

**CARVING A NICHE? A REASSESSMENT OF EARLY
SIXTEENTH-CENTURY SCULPTURE PRODUCTION IN
HILDESHEIM**

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by

Conny Bailey MA
Department of the History of Art and Film
University of Leicester

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ABSTRACT

Conny Bailey: Carving their Niche? A Reassessment of early sixteen-century sculptors and sculpture production in the Lower Saxon town of Hildesheim

The town of Hildesheim in the German state of Lower Saxony is generally accepted to have been home to a uniquely recognizable and contradictory assembly of early-sixteenth-century sculpture executed in a highly distinctive carving style that appears to have emerged suddenly in the region today defined as southern Lower Saxony, and vanished as imperceptibly forty years later. Its surviving examples range from exceptional to mediocre, and are found scattered across the breadth of Northern Germany, with some also in notable collections abroad.

A small number of these sculptures have traditionally been associated with the locally documented master Hinrick Stavoer. Based upon a signature on a retable located in the town of Enger in Westfalia, Stavoer's oeuvre has been judged by scholarship to represent competent joinery work with little artistic flair or merit. Consequently, Stavoer was excluded from the reconstructions of a more meritorious sculpture production, and relocated to the neighbouring town of Brunswick. The more sophisticated works from Hildesheim were divided amongst several autonomous workshops, each presided over by an anonymous master who all orientated their own outputs on the dominant artistic personality of the day, the equally anonymous Master of St. Benedict. The result is a production that is characterized by its remarkable homogeneity and interchangeability. The almost complete absence of secure provenance, coupled with a connoisseurship typified by prevailing contemporary autocratic traditions of scholarship, have created a de-contextualized and de-constructed art history that has neglected to consider the much greater number of less sophisticated but historically equally significant works. Taking the historic attributions to Hinrick Stavoer and the known primary evidence relating to him as its departure point, this thesis revisits the existing precepts of Hildesheim sculpture. It successfully challenges its long-held assumptions, and presents a new basis for our understanding of early-sixteenth-century sculpture from southern Lower Saxony.

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The racing driver Jacky Ickx once likened the trackside staff of a racing team to the tip of an iceberg. In doing so he acknowledged the invisible contribution made by a far greater number of anonymous individuals who work tirelessly behind the scenes towards racetrack success. Similarly, a research project such as this cannot succeed without the help and support of numerous individuals and organisations.

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Dedicated to the memory of
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who fanned the spark that became a flame,

and to those who believed in me throughout.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BAH	Bistumsarchiv Hildesheim Diocese Archive Hildesheim
DBH	Dombibliothek Hildesheim Cathedral Library Hildesheim
HAWK	Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaft und Kunst University of Applied Sciences and Arts
NLM	Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum Museum Hannover Lower Saxony State Museum Hanover
RPM	Roemer Pelizäus Museum Hildesheim
SAB	Stadtarchiv Brunswick Municipal or Town Archive Brunswick
SAH	Stadtarchiv Hildesheim Municipal or Town Archive Hildesheim
SMB	Städtisches Museum Brunswick Municipal or Town Museum Brunswick

I. INTRODUCTION

The town of Hildesheim in the federal state of Lower Saxony in Northern Germany is home to what is arguably one of the most confusing collections of late Gothic sculptures in German art history. A number of surviving figures and retables demonstrate an extremely high standard of workmanship that is deserving of far greater recognition than has been received so far. These eclipse those works that can be demonstrated to be local productions, which, at best, might be classified as second and third-rate sculptures. Moreover, the only works that have been authoritatively associated with a locally documented master, Hinrick Stavoer, are not found in Hildesheim, but scattered across a geographical area that stretches the breadth of Northern Germany from Aachen, near the Belgian border to Salzwedel in the former German Democratic Republic.¹ Despite the best endeavours of a number of art historians during the first half of the twentieth century to produce a definitive account of the Hildesheim sculpture production, the subject has proven to be of such complexity that a resolution remains outstanding. Although the current understanding of Hildesheim sculpture production remains largely determined by these earlier publications, their conclusions demand re-examination. Consequently, modern-day scholars have repeatedly expressed the need for a full

¹ This reference to modern-day political borders is made in order to fix in the reader's mind the actual geographical distance covered; there is no suggestion intended that these borders were of significance during the sixteenth century.

review of the subject, and this thesis constitutes a first step towards providing such a study.²

Before continuing this discourse, some clarifications will be necessary. In the literature cited throughout this thesis, the term 'Hildesheim' may refer to a specific stylistic current, or sculpture located in the town, or sculptures from the wider geographical region. The imprecise use of this portmanteau description does on occasion blur the distinctions of what are actually three very different things. However, in the absence of more accurate distinctions, to facilitate efficient discussion of their proposals and in recognition of the continued use of the term amongst German scholarship, this thesis will continue to use the same terminology. Where there is any possibility of ambiguity, care will be taken to clarify the exact meaning. Equally, both masters and works are identified in the existing literature by descriptives which modern-day criteria would judge to be incorrect, or which have passed into disuse. For the purpose of clarity in relation to the earlier texts these nomenclatures will be adopted initially, and revised as appropriate in the subsequent discussions.

The common feature that distinguishes Lower Saxon sculpture production from any other in Europe is the unique manner in which hair is represented. The style itself has been described variously as 'bunched' (Schäffer, Meier, Stuttmann and von der Osten), 'diamond-

² Exh. Cat. Hildesheim 1991, p. 89. Karrenbrock140208.

shaped' (Habicht), or 'laurel-leaved' (Busch).³ None of these descriptions, however, satisfactorily reflect its unique appearance. That is perhaps best explained using a piece of rope as an example. In its simplest form, rope is a structure created by twisting tightly wound strands of material (sisal, nylon, etc.), which in turn consist of similarly wound, individual fibres. Although we are aware of the technical precondition of the twisted fibre materials that makes the individual strands which are twisted into a rope, we do not perceive them as individual entities, only as strands twisted into a rope. In a similar manner, Lower Saxon sculpture depicts the three-dimensional and irregular nature of hair, its various types of strands, waves and curls, but without acknowledging the underlying structure of single hairs next to each other. Instead, these structures are abstracted into a series of raised lozenges and S-shapes which are interspersed with either long, narrow, crescent-shaped curls, or a tightly-wound curl shape described in the German literature as a 'rosebud' curl.⁴ At its best, it represents a masterful display of carving virtuosity that creates powerful, lively effects at middle to long distance. At its worst, it descends into a form of artificial caricature that seems diametrically opposed to any sense of, or desire for, naturalistic realism. This distinctive formula for the representation of human hair represents one of the few immutable

³ Schäffer 1930, p. 30; Meier 1937, p. 21; Stutmman, Osten 1940, p. 26; Habicht 1917, p. 176; Busch 1931, p. 153.

⁴ Meier 1937, p. 21.

cornerstones of every discussion of sculpture from Hildesheim and its wider Lower Saxon context.

Another such cornerstone is the so-called *Benedict Retable* (Figure I-1), an almost life-sized relief and two free-standing pendant figures which today form part of a more modern chapel assemblage in the Southern transept of St. Godehard, and of which these sculptures constitute the oldest parts. There can be little doubt concerning the exceptional quality of the surviving scene and figures, which are unanimously recognised as one of the pinnacles of local sculpture production. Consequently, the author of these works has been placed at the centre of the construction of the Hildesheim art history as an artist of exceptional standard and sophistication. Although it is synonymous with its originator's creative personality, the *Benedict Retable* does not disclose that artist's identity. It has always been accepted as having come from a Hildesheim-based workshop; however, no direct evidence exists to support this. The retable is discussed in greater detail in Chapter X, but is of interest in this context because of its carved inscription (Figure I-2) commemorating the donor Henig Werleman and his wife Sofke, which also includes the date 1518, making it one of only a small number of works that can be reliably dated. Consequently, all attempts to establish the likely chronology of sculpture production in Hildesheim are informed by this figure group. Indeed, this figure group is so central to all deliberations presented to date that the possibility of its originator having lived and worked anywhere else has not been

considered. One extreme consequence of this group's domination of scholarly thinking has been the re-assignment of a number of qualitatively less elevated sculptures to another production location, rather than allowing them to diminish the superior nature of the Hildesheim-based manufacture.

One victim of this unceremonious bout of aesthetic 'cleansing' was Hinrick Stavoer, who can be documented through the Hildesheim tax registers between 1504 and 1537. Stavoer's autograph retable (Figure I-3) stands in the Collegiate church of Enger in the Westfalia region of northern Germany, some one hundred miles west of Hildesheim, and constitutes the third cornerstone. Signed *Mester Hinrick Stavoer* and dated 1525, the retable has undergone a number of interventions and changes, placing a question mark over the altarpiece's usefulness as the definitive example of Stavoer's carving style. Moreover, the Enger retable displays a broad range of carving quality, resulting in at least three hands being suggested as having contributed towards its production.⁵ The Enger retable also signifies the substantial artistic chasm that seems to have existed between Stavoer's capabilities and those of the anonymous originator of the *Benedict Retable*, the so-called *Master of St. Benedict*. Conversely, however, Stavoer's retable also represents a measure of Stavoer as a craftsman and workshop owner. Not only was he able to attract such a prestigious commission from far outside of his own geographical region, but he also appears to

⁵ Kornfeld 1932, p. 65; Meier 1937, p. 11.

have left its execution largely in the hands of assistants and apprentices, with his signature merely authenticating the retable's origin within his workshop. All of these deliberations, however, assume Stavoer or his workshop to have executed the carvings, not the polychromy.

The evidence, comprising two retables and supporting archival material pertaining to at least one of the executing artists, is complemented further by the fourth cornerstone to be introduced here. This comes in the form of what the extant literature in the past has erroneously described as a contract for a retable for the high altar of the abbey of St. Godehard in Hildesheim, entered into in December 1504 between the abbey and one Master Wolter, '*citizen of Hildesheim*'. This 'contract', in fact, relates to two slightly differing transcriptions of the same entry from a St. Godehard cartulary, published in 1885 by H. W. H. Mithoff, and in 1917 by V. C. Habicht.⁶ Mithoff's version was also reproduced in the 1967 reprint of Hans Huth's 1925 monograph on late-Gothic artists and their workshop structures.⁷ The document describes a double-shuttered retable with four painted scenes on the outside (closed transition), eight painted scenes 'in the middle' (first opened state), and eleven carved images in the centre (final opened state). Emphasis is placed on the quality of the gilding, for which 'good Hungarian gold' was to be used, and the application of 'beautiful blue', i.e. lapis lazuli, as opposed to azurite. The document also notes that the

⁶ Mithoff 1885, pp. 430-431; Habicht 1917, p. 201.

⁷ Huth 1967, p. 124.

casing was to be supplied separately by the abbey. The iconographic programme for this retable is recorded in the surviving fragments of a series of register books from St Godehard.⁸ A misreading of that evidence by Habicht, however, has led to it being disregarded by subsequent scholarship. Despite a very accurate description, there is no surviving work that can be matched to either the cartulary transcription or the register book entry. With the specified colours, gold and blue, common to a great many German retables as a whole, let alone those of Lower Saxon origin, the information found remains insufficient for a positive identification of the documented work.

Master Wolter's exact role in the production of the retable cannot be determined from the transcript alone. Although the earlier scholars have never had any difficulty in accepting him as a producer of sculpture, this supposition cannot be deduced from the transcription, and may be more indicative of the various authors' endeavours to identify the executing sculptor of surviving images with a named individual. Modern survivals of sculpture, particularly when combined with losses of polychromy, tend to draw attention on the carving of the wood itself, often to the exclusion of the polychromer. This is reflected in many of the earlier studies which in their quality judgements in particular fail to take into account that in many cases the wood was often required to be nothing more than a plain-surfaced carrier for the display of the polychromer's skill. Later studies are more cognisant of

⁸ PS DBH HS318e, Fol. 236r

sculpture as being the final product of a number of individual production steps and skill sets, and the consequences this has for the organisation and spread of workshops.

After more than four years of intense engagement with the subject matter it has become clearer to me why scholarship may so far have been reluctant to reinvestigate the subject, despite some important new insights being gained in the interim. Of the challenges it presents, one difficulty lies in the absence of a sufficiently researched historical framework which might help to identify emerging personalities, or surviving material evidence. The only comprehensive history of Hildesheim, published in two volumes in 1922 and 1924, has been shown to owe far more to its own historiography than has previously been recognised.⁹ This and the majority of subsequent studies which have spotlighted aspects of the town's medieval past have been restricted in their scope by the availability of readily transcribed and published archive material. Edited transcriptions of medieval manuscripts from the collection of the town archives exist for documents up to 1450. Subsequently the transcriptions become intermittent, with most documents surviving from 1450 to 1500 partially transcribed. Post-1500 documents were transcribed only sporadically and usually as a result of targeted enquiries. This, however, does not reflect the availability of archival material, but is the consequence of

⁹ Klingebiel 1992, p. 65.

curatorial time framing in the late nineteenth century, when the majority of these transcriptions were commissioned and published.

Two very useful collections of sixteenth-century archive materials survive. The first comprises the administrative records in the Hildesheim Records Office, the *Stadtarchiv* (SAH). The second is a collection of medieval manuscripts acquired during the second half of the nineteenth century by the Cathedral Library (DBH), the so-called *Beverina* collection. Although by no means complete (the municipal collection, for example, has lost almost all guild records for any period prior to the Early Modern), there is much unexplored material available to underpin and contextualise future art historical studies. Much of this, however, has to be assessed, transcribed, and translated first, and this may go some way towards explaining why the existing art historical literature makes little to no reference to it. Another reason is the unfortunate inter-disciplinarian chasm of responsibility that existed between the art historians of the day and what they regarded as their 'supplementary scholarship', i.e. archivists and historians. The consulted literature repeatedly expresses the belief that any investigation into the historical background was not part of an art historian's sphere of responsibility. Consequently, several publications contain appeals to the aforementioned 'supplementary scholarship' to venture forth and 'find the historical evidence that might support the conclusions' which had already been reached, since 'any such discovery [of archival evidence] can, after all, not be made by targeted research, but has to be the result

of accidental discoveries, made in the course of the archivist's regular work.'¹⁰

Another problem lies with the provenance of the surviving sculpture. The majority of works can be documented only from the mid to late nineteenth century as they appeared in sales catalogues or museum inventories for the first time. Others have been moved from their original locations, and are today found in churches or chapels that clearly post-date them. Those held in public collections often have no more than an improvable oral history to fall back on in determining their provenance. That absence of provenance has led to assumptions being made about the origin of items, which, even when based on sound interdisciplinary arguments, do not exclude the possibility of error sufficiently to permit their acceptance without reservation. With style-critical analysis then the only reliable basis for categorisation, the existing literature has proposed between one and seven workshops to have been responsible for the total Hildesheim output c. 1475 to 1535.¹¹ The same literature also has tended to focus on that part of the extant Hildesheim production which its authors have judged to have attained the highest standard of competence. Their findings reflect a connoisseurship which continually strove to understand late medieval sculpture in the context of, and in comparison with, the output of Tilman Riemenschneider as the highest qualitative benchmark, and that of

¹⁰ Habicht 1917, pp. 219-220; Busch 1931, p. 154.

¹¹ Timeframe based upon dating of extant works according to Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940.

Master HW as a close second. Master HW's works are located in the Upper Saxony region in the former East Germany, and bear sufficient stylistic similarities to the Lower Saxon production to suggest a common source, which in turn has led to attempts to locate his origins in the Lower Saxony region. Riemenschneider's workshop in Southern Germany was a tightly controlled environment, in which every contributing hand produced sculpture in a uniform corporate style, overseen by its owner/artistic director. The imposition of such a singularly dominant, autonomous workshop structure on an artistic production that supposedly displays all the hallmarks of an entirely different approach complicates the assessment of Lower Saxon sculpture.

Up until Ferdinand Stuttmann and Gert von der Osten's revision, the local sculpture industry had been presented as a homogeneous but evolving production located in Hildesheim. Its chronology had been constructed around two seemingly individual, but anonymous artistic identities. These identities were exemplified through a pair of altarpieces surviving in two Hildesheim churches, one the aforementioned *Benedict Retable* in the basilica of St. Godehard, the other the retable that today stands in the west choir of St. Michael's church, and which in the past has been identified as a retable dedicated to the two saints John [Evangelist and Baptist - *Johannesaltar*] (Figure

I-4).¹² When looking at the two works side-by-side the differences between them appear obvious, with the drapery handling of one markedly understated in comparison to the statement flourishes of the other. As soon as other, related works are brought into the discussion, these distinctions very rapidly blur, as elements of both merge in a number of figures. This includes figures such as the *Pietà* from the chapel of the *Trinitatis Hospital* and now in the collection of the Roemer Pelizäus Museum (RPM, Figure I-5) in Hildesheim, as well as the four panels depicting the *Four Church Fathers and Evangelists* in the NLM (Figures I-6 to I-9) and a panel depicting *St. Anne teaching the Virgin to Read*, now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (Figure I-10). The constant conflict that is created by obvious differences on the one hand and the overlapping of commonalities on the other make this subject uniquely challenging to follow. As various authors have separated and

¹² The iconography of this altarpiece has led to some confusion over its dedication, and this is reflected in the variety of nomenclatures by which this altar has been known. The central figure of the Virgin and Child is flanked on the dexter side by St. John Evangelist and St. John Baptist on the sinister side. In the shutter next to St. John Evangelist stand first St. James the Greater and second St. Barbara. In the left hand shutter, nearest to St. John Baptist stands St. Andrew, with St. Elizabeth of Hungary occupying the final space. The painted panels on the two pairs of shutters when closed depicted two scenes each from the lives of St. John Evangelist and St. Baptist, and when opened revealed four scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary. The presence of both St. John Evangelist and St. John Baptist in the central section is the likely reason why the altarpiece has been referred to as the *Johannesaltar* throughout the first half of the twentieth century, and this tradition has been taken up in some of the older records in the inventories of the Church's regional administrative organisation, the Evangelisches Landeskirchenamt (EVLKA).¹² The records of the RP Museum refer to the shutters only generically, without any reference to the dedication of the altar of which they once formed part.¹² In a recent publication, Jan Richter has rightly pointed out that both saints John flank the centrally located figure of the Virgin Mary in the shrine, leading him to conclude that this altarpiece had a Marian dedication only.¹² Within the church of St Michael the altar is also referred to as the *Marienaltar*, or altar of [the Virgin] Mary.¹² Considering the iconographic programme of the painted shutters in conjunction with the arrangement of the central section, the possibility of a tripartite dedication can also not be ruled out. Today the EVLKA use the more generic term 'altar in the west choir'. For the purpose of this thesis this altarpiece will be referred to as the *West Choir Retable* and its carver as the *Master of the West Choir Retable*.

reassembled individual pieces into groups of works typical of one or the other artist, the boundaries have become increasingly blurred, so that by the time Ferdinand Stuttmann and Gert von der Osten began to put together their exhibition of medieval sculpture from the region, the subject was ready for a definitive review. Stuttmann and von der Osten's stated aim had been, in the latter's words 'to see if the solo voice of Hildesheim was not, in fact, merely the visible part of a more substantial choir', and how that choir 'might have fitted into the wider context of the whole Lower Saxon *opera*'.¹³ Following the assessment of some three hundred or so examples in preparation for their landmark exhibition of *Spätmittelalterliche Bildschnitzerei zwischen Weser und Elbe* at the Lower Saxony State Museum (*Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum – NLM*) Stuttmann and von der Osten published a monograph that divided the Hildesheim production into no fewer than six workshops, each centred on an anonymous construct.¹⁴ Considering their supposed differences, the *Master of St. Alexander* (active 1470 to 1500), the *Master of St. Epiphanius* (1480-1510), the *Master of St. Benedict* (1510-1525), the *Holtrup Carver* (1520-1530), the *Master of the Retable of Saints John* (1515-1530), and the *Urban Master* (1515-1530¹⁵) produced sculpture 'of a remarkably homogenous appearance',

¹³ Von der Osten 1939 I, p. 169.

