from the many individuals connected with the court. In addition to his surviving paintings, there are some 50 portrait drawings for which no painted version survives and numerous versions after Holbein, some of which might have been done by members of his workshop.[74] It seems likely that the availability at court of such a gifted portraitist stimulated demand. Ultimately, it must have been this demand as much as the religious climate that decided the course Holbein's career in England finally took and on which his reputation was built.

6 Conclusion

There was considerable continuity between Holbein's activities in Basle and in London. In both cities he produced portraits, wall paintings and book illustrations of a reforming character. Conspicuously, however, there is no evidence that he produced conventional religious paintings during his time in England. While it might be true that English Protestant opposition during the late 1520s and 1530s was not necessarily so overwhelming as to preclude the production of religious works of art altogether, Holbein's artistic opportunities were governed by the requirements of his patrons and employers. Humanists, courtiers and merchants alike sought portraits, and it was evidently for his skills in portraiture that Holbein was renowned. Portraits were not necessarily devoid of moral or religious sentiment, and conventionally provided an important reminder of mortality as well as serving as surrogate family photographs,[75] but they did not incur the opposition of reformers. Hence they represented a safe option for both artist and patron during a turbulent reforming era. While such work was available, the absence of religious commissions might not have caused Holbein undue regret, particularly if, as has often been supposed, in time he began to adopt the reforming views of some of his employers.[76]

The fate of religious images in England was sealed at the accession of Edward VI in 1547. On 31 July, a new set of injunctions demanded that all images associated with pilgrimages, or any other form of abuse, be removed and destroyed. In December, chantry chapels were finally abolished, and with them religious guilds and their possessions. In January 1550, the act for the defacing of images was passed, which gave churches six months to destroy all religious images whether still in churches or already removed from them. In November 1550, an order was issued for altars to be completely dismantled. Religious art was never really viewed with approval in England again; indeed, virtually none survived to be viewed at all. This was Basle all over again, but Holbein was not there to see it. He had died, probably of the plague, in 1543.

– George who was patron of the emperor's Order of Saint George, Sebastian patron of archers, and Barbara patron of artillery.

[92] Schmid, 1984, pp.757–9.

[93] Ibid., pp.765–6.

[94] Luther, *On the Misuse of the Mass*, 1521, quoted in Koslofsky, 2000, p.35.

[95] Koslofsky, 2000, p.36.

[96] John Frith, *Disputation of Purgatory*, 1531, quoted in Koslofsky, 2000, p.34. Frith was an associate of William Tyndale, who translated the Bible into English. Frith had fled to Antwerp from England in 1528 because of his support for Luther's Reformation; see Marshall, 2002, pp.48–51.

Chapter 7

[1] Gordon, 2002, p.39.

[2] All of the surviving panels from the altarpiece are in the Kunstmuseum in Basle except for Solomon and Sheba (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin) and Augustus and the Tiburtine sibyl and Saint Bartholomew (Musée des Beaux Arts, Dijon).

[3] The incident is repeated in 1 Chronicles 11:17–25. Sabothai is not named in either of these passages.

[4] Châtelet, 1987; document published in Roth, 1933–8, vol.3, pp.127–8.

[5] Gordon, 2002, pp.33, 35.

[6] 'Dis ist die engelwichi zu unser lieben frouwen zu den einsidlen ave gr[a]cia plenna.'

[7] Koerner, 2004, pp.146–7.

[8] The wooden statue of the Virgin in the monastery today is fifteenth century and far too late to have belonged to Saint Meinrad, however.

[9] Erasmus's 1526 colloquy, 'A pilgrimage for religion's sake', is in Erasmus, 1965, pp.287–91.

[10] See Eisler, 1970, and Richardson, Woods and Franklin (1.6.4).

[11] For an up-to-date English translation, see Voragine, 1993.

[12] Verdi, 2003, cat.216, p.271.

[13] Baxandall, 1980, p.292.

[14] See Richardson, Woods and Franklin, 2007, 3.7.5; for Karlstadt, see 3.7.1.

[15] For John of Damascus, see ibid. (3.5.1). See also Chapter 5.

[16] Lindberg, 2000, p.57.

[17] Garside, 1966, ch.8.

[18] For an account of events in Basle, see Eire, 1986, p.115, and Wandel, 1995, pp.152–89.

[19] See Müller, C., 1991, and Bätschmann and Griener, 1997, pp.77–81.

[20] It is now generally agreed that the panels served as the outer shutters of a carved altarpiece commissioned for the cloister of Basle Cathedral, and that there were relief carvings rather than paintings on the inner faces. See Müller, C. *et al.*, 2006, cat.104, pp.324–7.

[21] See Saxl, 1970.

[22] Rümelin, 1998, and Parshall, 2001.

[23] This is the argument of Zemon Davis, 1956. The series was not published until 1538, but prints from it were evidently circulating before Lützelburger's death.

[24] Bätschmann and Griener, 1997, pp.115–16.

[25] Ibid., p.36, and Landau and Parshall, 1994, p.201.

[26] See Plates 1.2–1.3 in the first volume of this series (Woods, 2007, pp.32–3).

[27] In the early sixteenth century the Holy Roman Emperor was overlord of what is now Germany, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, Austria and much of central Europe.

[28] Frequently translated as a 'sacred conversation', the name probably derives from the Latin *sacra conversatio*, meaning a holy company or gathering.

[29] It has also been suggested that he represents the youthful Saint James, patron saint of Jakob Meyer, but this seems very much less likely. See Buck and Sander, 2003, p.45.

[30] There are two versions of this painting, one commissioned 1483, now Louvre, Paris, and the other *c.*1508, National Gallery, London, and probably originally from Milan. See Dunkerton *et al.*, 1991, pp.382–5. Holbein certainly visited France and probably also Milan; see Bätschmann and Griener, 1997, appendix, doc.3, p.211.

[31] Buck and Sander, 2003, p.38.

[32] Ibid., p.54.

[33] Quoted in Bätschmann and Griener, 1997, pp.27–9, except for the second line, where they have 'the work of art represents *in* me'. While a more accurate rendering of the Latin original, this translation is ungrammatical in English.

[34] Strauss, 1973, Plate 88, pp.186–7.

[35] Rowlands, 1985, Plates 19–24, pp.127–9.

[36] Müller, C., 2001, and Jenny, 2001.

[37] Rowlands, 1985, p.18.

[38] Winner, 2001, p.155.

[39] According to one source, a version of this portrait was sent to Erasmus by way of exchange for the portrait sent to him; see Rowlands, 1985, p.134.

[40] Ibid. See also the first volume of this series (Woods, 2007, ch.4) for a discussion of Cesariano's edition.

[41] Translation taken from Bätschmann and Griener, 1997, p.30.

[42] Translation taken from Roberts, J., 1979, p.5.

[43] Baxandall, 1980, p.75.

[44] See Plate 3.27 in the first volume of this series (Woods, 2007, p.133) for another likeness of the duke.

[45] Müller, T., 1966, Plate 137. See also Plate 3.30 in the first volume of this series (Woods, 2007, p.136).

[46] For the history and analysis of the Eton paintings, see Martindale, 1995, and Gill, M., 2003.

[47] Voragine, 1993, vol.2, p.155.

[48] Foister, 2004, p.114.

[49] For a full consideration of this statue, see Woods, 2006. For a seminal article written after the discovery of the statue in 1954, see Evans and Cook, 1955.

[50] It is even possible that Holbein could indirectly have heard about this image, for Erasmus was in England around the time that it was probably carved, and certainly had contacts with Saint Thomas of Acon, not least through his friend Sir Thomas More, a member of the Mercers' Company, who also leased his house from the Mercers. Erasmus, it should be remembered, was also a great friend of Bonifacius Amerbach.

[51] Lindley, 2003, takes the view that it is largely Continental, while Dow, 1992, sees the craftsmanship as essentially English.

[52] Colvin, 1963–82, vol.3, pt2, p.219.

[53] Darr, 1982, pp.293–4.

[54] For the documentation of the Horenbouts' careers in England, see Campbell and Foister, 1986.

[55] Translation from Latin in Buck and Sander, 2003, p.19.

[56] Bätschmann and Griener, 1997, p.164; Foister, 2004, p.248 translates the Latin phrase slightly differently: 'I seem to see you all before me as if you were in my presence.'

[57] Foister, 2004, p.59.

[58] Ibid., p.55.

[59] See Ainsworth, 1990, pp.178–9.

[60] Foister, 2004, pp.121–8.

[61] Holbein's portrait of Hermann von Wedigh seems to have been sent home to Cologne almost at once; see Markow, 1978, p.40.

[62] Ainsworth and Martens, 1994, cat.6, pp.96–101.

[63] See Plate 2.12 in the second volume of this series (Richardson, 2007, p.79).

[64] See Holman, T.S., 1979. The Venetian painter Lorenzo Lotto (1480–1556/7) also portrayed collector Andrea Odoni (Royal Collection), for example, in a setting that commented on his own preoccupations in 1527, but it is perhaps less certain that Holbein could have been familiar with his work.

[65] Rowlands, 1985, p.137, and Holman, T.S., 1979, p.142.

[66] Holman, T.S., 1979, p.142.

[67] Ibid., p.143.

[68] The first scene is to be found in the Old Testament Apocrypha in 1 Esdras 9:39–55, and it follows an incident of obvious relevance to Henry VIII: the priests putting away their foreign wives. In the second scene, while it was conventional to represent the Apostles with tongues of flame on their heads as here, the stress on the subsequent preaching is distinctly Protestant and contrasts with the usual iconography of the Pentecost.

[69] Foister, 2004, p.179.

[70] Rowlands, 1985, p.225.

[71] Foister, 2004, p.196.

[72] Translation taken from Buck and Sander, 2003, p.130.

[73] Hacker and Kuhl, 1992.

[74] See Ainsworth, 1990.

[75] Susan Foister stresses this point; see Foister, 2004, ch.5, especially p.237.

[76] Susan Foister views his eventual attendance at Protestant services as a Protestant conversion, and raises the possibility that Holbein was a go-between supplying Thomas Cromwell with Protestant literature (Foister, 2004).

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