¹⁴ Op cit., pp. 20 to 64. The dates given in brackets correspond to those proposed by the authors.

¹⁵ This carver is known as the 'Urban Master of Hildesheim' in Chapuis' edited volume of Tilman Riemenschneider (Exh. Cat. Washington 1999, p. 150), and the records of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Since this thesis, however, is casting doubts on Hildesheim as the location of this master's workshop the suffix 'of Hildesheim' will be dropped in the subsequent text.

as the art historian Jörg Rosenfeld was to observe some sixty years later.¹⁶ As Rosenfeld's statement implies, and the earlier cited examples of the *Benedict Retable* and the *West Choir Retable* illustrate, there is little that truly sets the various groups of Hildesheim sculptures apart from each other in stylistic terms. The publication contains some obvious incongruities, the most intriguing of which is the statue of St. Martin from a private collection, which in the photograph accompanying Stuttmann and von der Osten's text is clearly labelled 'Hinrick Stavoyer 1529' (Figure I-11 and I-12), but which the authors attributed to the Master of St. Benedict without acknowledging the obvious discrepancy. Despite this, their proposed attributions and identities have been accepted by subsequent scholars without further revision, and are still cited today in summaries and overviews of the subject.¹⁷ One example of this is the overview of the *Master of St. Benedict's* oeuvre, published by Claudia Günther in 2002. In this, Günther observed an unspecified number of 'unresolved art historical issues' without elaborating on their exact nature, but implying that the solutions offered by Stuttmann and von der Osten might not be as sound as seemed generally accepted. Any scepticism is amplified by Günther's concession that it would not be easy for the layman to understand how the works are interconnected.¹⁸ To the outsider this thinly-veiled connoisseurial one-upmanship, which positions the writer as part of an authoritative circle of insiders, also

¹⁶ Rosenfeld 2000, p. 155.

¹⁷ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 51 and Pl. 50.

¹⁸ Günther 2002, p. 93 and p. 102.

indicates that the proposed interconnections might lack a vital element of overall conformity or cohesion of style that is essential to create the kind of visual homogeneity one would associate with the output from a single workshop.

This brief summary of the cornerstones of the Hildesheim art history in the sixteenth century, and the highlighting of some of the issues, have illustrated how easy it is to shake the foundations upon which this history has been built. This, however, is not to say that the existing literature can no longer support a scholarly argument. On the contrary, although elements of it may no longer stand up to scrutiny, that literature has been proven also to contain much that remains valuable, insightful, and pertinent. The recurring difficulty in categorising the Hildesheim output – regardless of how many responsible hands one is prepared to accept at this stage – is created by those pieces which combine elements of the two primary styles as exemplified by the *Benedict Retable* and the *West Choir Retable*. This difficulty is expressed in the disparate approaches to categorisation taken by the various authors. All accept the visual difference between the *Master of the West Choir Retable*, and the *Master of St. Benedict*. The solutions they offer, however, and the means by which they are arrived at, differ greatly, leaving the modern researcher a veritable challenge of deduction, analysis, and interpretation. In this spirit, this thesis is unlikely to consist of the positive, continuous narrative it set out to be, nor will it expect to present a multitude of novel insights to show its

subject in a radically new light. Instead it will aim to combine the surviving material evidences of the sixteenth century with the insights of the twenty-first century to serve as a more secure foundation on which new knowledge can be built.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature pertaining to Stavoer and the Enger retable shows two distinct approaches, which appear related to the geographical context of its authorship. Essays by Westfalian authors have tended to focus on the retable as a singular novelty amongst the indigenous sculpture production, whereas Lower Saxon writers have included both the retable and its master as part of their more generic discourses on sculpture from their geographical region. This has resulted in the Westfalian accounts presenting their material in a more objective manner, but often relying on outdated literature, while the Lower Saxon accounts are more concerned with subjective speculations as to the merit and localisation of executing workshops in the absence of secure provenance. This has created a complex historiography which often seems to complicate what should be a relatively straightforward art historical account.

Neither Stavoer nor his altarpiece were discussed at all by the first comprehensive review of the subject, a monograph on medieval sculpture from Hildesheim published by Victor Curt Habicht. At the time of its publication in 1917, Habicht clearly was unaware of the existence of the Enger altarpiece, or its stylistic connection with Hildesheim. His knowledge of local craftsmen appears based on Hector Wilhelm Heinrich Mithoff's *Mittelalterliche Künstler und Werkmeister Niedersachsens und Westfalens lexikalisch dargestellt*, published in two

editions in 1866 and 1885, neither of which mention Stavoer. Habicht's survey begins with the flourishing of the arts at the turn of the first millennium, under bishops Bernward and Godehard, the period when Hildesheim culturally and politically was at its most influential. From this starting point, he tried to chart a coherent and largely independent evolution of artistic endeavour to the late fifteenth century. His study is, however, hampered by the absence of a sufficiently cohesive body of material evidence, so that his discussion depends on the evidence from locally found highlights, with few references to parallels in other locations. Throughout his discussion, Habicht tried to suffuse his discourse with a sense of heightened quality and artistic innovation for the artistic achievements of the town since its early halcyon days. In this context, Habicht's sudden change of tone in his description of the art production of the third quarter of the fifteenth century seems harsh, if not startling. The use of words like 'introversion', 'stagnation', and [artistic] 'ambivalence' appears out of character with the established tone and inflection. It is a device, used also later by Harald Busch, of deliberately talking down the achievements of one period, in this case around the middle of the fifteenth century, in order to increase his readers' appreciation of the impact the writer attached to the next evolutionary step.¹⁹ As Habicht shows, very few carved products have survived in Hildesheim that can be dated securely to the third quarter of the fifteenth century, making what does survive even more important for

¹⁹ Habicht 1917, p. 175.

the construction of a cohesive narrative. This lack of physical evidence necessitates the occasional leap of faith in order to move from the abundantly surviving retable production of the first quarter of the fifteenth century to the technically masterful works produced by the Hildesheim artists a century later. An example of this is Habicht's discussion of the two surviving sections of the St. Godehard choir stalls with their companion figures. In order to explain the distinctive appearance not of this generation of works, but of those of the following generation, Habicht posited that the choir stalls had been produced in Hildesheim by a Netherlandish master, with contributions from a local assistant. That assistant absorbed the Netherlandish influences and transmitted them to the indigenous craftsmen working during the first quarter of the sixteenth century.²⁰ There are several problems with this rather sweeping assertion, not least of which is the complete lack of evidence to support it in the form of parallel examples or documentary evidence. In absence of either, his suggestion becomes untenable.

Although Habicht's stated aim was to conclude his discourse with the close of the fifteenth century, he went beyond his own timeframe in order to include Hildesheim sculpture production of the first quarter of the sixteenth century, taking his discourse almost to the introduction of the Reformation in 1542. This enabled Habicht to connect the cartulary transcript already published in Mithoff 1885 to the additional evidence uncovered by him from the St. Godehard register book of 1504 to 1506

²⁰ Habicht 1917, pp.167-168.

and to the so-called *Benedict Retable* of 1518, despite the fourteen-year gap between them. Habicht's argument was centred on the iconography of the surviving sculpture in St. Godehard and the register book entry which showed three of the five saints depicted included in a list of eleven names written in the margin.²¹ That connection, however, is not sufficiently secure to make his proposal sustainable, as all subsequent publications, with the exception of Busch who had his own reasons for accepting it, have pointed out.

The first mention of Hinrick Stavoer was made in Wolfgang Scheffler's unpublished thesis on gothic sculpture in the city of Brunswick, submitted in 1925, and available in manuscript form only. Scheffler's chronological survey of medieval works from the late thirteenth to the beginning of the sixteenth century is one of the few texts that draw on similarities, rather than differences. Whereas Habicht tried to position 'his Hildesheim' production as unique, Scheffler immediately acknowledged those style commonalities that suffused sculpture not only from Lower Saxon centres such as Brunswick and Hildesheim, but also reached across the regional borders towards Halberstadt and Madgeburg.²² Scheffler viewed the local sculpture as having been divisible into three distinctive style periods of which the third period comprises works related to this thesis. Beginning with those sculptures surviving in Brunswick, Scheffler then drew an increasingly widening geographical circle to encompass first Hildesheim, the

²¹ PS DBH HS318e, Fol. 230^v.

²² Scheffler 1925, p. 1.

collection of the NLM in Hannover and finally Enger and Holtrup in Westfalia to create a visually cohesive group of sculpture of 'most interesting idiosyncrasies'.²³ Although Scheffler does not share his analytical processes with his audience, it is clearly based on style-critical analysis. An early lament over lack of a gazetteer-style publication to describe the ancient monuments and artefacts of the city of Brunswick and surrounding areas suggests his familiarity with those describing the neighbouring regions, and it is possible that he became aware of Stavoer through one of these.²⁴ Scheffler's approach is measured and factual, as absence of knowledge is equalled by absence of speculation. While his views were often rejected by his peers, this thesis, with the benefit of hindsight, finds much with which it would agree, so that his value for future investigations should not be underestimated.

Harald Busch's monograph of 1931, entitled *Meister Wolter und sein Kreis 1542* constitutes another attempt, after Habicht, at reconciling the extant Hildesheim sculpture with the evidence pertaining to Master Wolter. Busch's point of departure seems to be his deep-seated conviction that Master Wolter was an artist of great importance who had a lasting influence over the sculpture of the whole region. Each chapter introduces different groups of sculpture which in Busch's view were stylistically connected. These groups he then tried to position in relation to Master Wolter as the key focus of his book. His structure, as

²³ op.cit., p. 2.

²⁴ op. cit., p. 1.

well as his analytical methods, requires some determined familiarisation, and it remains a book that is extremely difficult to follow, as the author himself acknowledged in his revision article of 1939.²⁵ The most significant, if not irritating, drawback of his volume is the considerable deviation between the numbers of illustrations Busch referred to in his text, and the significantly lower quantity of pictures actually included. The failure to adjust the text to the reduced number of (published) illustrations has necessitated a complicated system of cross-referral between the original catalogue of illustrations and the images that were finally included via a subsidiary numbering system. In addition, Busch's monograph repeatedly descends into an anecdotal style of writing in which personal observations and comments are interleaved with academic discourse, and colloquialisms and academic language interchange. As noted earlier in conjunction with the discussion of Habicht's book, this constitutes a deliberate device intended to add gravitas or emphasis to certain parts of the discourse, with the colloquialisms assigning less weight to that which they describe, while the switch to a more formal language provides added accentuation.

Busch's assessment of Hinrick Stavoer as a competent, but not exceptional, carver made reconciliation with the much higher quality of the other Hildesheim production difficult, leading Busch to invent a biography that proposed a spell as an assistant in Master Wolter's

²⁵ Busch 1939, p. 211.

workshop, followed by the return to his 'native' Westfalia, where his 'Hildesheim-ish' carving manner gradually coarsened or "westfalianized".²⁶ This would not be the only occasion encountered where missing fact or unpalatable truths were sanitized by authoritatively presented but highly speculative reasoning. Amongst the more brazen examples of this are the efforts made by Meier and Stuttmann and von der Osten to re-locate Stavoer to Brunswick despite the very decisive archival evidence to the contrary.

Busch expended a significant amount of effort on discussion of the Enger retable, and it is a source of some disappointment to note that he appears to have done so based upon photographs alone, without having visited the retable and this places a question mark upon the validity of some of his observations. One example is his description of the figure of St. Denis in its early twentieth-century setting as part of the retable's superstructure, which had been taken down and replaced by two asymmetrical sections of foliate tracery some fifteen years previously.²⁷ Despite his methodological shortcuts, however, his text also contains numerous pertinent observations which single his work out as uniquely thoughtful. For example, his commentary on Stavoer's signature which he noted as having been placed in a prominent and '...conspicuous – not to say annoying – location' is rightly identified as a highly unusual occurrence through Busch's throwaway criticism, alerting

²⁶ Busch 1931, p. 130.

²⁷ Copies of archival records suggest this to have happened during the second decade of the twentieth century, as will be discussed in more detail later.

the reader to a potential discrepancy between the retable's original structure and its current presentation.²⁸ Therefore, having questioned the reliability of Busch on the one hand, one also has to acknowledge his capacity for pertinence and insight on the other, making a critical and cautious stance towards his writings essential.

Busch's monograph was followed by Paul Jonas Meier's essay entitled '*Die Hildesheimer Bildschnitzer Hinrick Stavoer und Meister Wolter*', which turned the subject completely on its head, and it helps the following of his discourse if one clears up at the beginning a couple of issues which colour Meier's discussion throughout.

The first is Meier's entirely unsupportable conviction that Hinrick Stavoer's workshop was located in Brunswick, a proposal that has no foundation, and which Meier never quite manages to explain or justify. Nevertheless, he doggedly reiterates this theory throughout his discourse, even in the face of the most rigid opposition in the form of archival evidence, an opposition that appears all the more curious when one considers that it was Meier who discovered and published the evidence that documents Stavoer as a Hildesheim citizen.²⁹ It is possible that Meier's conclusions are simply the result of a determined effort to reconcile Hildesheim-ish carving characteristics with their occurrence in Brunswick. In Meier's case, the decision to locate Stavoer in Brunswick stemmed from his conviction that Stavoer was the originator of both the wooden model from which the baptismal font in St.

²⁸Busch 1931, p. 125.

²⁹ Meier 1937, p. 11.

Peter's church in Brunswick had been cast in 1530, and the Holtrup figures which supposedly served as inspiration for it (Figs. III-2 and III-3). Setting aside the question of that suggestion being sustainable (and there are reasons to doubt it), the occurrence in Brunswick of what was perceived as being Stavoer's style was sufficient excuse for Meier to claim the artist for the town. To reconcile this with the documentary evidence uncovered by him, Meier went as far as inventing a fictitious father figure also named Hinrick Stavoer as the Hildesheim citizen and taxpayer to satisfy the primary evidence.

The second is Meier's initial disregard for many of the details which would normally form part of a well-argued style-critical analysis. His early criteria for defining style associations appear limited to the occurrence of an admittedly distinctive fold formation which he treats more like an iconographic characteristic than a stylistic one, and the distinctive hair structure that is so typically associated with the Hildesheim production. At the same time, he appeared to disregard other details, such as facial features, drapery construction, and positioning, to name but a few. This is not to say that his discourse is entirely bereft of them. Rather, it suits Meier not to take too close a look at these details at the beginning of his essay, while he is concentrating on introducing what is in reality rather a broad spectrum of Lower Saxon sculpture, sorting them as he goes into the two style strands the justifying of which is the underlying aim of his essay. When he finally compares what he regards as the defining characteristics of the two

masters, Stavoer and Wolter, his analysis suddenly becomes very detailed and finely observed, as well as eloquently presented. Indeed, the only serious criticism one can levy at Meier in this regard is an over-reliance on the hair formation as the definitive characteristic over and above all other considerations. A prominent part of Meier's study is given over to attempts at defining the stylistic differences between Stavoer, Master Wolter, and Master HW, which, Meier was convinced, were evident in three distinctly different approaches taken to build up the distinctive lozenges structures that make up these hair formations. These Meier categorised as ribbed, ridged, and simplified, which he assigned to Stavoer, Wolter, and Master HW respectively. Unfortunately, however, these seemingly clearly distinguishable categorisations struggle to stand up even to Meier's own analysis. Many of the examples cited by him serve only to contradict his findings, such as ribbed and ridged lozenges occurring on the same head, or Stavoer's supposedly typical foot positioning being clearly visible in figures whose hair and beard formation propose a different origin. Moreover, Meier's attributions to Master Wolter confined his discussions to a very narrow group of figures shown wearing a mitre, making Wolter's lozenges not so much simplified, but effectively invisible under the liturgical headgear. Meier's tacit acceptance of these incongruities leave his conclusions weakened, and his reader searching for more visual harmony amongst the bodies of works thus given to each of the three masters.

Despite the aforementioned shortcomings, Meier's account does also contain some valuable insights relating to individual works in the relatively broad field of sculpture he discussed. Many of his proposals, however, were overturned by subsequent writers, and sometimes rightly so, and this has given Meier an air of the maverick outsider. Nevertheless, for all these rejections there are also repeated instances in which subsequent scholarship has proven Meier's instincts to have been correct, albeit that the arguments may have changed. In opposition to almost every other writer, for example, Meier regarded Hinrick Stavoer as having been one of the major artists of his time, perhaps not as good as Master HW, but certainly not far behind this contemporary, and easily on a par with Master Wolter. This in itself makes an interesting change from the chorus of deprecation with which Stavoer's work is usually met, even if Meier's more than generous – not to say fanciful – interpretation of the archival evidence placed his conclusions in a much less reliable light.

The publication of Walter Hentschel's book on Master HW in 1938 forced Harald Busch to revise a sizeable proportion of his 1931 book. That revision was published in 1939, in the form of an article entitled *Hinrick Stavoer – Meister Wolter? Hans Witten und die Plastik "zwischen Weser und Elbe"*. Instead of becoming clearer, Busch's latest discourse managed to wrap itself in more confusion as his discussion not only rejected all his earlier attributions to what he now regarded as an entirely improvable Master Wolter on the basis that if Wolter 'was not

responsible for the Benedict Retable, then there is no knowing what he might have produced.'³⁰ Instead, Busch invented an 'ex-Wolter', a shadowy figure to which he still attributed a number of sculptures which, in his opinion, all had come out of the same workshop. More crucially for this thesis, however, and obviously influenced by Meier's outright attribution of all important works to Stavoer, is Busch's concession that even Stavoer could be identical with the originator of the major Hildesheim works, 'but only if he did not carve the only retable bearing his signature'.³¹ In typical fashion, Busch left his thought there, to be picked up again by others, an opportunity that was sadly (or perhaps fortuitously for the very existence of this thesis) missed by the last of the major reviews of the subject.

Published in late 1940 by Ferdinand Stuttmann, director of the art galleries at the NLM in Hannover, and his assistant Gert von der Osten, the monograph entitled *Niedersächsische Bildschnitzerkunst des späten Mittelalters* remains to this day the seminal work on Lower Saxon sculpture of the pre-Reformation period.³² It represents the most comprehensive overview of the subject, as well as the most authoritative one, and is rarely challenged even by more recent publications. The idea for the publication emerged during preparations for a major exhibition of late medieval Lower Saxon sculpture in summer 1938, curated by the authors, and it is useful to consider the

³⁰ Busch 1939, p. 213.

³¹ *op. cit.*, p. 214.

³² Personal Communication Dr. Reinhard Karrenbrock, Denkmalpflege Bistum Münster 14/02/08

exhibition and the background to the book more closely. 1937 had been a year of great change for the museum, and its art galleries in particular. Until February of that year, the art department had been under the directorship of Alexander Dorner, an innovator and visionary who had revolutionised the way in which art was displayed. His innovation of themed rooms that recreated a sense of each epoch culminated in the so-called *Abstract Cabinet*, a room created in collaboration with the Russian avant-garde artist El Lissitzky and the first space permanently to display works by Mondrian, Malevich, and Kandinski.³³ The *Cabinet* went on to influence exhibiting practices worldwide, placing what was then the Provincial Museum of Hannover at the forefront of museum practices, in complete contrast to the somewhat conservative aspect of its official title. By the mid-1930s, however, Dorner's modernist leanings had made his position at the museum increasingly difficult, and in late spring 1937 his request to terminate his employment went uncontested.³⁴ It was left to his successor, Ferdinand Stuttmann, to restructure the galleries' exhibition programme in line with the National Socialist regime's cultural policies, and the *Cabinet* was dismantled almost immediately. In June of the same year the first of the Nazi's purges of Modernist art resulted in the confiscation of 278 works from the museum's collection; indeed the

³³ Katenhusen 2002, p. 36.

³⁴ op. cit., p. 40.

museum's collection of modern art proportionally was to be the largest contributor to the Nazi's exhibition of Degenerate Art in Munich.³⁵

The idea for the sculpture exhibition was conceived against this background. According to an article published by von der Osten in 1939, the exhibition was the third in a series of annual showcase events intended to spotlight 'under-researched periods of local art history', implying an exposition that had been long in planning and preparation.³⁶ Both the exhibition catalogue and the resultant publication emphasised the hope that the exhibition might provide the basis for a complete scholarly review of the subject.³⁷ In the foreword to their monograph *Stuttman and von der Osten* have provided an insight into their working methods in relation to both exhibition and book. There they emphasised how Lower Saxony and 'other, pertinent regions had been systematically searched over months, revealing many documented, as well as unknown or disregarded works'.³⁸ According to the authors, the findings presented in their publication were the result of joint research efforts undertaken by both during the years 1937 to 1939.³⁹ This carefully presented scholarly foundation of both the exhibition and the monograph sits at odds with von der Osten's description of their research in another 1939 article as '...cursory, certainly not all-encompassing...', and his admission in 1965 that the monograph had to

³⁵ *op. cit.*, p. 41.

³⁶ Von der Osten 1939 I, p. 169.

³⁷ *Exh. Cat. Hannover 1938*, p. 7; *Stuttman and von der Osten 1940*, p. 1.

³⁸ *Stuttman and von der Osten*, p. 1.

³⁹ *Stuttman and von der Osten 1940*, p. 3.

be 'completed with the utmost haste'.⁴⁰ This statement reinforces the impression not of a carefully-planned, strategic scholarly examination, but a hastily assembled showcase. It further implies the requirement for a more comprehensive, subsequent review of the subject, such as the planned monograph could provide.⁴¹ The paperback exhibition catalogue which had been intended as no more than a factual companion to both lay and expert audiences deliberately refrained from style-critical analysis or art historical discussion of the wider subject.⁴² At the same time, there had been a number of works which, for a number of reasons, it had not been possible to show, but which were important to the overall narrative, so that the subject certainly required a more comprehensive discussion than could be achieved within the constraints of the temporary display. A separate publication had the advantage that it could also contextualise those works which it had not been possible to include in the show.⁴³ The monograph then constituted not only a significant expansion of the initial catalogue, but also retrospectively increased the academic impact of the exhibition.

As already indicated, von der Osten's article is supplemented by the survival of a number of files in the offices of the NLM which document some of the preparations for both the exhibition and the monograph. These records are complemented by extant correspondence in the archives of the church in Enger. In combination,

⁴⁰ Von der Osten 1939 , p. 169; Exh.Cat. Hildesheim 1991, p. 89.

⁴¹ Op. cit., p. 170.

⁴² Exh. Cat, Hannover 1938, p. 7.

⁴³ Von der Osten 1939 , p. 170; Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. I.

these records present an impression of the exhibition that contradicts the carefully perpetuated impression of a well-planned and judiciously executed scholarly discourse. Surviving communications between the exhibition organisers and various lenders indicate a much tighter timeframe, with a first circular request for loan items sent out on 04 April 1938.⁴⁴ Positive replies to requests for specific items for loans appear from early May 1938.⁴⁵ Another letter shows that as late as May 21st the exhibition programme had not yet been finalised, with potential exhibits still 'being discovered', while the refusal of the loan of a number of works from the Diocese of Osnabruck did not reach Hannover until the end of May.⁴⁶ The formal loan agreement for four figures and a passion scene from Enger, dated 11th June 1938, shows that even at such late a date changes were still possible, as the two apostles from the predella that had been requested initially, were dropped and manually deleted from the contract.⁴⁷ The sense one gets from these archives is very much of an event that is being put together at the last minute. This suggests that von der Osten's subsequent article may have constituted an attempt to locate the exhibition within a longer-term scholarly framework retrospectively or outward window dressing in an effort to aggrandize its scholarly value or to mitigate the restrictive and disruptive effects of National Socialism on a museum of international renown.

⁴⁴ PS NLM NB 050438.

⁴⁵ PS NLM NB 080538

⁴⁶ PS NLM NB 210538 and PS NLM NB 310538.

⁴⁷ PS NLM NB 'Angeforderte Stücke', undated, and PS LkA EKvW 4.61–194 IV.

If one is prepared to accept that the exhibition was put together within a restricted timeframe, then the same can be said for the monograph that resulted from it. Although the authors were at pains to assure their readership that the manuscript had been completed prior to the outbreak of WWII in September 1939, they also in their introductory preamble paint a vivid picture of reading the final proofs effectively on the battle fields, with any last-minute queries resolved by field post.⁴⁸ An earlier letter from Gert von der Osten to Harald Busch, dated 04 January 1940, makes specific reference to the author's relief at having secured a publishing agreement for the monograph, since 'Stuttman is already in the Field, and I shall undoubtedly follow him shortly'.⁴⁹ This does suggest that time pressures, as well as historic events, at least occasionally may have informed the conclusions presented by the authors.

In both the exhibition and the monograph, there was, as von der Osten put it, 'an emphasis on works created during the decades after the turn of the century', due to the authors' perception that this period had yielded a greater number of high-quality pieces.⁵⁰ Since, however, there is no documented provenance for the majority of works under consideration, let alone an accurate mechanism of dating them, this assertion has to be treated with some caution. It was certainly informed by the very few tangible anchoring points of Lower Saxon sculpture

⁴⁸ Stuttmann and von der Osten , 1940, preamble, no pag.

⁴⁹ PS NLM NB 04011940

⁵⁰ Von der Osten 1939 , p. 169.

outlined as part of the Introduction. In addition, restoration work carried out in 1932 on a Crucifixion Group now in the Museum of Local History in Goslar revealed a concealed box of relics which also included a note which dated that group to 1520.⁵¹ Finally, according to an antiquarian source, the former altarpiece in Holtrup, of which the Madonna and twelve apostles survive as individual figures, also used to bear an inscription dating that retable to 1525.⁵² This concentration of dates to roughly the ten-year span between 1515 and 1525 seems to have significantly informed Stuttmann and von der Osten's thinking.

At the same time, the authors repeatedly asserted that 'artistically inferior' works had been excluded from their considerations.⁵³ It is, of course, impossible to locate any object within its appropriate artistic context without some form of comparison to other works, good or bad. Indeed, the authors' own qualitatively hierarchical conclusions require the presence of inferior examples against which to contrast the superiority of what they have judged to be high quality work, so that in a way their statement has only limited validity. It does, however, alert the reader to the fact that their analysis may have been based on aesthetic/subjective criteria rather than the more objective style-critical analysis alone. That approach, however, was based not on a personal bias, but on the analytical approaches explicated by one of Germany's most influential scholars of his time, Wilhelm Pinder. Pinder believed

⁵¹ Web Christine Magin, DI 45, Nr. 72.

⁵² Anton Gottfried Schlichthaber, cited in Wohl 1984, p. 172.

⁵³ Von der Osten 1939 I, p. 169; Stuttmann, Osten 1940, p.l.

that in sculpture meaning could only be derived from the works themselves, not from externally defined criteria.⁵⁴ His metaphor-rich language exaggerated the visual and spiritual qualities of individual exponents of excellence to the point of lyrical ecstasy, but had little room for the materiality of his subject, or academic analyses of style or form.⁵⁵ As such Pinder positioned himself in the role of informed interpreter of meaning while at the same time preventing his audience from articulating informed opinions of their own.⁵⁶ Stuttmann and von der Osten's text frequently wavers between Pinder's sage-like interpretation, and sound academic argument.

Taking into account solely sculpture production in Hildesheim as the focus of this research, the qualitative cherry-picking approach, coupled with the almost complete absence of provenance, has resulted in a significant number of works being attributed not to a master, but merely a location – the town of Hildesheim. This putative provenancing of works is founded not on style-critical, but aesthetic criteria. A multitude of likely workshop products, as well as the complete survival of architectural carvings that adorned medieval houses, and still characterises many a regional town centre, have been excluded from the analysis, while works deemed to be of sub-standard quality were re-distributed across the region. Hinrick Stavoer, the only artist documentable in Hildesheim through archival evidence and a signature

⁵⁴ Schürmann 2008, p. 247.

⁵⁵ *op. cit.*, pp. 249-250.

⁵⁶ *op. cit.*, p. 250.

retable was (again) unceremoniously re-located to neighbouring Brunswick, this time because his style failed to meet the high standard of the re-constituted Hildesheim production. Even more interesting is the authors' proposal that Stavoer re-located his workshop from Brunswick to Hildesheim late in his career. This was necessary to maintain the attribution of his *Coronation of the Virgin* group, which was deemed too Hildesheim-ish in character to have originated in Brunswick. The implied subjugation of style to physical location is difficult to uphold, and further negates the usual channels of contemporary artistic and economic exchange. By de-contextualising Stavoer's work, Stuttmann and von der Osten have effectively prevented a full assessment of his personal style by more objective criteria. As a result, the boundaries that would normally have distinguished his hand from others are likely to have dissipated, and the characteristics that under normal circumstances would have facilitated the definition of his individual style are likely to have become interchangeable.

What should be the most comprehensive and cohesive study of Lower Saxon sculpture, therefore is diminished by the manner in which unsustainable theories have been accepted, or replaced by proposals that are equally difficult to reconcile, leaving the reader with a sense of abeyance, if not confusion, and a distinct desire for the discovery of additional hard evidence. That such can still emerge to change our perceptions of the subject fundamentally is exemplified by Corinna

Lohse and Annette Berg's discovery of the original monochrome appearance of the *Benedict Retable*.⁵⁷ Similarly, Jan Friedrich Richter has re-evaluated the *West Choir Retable* as part of his recent publication on the North German master Claus Berg, while his review of late-gothic sculpture in Bad Gandersheim, has also cast doubt on some of the works previously attributed by Stuttmann and von der Osten to another of their constructs, the *Master of St. Epiphanius*.⁵⁸ These more recent discoveries and revisions prove beyond doubt that in relation to sculpture from Hildesheim and Lower Saxony, the final word is unlikely to have been spoken.

⁵⁷ Berg-Lohse, 2002, pp. 148 – 154.

⁵⁸ Richter 2010, pp. 64-69.

III. METHODOLOGY

Hinrick Stavoer, despite the publication of archival records, is essentially a victim of anonymity. The facts about him are scant, and there is little factual context to anchor him. The isolated pieces of evidence that relate to him have given his interpreters the opportunity to present him not as history has recorded him, but to reposition him in accordance with their own preoccupations. In Stavoer's case this has led to a number of presuppositions presented as facts from which he, as a silent participant, cannot extricate himself, and which deepen his anonymity the longer they are perpetuated. The literature review has already shown how the meaning of the material evidence of Lower Saxon art can change in the hands of its interpreters. Medieval art in particular lends itself to shifting interpretations. Often isolated from its history, form and context it becomes the subject of theories that are expounded, sometime challenged and more frequently simply dismissed. Much of the late medieval sculpture shares this fate, and thus patterns of interpretation emerge. One such pattern concerns the assessment of medieval sculpture. With most of its material survival separated from its source its assessment and interpretation cannot anchor themselves in fact, but rely on perceptions of fact that owe as much to the period in which they are formed as they do on the supposed facts that underpin them.

To understand how the various layers of interpretation have affected the art history of Lower Saxony the experience of others has been valuable. Both Reinhard Karrenbrock and Hans-Joachim Manske have been confronted with challenges similar to that presented in Lower Saxony in that the reassessment of 'facts' had created an increasingly diffuse reality. Manske's research into the anonymous Master of Osnabruck has identified a three-phase process of interpretation that would lead to what he described as 'Vermeisterung', the over-proliferation of masters deemed responsible for a steadily decreasing amount of extant works. It begins with the identification of an overarching formal style that is defined through a commonality in individual forms and motifs, and a number of sub-styles which vary to such a degree as to contradict the possibility of them as being the product of a single master and his assistants. In the case of the Master of Osnabruck, over a period of no more than ten years, that output had been divided across first two masters and their workshops, then three. Further escalation follows as another layer of classification criteria is added to each re-examination, or a changing set of benchmarks is applied.

The terms in which Manske described the theoretical development of his subject has obvious parallels with the art historic treatment of Hildesheim sculpture, which numerous authors have centred first around one then another artistic core, before they were split into half a dozen hands and geographically re-cast by Stuttmann and von der

Osten's monograph. Although their resultant abundance of emergency names remains unchallenged to date, their existence is symptomatic of *Vermeisterung*, particularly as in this context we encounter the same paradox whereby each instance of stylistic commonality is countered by one of differentiation. One result of *Vermeisterung* is that the works that represent supposedly separate identities present a surprisingly homogenous whole.⁵⁹ In the light of the analogy between the foundations of Manske's research and the Lower Saxon art topography as it presented itself at the beginning of this project, Manske's monograph presented an essential guide the interpretation of stylistic as well as factual evidence.

One such avenue relates to materiality. With archival evidence in relation to particular artworks continuing to elude the researcher, technological examination presently represents the only avenue likely to yield results that might contribute towards a chronology of sculpture production in Hildesheim in general and Stavoer in particular. Any hopes of significant discoveries here, however, are moderated by the fact that the majority of sculpture is executed in lime wood. To the conservator, lime wood is a diffuse-porous wood, which renders it unsuitable for basic dendrochronological analysis. As opposed to ring-porous woods such as oak, diffuse-porous woods do not alter the appearance of their tracheid cells over their annual growth period. Ring-diffuse trees change their cell appearance between early and late

⁵⁹ Rosenfeld 2000, p. 155

growth, thus forming clearly distinguishable tree rings each year. Diffuse-porous tree cells, however, maintain the same appearance throughout, so that the only demarcation between two years' growth is a barely perceptible radial flattening of the last few elements, or a possible increase in fibres near the end of the growing period.⁶⁰ Conventional dendrochronological analysis therefore will only yield unreliable results when examining lime wood.⁶¹ Consequently, it is desirable to identify carvings made from wood more suitable to such analysis. Such possibilities exist in the form of the console brackets and weather boards surviving from the often elaborately carved facades of Hildesheim's late medieval architecture. The brackets in particular were popular locations of figurative carvings, while spaces between them were often clad in large wooden boards, with allegorical scenes or allusions to a building's purpose carved, or painted upon them. Although these brackets and boards had no need to be carved to particularly high standard, often being attached two or three storeys high, they nevertheless mirror the artistic and intellectual concerns of the people and organisations who commissioned them for their houses. Being part of the structural support of a building, they were made from the more sturdy oak, a material that does not suffer the same limitations of analytical capacity as lime wood. Moreover, while the buildings no longer exist, numerous brackets and boards do survive in the collection of the former Saint Andrew's museum, an architectural collection once

⁶⁰ Klein 1998, p. 48; Klein 2012, p. 52.

⁶¹ Klein 1998, p. 52.

kept and displayed in the tower of the church of Saint Andrew, now subsumed into the collection of the Roemer-Pelizaeus Museum (RPM). Today they make popular study objects for examination by students of conservation and restoration technologies at the local University of Applied Science and Arts.

The relevance of the evidence gained from the dating of architectural carvings for the production of '[portable] cultural hardware', to use Baxandall's term, however, presupposes that both were produced in the same workshop. Actual evidence for this is scant; if the survival of documents relating to the commissioning of artefacts is marginal, that for the commissioning of architectural carvings appears non-existent. The only indication is the stylistic evidence found in the form of surviving carvings incorporated into domestic carpentry, and for this recent studies have set precedents. Jan-Friedrich Richter has published evidence from account books which shows that the sculptor Claus Berg delivered a carved door to the Danish royal court in 1508, while Manske's research was able to locate four carved panels in a door in Osnabruck town hall which bear all the stylistic hallmarks of his Master of Osnabruck.⁶² While neither example, in isolation, provides conclusive proof, these instances provide a precedent of seemingly separate crafts crossing over into another's professional territory. The possibility that other items which involve extensive figure carving would be generated within such workshop therefore cannot be dismissed, and

⁶² Richter 2007, p. 112; Manske 1978, p. 24

there are sufficient stylistic parallels between examples of architectural carvings in Hildesheim and the Enger retablo to suggest that Stavoer's workshop might also have been involved in the production of both. The idea is not new – in a letter to Gert von der Osten dated 30 May 1938 Harald Busch privately expressed his (otherwise unpublished) view that Hinrick Stavoer was responsible for the architectural carvings that had adorned the original *Knochenhaueramtshaus* (butchers' guild hall, 1529).⁶³ This overlap between different forms of carving feeds into a more holistic approach towards the subject in which a more diverse history is accepted than the relatively narrow focus in the extant literature on purely figurative sculpture production. Michael Baxandall's and Julien Chapuis' research into the working methods of Tilman Riemenschneider has opened up a number of avenues, particularly in relation to the commercial environment in which Stavoer might have operated.

In the existing literature, the engagement with primary source material is limited. Habicht discovered and published the Saint Godehard register books. Busch found the tax register evidence relating to Master Wolter, while Meier contributed the same for Hinrick Stavoer. Contrary to reasonable expectation, Stuttmann and von der Osten 'somewhat neglected' to 'underpin their research with archival evidence', as Reinhard Karrenbrock put it in 2011.⁶⁴ Since then, archival research has advanced only rudimentarily. Consequently a

⁶³ OS NLM NB 300538

⁶⁴ Karrenbrock 2011, p. 294, fn. 20.

significant part of this research has been spent with practical archive work, and the interpretation of the sources that have been uncovered. The practical nature of this research, and in particular the engagement with the primary sources, has demanded a more factual than theoretical approach. The results have made it possible to reposition Hinrick Stavoer closer to his own history.

IV. SOME NOTES ON THE ARTISTIC TOPOGRAPHY OF HILDESHEIM

The existing literature on Lower Saxon sculpture has always implicitly accepted, if not actively perpetuated, the notion that Hildesheim was able to support at least one major workshop, that is a workshop capable of producing high quality sculpture that was both sold locally and exported. Stuttmann and von der Osten have proposed that three such workshops existed simultaneously in the period 1515 to 1530 alone, with a fourth, that of Hinrick Stavoer, also moving to the town c. 1530.⁶⁵ This chapter will sketch out the likely market conditions under which religious and other sculpture might have been produced in the town during Stavoer's time.

In the late middle ages, the Lower Saxon town of Hildesheim was of some regional, but little national importance. Although a cathedral town, it had no episcopal court, that court having relocated during a period of increasing conflict with the town's citizenship to the newly built fortification of Steuerwald in 1311.⁶⁶ Although Hildesheim never attained the status of Free Imperial City, its wealthy merchant class had obtained most town privileges from the bishop during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. With approximately 9000 inhabitants, Hildesheim was the second largest town in the region after Brunswick. In status it was similar to other regional centres such as Munster and Osnabruck,

⁶⁵ Meier 1937, p. 11; Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 79.

⁶⁶ Küster 2008, p. 114; Klappauf et al in Exh. Cat. Hildesheim 2008, p. 76; Reyer 2002, p. 36.

but not as influential or important as cities such as Magdeburg or Cologne were. The local economy relied mainly on trade with its own territory, particularly the acquisition, conversion, and resale of local goods, especially shoes, beer and knives⁶⁷. Export goods included wool and thread which travelled as far as Flanders and England to be used in the production of cloth there and re-imported, while cloth produced locally was sold locally, and barely left the region.⁶⁸ In 1367, Hildesheim joined the Lower Saxon Concordance, the Hanseatic League's alliance of inland towns in the region.⁶⁹ The town's relatively low-key profile in the transactions of the Concordance underscores the view that the town's economic interests retained a primarily local focus.⁷⁰ Although Hildesheim was by no means the exceptional location some art historical treatises proposed, it does conform to the profile Michael Baxandall has established for a town in which sculpture was produced.⁷¹ However, as Baxandall also pointed out, the nature of that sculpture production was more diverse and included a broader range of woodcrafts including construction carpentry and joinery, with very few locations being able to support a workshop that was focussed on producing sculpture alone. The validity of Baxandall's proposals seems reflected in the town's urban appearance prior to WWII, during which the town's historic fabric was all but obliterated.

⁶⁷ Mainzer 1987, p. 29

⁶⁸ Mainzer 1987, p. 28; Gebauer 1939, p. 27 and p. 29.

⁶⁹ Germer 2001, p. 77.

⁷⁰ Gebauer 1939, p. 29; Germer 2001, p. 77.

⁷¹ Baxandall 1980, p. 97.

Numerous historic records, particularly photographs, but also specially commissioned watercolours and published studies of the medieval fabric of the town have preserved a vision of the ornate appearance of Hildesheim at the beginning of the sixteenth century, which was renowned for its late medieval architecture embellished with rich carvings on lintels, beams, console brackets and doors (Figure IV-1). Against a background of long drawn-out antagonism between the town and its bishop coupled with only moderate capacity for economic development in the region, ecclesiastical commissioning and personal patronage had declined during the fifteenth century.⁷² Nevertheless, a number of ecclesiastic and profane building projects were underway which would have brought with them a requirement for some sculpture, and can offer a view of the likely extent of sculpture patronage. Dilapidated parts of the abbey of St. Godehard were being rebuilt between 1493 to 1496 and 1504 to 1512.⁷³ Of the other monastic orders, the Dominicans commissioned a new choir for their church, St. Paul, in 1480, while the Franciscans at St. Martin's added a four-bay chapel extension, the so-called *Portiuncula* Chapel, to their church ten years later.⁷⁴ In the New Town district on the outskirts of Hildesheim the church of St. Lambert was being rebuilt between 1474 and 1488. In 1503 the foundation stone was laid for the new west tower of St. Andreas, and the former chapel of St. Jakob was being rebuilt as a new

⁷² Nolte 2001, p. 117.

⁷³ Dehio Bremen Niedersachsen 1992, p. 712.

⁷⁴ op. cit., p. 722 and p. 728.

parish church for the market quarter north of St. Andreas' Square (completed 1514).⁷⁵ The last major ecclesiastical project of the pre-Reformation period was the reconstruction of the parish church of Saint Lambert in the grounds of the abbey of Saint Michael in 1514.⁷⁶ This appears to conclude the list of ecclesiastic works until 1568, when, according to Zeller, the crossing tower of Saint Godehard was reconstructed, followed by the rebuilding of the church of Saint George in 1601.⁷⁷

All these works clearly brought with them at least some demand for carved product such as choir stalls, altar furnishings and similar, although only the details pertaining to commissions from St. Godehard survive. In December 1504, St. Godehard ordered a new retable for the high altar of its abbey church, double shuttered, with painted panels and a carved interior of eleven figures, to be covered in 'good Hungarian gold' and 'beautiful blue' from Master Wolter, a craftsman resident in the *Brühl* district of the town.⁷⁸ In the same year Wolter had already delivered a retable for the infirmary, for which the register book of 1504 records staged payments to the sum of twenty pounds.⁷⁹ Despite an overall decline in retable and memorial endowments which saw donations and endowments fall off by up to seventy-five per cent during the last quarter of the fifteenth century and first quarter of the sixteenth

⁷⁵ op. cit., p. 716.

⁷⁶ Zeller 1912, pp. 397 – 399.

⁷⁷ Zeller 1912, p. 400 and p. 403.

⁷⁸ Mithoff 1885, pp. 430 to 431, and Habicht 1917, p. 201. The original source was lost in 1945.

⁷⁹ DBH HS318e, fol. 213^r

century, demand for sacred sculpture was also sustained by the popularity of *Andachtsbilder* and sculpture for personal devotion in the domestic environment.⁸⁰

The majority of construction, however, involved civic projects. Zeller cites some thirty projects, from workers' crofts to representational residences privately commissioned by ecclesiasts and multi-storey guildhalls designed to impress both through the size of their trading space and the international spread of their connections through decorative allusion to an artistic vocabulary that is clearly exotic and foreign. It can be no coincidence that the largest of these halls, the *Knochenhaueramtshaus* is also the only pre-Reformation building to use more secular Renaissance-derived motifs for its exterior, and it may be this conspicuous new trend for secular decoration that prompted some art historians to question the town's status as a centre for the production of religious sculpture.⁸¹ The *Knochenhaueramtshaus* certainly represents the moment at which established architectural decorative forms left their late Gothic traditions in favour of more contemporary forms of expression. Although no longer in its original form, numerous surviving paintings and photographs convey impressions of the richness of its decoration and the novelty of its subject matter. Structurally, the building adhered to gothic architectural formulae, which were also inherent in the diaper patterns and the

⁸⁰ Data extrapolated from Hans-Walter Krumwiede's listing of church, chapel and altar dedications in Lower Saxony. Krumwiede 1960, pp. 110 to 121.

⁸¹ Nolte 2001, p. 110.

figurative decoration of its console brackets, albeit that the traditional saints and apostle figures had been replaced by music-playing putti. Intricately carved girders full of mythical beasts, grotesques, and botanically-inspired garlands of fruits, seeds, leaves and flowers replaced the more conservative pierced tracery popular a generation earlier, and formed the basis of a decorative language that is more readily associated with the second half of the sixteenth century.⁸²

Until the decoration of the *Knochenhaueramtshaus* was conceived, house fronts shared some of their joinery elements with retables. The carved weather boards from the private house formerly located at *Eckemeckerstraße 4* (Figure IV-2), for example, known from a late nineteenth-century watercolour, shows tracery patterns of a type that were still used for altarpieces a generation later, as a comparison between the watercolour painting of that detail and the foliate tracery from an altarpiece in Henneckenrode (Figure IV-3) shows.⁸³ Similarly, the scrollwork carving on the external supporting beam between the first and second floors of the Grocers' Guild Hall (*Kramergildehaus*, Figure IV-4) references numerous similar insertions in retables such as the Enger retable (Figure IV-5) amongst them.⁸⁴ The interchangeability of forms between domestic architecture and retable production points towards a common origin in the joinery workshops that supplied both the structure elements of the dwellings and the casings for the retables.

⁸² Stein 2002, p. 132.

⁸³ Zeller 1913, p. 62, fig. 89

⁸⁴ The latter illustrated in Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, Cat No 22, pl. 27. Grocers' Guildhall illustrated in Zeller 1913, pl. 10, fig. 88.

With the shift towards a more secular decoration that link was severed, especially as the new decorative forms were also suitable, and readily taken up, for all manners of interior decoration, and adorned doorframes, furniture, and small domestic vessels. The likelihood is therefore of not an extensive, but a regular market for religious sculpture, that was outdone by a distinct appetite for carved work in the domestic environment.

V. HINRICK STAVORDE (STAVOREN)

It should be stated from the outset that there is no taxpayer by the name of Hinrick Stavoer in the Hildesheim tax registers. Enquiries to the municipal archive for the town of Hildesheim (SAH), pertaining to Hinrick Stavoer instead yield references to entries for an individual resident in the *Sutorum* district of the town, whose surname is most commonly given in the registers first as Stavoren, later as Stavorde, with the usual range of variation in the phonetic spelling of the name. Although Meier never stated so explicitly, it was his conclusion that this taxpayer was identical with the signatory on the Enger retable.⁸⁵ Stuttmann and von der Osten, while making no direct reference to the primary evidence or Meier's interpretation of it, clearly were conscious of the potential limitations of both, as the seemingly casual reference in their volume to the possibility that the carver of the Enger retable might yet be proven to have originated in the Netherlandish town of *Stavoren*, shows.⁸⁶ The fact that the authors located Stavoer in Brunswick despite that evidence implies rejection rather than acceptance of it, and creates a potential conflict with the now common acceptance of it as relating to the signatory of the Enger retable. In view of the diverging interpretations this chapter will be dedicated to the examination of the historic personality documented in the primary evidence. To keep that person separate from the carver of the Enger retable, and in

⁸⁵ Meier 1937, p. 11.

⁸⁶ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 79.

acknowledgement of the fact that it is the Stavorde variant of the surname that passes to the following generations this thesis will refer to that historic personality as Hinrick Stavorde.

Hinrick Stavorde becomes visible for first time in the June tax register of 1504, when his name appears in the *Sutorum* tax register, below the listing of one Hans Shomeker and above that of Margarethe Borthsehl.⁸⁷ Margarethe Borthsehl was already established as a taxpayer in her own right in 1502 and again in 1503, then abbreviated to *Grete Borthsehl*.⁸⁸ The consistent citation of her first and surnames precludes the possibility that Grethe was widowed; as a widow she would have appeared in the tax registers as *De Borthsehlsche*. While the June tax register of 1504 shows Hinrick Stavorde and Grethe Borthsehl discharging their dues independently, the November register of the same year documents two payments made by Stavorde, one in his own name and the other on Grethe's behalf (*Et nu[men] grethe boa[rthsehl]*).⁸⁹ In subsequent tax registers no further payments by or on behalf of Grethe Borthsehl are recorded. The next tax register of June 1505, however, documents Stavorde as discharging two payments again, the second payment on behalf of his wife (*et nu[men] uxoris*).⁹⁰ In the same year, Stavorde also acquired citizenship of Hildesheim for a separate payment of ten shillings, as recorded in

⁸⁷ PS SAH 50-1873, Fol. 73^r.

⁸⁸ PS SAH 50-1873 Fols. 13^r and 42^r.

⁸⁹ PS SAH 50-1873, Fols. 73^r and 104^r.

⁹⁰ PS SAH 50-1873 Fol. 136^r.

treasury report for that year.⁹¹ Payments by Stavorde on behalf of an unnamed person, but taken by the writer to represent his wife (*et nu[men]*), continue in the November register of 1505, and those of November 1507 and November 1512, the only other registers to survive from the first decade of Stavorde's residence in the town.⁹² The next three extant registers of 1516, 1517, and 1520 record subsidiary payments discharged by his mother (*et mater*) instead of the previously indicated wife.⁹³ After 1520, Hinrick Stavorde remains the sole tax payer. A surviving working copy of the 1532 register documents the existence of a son, Brandt, who in the same year became a tax payer in his own right, with a dwelling in the Brühl district of the town.⁹⁴ The 1532 working copy of the tax register also shows that Hinrick Stavorde was resident in *Hillige † Strate* (Heilig Kreuz Straße, see Appendix A, Map 3) which today still connects the former Cathedral Close with the collegiate foundation of the Holy Cross. The 1535 tax register documents the last tax liability discharged by Hinrick Stavorde.⁹⁵ There is no surviving register for 1536, and by the time the 1537 *Vorschöß* register was drawn up the Stavorde household in *Hillige † Strate* had been dissolved, and Brandt Stavorde's mother had joined her son's household.⁹⁶

⁹¹ PS SAH 50-699, Fol 129^v.

⁹² PS SAH 50-1873, Fols. 166^r and 198^r; SAH 50-1874 Fol. 19^r.

⁹³ PS SAH 50-1874, Fols. 66^r, 99^r and 135^r.

⁹⁴ PS SAH 50-1876, Fols. 26^v and 28^r.

⁹⁵ PS SAH 50-1877 Fol. 50^r.

⁹⁶ PS SAH 90^r.

Based upon the information contained in the tax registers, a basic biography can be extrapolated. Accordingly, Hinrick Stavorde arrived in Hildesheim in late 1503 or early 1504, and entered Margarethe (Grethe) Borthsehl's household as an itinerant craftsman or assistant. This would suggest him to have been born c. 1480. In 1505 he became a citizen of Hildesheim, and married Grethe Borthsehl. In c. 1507 a son, Brandt, was born.⁹⁷ Hinrick Stavorde died c. 1536. The cause of his death is not known, although natural causes may be assumed since in that year no outbreaks of major diseases are recorded.⁹⁸ Stavorde's tax payments (Appendix B, blue graph) indicate a stable lifestyle, with steady improvement, and little fluctuation. During his first fifteen years as a Hildesheim resident, his payments increased regularly and steadily, documenting the gradual doubling of his personal wealth from 50 Marks in 1504 to 100 Marks in 1512, and 120 Marks in 1516 and 1517. His personal estate reached its highest worth of 180 Marks for the first time in 1520, and remained at that level for the rest of his life with some brief intermissions. In 1522, 1523 and 1527 the value of his estate dipped to 150 Marks, 170 Marks and 148 Marks respectively. It is, however, interesting to note that during the years of the *Stiftsfehde*, the *Great Diocese Feud*, 1518 to 1523, Stavorde established himself at his most wealthy. Although there are temporary reductions in his fortune during the final two years of that conflict which are unlikely to be coincidental,

⁹⁷ This assumes that Brandt was approximately twenty-five years old when he set up his own household in the Brühl in 1532.

⁹⁸ Ohlmer 1921, p. 232.

his estate had recovered its pre-conflict value by 1524. In his final years, 1528 to 1535, Stavorde's tax payments remain steady, indicating a stable estate to the value of 180 Mark, which may suggest that his income was not dependent on his business alone, although no actual records of any investment income have been found. The seventeen-year long gap in the Schoß registers between 1535 and 1552 makes it impossible to estimate the extent of Stavorde's estate as might have been inherited by son Brandt, leaving the conclusion of Stavorde's life in a somewhat unsatisfying, but inevitable, abeyance.

The treasury accounts of Hildesheim's ruling council offer further insights into his working life, although those compiled during the early years of his residence, 1504 to 1513, had to be excluded because it is not possible to allocate the payments listed to individual craftsmen or service providers. In addition, the accounts for the years 1514 to 1517 are preserved incomplete: the records for 1515 and 1516 are missing entirely, while of 1514 and 1517 pages are bound out of sequence and against the usual reporting order, so that a representative audit is not possible. This thesis therefore can only use the treasury accounts compiled from 1518 onwards. In that year, Hinrick Stavorde received a payment of four pounds for the white-washing of the chamber of the twenty-four men (*vor der xxiiij man dornsen to wytkende*), and some maintenance work on a tiled stove (*den kaggeloven to vervende*), presumably located in the same chamber. In addition he executed some signwriting in the chapel (*de karakteren gemakt up de cappell*),

although the entry does not specify the medium in which the lettering was effected.⁹⁹ In the following year, he varnished two tables (*twe dische to fornissenden*).¹⁰⁰ In 1521, he again attended to two tiled stoves in the town hall (*vor de beiden kaggheloven tu male[r]n uppe dem radhus*), and gilded a door knob or pommel that formed part of the breastwork near the eastern town gate (*en lutken knopen to v[er]guldende up de arkend vor dem osterdor*).¹⁰¹ During the following year he received a payment for the painting of a board for the town's customs house (*dath breth to malende vor de tollen boede*).¹⁰² The next recorded payment occurred in 1525, when he received fifteen shillings for painting several pictures in the town hall (*vor ithlige belde to malende up dem radhuse*).¹⁰³ The relatively small amount received suggests that the images referred to are of a utilitarian nature, rather than more complex artistic commissions. In the following year, 1526, he was paid seven pounds and eight pence for an otherwise unspecified painting work executed in the council chamber and the treasury (*vor dat malenten up des rades dornsen und up der kemerien*).¹⁰⁴ In the latter half of that year he tended to a stove in the treasury (*vor den oven up da kernerie an to strikende*).¹⁰⁵ Two years later, in 1528, he received a payment of fourteen shillings for similar maintenance work on the

⁹⁹ PS SAH 50-704, Fol. 75^v.

¹⁰⁰ PS SAH 50-704, Fol. 157^r.

¹⁰¹ PS SAH 50-705, Fol. 146^v.

¹⁰² PS SAH 50-705, Fol. 225^r.

¹⁰³ PS SAH 50-706, Fol. 211^v.

¹⁰⁴ PS SAH 50-707, Fol. 58^v.

¹⁰⁵ PS SAH 50-707, Fol. 60^r.

breastwork by the Hagendor, one of two gates exiting to the north of the town (*vor vij helze an den kleyn[en] arkenen vor dem haghendor an tho strickende*).¹⁰⁶ Shortly afterwards he was paid a further four shillings to paint a cross (*vor dath cruittze to malende uppe dem nygen hues*), most likely to mean a debtor's cross on a door or a market symbol, rather than the more artistic rendering of a crucifix for devotional purposes.¹⁰⁷ In the same year he also received sixteen shillings to apply the town's new coat of arms to six official messenger bags (*vor vj boden bvssen vam nygen wapen*).¹⁰⁸ In 1529 Stavorde painted the roundtable and supplied linen for it (*vor de tablrunden tho malende unnd viij d. vor dat lenewandt*), a task that is fulfilled by a number of different artists during the first half of the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁹ In 1531 he received three separate payments. The first was for ten shillings to paint a tiled stove (*dat he den kachel-oven vormalde*). Three shillings and four pence were received for painting more messenger bags (*vor ij boden bussen*). The final payment that year, twenty-three shillings, Stavorde received for making 'a table green' (*den disch grone to makende*).¹¹⁰ Stavorde's final entry in the treasury accounts occurred in 1534, when he was paid seven pounds for painting and other work to the roundtable (*vor de tafelrudnen tho leggerent und tho vormalend*).¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ PS SAH 50-707, Fol. 190^v.

¹⁰⁷ PS SAH 50-707, Fol. 191^v; Schiller Lübben II, p. 568.

¹⁰⁸ PS SAH 50-707, Fol.

¹⁰⁹ PS SAH 50-707, Fol. 251^v.

¹¹⁰ PS SAH 50-708, Fols. 153^r and 154^r.

¹¹¹ PS SAH 50-709, Fol. 135^v.

The assignments for which Hinrick Stavorde was being paid amount only to minor maintenance tasks, of which some were of a routine nature than others. There are no major commissions recorded, nor sums paid that would indicate the award of such, even if their detailed description was absent. Intriguing in the context of a wood processing workshop such as has always been assumed in this context, are the frequent references to painting or related activities, such as the white-washing of interior spaces, the painting of coats of arms on messenger bags or the unspecified images or pictures that were painted in the town hall. Other entries also imply painterly rather than woodworking activities. ‘*Vervende*’, for example, the word used to describe maintenance being carried out on the tiled stove in 1518, for example, is translated in Schiller Lübben as dyeing or colouring, while the noun ‘*verwe*’ is the translation for paint in Middle Low German. In later records the same activity is described in a range of different expressions (‘*malern*’ in 1521, ‘*an to strikende*’ in 1526 and ‘*vormalde*’ in 1531). A primary source quoted in a thesis on tiled stoves published in 1999 by Matthias Henkel shows that tiled stoves were often given a secondary coat of paint over the tiles.¹¹² The painting tasks for which Hinrick Stavorde was paid in conjunction with stoves and individual rooms within the town hall therefore do not refer to artistically conceived ornamental adornments, but simple interior decorating tasks, possibly to counter the effects of smoke dispersal from the stoves. The same

¹¹² Henkel 1999, p. 52.

sources cited by Henkel also clear up a discrepancy between the treasury accounts and the Middle Low German dictionary and glossaries. Several of Stavorde's payments are made as reimbursements for different items '*an t[h]o stri[c]kende*'. In the dictionaries '*striken*' is associated with a number of meanings, usually relating to the measuring and grading of woven fabric, an activity not readily associated with artistic pursuits. Henkel's source, however, makes it clear that this word was also used in a janitorial context, referring to the application of coats of paint to judge by the context of the treasury accounts.¹¹³

When viewed in context, the works carried out by Hinrick Stavorde on behalf of the town council do not relate to a wood carver, but a painter. Even tasks which clearly involve wood, such as the painting of boards in numerous locations or the varnishing of tables in the town hall, always imply that the wood to be treated is already in situ, and not to be supplied or installed by Stavorde. The conclusion therefore has to be that the records pertaining to Hinrick Stavorde in the Hildesheim treasury accounts and tax registers do not relate to the carver of the Enger retable.

That function, however, relies on the supposition that the signature on the retable was that of the carver. To date, no documentary evidence or antiquarian record has been found that links the signature with the identity of the carver, suggesting that the interpretation

¹¹³ Schiller Lübben IV, pp. 435-436.

indicates nothing more than a historic perception of the late medieval artisan as isolated genius. That notion has been challenged repeatedly by more recent scholarship which now recognises the highly collaborative nature of the late medieval workshops.

The signature's prominent location beneath the cross on mount Golgotha represents a highly unusual conceit for which no parallel example is presently documented.¹¹⁴ Observations made by Dr. Christine Wulff as part of her research cataloguing inscriptions from the medieval and early modern periods in Southern Lower Saxony and other regions of Germany, have led her to conclude that artisans in Stavoer's time appear to have followed certain conventions in the positioning of inscriptions. Accordingly, inscriptions relating to the manufacture of a retable were most commonly found on the retable frame, with carvers also leaving annotations hidden behind removable figures, while texts included in individual scenes usually stood in direct relation to the depicted narrative.¹¹⁵ An example of the former is the retable signed and dated by Cord Borgentrick on the upper edge of the casing beneath the decorative frieze, while Bartold Kastrop left a painted signature in the aureole behind the Virgin Mary in the altarpiece of the village church of Hetjershausen that is only visible when that figure is removed.¹¹⁶ Consequently, the signature of the Enger retable appears to flaunt conventions both in terms of location and content. It is

¹¹⁴ Wulff 190511.

¹¹⁵ Christine Wulff, 'Die Inschriften der Göttinger Altarretabel' in Noll und Warncke 2012, p. 284 and p. 294, fn. 9; Wulff 190511 and Wulff 221111.

¹¹⁶ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 70 and p. 101.

my conclusion that the inscription painted onto Mount Golgotha is a copy of one originally located elsewhere on the retable, possibly the exterior face of the shutters or the original predella, which was transferred to the only space large enough on the inside of the retable to prevent its loss altogether as part of a previous restoration. The likelihood of the signature being a copy opens up the possibility of the discrepancy in the spelling of Hinrick Stavorde's name being the result of a transcription error occurring most likely as a result of deterioration. That the retable had suffered periods of neglect is evidenced in the condition of the reliefs and figures prior to Hampke's restoration as documented through late-nineteenth-century photographs, which also show some structural replacements already in place, such as the arcaded tops above each compartment which replaced the foliate tracery typical of Lower Saxon retables. Inscriptions executed in the early humanist script commonly used during the first quarter of the sixteenth century when deteriorated could easily introduce the kind of transcription error that could transform a *Stavoren* into a *Stavoer*. Consequently the possibility can no longer be dismissed that the signature on the Enger retable relates to the originator of its polychromy, not its carvings. Nor can a dual occupation as carver and polychromer be presumed, since Stavorde is never described as the supplier of any of the wood-based product which he was paid to paint or varnish.

VI. SIGNATURE OR AUTOGRAPH? THE ENGER RETABLE AS A TOUCHSTONE FOR THE STYLE-CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF HINRICK STAVOER

EXCURSUS - THE STYLISTIC CONTEXT

Before commencing the style analysis in earnest, it would be useful to introduce some of the terminology and stylistic formulae this thesis will make repeated reference to. The Introduction and Literature Review have already introduced this style's most distinguishing feature, the so-called lozenge manner of hair depiction. The lozenge style arranges hair tightly around the head in a variety of lozenge and S-shapes arranged in a series of spirals which partially overlay each other (Figure VI-1). Long beards display similar individual sections which move freely over and against each other as vortex curls seemingly clash with more generous swathes of ridged lozenges and parallel cuts, before being reined in by an individual strand of hair elegantly swooping in a thin, open curl around a cluster of smaller structures. Curly hair is represented through a series of tightly wound vortex curls (Figure VI-2). Short beards, like curly-haired heads, are formed from a succession of shallower vortices (Figure VI-3). Similar small curls can also form the transition from face to hair (Figure VI-4). Female heads frequently have relatively simple swept-back long hair that alternates lozenge-shaped sections with thinner and lower parallel cuts arranged in a series of shallow s-shapes. The hair follows the contours of head and neck to the

shoulders, where it divides to form several long plaits which terminate at waist level (Figure VI-5). While larger sections may at least partially overlay each other, all plaits appear heavily weighted, with little to no scope for the introduction of movement through the inclusion of curls and vortices.

Individual forms fulfil what I would describe as either an active (feature) or an inactive (structure) function. Strands, waves, and curls are active features which introduce movement, while lozenges and s-shapes represent the inactive, structural elements of this style. The latter also represent the fixed points of the hair, around which the counter-movement of the other forms occurs. The S-shapes in both their wide and narrow forms are used to build up the physical length of hair, and create a sense of linearity. Individual elongated open curls frequently bisect the inactive forms, to create additional movement by breaking up that linearity. The greatest virtuosity in their arrangement and the resultant interaction of these forms is demonstrated by the fully bearded and long-haired figures of the *West Choir Retable* (Figures VI-1 and VI-6).

In the existing literature, little consideration has so far been given to the origins of this style; it appears to be accepted that it formed part of the stylistic characteristics of sculpture produced during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Walter Hentschel proposed that twelfth-century depictions of the so-called Brunswick lions, emblems of the town since the days of *Heinrich der Löwe* (Henry the Lion, duke of

Saxony 1142 to 1180), may have provided the inspiration for this carving style, since their manes show a similar lozenge-based structure (Figure VI-7).¹¹⁷ While seemingly plausible, this would not explain the resurrection of that style some 350 years later. There is a suggestion of the emergence of the lozenge style being the result of a more gradual process in some of the sculpture surviving from the previous generation in Hildesheim. The relief depicting St James the Greater (Figure VI-8) from the choir stalls in St Godehard, carved 1466 to 1473, displays a simplified arrangement of the broad and narrow S-shapes that could be seen as a stylistic predecessor of some of the formal language that underpins the Lower Saxon hair formations.¹¹⁸ The step from this to the lozenge shapes of the following generation, however, is by no means prefigured in the choir stalls, making a definitive chronology elusive still. The lozenge style seems to appear, as a completely evolved style, for the first time in export retables from Brunswick. It is evident in the Passion retable of St. Mary's in Salzwedel (Altmark, Figure VI-9), which Peter Knüvener has dated to 1500, and a crucifixion retable in Altencelle, which an inscription dates to 1509 (Figure VI-10).¹¹⁹ This seems to bear out the implication in Hentschel's suggestion that this style originated in or near Brunswick, from where it was disseminated to other carvers.

¹¹⁷ Hentschel 1938, p. 179.

¹¹⁸ Exh. Cat. Hildesheim 1988, p. 5.

¹¹⁹ Knüvener 2011, p. 55 and p. 65.

The sophisticated and intricate forms of the lozenge style are countered by a proliferation of heads where the hair depiction displays extremely basic forms which on occasion are extended into ornamental stylisation. In the literature these are often described as executed by 'weaker' carvers, as Peter Knüvener, for example, posits in his discussion of the retable from Altencelle in an effort to distinguish the different quality levels between the shutter and central compartment figures. In their simplification, such figures are as distinctive as the most superior production. Instead of carefully defining individual strands, hair is now defined by alternating crescents cut into a flattened wood surface, as shown, for example, in the figure of Judas Thaddeus from the Enger retable (Figure VI-11). The same formula is also used to characterise hair that is worn open, such as by the Virgin Mary, for example (Figure VI-12). In many male figures hair was also abstracted into a symmetrical decorative form that bears little allusion to realism (Figure VI-13). This simplification tends to occur only in figures that are c. 30 cm to 45 cm tall and occupying shutters or predellae, and suggests that in the Lower Saxon context a staged classification system for sculpture existed similar to that which Julien Chapuis has proposed for Tilman Riemenschneider's workshop.¹²⁰

The Lower Saxon style, like contemporary carvings from Southern German production centres, is heavily influenced by formulae developed through study of graphic sources by Martin Schongauer and

¹²⁰ Exh. Cat. Washington and New York 1999-2000, pp. 39-40.

Lucas Cranach the Elder. Of these, the most frequently recurring feature is a combination of straight, tightly spaced tubular folds, sometimes also described in this thesis as pin-folds, that form an oblique triangle running from the waist towards the foot, and with a cluster of sub-structures contained therein (Figure VI-14). Depending on the length to which this formation is drawn out, the sub-structures create a cascade of creases and crumples that may tumble the length of the triangular shape, although they have never been observed to fall outside of that perimeter. This very noticeable feature occurs in the majority of Lower Saxon sculpture and usually varies only in the complexity of its inner forms. In recognition of its arrow-like shape, this thesis refers to this feature as an arrowhead configuration or structure. The inner forms of the arrowhead configuration often form into smaller, rigidly flat triangles sometimes described as 'deltoid' forms. These are clearly defined in the drapery of St. John the Baptist from Brunswick Cathedral (Figure VI-15), and in later figures adopt softer but still distinguishable forms (Figure VI-16). Another feature frequently found within an arrowhead structure is the back-filled tip of the arrowhead, which pushes the fabric out as if stuffed (Figure VI-17).

A number of surface cuts use tooling properties to create effects typical of this style, whereby some occur more widely spread than others. The striking of a single gouge cut across a fold structure creates an effect that is reminiscent of the inverted mouth sections of flue pipes in church organs (Figure VI-18). They are usually found causing an

indentation across the back of a crease to interrupt or terminate the linear flow of a primary structure, and also constitute popular devices to create the impression of fabric falling across a surface (Figure VI-19).

The figures are also characterised by a number of recurring feature folds. The first is a silhouette-defining protrusion of fabric that loops back on itself tightly, and is usually seen either in profile, at approximating a 90° angle to the figure, or half-profile at c. 45°. These folds do not always run the full length of the drapery, and often terminate in an added flourish of the hem turning itself inside out over the cusp. Figure VI-20 and VI-21 illustrate the two most commonly occurring variants of these projecting folds. Equally distinctive is the forward or tumbling lapel, a lanceate-shaped statement protrusion formed of a mantle tip folded outward which is often positioned across the body like a shield. A smaller version is sometimes attached as an open, 'break-away' feature to interrupt and enliven the silhouette. Another fold type to be illustrated here is the crimp fold, a tightly compressed section of fabric that follows the contour of an arm or a leg. Figure VI-22 depicts such a fold emerging as a result of fabric being pushed together by the kneeling Christ's legs, while Figure VI-23 shows such a configuration under the sleeve of the striking henchman from the *Enger Crucifixion*.

In their physicality and compositional formulae, the figures show a strong reliance on Southern German models. The long, slender bodies describe a gentle, often inverted, S-shape in the slight tilt of the head,

inclination of the hips in the opposite direction, and the pushing forward of the non-supporting leg that recalls the positioning favoured by Tilman Riemenschneider for his sculptures. The drapery forms that have been described here are also clearly derived from early works by Riemenschneider, as this figure of St. Matthias (Figure VI-24) shows. Both the tumbling lapel and the projecting folds are prefigured in this sculpture, as are the deltoid and fluepipe substructures (Figure VI-25). While the arrowhead configuration may not be evidenced in this particular example, it is apparent in a number of other contemporary figures from the same workshop. Evolutionary differences are also readily noted. In Riemenschneider's work the tubular folds are often softened by the introduction of a deep indent in the cusp of the fold, whereas in the Lower Saxon style they run uninterrupted, giving them a more rigid and inflexible but also a more assertive appearance (Figure VI-14). While the arrowhead configurations may be part of a transregional sculptural language, the arrangement of their internal forms is more individualised, as the discussion in subsequent chapter will show. For example, in Lower Saxon sculpture the flue-pipe flourish rarely forms part of an arrowhead substructure, occurring instead either on its perimeter, or at the foot of the sculpture to induce a gradual running-out of drapery hems over pedestal edges or feet. The assurance and ease with which Riemenschneider's forms have not only been incorporated into this style, but also evolved to represent a more

personal technique, suggest knowledge gained during a spell in his workshop.

The sculpture of Veit Stoss has also brought impulses to bear on Hildesheim works, the prime example of which is the retable now in the west choir of St. Michael's church in Hildesheim (Figure VI-26). There, dramatically swirling hems and whirlpool inversions shift the viewer's focus from the figure to the drapery using devices of expression that are direct quotations from works such as his retable in the church of St. Mary in Cracow, produced in 1477 to 1489 (Figure VI-27). Whereas Riemenschneider's hems are unfussy and at most have a single fabric passage fall from the pedestal to break down the barrier between the figure and the viewer's space, Stoss' work transgresses that boundary with his statement agitation of the drapery and generous flows of deeply furrowed and multi-layered fabric gathered at the feet. As has already been pointed out, however, as part of the Introduction, once seen alongside works such as the *Trinitatis Pietá*, the *Four Evangelists*, and *Church Fathers*, and *St. Anne teaching the Virgin to Read*, a more gradual transition can be discerned towards the more restrained forms of the Riemenschneider-derived artistic vocabulary. The formal restrictions placed upon this thesis prevent an in-depth examination of the manifestations of Stoss and Riemenschneider-derived elements in Lower Saxon art at this stage. The existence of both artistic vocabularies in such mature forms at the beginning of the relatively brief

flourishing of the Lower Saxon style is noted here as a basis for the ensuing discussions.

THE ENGER RETABLE AS TOUCHSTONE FOR THE STYLE-CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF HINRICK STAVOER

With the identification of Hinrick Stavorde as the polychromer of the Enger retable, the carved output previously associated with Hinrick Stavoer needs to be re-examined for possible stylistic affiliations with other oeuvres. Since Stuttmann and von der Osten's monograph the Stavoer oeuvre has been accepted as comprising the Enger retable (Figure VI-28), two relief scenes from a Passion altarpiece formerly part of the collection of Hannover-based architect Edwin Oppler and a *Coronation of the Virgin* relief of unknown provenance in the NLM, the eleven apostles that used to adorn the frontage of the Döringstift foundation in Brunswick, and the over-life-sized figure of *Christ Bearing the Cross* formerly in the church of the Holy Cross in Hildesheim. Two further retables, in Breselenz and Soest, were acknowledged to stand in close connection to the Stavoer oeuvre.¹²¹ While this oeuvre has remained unchallenged by scholarship, elements of it are controversial. Particularly the attribution of the three works in the NLM to the same hand remains the subject of debate. As well as leaving 'a bad feeling' with one NLM curator during a research visit at the beginning of this

¹²¹ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, pp. 78-80.

project, it has also been called into doubt by a more recent publication.¹²²

To his commentators, the originator of the Enger retable was 'deliberately antiquated', a 'thoughtless copyist', and a 'temperamental minor story-telling talent who was not afraid of the larger format'.¹²³ Busch had categorised this carver as a former assistant from Master Wolter's workshop who had returned to his – presumed - native Westfalia, where his carving style gradually adjusted to a coarser, local variant, while Kornfeld downgraded the merit of the Enger retable largely because of its adherence to its graphic sources.¹²⁴ Meier, on the other hand, contradicted all notions of the sculptor as a minor artist by attributing to him a far more extensive oeuvre which also comprised a number of the higher quality works from Hildesheim and Brunswick. With Hentschel's publication on Master HW in 1938 much of the chronology on which Busch's thesis on Master Wolter had relied, became obsolete. As a consequence of this and Meier's essay, Busch produced a revisionist article in 1939 in which he accepted some of Meier's 'upgrades' on the proviso that their originator would have to be separated from the only work bearing his signature.¹²⁵ Only after Stuttmann and von der Osten emphatically rejected Meier's attributions was the reputation of the carver of the Enger retable as a second-rate

¹²² Personal opinion expressed by Elena Tutino, MA, assistant curator and project leader NLM, December 2008; Knüvener 2011, p. 68.

¹²³ Busch 1931, p. 133; Kornfeld 1932, p. 64; Stuttmann and von der Osten, p. 80.

¹²⁴ Busch 1931, p. 130 and p. 132.

¹²⁵ Busch 1939, p. 214.

artist sealed.¹²⁶ While this may not constitute the 'inter-faith battle' Peter Knüvener has most recently likened the diverging opinions to, this artist's detractors did use a surprisingly expressive vocabulary to voice their criticisms.¹²⁷

Much of the existing literature's reaction is a response to the palpable unevenness in the quality and consistency of the retable's execution, the reconciliation of which has led to the proposal of a notional but unspecified number of assistants (Kornfeld 1932), or the drawing up of perceived differences between sections that are too vaguely described to allow for recapitulation (Busch 1931).¹²⁸ The indeterminate nature of these speculations is as unhelpful as Stuttmann and von der Osten's summary rejection of these considerations as simply the work of a less competent artist, since these conjectures create a methodological conflict with the concept of the retable as an autograph work that has never been resolved. The problem with the Enger retable is that, although it is widely accepted as an autograph masterpiece as designated by its signature, it falls short of a masterpiece in terms of presence, execution and finish, and that somewhat capricious execution has caused several writers to question its authenticity as an autograph piece. Busch and Kornfeld, for example, agreed that the figure of Saint Denis (Figure VI-29) far exceeded any other part of the retable in terms of accomplishment, although Kornfeld

¹²⁶ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 78.

¹²⁷ Knüvener 2011, p. 68.

¹²⁸ Kornfeld 1932, p. 65; Busch 1931, p. 131.

alone proposed it to have been bought in from another workshop, suggested by him to have been Mater Wolter's.¹²⁹ Busch and Meier also felt that the central section of the retable had greater merit than the other relief scenes, with Meier singling out the 'expressive mourning' displayed by the Virgin Mary', and Mary Magdalene's 'passionate grief at the foot of the cross' as examples of 'the high standard of Stavoer's workmanship'.¹³⁰ Consensus also emerged in the discussions of the predella apostles, which are universally deemed to be below the standard achieved by the relief scenes, let alone that of the Saint Denis figure, as well as of variable quality.¹³¹ Here, however, the agreement stopped, or at least becomes difficult to reconcile, as Meier in particular related further observations not to individual figures, but positions of figures in a photograph that it has not been possible to trace, and which therefore cannot be recapitulated at this stage. If there was a consensus emerging amongst that authorship that cast doubt on the authenticity of the Enger retable as an autograph work, that doubt was dispelled again by Stuttmann and von der Osten. While acknowledging the possibility of the retable being worked by assistants the authors argued that regardless of its signatory's actual role, production would still have taken place in a sufficiently controlled environment to ensure

¹²⁹ Busch 1931, p. 131; Kornfeld 1932, p. 64. Kornfeld's essay cites only Habicht 1917 as source for his knowledge of Lower Saxon woodcarving.

¹³⁰ Busch 1931, p. 131; Meier 1937, pp. 10-11.

¹³¹ Busch 1931, p. 313; Kornfeld 1932, p. 65; Meier 1937, p. 16.

that the overall appearance still conformed to a standard representation of an autograph work.¹³²

There is, without doubt, a difference in quality and standard of workmanship discernible across the various components of the retable, although the actual merit of the individual parts does depend on the yardstick one applies. For example, while the figure of Saint Denis may be deemed exceptional in the context of the retable, in terms of execution and conception it would still struggle to surpass works attributed to the Master of St. Benedict, for example. Similarly, the reliefs depicting the legends of Saint George and Saint Eustace are less accomplished than the Passion reliefs in their execution – perhaps the divergence Busch had in mind when pointing to the differences he perceived to exist between the central section and other relief scenes. Of the actual Passion scenes, those passages depicting figures in contemporary dress appear more successfully executed than those depicted in voluminous drapery. I would go so far as suggesting that the depiction of drapery on such a small scale is one of the unresolved issues of this retable which has contributed significantly to its downgrading in the past (Figures VI-30 and VI-31).

The retable tells the story of Christ's Passion and Resurrection in twelve scenes arranged around a double-height, centrally placed Crucifixion scene. Apart from two or three exceptions, the scenes were taken from Hans Schäufolein's woodcut illustrations for Ulrich Pinder's

¹³² Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 81.

Speculum Passionis, one of the most successful meditative books of its time, published in Nuremberg in 1507. The *Speculum* is acknowledged as being the first publication in which word and image were given equal prominence, and in terms of size and content Schüpfelin's cycle of illustrations is predated only by the earliest woodcuts from Dürer's Large Passion cycle.¹³³ The arrangement of the individual scenes in their compartments follows the order of their appearance in the *Speculum*, which placed the events of the *Flagellation* and *Christ Crowned with Thorns* chronologically before the presentation of Christ to the populace (*Ecce Homo*) and *Pilate washing his Hands*.¹³⁴ The nervous tension that Knüvener noted as suffusing the carvings can also be seen in Schüpfelin's prints, which transfer well into the medium of wood (Figures VI-32 and VI-33).¹³⁵ Schüpfelin's narratives take place in generous settings comprising either expansive town- or landscapes, or light-filled interiors with high ceilings in which each component part of the narrative is given its own space to develop. The human body is shown from numerous aspects twisting, turning, stepping out, or gesticulating, and each scene contains at least one figure whose function it is to expand the foreground distance and to create a visual barrier that places the viewer firmly in the role of witness rather than participant.

¹³³ Schreyl 1990 Vol. I, p. 82, Hass 2000, p. 169.

¹³⁴ Schreyl 1990, Vol. II, pl. 362, 364, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380.

¹³⁵ Knüvener 2011, p. 68.

Schäufelein's draperies tend to be understated, with little billowing or creasing. Figures essential to his narrative often wear close-fitting garments that are gathered at the waist, either through a belt or by tucking the tunic into the trousers. Draperies are often characterised by their use of long tubular folds which allow for substantial light and shadow contrast in the graphic medium, and for that reason alone must have appealed to contemporary carvers as source material. Schäufelein's lively story-telling style has been analysed and discussed by numerous authors since the late nineteenth century, who considered him to have 'excelled at scenes of serenity and calm' while those charged with emotions were deemed to have 'descended into mannerist ugliness'.¹³⁶ His figures have been described as having rounded contours with compacted foreheads, although, as Hans Schreyll observed, the heads of Christ, saints and angels were often given an unnaturally elongated forehead.¹³⁷ The heads are typified by prominent cheekbones set widely apart, a small, arched nose protruding above wavy lips of which the lower is the more projecting. The hair is unkempt and mostly curly, with a small forelock repeatedly falling into the face. One author also emphasised the flat-footed grounding of the figures.¹³⁸ To this should be added the strong sense of presence and focus of Schäufelein's figures, especially those concentrated upon a specific task. Although each only represents one constituent part of the

¹³⁶ Schreyll 1990, p. 82.

¹³⁷ *op. cit.*, p. 83.

¹³⁸ Franz Rieffel, quoted in Schreyll 1990, p. 83.

narrative, their introverted self-containment is an essential device to engage the viewer in devout meditation.

How did the carver respond to his source? The carvings not only maintained the emotional and forceful vigour of the graphic templates, they increased the tension by compacting the scenes into a smaller frame. Individual figures were moved closer together, with those in the background raised up and depicted in a slightly smaller scale than those in the middle ground to maintain spatial integrity and a sense of realistic distancing. Schäufolein's expansive backgrounds were terminated at middle distance through the introduction of rear walls, palisade fencing, or rock faces that encapsulate each scene. Tall ceilings are forestalled by the upper edge of each compartment and the hanging foliate tracery which conceals that sphere from the gaze of the spectator. In moving his figures closer to the lower edge of the panel the carver also reduced the space between the viewer and the depicted narrative, making the viewer an active participant in each scene, not a distant observer, as well as creating the occasional sense of unease in anticipation of the possibility of the odd figure or two tumbling out of the relief.

Scenes that were derived from other sources have received similar treatment. The Betrayal of Christ, for example, is a composite scene with elements taken from a woodcut print by Lucas Cranach the Elder (Figure VI-34) to which the Judas kiss has been added. The stance of Christ's captor on the left as we look at the scene has been

changed from Cranach's kicking motif to a striding motion that is more in keeping with the Schüfelen subjects (Figure VI-35). Similarly, St. Peter has been raised from his crouched to an upright position that aligns him more with the other figures, and brings him into the horizontal narrative axis. Malchus and the fallen lamp draw the viewer into the scene, while rocks reduce Cranach's expansive background to the most minimalist essential.

The detail of partially missing shoes is an idiom already introduced by Cranach, who gave Malchus only a single shoe to wear. In this interpretation, both Malchus and Christ's captor are only partially shod, the latter standing on a sole without any visible means of fastening it to his otherwise bare foot. As well as parting company with his shoe leather, he has also lost most of his legwear, while Malchus' left foot exposes the undersides of the toes (Figure VI-36). This somewhat unusual iconography is to be understood in the context of a late medieval take on the old adage that 'dress maketh man'. Andrea Reichel's 1998 dissertation, which analyses the iconography of contemporary costume as depicted in the heavily populated mount Golgotha scenes of late medieval altarpieces and paintings, has found numerous depictions of similarly missing sartorial detailing, usually in conjunction with the dice-throwing soldiers who are dividing Christ's clothing amongst themselves. An example is the henchman facing the female donor figure in Wilm Dedeke's painted Calvary scene of c. 1496

(Figure VI-37) whose left foot is in similar disarray as Malchus'.¹³⁹ Reichel's conclusion is that the late-medieval artistic language sought to underscore the sub-cultural nature of Christ's tormentors by associating them in the viewer's mind with overtly illicit activities, such as fighting, stealing or gambling, echoing similar imagery created in Goliardic poetry.¹⁴⁰ While the carver may have expanded Cranach's omission of a single shoe in a seemingly excessive and unrealistic manner, the fine detail with which the evidence of the lowly intellect and immoral conduct of Christ's captors is an effective inducement to contemplation, as well as creating a moral distance between the viewer and the Passion's antagonists.

The central *Crucifixion* scene (Figure VI-38) displays the same formal arrangement as the reliefs. It is divided horizontally into two distinct halves, a heavily populated lower section that fills a space equivalent in height to the relief scenes, and an almost empty upper section that contains only the three crosses reaching skyward. The surrounding vacant space suggests these may once have been complemented by angels and other symbolic manifestations. The mood of the upper section is one of deliberate contrast to the confused and emotionally charged earthly confine below. It depicts Christ at the moment of transition from life to death, precipitous of man's salvation as the last breath leaves his parted lips. His eyes are closed and his body

¹³⁹ In Reichel's thesis, this painting is attributed to Hinrik Bornemann. More recent scholarship, however, attributes the same painting to Wilm Dedeke. See Exh. Cat. Hamburg 1999I, p. 235).

¹⁴⁰ Reichel 1998, p. 86, p. 88, p. 92 and p. 93.

has already slumped forward on the cross. In the centre of the lower section, Mary Magdalene kneels in front of the cross, with the left hand outstretched in front of her, and the right arm raised. Her missing right hand is likely to have once held the chalice catching the spilled blood of Christ. Her movement, which is intensified by the structure of the folds in her drapery, draws the gaze towards Christ precisely at the moment in which man's salvation is precipitated. By comparison the depiction of the grieving Virgin Mary supported by St. John in the foreground is understated and self-contained. Even the holy women who normally stand by Mary are separated as one is shown seated alongside with her arms around the knees, while another is shown standing at some distance behind the mounted figure of Longinus. The separation of Mary and John from the holy women feeds into the perception of nervous tension which Knüvener has also noted.¹⁴¹ At the same time, the seated figure forms a physical barrier between the mourning figures beneath the cross and the aggressive fight over Christ's tunic while the orientation of her head leads the viewer's gaze towards it. On the other side of the cross a long procession of people is shown still arriving on mount Golgotha. They are being funnelled into the small gap between Mary Magdalene and the horse. The surging movement of the crowd and the nervous horse, expressed through the lowered head and pounding hooves, again emphasise the tension that suffuses the events shown.

¹⁴¹ Knüvener 2011, p. 68.

The sense of confusion, disorder and anxiety that culminates in the outbursts of sporadic violence, intense grief and jostling crowds in the Crucifixion scene extends into the predella, where the twelve apostles also display agitation and emotive restlessness in the range of poses they strike (Figure VI-39). The effort of ensuring that they avoid direct visual or physical contact with each other and the viewer has resulted in the figures being depicted in a variety of frontal, three-quarter and profile views. Each figure is individually articulated through drapery structure, pose, and expression. The drapery structure of the apostles is conceived differently to the draperies of the relief scenes. While not as linear in character it is recognisably reliant on the use of tubular folds, but with deeper crevices and more generous bulging of the fabric.

By contrast, the figure of St. Denis exudes calm serenity in its quest to carry his severed head to the Mount of Martyrs. The saint is characterised by a small head and a stocky figure that is contained within a bulky silhouette. The statue is dominated by the chasuble that falls from his shoulders in a single gently undulating swoop that suggests a heavy, inflexible fabric. The circular form of the chasuble is emphasised by the contrast with its crumpling inner structures which are contained within straight, rigid tubular folds. An array of smaller creases cascades towards a heavy, bulked central point which is forced slightly off-axis by the right leg pushing outward from under the garment. Two tubular folds frame the calf and converge above the right

foot as an indication of the position and angle of the lower leg. After converging they fall to the right in a multiply layered horizontal compression fold over the exposed square-toed and thickly soled shoe which pushes out beyond the confines of the pedestal. Alongside, a triangular section of fabric drops away from the saint's undergarment to also lap over the edge of the pedestal. While clearly intended as a device to reduce the distance between figure and viewer, it does not require the expertise of a seamstress or tailor to note the unfeasible nature of this fold emerging where it does in the context of what is otherwise a straight-hemmed garment.

The book upon which Denis' mitre and severed cranium are placed is only slightly adjusted into the trapezoid form that is frequently noted in conjunction with Lower Saxon carving and is intended to compensate optically for an awkward viewing angle. The thin strip of hair that protrudes from beneath the mitre has been carved in the bunched and lightly curled style typical of Lower Saxon carvings. Saint Denis' face (Figure VI-40) is broad, with prominent cheekbones, sunken cheeks and fleshy lines all intended to suggest an ascetic life. His nose is short and flattens out across the nostrils, giving the nose a squashed appearance. The thin upper lip and fuller lower one are also characteristic. The neck is shown realistically in mature age with sinewy lines and soft tissue passages. There is a noticeable difference between the left and right side of the figure. The right ear is shown close to the head and the modulation from the neck across the shoulder

to the right upper arm appears realistic when seen head-on. However, the positioning of the left upper arm as it emerges behind the book and mitre suggests an unnaturally elongated left shoulder while the left ear joins the head at a greater angle. The figure therefore appears to have been conceptualised for two viewpoints, one a distance view, and the other from the foot of the retable and offset towards the south side of the church (Figure VI-41).

In imbuing Schäufolein's more poignantly aggressive heads with a Lower Saxon physiognomy, some conclusions can be drawn about the carver's personal style. His faces have prominent cheekbones, sunken cheeks and wide, flat noses with chins clearly emphasised where not covered by a beard. The nose profile is emphatically, sometimes excessively, aquiline, with the tip of the nose often pushed towards the upper lip to create an unnaturally elongated septum (Figure VI-42). Female heads are characterised by a raised rear section of the head under the wimple. This fashionable idiom has been adopted from contemporary painting, such as Albrecht Dürer's portrait of Elsbeth Tucher (Figures VI-43 and VI-44). Male headwear ranges from utilitarian (Figure VI-45) to more exotic creations (Figure VI-46) that far exceed the extent depicted in Schäufolein's prints. Although Schäufolein also used large hats in his depictions, it is unlikely that his prints were the sole inspiration for the fanciful millinery displayed in the Enger retable, because some of the more flamboyant features such as the rolled-up brims (Figure VI-47) cannot be documented amongst

Schäufelein's figures. Although the beards may on occasion appear bulky and over-voluminous, such as that of Pontius Pilate (Figure VI-48), they are still worked with significant attention to detail. The variety of hair, beard, and headwear styles deployed all represent components of individualization of a figure style that is otherwise based on a single facial type.

It is more difficult to derive the carver's approach to drapery from the Enger retable. As a craftsman the artist appears more comfortable depicting the tight-fitting, contemporary costumes worn by the antagonists in Schäufelein's prints, rather than the more expressive flowing drapery worn by the holy figures of the Enger retable. Whereas the costumes of ordinary citizens were characterized by the rectilinear nature of their folds, the draperies express the polar opposite in their tightly packed cascading creases and structuring folds that are erect and appear pinched as if crimped (Figure VI-30). The observation of the human physiognomy beneath appears arbitrary with the drapery not always falling across the body as our knowledge of the human physiognomy might expect it to do. Sleeves display a lively array of ridges and crevices as they are pushed up over the arms. There is a noticeable absence of statement flourishes in the design of the figures such as complex fold structures or auricle forms. They occur only sparingly in Schäufelein's work, and the carver of this altarpiece refrained from their use in the scenes adapted from other sources. Only the women beneath the cross bear such flourishes, an unrealistic over-

sized fabric tip that spills from the Virgin's mantle in an allusion to the outpouring of grief, and a pinned-back hem on Mary Magdalene's dress.

The apostles have short necks and shoulders which drop at an unnaturally sharp angle. Their faces are more elongated, and their noses remarkably straight in comparison to those of the relief figures. Their proportions are not always harmonious, suggesting that perhaps not all had originally been conceived for positioning at the base of an altarpiece. For example, the heads of James the Greater and James the Less are too large (Figures VI-49 and VI-50), while that of Thaddeus (Figure VI-51) appears too small. Similarly, the upper torso of Saint Andrew (Figure VI-52) dominates his much shorter legs, an impression that is caused at least in part by the unconvincing foreshortening of the visible part of the lower leg. Bartholomew (Figure VI-53), who displays a similar stance, is more successfully rendered. The draperies are characterised through primary fold structures and the addition of statement flourishes such as fabric passages that twist into distinctive auricle folds. There is a great variation in the positioning of the feet as each apostle is given his individual stance using a range of striding and standing motifs. The apostles' hair varies between the established Lower Saxon formulae (Figure VI-54) and a simplified, more unnatural form (Figure VI-55) that presents hair as a solid form from into which grooves and crescents are cut to simulate shape and movement. The effect is one of deliberate distancing from recognisable human

structures towards a more otherworldly and de-personalized representation of the figure, perhaps a reflection of contemporary theological concerns relating to idolatry of the image. From a technical point of view, these structures remind of the unfinished carving often found on the invisible parts of a figure, such as the rear of the head (Figure VI-56), suggesting that they were derived from an earlier, preparatory stage in the carving process. Such superficially finished hair formations occur so frequently in Lower Saxon woodcarving that this thesis proposes to adopt the term 'semi-finished' as a means of characterising them and to distinguish them from the fully formed lozenge variant. In comparison to the heads of the relief figures, which are worked in much greater detail with slender ridged lozenges that run out in finely detailed individual curls, the semi-finished hair forms often appear unnaturally padded and bulky (Figure VI-57).

It is not possible to decide without reference to other works whether the absence of the statement flourishes was a result of the carver following Schäufelein's precedent, or whether one should also look for such understatement in his own, independently conceived work. Certainly the figure of St. Denis might suggest this to be the case, although a figure destined to form the highest part of a retable that stands at a height in excess of seven metres does not constitute a reliable point of reference. For a number of reasons then, it is not possible to draw more than partial conclusions from the Enger retable about the carver's personal style. Neither the subordination of that style

to that of Hans Schäufolein, nor the need to make the dedicatory saint of his retable legible to a distant audience have allowed this artist to display the full range of his capabilities. Consequently the retable's proposed function as an autograph work can no longer be sustained, since it poses a number of problems. The most pressing of these is the recognition that the retable is carved in the stylistic idiom of Hans Schäufolein which masks the carver's personal style. The second is the question of collaboration. Julien Chapuis discussed the chasm between the concept of autograph works and the collaborative practices of late medieval sculpture workshops in the context of Tilman Riemenschneider's output, concluding that no single work from this remarkably consistent oeuvre could be securely classified as autograph.¹⁴² In the case of the Enger retable, that collaborative element is universally acknowledged amongst the existing scholarship in the form of assistants' contributions and Kornfeld's suggestion of St. Denis' origin in Master Wolter's workshop.

It is clear that the Enger retable is a production of compromise. Its manufacture in the style of Hans Schäufolein required the carver to compromise his own style. That and the clearly identifiable passages that constitute assistants' contributions forestall any notion of the retable as an autograph work. The retable was, without doubt, a major commission, and its dimensions indicate that it had always been intended for the most prestigious part of a church, the high altar. Its

¹⁴² Chapuis 1999, p. 37.

location some one hundred kilometres outside of the Hildesheim – Brunswick region also reflects on the reputation sculpture from that region must have enjoyed at the time. It also raises the question whether a minor parish church presided over by a curate would have been able to raise the necessary funds to award such a commission. The church itself contains no other material evidence to suggest the existence of a private patron who might have sought commemoration in this way, nor does such a personality emerge from the town's history. How the retable might have got to Enger therefore remains a subject for conjecture. The distance between its place of origin and its intended location, however, undoubtedly contributed to the retable bearing a signature in the first place, but this signature must be understood more in terms of a legal statement of authenticity, not autography.

VII. STAVOER'S METAMORPHOSIS: THE ENGER RETABLE AND THE URBAN MASTER

The reclassification of the Enger retable as a workshop product rather than an autograph work has opened up the opportunity to review its position within the wider context of Lower Saxon sculpture production. The remaining oeuvre presently ascribed to its originator on the strength of it needs to be set aside for the moment, since the attributions are dependent upon an altarpiece that has just been proven to show little of its master's personal style. The style-critical net of conformance may therefore be cast a little wider, and that cast captures an altarpiece dedicated to the Virgin Mary and St George which today stands in the church of St. Joseph in Henneckenrode and which bears some remarkable parallels to the Enger retable. That retable is attributed to another Stuttmann and von der Osten construct, the so-called Urban Master. His oeuvre of eight attributed works includes copies of a Madonna composition believed by Stuttmann and von der Osten to have originated in the Master of St. Benedict's workshop. Works attributed to the Urban Master are deemed to be stylistically close to the output of the Master of St. Benedict, but inferior in execution. Stuttmann and von der Osten therefore have proposed the Urban Master to have spent time working in the Master of St. Benedict's workshop, either as a pupil or assistant. He distinguishes himself from his master and his other contemporaries through his wider repertoire of

personality types and a gift for characterisation.¹⁴³ Amongst the followers of the Master of St. Benedict the Urban Master is often presented as a foil against which his other contemporary, the Master of the *West Choir Retable*, could be downgraded.¹⁴⁴ This chapter will draw together works from the oeuvres of the Master of St. Urban and that formerly attributed to Hinrick Stavoer in comparative analysis. It will posit that sufficient overlaps exist between the two oeuvres to compel the reattribution of a number of works to the former, leaving the latter's oeuvre not only in a state of impending dissolution that reaffirms the findings of the archival research, but also allows his works to metamorphose into a newly homogenous oeuvre.

Beginning with the Henneckenrode retable, the open state reveals seven figures of which one, that of St. Urban, is a long-lost brother to the Enger St. Denis (Figures VII-1 and VII-2). The family resemblance becomes clear as soon as the two figures are placed side-by-side, especially when seen from similar viewing angles (Figures VII-3 and VII-4). Both figures display the same deep-set, half-closed eyes that are pitched downwards, elongated nasolabial folds and necklines, and compressed lips. The facial contours are rounded with a tendency towards a double chin that is more developed in St. Denis than it is in St. Urban. Conversely St. Urban's nose is better proportioned than that of St. Denis, and smaller in relation to the face, a difference that may reflect the different viewing positions of their respective audiences. Both

¹⁴³ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 61.

¹⁴⁴ *op. cit.* pp. 61-62.

figures are depicted wearing gloves with what appear to be weighted accoutrements that draw the cuff into a vertical fall. The drapery structures of the two figures vary considerably, governed by their intended locations and contexts. Whereas Denis had been conceived to stand above the crucified Christ to form the highest point of the Enger retable, St. Urban's drapery was informed not only by his much closer proximity to his intended audience, but also responds to that of Mary Magdalene who is positioned alongside him in the shutter (Figure VII-5). Whereas the internal structures of St. Denis' draperies form ridges which enhance the effect of light breaking across them, St. Urban's more understated structures and plain secondary spaces provide an effective contrast to Mary Magdalene's more lively drapery structures. The lower passages, however, again show similarities in the convergence of straight tubular folds towards one side of the emerging foot, and the horizontal fold above it which in St. Urban's case is reduced to a pinch.

The primary features that characterize the costume of the Virgin Mary in the Enger Crucifixion scene also occur in the Henneckenrode retable where the long straight tubular folds also distinguish the draperies of St. Catherine (Figure VII-6), Mary Magdalene (Figure VII-7) and the anonymous male saint in the central compartment (Figure VII-8), as Busch had already noted in his monograph.¹⁴⁵ The folds in the gown of Mary Magdalene and to a lesser degree those of the

¹⁴⁵ Busch 1931, p. 131.

Henneckenrode Virgin Mary (Figure VII-9) also repeat the distinct arrowhead shape that dominates Mary's draperies in the Enger Crucifixion, while the fold-over flourish that breaks up her silhouette is repeated in the Henneckenrode St. Anne (Figures VII-10 and VII-11). Busch highlighted the crystalline quality of these fold structures, which in his view linked the Enger retable with that in Henneckenrode retable and the so-called *Nemeš* Madonna attributed by Stuttmann and von der Osten to the Master of St. Benedict.¹⁴⁶

Several of the figures in the Henneckenrode retable show an emphasised free lower leg as it pushes through the drapery that reminds one of the highly-defined legs beneath the Enger draperies. Both St. Anne and Mary in the Anna Selbdritt group, the Virgin, the anonymous saint, Mary Magdalene and St. Urban display moving legs that are clearly outlined under clinging fabric by tubular folds that frame the slightly raised limb, before falling to one side and terminating in a horizontal compression fold across the foot. Even more pronounced are the leg structures of the two angels attending the Virgin; the angel on Mary's left (Figure VII-12) in particular recalls the awkward stance of Christ collapsed under the weight of the cross in the Enger retable (Figure VII-13). Both figures also show a distinctive crimp fold pushing up between their legs between the legs, albeit that the fold is less developed in the costume of the angel.

¹⁴⁶ op. cit., pp. 130-131.

The similarities between the faces of St. Denis and St. Urban, the transfer of fold structures between the two retables and recurrence of statement motifs such as the fold-over flourish that links the Virgin Mary in Enger with the Henneckenrode Anna Selbdritt group all combine to compel the writer to suggest that the Enger retable was produced in the Urban Master's workshop. That suggestion is underpinned by Busch who observed that the figures in the Henneckenrode and Enger retables were fitted out with remarkably similar headdress, particularly the beret described by Busch as a 'wainwright's beret' that is worn by the anonymous male saint in Henneckenrode and several bystanders in the Enger passion scenes (Figures VII-14 to VII-16).¹⁴⁷

Another figure group connected with the Henneckenrode retable is the *Emerentia Selbviert* group, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Figure VII-17). The faces of this figure group (Figure VII-18) immediately recall those of Mary Magdalene (Figure VII-19) and the *Anna Selbdritt* group (Figure VII-11) from the Henneckenrode retable. Both Anne and her mother wear headdresses. The headdress of Anne's mother Emerentia has a similar orientation and format as that of the Henneckenrode Magdalene. Conversely, Anne's headdress is tucked in below both ears, with a slightly raised rear section that recalls the more extreme beehive-style heads of the Enger retable. All figures have almond-shaped eyes, although those of Anne and her mother are narrower than those of Mary and her son, with prominently carved eye

¹⁴⁷ Busch 1931, p. 130.

cover folds and nasolabial furrows. The noses of Mary, Christ, and Anne are short, straight, and flat, particularly across the nostrils. Only Emerentia's nose is more elongated, and when seen in profile view reveals the same highly distinctive profile with an aquiline curve and drawn-down septum that matches the nasal profiles of the figures in the Enger passion reliefs (Figure VII-20). Both Anne's and Emerentia's eyes are also placed at outward angle similar to that of the Enger St. Denis and the Henneckenrode St. Urban.

The infant's hair has been structured by alternating rounded lozenges with crescent-shaped thin parallel cuts in four orderly tiers along his head. The concentration of curls that emerges around the two sides of his head in this arrangement gives his head an elliptical orientation that echoes the aspect of Mary Magdalene's and Emerentia's headdresses. Mary's hair is carved into alternating broad and narrow bands laid alongside a single ridged lozenge that eventually changes to ridged lozenges alternating with thin parallel cuts for the visible plaits. All four figures have great physical presence and three-dimensionality. The latter effect is particularly impressive in the case of Emerentia who only has a depth of about twelve centimetres, and whose profile view (Figure VII-21) belies the three-dimensionality of the figure when seen from the only frontal vantage point for which the figure was designed. The ability to convey the illusion of spatial depth in a shallow plane is a feature that recurs frequently in conjunction with this workshop. The draperies display a familiar linear approach with

prominent tubular folds controlling the contours and framing the substructures. In contrast to the other sculptures examined so far, however, there are no internal cascading systems. Instead, both legs push through the fabric to create crumple zones at foot level that flow out gently across the edge of the rock-face pedestal in a series of triangular extensions. An interesting development are the horizontal folds that are layered across the top of Anne's right leg, and the increasing volume of drapery that is gathered over Anne's and Mary's elbows and lower arms. These create an overlap with another pair of figures attributed to the Master of St. Benedict and his workshop, the so-called *Nemeš* and Holtrup Madonnas, which will be the subject of a later chapter. Concave hems frame the silhouettes of both Anna and Emerentia. Mary's drapery is dominated by narrow, straight tubular folds that, when seen at the appropriate angle, reveal themselves as another variant of the arrowhead structures (Figure VII-22), with arching V-fold substructures that also recall the drapery of the Enger St. Andrew. The hand that retains the book on Anne's lap is also remarkably similar to that of Andrew, with four fingers closing around the book, and the thumb resting on the cover, extending outward (Figures VII-23 and VII-24). Emerentia holds her book open in one hand; the detail of the open pages apparently moving to close (Figure VII-25) adds a sense of realism to the scene. The carving techniques deployed add significantly to the illusion of spatial depth, as does the crossing of St. Anne's now partially lost arm in front of Mary to meet that of the Christ child. All

recesses are deeply carved and undercut, with sections of the Christ child and Anne carved in the round.

Noticeable throughout the discussion of this figure group is the repeated recourse to a vocabulary in describing individual parts of this sculpture that is equally pertinent to the description of the Enger retable and related works, underscoring again the close affinity between works attributed to the Urban Master and the originator of the Enger retable. It begins with the distinctive shape of Emerentia's nose that is visible only in profile, but also includes the drapery characteristics, the dependency on tubular folds to introduce a linear outline structure to the draperies, and the depth of the carving despite the relatively shallow depth of the quartet. These characteristics, which the previous chapter has identified as synonymous with the retable in Enger, add further weight to the suggestion that carvings hitherto thought to have been produced by its originator represent a production strand that could as readily be associated with the output of the Urban Master.

As well as referencing the Enger retable, the Emerentia group also builds connections to another attribution from Stavoer's erstwhile oeuvre, the two panels from the *Oppler* collection in the NLM. The two fragments from an otherwise undocumented passion altarpiece have been accepted as having been produced by the carver of the Enger retable since Scheffler made the initial attribution in 1925.¹⁴⁸ Illustrating the narratives of *Pilate washing his Hands* and *Christ Carrying of the*

¹⁴⁸ Scheffler 1925, p. 248 and p. 252; Busch 1931, p. 125ff.; Meier 1937, p. 25; Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 78.

Cross, the reliefs have a landscape aspect that is not commonly encountered in Lower Saxon altarpieces (Figures VII-26 and VII-27). A comparable format exists in the passions scenes that form part of the so-called *Brabantian* Retable in Soest, suggesting that these panels may have come from a similarly structured altarpiece (Figure VI-28).

The depiction of *Pilate washing his Hands* is an adaptation of Schäumelein's print from the *Speculum Passionis*, while the scene illustrating Christ bearing the cross constitutes a more generic assemblage of related motifs from a variety of sources. The unusual landscape orientation of the panels has given the carver significant scope for invention in the conversion of the graphic source material which is usually oriented in the opposite aspect. It is immediately apparent that here the graphic source has not been as determining for the overall appearance of the panels as it had been for the Enger retable. Although both panels are of an exceptionally high standard, when seen side by side the *Pilate washing his Hands* relief attests to a greater level of accomplishment than the *Christ Bearing the Cross*, where the flat draperies of Christ and Veronica make the legs appear disproportionately prominent. The figure group surrounding Mary and John in this relief (Figure VII-29) stands out against the rest of the panel, and the *Pilate washing his Hands* panel in particular. Their rendering has given them a stockier build, while their soft and plump but otherwise undifferentiated faces create a more child-like impression that is exacerbated by the putto-like chubbiness of the figure with the raised

arm and creates an uneasy conflict between his infantile appearance and his function as the soldier scourging Christ on the road to Mount Golgotha. In terms of conception, execution and style the *Christ bearing the Cross* panel does not achieve the same level of virtuosity that characterises the other relief, leaving the writer unable to accept that both panels were carved by the same hand.

In the *Pilate washing his Hands* relief, on the other hand, the figures are finely detailed and appear as if carved in the round. The carving between the front and second row is incredibly deep, particularly in the vertical, with the front row figures carved almost, but not quite in the round (Figure VII-30). This suggests that they might have been produced separately and inserted into the panel, a not uncommon practice in late medieval sculpture production. There is, however, no visible sign that would support such a theory. Although all three sections of wood from which the block has been assembled have experienced shrinkage, neither evidence of individual figures loosening nor of subsequent reattachment have become apparent over time. The result is a panel which responds more the effects of natural light than any other examined, creating great movement and interest even in the artificial light of the museum's restoration workshop where it was seen by the writer (Figure VII-31). Although the Schäufelein source is clearly evident in this panel, the carver has shown great freedom of invention in its adaptation. The figure seen departing the scene on the left has been moved from the centre of the panel, with all details of his costume

adjusted for the new viewing angle. He has been given a vessel to carry over his left shoulder which in the past has been interpreted as representing a water bottle, and it is not quite clear whether it is purely an aesthetic device, or if there is a narrative cause for its inclusion.¹⁴⁹ His position in the centre of the depiction has been taken by another figure shown from the rear which is a free invention of the carver. The raised heels of both figures anchor them more realistically than is done in the Enger reliefs, and minimise the effect the sloping floor has on our visual perception. Pilate's throne has been turned into the scene to accommodate the extended design of this panel, while the water jug held by his servant has been adjusted from profile to three-quarter view and convincingly foreshortened to compensate for the different viewing angle (Figure VII-32). The guardsman holding the rope gives the viewer a sense of his face even at his extremely challenging angle. The figures repeat the facial and figure types already described in the discussion of the Enger relief scenes, but exceed them significantly in the quality of their conception and execution.

The faces of the *Pilate* relief have been carved with great attention to detail, and are more convincing in terms of characterisation and expression than those of the *Christ Bearing the Cross* scene or the Enger reliefs. The Hannover figures, and those of the scene visualizing *Christ Bearing the Cross* in particular, have the same youthful chubbiness and short necks that also characterize the Virgin Mary and

¹⁴⁹ Today that figure is more noted for its repetition in the *Ecce Homo* scene of the large passion retable now in the church of St. Mary Magdalene in Hildesheim.

the Christ child from the New York *Emerentia* group, while the noses show a similar profile to that of *Emerentia* with some, such as the soldier pulling the rope, displaying a gentle aquiline curvature (Figure VII-33). Heads, hair, and beards are much better proportioned, and the female heads have a more natural shape without the excessive beehive-style extension of the *Enger* retable at the back. Most crucially, the figures of the *Pilate* relief in particular stand much taller and slimmer with no evidence of the stockiness that has been noted in conjunction with the *Enger* reliefs and also the other panel. There is, however, one figure in the *Enger* retable that matches the *Pilate washing his Hands* panel in terms of sophistication and finesse, and that is the figure of Christ on the cross in the *Enger Crucifixion* (Figures VII-34 and VII-35). Already noted by Busch as having been carved in the round, this figure is much closer to the tall, slender depictions of the *Oppler* relief than the stocky, round-faced burghers that populate the retable's reliefs.¹⁵⁰ The anatomical accuracy of the body slumping away from the cross at the moment of death as the dead-weight musculature strains under the shifting weight are well-executed details missed by most viewers of the retable. This representation of biological death forms a powerful contrast to Christ's face which is already relaxing as he transitions from earthly suffering to heavenly relief, anticipating the attainment of human salvation. In its expressiveness, poignancy and sophistication this figure represents everything expected from a masterpiece and bridges the

¹⁵⁰ Busch 1931, p. 131.

otherwise tangible qualitative gap between the Enger retable and the *Pilate* relief.

One question that is posed by the expanding composition of the Urban Master's output is that of autography. On the one hand we have a signed altarpiece which this thesis proposes to be downgraded from autograph work to workshop production. On the other hand there are two reliefs from a different altarpiece of uneven quality, but of which one scene surpasses all relief carving discussed so far, attaining the highest standard of Lower Saxon retable carving, and easily matching the quality of the New York Emerentia group and the Henneckenrode retable. Setting the Enger passion scenes and the two *Oppler* panels side-by-side, one can see a tangible difference in quality and execution. Several passages indicate that, far from having been carved by a craftsman struggling to match the greater abilities of his contemporaries, the artistic effort that went into the manufacture of the Enger retable may instead have been deliberately scaled back. The first is the formulaic precedence of the source style over the carver's own creative personality, from which came its originator's reputation as thoughtless copyist, and his use of standard formats for his heads which were individualized through appurtenances such as hats, hair, and beards. The second is the positioning of the figures in each scene to create the successful illusion of greater spatial depth. This both works have in common, albeit that the *Oppler* panel displays a more complex degree of finish. In both, however, the three-dimensional

carving of its foreground figures and the depth of the carving of the background figures are identical. The insertion of the brush binder in the immediate foreground of the Enger *Flagellation* scene constitutes one example of the virtuosity with which this workshop can manipulate our perceptions of space (Figures VII-36 and VII-37). The *Pilate washing his Hands* scene and the Emerentia sculpture illustrate the same capability. These commonalities convince the writer that the oeuvre which in the past had been defined as that of Hinrick Stavoer by Stuttmann and von der Osten and others needs to be revised. There are compelling reasons to merge the main works at least with the output of the Urban Master. Once integrated into that production, the sophistication of that master's personal style, which is already manifest in the New York *Emerentia* group and the Henneckenrode figures, is confirmed in the *Oppler Pilate washing his Hands* panel. The inclusion of the *Oppler* panels and the Enger retable in this oeuvre adds the spectrum of relief carving to a production that to date has been known for its figure carving alone, and proposes a distinctive autograph style from which the key characteristics of this carver's production can be derived.

In terms of technical achievement the two passion reliefs from the *Oppler* collection constitute the most sophisticated works in the oeuvre associated with the carver of the Enger retable, and this has led to some conflicting opinions as to their correct location in the chronology of that oeuvre. In Busch's view the panels had to be early works, pre-

dating the Enger retable, to support his theory of this carver producing his best work while still an assistant employed in the workshop of Master Wolter.¹⁵¹ Contrarily, Stuttmann and von der Osten argued for an origination after the Enger retable because, in their opinion, they reflected the growing competence and greater craftsmanship of a more mature master.¹⁵²

The Henneckenrode retable and that in Enger can be regarded as almost contemporaneous productions because of the transfer of facial and drapery motifs between the two works. At the same time, the Henneckenrode retable represents a transitional point without which the evolution from the New York Emerentia towards the Enger retable cannot be reconstructed. The Emerentia group therefore must predate it. With the date of the Enger retable providing a *terminus ante quem* for the Henneckenrode retable, the softer, calmer structures of St. Denis and the figure of Christ on the Cross stand in some contrast to the more vigorous and assertive lines of the Henneckenrode retable and suggest a slightly earlier production date of c. 1520. The generic application of the forms established by the New York figure group indicate that the natural progression from innovation to the routine deployment of forms was well underway by the time the Henneckenrode retable was carved, proposing an earlier date of around 1515 for the New York group. The *Oppler* panels, on the other hand, constitute a refinement that is impossible to imagine in this trajectory without the softer forms of Denis'

¹⁵¹ Op. cit., p. 130.

¹⁵² Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 78 and p. 79.

draperies and the sophisticated depiction of the crucified Christ to precede them. Consequently they should be dated to around 1525 to 1530.

The restructuring of the Urban Master's output has prompted the reattribution to his oeuvre of another retable hitherto associated with the Workshop of the Master of St. Benedict. The retable is in the Aachen Cathedral museum, and depicts the Mass of St. Gregory in the central compartment, flanked by Mary, Anna Selbdritt, and the medical saints Cosmas and Damian in the central compartment (Figure VII-38), with the twelve apostles arranged in two tiers across the shutters.

As Stuttmann and von der Osten have noted, two hands have contributed to this retable.¹⁵³ The first has carved the central panel, and the twelve apostles, while the second is responsible for the four figures which flank the central scene in the inner compartment. Of the figures populating the central panel depicting the Mass of St. Gregory, several faces have familiar features. St. Gregory, his attendant and the two cardinals holding St. Gregory's attributes, the papal tiara and triple cross, all have the distinctive aquiline noses with elongated arching and extended septum (Figures VII-39 and VII-40). The cardinals also repeat the facial types found in other works by the Urban Master, especially the two *Oppler* panels, but also the Enger passion reliefs. The apostles are of far higher quality than any discussed so far. The nose shapes vary from short, flat noses with broadened nostrils in the older apostles

¹⁵³ op. cit., pp. 49-50.

to narrower versions for the younger ones; this form of differentiation of varying ages is also manifest in the New York Emerentia group. Philip's nose comes closest to the typically aquiline shape of the figures that populate the central panel (Figure VII-41). The hair depictions conform to the Lower Saxon lozenge prototype, with individual sections worked in the longer strands that also characterize the hair of the Virgin Mary in the New York Emerentia group. Several of the tonsured heads have hair masses arranged around ear level to create a similarly elliptical head shape to that also indicated in the Emerentia group's Christ child. Longer hair and beards run out in the single, thin curls already known from the Enger retable and the *Oppler* panels.

Each of the apostles (Figures VII-42 and VII-43) is posed and articulated differently. The exaggerated T-positioning of the feet that some of the apostles in the Enger predella display is also evident amongst this group. The moving leg is emphasised beneath the drapery, but more subtly so than in the Enger figures. The propensity for linear figure definition remains, but here is achieved differently, with less emphasis on triangular form definition, and greater variation of gown combinations. The drapery of four figures - Peter, John, Simon, and Thomas - is dominated by a rigid hem that falls in a straight line from the shoulder all the way to the ground. Conceived as the display side of their cloaks, they end in plain extended tips that recall the popular arrowhead formation. Here, however, they present a less diffuse overall appearance with sub-structures created only through the

gathering of fabric under the arm that is being covered. Only Peter's cloak presents an exception in that it is slit to allow the hand that would have held the key or keys to emerge without demanding a complicated arrangement of furrows and creases that would not be appreciated by the viewers unless this figure's orientation was significantly altered. The other figures allude to carver's trademark primary structures by gathering the drape around one side in a layer of folds that reference other more overtly triangular arrangements, or by deliberately introducing an arrowhead configuration into the frontal view. The former can be observed in the draperies of John, James the Greater, Thaddeus, James the Less and Bartholomew, while the latter characterises Paul, Matthew and Philip. Only Andrew is given a livelier contour to compensate for the visual restrictions placed upon the composition of this figure by his saltire cross attribute.

The draperies are articulated using more sophisticated animation techniques. Internal structures are given more space to develop and react to the dynamic forces that cause them. Silhouette elements observed in other works also find quotation here. Fold-back hems and projecting folds both reference the formal language of other sculptures from this workshop, as do the concave collars and hems. The tight, horizontally orientated compression folds that denote where the moving legs of James the Greater and James the Less are pushing through the drapery recall the layer of horizontal folds that runs across the right upper leg of the New York St. Anne.

Silhouette elements observed in other works also find quotation here. Both the folded back hems (James the Greater, James the Less) and the very flat projecting folds (John, Bartholomew) form part of the formal language, as do convex collars (Andrew, Thomas) and hems (John, Peter). A small lanceate fold that overlaps Thaddeus' gown reminds of the smaller breakaway tip from the Henneckenrode Magdalene, while the tight compression folds that denote James the Greater's and James the Less' moving legs pushing through, recall the tightly layered fan of tubular folds in the same position seen on the New York St. Anne.

While the central scene and shutter figures make compelling references to the Urban Master's formal language, the four pendant figures in the central section refer a different tradition altogether. Stuttmann and Osten suggested that these figures had been transferred from another retable and represented an earlier, more moderate Lower Saxon production, but failed to locate that production stylistically or geographically.¹⁵⁴ The stylistic formulations the four figures quote undoubtedly belong to a contemporary Lower Saxon context. Their execution suggests that they have originated in the vicinity of a group of works centred around two figures of the Virgin Mary and St. John Evangelist from a monumental Crucifixion group formerly in the minster church of Bad Gandersheim, and three figures in the central shrine of a retable fragment in the church of St. Alexander in Einbeck (Figure VII-

¹⁵⁴ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p.50.

44).¹⁵⁵ This group of sculptures is characterized by a different arrowhead configuration that is open-sided rather than being enclosed by straight tubular or pinfolds, and which displays a distinctive horizontal arrangement of sub-structure furrows, with open recesses that appear punched into the folds. A similar arrangement can be observed on the figures that flank the Mass of St. Gregory (Figure VII-45). One of the figures, Damian, has a conspicuous indent above his moving leg demarcating where it pushes through beneath his mantle (Figure VII-46). The manner in which that indent has been laid across the thigh to define the point of pushing through, and its extension that follows the leg contour can also be seen in the figure of St. Vitus from the Einbeck retable, where it is more clearly defined and carved in greater detail (Figure VII-47). Without further research it is not possible to suggest whether this overlap between the two workshops is the result of itinerancy, subcontracting, or whether the figures were produced speculatively by one workshop and acquired on the open market by the other.

This retable develops a number of characteristics that are typical of the Urban Master's later work. Particularly the faces of the cardinals and deacons prefigure those of the *Oppler* panels, but are also reflected in some of the supporting figures in the Enger retable, while the hair formations continue a style already established by the New York Emerentia group, confirming that this retable should be added to the

¹⁵⁵ Richter 2010, pp. 64-69.

Urban Master's output. With this and the other additions to that master's oeuvre a more homogenous style is emerging which the next chapter will characterize further.

VIII. RE-FRAMING THE URBAN MASTER

With the reattribution of part of the dissolved Stavoer oeuvre to the Urban Master and the additional inclusion in that oeuvre of the St. Gregory's Mass retable from Aachen, a small but homogenous output is beginning to emerge that can provide a sound touchstone for a redefinition of this carver's style. Unique to this style are the tall, slender figures with their distinctive round faces, short necks, recurring use of aquiline noses and hair that encompasses an evolution of the traditional lozenge style to the long, flattened sections that characterise the Aachen apostles and the Virgin Mary from the New York Emerentia group. The spatial illusionism of his reliefs is as typical as the crystalline character of his draperies. These draperies give cause to question the long held perception that three sculptures of virtually identical appearance must be attributed to three different hands while other works of relatively little commonality are being shoe-horned into an artistic context that encompasses them with some unease. This chapter interrogates the current attributions of three further works that have already been touched upon in the previous discussions. As part of the discussions an alternative way of looking at the two primary artists under discussion

The Urban Master and the *Alfeld* Retable

The *Alfeld* retable (Figure VIII-1) is the second of the two eponymous retables produced by this master to include the figure of St.

Urban in its iconography. It has been linked in the past with a group of five apostles formerly from Fredelsloh (Scheffler), with the *West Choir Retable* in the Hildesheim church of St. Michael (Busch) and with Hinrick Stavoer (Meier).¹⁵⁶ Rejecting all of these attributions, Stuttmann and von der Osten instead placed the retable at the centre of works attributed to the new artistic identity instigated by them as the Urban Master.¹⁵⁷ On the grounds that three of his Madonna figures from this retable, the Henneckenrode altarpiece, and a free-standing figure from the church of St. Gallus in Detfurth were all dependent upon the Master of St. Benedict's *Nemeš* Madonna, the authors allocated to the Urban Master the role of competent but contingent disciple. That this proposal may have stood on shaky ground from the start is indicated in the concession that two of the cited examples, the Virgin from this retable and her sister-figure in Detfurth, represented 'a more independent type that might possibly quote a lost, earlier version of this subject by the Master of St. Benedict'.¹⁵⁸ The fact that the dependence of the Urban Master on the Master of St. Benedict was argued on the basis of a Madonna model the origin of which seemingly cannot be securely allocated to the latter's workshop demands closer examination.

The *Alfeld* Virgin holds the Christ Child on her raised right arm, while the left hand once held an implement, likely a sceptre. Her left foot is pushed slightly forward under her draperies, and her head inclined to

¹⁵⁶ Scheffler 1925, p. 250; Busch 1931, pp. 19-22; Meier 1936 cited in Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 63.

¹⁵⁷ Stuttmann and von der Osten, pp. 62-63.

¹⁵⁸ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 61.

the right, giving her body the gently S-curve that is a frequent feature of late Gothic woodcarving. That positioning prompts the development of an elongated arrowhead structure, which extends in a single swoop from the waist to the feet. The internal structures contained therein form a steady downwards progression that frequently results in the formation of flat, solid looking triangles. Her face is of an oval, almost rectangular shape with narrowed almond eyes, widely set and angled slightly downwards, and a levelled lower lid although the effect has been mitigated through overpainting of the eyes' contours in different tones of brown (Figure VIII-2). The nose is long and slender, remarkably narrow across the nostrils and with a sharply pointed tip. She has a small chin with a pronounced volume of soft tissue underneath. Her hair comprises rounded cushions with thin, narrow cuts inserted at one or the other end of each.

Both the Virgin Mary and the Christ child show evidence that suggests later alterations to affect their appearance today. The Christ child's head is oddly proportioned in comparison to the numerous examples encountered as part of this investigation, suggesting that he has lost much of what once was a much more substantial head of hair. Mary's nose is likely to have been narrowed; in other figures by the Urban Master the width of the nostrils stands in direct correlation to the width of the mouth (Figure VIII-3), whereas the *Alfeld* Virgin's mouth is much wider than her nose. The overpainting of the eyes, and the addition of the three strings of pearls on her long and slender neck add

further weight to the suggestion that this figure may have been modified in the past.

Mary's draperies are characterised by an unusual overlap of the mantle horizontally across the knees. The mantle has been drawn across the left upper arm, followed by a tuck under the right arm, and this is where the majority of the sub-forms congregate. Triangular secondary forms, although present, are less evident than in other works by the Urban Master. Several sections appear designed as clear statements of the carver's artistry. One of these is the diaphanous drape that emerges from the Hannover Virgin's shoulder, and which is held playfully in the child's right hand. It represents a random, decorative addition that stands in no relation to Mary's attire. It does, however offer a meticulous illustration of the carver's art in the articulation of the intersection between Mary's supporting hand, the Christ child's leg and the drape running beneath both, which are carved almost in the round. The other is the passage that forms part of Mary's contour on the right, beneath the Christ child. As the mantle has folded around her body its hem has turned back on itself to reveal her skirt which forms a cascade of secondary forms tumbling to the ground. The planar fold that forms the backdrop to this cascade and the deep recess beneath the overlap create a profound illusion of three-dimensionality.

The *Alfeld St. Urban* (Figure VIII-4) has the same long and straight nose with a small, sharp tip as the Virgin Mary displays, suggesting again the spectrum of subsequent alteration. Fleshy sections that

extend from the nostrils to the lower jaw are common to both figures. The Hannover St. Urban has an oval face with a squarer jaw than male figures by the Urban Master have displayed so far. The absence of any form of curvature from his jaws adds further weight to the suggestion that the figures may have been altered. The eyes and lips have been overpainted to give both shapes similar to that of the Virgin Mary. St. Urban is characterised by the same generous fold and overlap construction as Mary, which also quotes the same structural traits. The majority of the fabric emerges from beneath and over St. Urban's right arm, from where it tumbles down his left side, and this is also where the sub-forms congregate. Triangular forms, although present, are less evident, while the fold-back hem with downwards extension quote the same format was seen on Mary's costume, although the distinct oblong triangle with its evolving internal structures is not used in the saint's drapery. Under the left arm can be seen the profile view of a projecting fold, as it drops away at almost a 45° angle. Although the right-hand side of St. Urban is more animated than the Virgin Mary, an overall sense of restraint and the deliberate projection of a shallower plane permeate both figures, despite the lively light-shadow play in the space beneath the figure's right arm as it is set back into the recess of the compartment.

By comparison to the other two figures, St. Maurice's face (Figure VIII-5) has a more rounded jaw line, and a pronounced double chin. His eyes are widely set apart, and the space from the lower lip to the jaw is

much more compressed. The nostrils are more flared and flattened in comparison to St. Urban. Maurice's beret sits jauntily to one side of the face, revealing sight of the under-cap. His armour is hidden under a cloak that billows over his right arm and shoulder. The hem describes a long sweeping arc from the high waist to the calves, and ends in a substantial auricular fold. The arch's internal structures are once again arranged in an oblique triangular shape that is bordered by a succession of tightly packed tubular folds. The cascading compressed sub-structures expand and contract in a series of solid triangles. Through this, the figure potentially has quite a lively silhouette that is calmed by the inclusion of a straight-edged projecting fold behind the cascade of internal structures, the curvature of which is matched by the outline of the shield opposite.

Although the Urban Master as an individual artistic personality has only existed since Stuttmann and von der Osten's 1940 monograph, his works had already entered earlier considerations. Historically the *Alfeld* retable was deemed to have been inspired not by works now associated with the Master of St. Benedict, but by the so-called *West Choir Retable* in St. Michael's Church in Hildesheim (Figure VIII-6). Stuttmann and von der Osten noted this in their text, but since they had already positioned its master, their so-called 'Master of Sts. John' and the Urban Master as contemporaries in similar positions of artistic dependence any affinities between the two oeuvres could be dismissed as different expressions of the same heritage. Both Scheffler and Busch

regarded the *Alfeld* retable as a transitional work that documented an evolution in the style of the carver of the *West Choir Retable* from his eponymous retable to another stage. Scheffler's evolutionary trajectory moved from the *Alfeld* retable via a group of four saints formerly in the Collegiate church of Fredelsloh in southern Lower Saxony and the *Holy Kindred* retable in Everloh (Figure VIII-7) to a small relief depicting the *Coronation of the Virgin* now in the NLM (Figure VIII-8).¹⁵⁹ Busch, on the other hand, regarded the retable as central to a group of sculptures which comprised a number of isolated works in the collections of the RPM in Hildesheim and the NLM. That group - quite unfathomably since it represents an entirely different style conception - also included the *Holy Kindred* retable in Everloh.¹⁶⁰ Neither author, however, proposed the links between the *Alfeld* retable and that in Henneckenrode upon which Stuttmann and von der Osten had based their construction of the Urban Master's identity.

St. Maurice was singled out by Busch as the figure closest to those in the St. Michael's retable, which appear more animated through their lively hemlines, effusive earlobe fold-overs, and deep carving.¹⁶¹ The sweeping outline of Maurice's cloak and the auricle flourish are direct quotations from the artistic vocabulary presented in the *West Choir Retable*, particularly in the figure of St. Andrew (Figure VIII-9). Although the sweep of the hemline is more expansive in St. Maurice's

¹⁵⁹ Scheffler 1925, pp. 250-251.

¹⁶⁰ Busch 1931, pp. 19-22.

¹⁶¹ op. cit., pp. 19-20.

cloak, the arrangement of the inverted S-shape of the hem embracing a triangular, elongated substructure is mirrored in the arrangement of St. Andrew's cloak. The sense of cohesion between both is further enhanced by the linear semblance between St. Maurice's shield and the very rigid fold that takes its place in St. Andrew's costume.

The commonalities between the two retables are not restricted to these two figures. Another correlation exists between the Virgin in the *Alfeld* retable, and St. Elizabeth (Figure VIII-10). The latter figure is characterised by the seemingly illogical expanse of material that emerges horizontally from her cloak beneath a pair of supposedly hidden loaves of bread, and envelopes her waist and lower arm. Coupled with the diagonal arrangement of the collar lines which part to reveal the loaves under her arm, the arrangement emphasises both the subterfuge and disobedience that have to underpin her merciful missions. It also showcases the carver's ability to convey a sense for realism and conflicting tensions in a single figure. The same arrangement of a horizontal channel leading into an elongated triangle filled with sub-structures has also been used for the figure of Mary, there emerging over the left arm, before falling alongside the non-supporting leg. The scarf, which first runs parallel to the downwards stroke of the triangle, before changing direction to follow the lines of the drapery channel, gives additional emphasis to this feature.

If the correlations described so far already make a strong case in support of Scheffler's and Busch's proposals one final comparison

makes them compelling – the similarity between the two Virgin figures (Figures VIII-11 and VIII-12). This is particularly eloquently expressed in the duplication of the arrowhead-shaped animation of each figure's mantle. It is formed by the act of drawing the mantle across the front of her body, looping it over the arm that also supports the Christ child, and the forward motion of the moving leg beneath the drapery. Although the articulation of the creases that are formed within that shape is not slavishly copied, both show the same bulking up of the fabric above the knee. The heads are almost identical both in their physiognomy and their orientation towards the right, creating a subtly swinging inverted S-shape that is more pronounced in the figure from St. Michael's. The *Alfeld* Virgin has been given a lower neckline. Both figures display the more complex structures of their draperies on the right beneath the Christ child. But whereas the Madonna from the *West Choir Retable* uses planar sweeping hems to enhance the forcefulness of her presence, the *Alfeld* Madonna displays a more simply structured vertical fall of fabric that gains in complexity through the pinning back of the hem and its immersion into the other folds.

While there are compelling reasons to propose the reattribution of the *Alfeld* retable to the Master of the *West Choir Retable*, a chronology is less easily arrived at without any secure date to relate either to. In this context it must be remembered that all current chronologies are orientated around the proposed output of the Master of St. Benedict, whose relatively late secure date of 1518 creates its own contradictions

with his reputation as a prototype for the output yet to be discussed. This has resulted in a proliferation of tentative dates to the decade 1515 to 1525. The *West Choir Retable* is the perfect example of this. Dated by Ferdinand Stuttmann to the early 1500s in the 1938 exhibition catalogue, the monograph gave it the much later date of 1525 to 1530.¹⁶² More recently, Jan-Friedrich Richter has questioned the later date, suggesting the retable to have been produced around 1515 instead.¹⁶³

This thesis would like to play devil's advocate by following Stuttmann's earliest assessment to propose a much earlier date for the *West Choir Retable*, placing it ahead of both the *Alfeld* retable and the Master of St. Benedict's output. The *West Choir Retable* is carved with great assurance and certainty of form. Its formal language, however, is one that is steeped in the sculptural language which Veit Stoss deployed in his carved altarpiece for the parish church of St. Mary in Cracow during the last quarter of the fifteenth century (Figure VIII-13). There similarly arcing seams, auricle folds and pinned-back hems can be found. The draperies of the *West Choir Retable* display the same passionate movement as the figures in Cracow possess (Figures VIII-14), albeit that in Hildesheim they are more tempered. Individual motifs such as the dramatic compressions of the mantles as they are gathered across the body and the diverging folds framing the lower moving leg attest to a deep knowledge of Stoss' methods. That knowledge is

¹⁶² Richter 2007, p. 259, fn. 767.

¹⁶³ Exh. Cat. Hannover 1938, p. 16, No. 59; Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 60.

unlikely to have been disseminated through third-party sources, that is, prints or sketches made by journeymen, but appear to have been experienced at first hand. The timing of Stoss' retable means that its formal idioms could have reached Hildesheim by the beginning of the sixteenth century, the date originally posited by Stuttmann. The *Alfeld* Virgin represents a later figure. Although as assuredly and confidently executed, the flamboyance and forward projection of the draperies in Stoss' retable and the figures in St. Michael's have been toned down further. While the planar folds and complex layering of the draperies require no less technical ability to produce, the fabric now stays closer to the body. A similar tendency to reduce the forward projection of the draperies can also be observed in the contemporaneous works of the Master of St. Benedict, particularly in the comparison of the so-called *Waddesdon Manor* saints (Figure VIII-15) and the eponymous relief in St. Godehard (Figure VIII-16). There the hems of Maurus' and Placidus' copes are arranged in gentle layers that echo the horizontal orientation of the edge that is laid across the knees of both the Virgin Mary and St. Urban from the *Alfeld* retable, proposing a date of around 1515 for this work.

The Urban Master, the Holtrup Madonna with Apostles and the Nemeš Madonna

These depictions of the Madonna and child on a crescent moon (Figures VIII-17 and VIII-18) represent two of a total of five known

variants of the same figure model. One of these, the Virgin Mary from the altarpiece in Henneckenrode, has already been discussed in the previous chapter. Two further examples comprise incidences of workshop reproduction of the same model from the retable in the village church of Nätebow-Bollewick (Figure VIII-19), and a smaller, stylized reproduction of this figure model's distinctive silhouette on the baptismal font in St. Peter's church in Brunswick (Figure VIII-20).¹⁶⁴ The remaining two figures stand in Nuremberg and the village church of Holtrup respectively.

These works have been attributed to a number of hands: The Nuremberg figure Stuttmann and von der Osten regarded as an autograph piece by the Master of St. Benedict, whereas the Holtrup Madonna and her pendant figures were considered the work of an assistant in the Master of St. Benedict's workshop.¹⁶⁵ The Henneckenrode Virgin has already been established as the product of the Urban Master's workshop in the previous chapter. The retable in Nätebow-Bollewick constitutes one of a number of known instances whereby works with a distinctly Lower Saxon character are created outside of that region. The formal quotations are unmistakable, but rudimentary applications of the formal language that are merged with local iconographies. The semi-recumbent Christ child is one such case in point; it is an unusual depiction in the Lower Saxon context, but local

¹⁶⁴ Wohl 1984, p. 185.

¹⁶⁵ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 54 and p. 61.

churches in the area surrounding Nätebow-Bollewick contain several contemporaneous examples.¹⁶⁶

Historically, there has always existed a hierarchy of worth attached to these figures from which only the altarpiece in Nätebow-Bollewick as a relatively recent discovery was excluded. Scheffler, unaware of the existence of the Nuremberg sculpture, noted parallels between the altarpiece in Enger and the baptismal font because of the crystalline appearance of the Holtrup Virgin's draperies.¹⁶⁷ Busch, on the other hand, claimed the Nuremberg figure, also known as the *Nemeš* Madonna, immediately as a masterpiece by Master Wolter, with the Holtrup and Henneckenrode figures judged to be copies of reduced quality.¹⁶⁸ Meier again linked both the *Nemeš* and the Holtrup Madonna figures with the baptismal font, while the supposed similarities between the font, the Holtrup figures and the Virgin and St. John from the Enger Crucifixion scene led Meier to the conclusion that the carver of the Enger retable was the executing artist of all.¹⁶⁹ Busch's revision of 1939 still maintained the *Nemeš*, Holtrup, and Henneckenrode statues as a homogenous production that, although it could no longer be associated with Master Wolter, still belonged to the same hand.¹⁷⁰ Differences in execution he put down to a gradual hardening of the carver's style as he moved towards old age. Stuttmann and von der Osten's monograph

¹⁶⁶ Knuevener 2011, p. 260-261.

¹⁶⁷ Scheffler 1925, pp. 252-253.

¹⁶⁸ Busch 1931, p. 82, p. 84. pp. 87-88.

¹⁶⁹ Meier 1937, p. 12.

¹⁷⁰ Busch 1939, p. 208.

finally introduced the divisions that still have currency today. Attributing the *Nemeš* Madonna as the qualitatively most valuable figure to the Master of St. Benedict and the Henneckenrode statue to the newly created Urban Master, they allocated the Holtrup Madonna to yet another anonymous assistant of the Master of St. Benedict who was able to work 'virtually autonomously' in his master's workshop.¹⁷¹ The latter distinction was an important device that allowed the authors to accord the *Nemeš* Madonna a position of greater authority over the other figures to underscore the leadership role of the Master of St. Benedict. More recently that precept has been challenged by Dietmar Wohl who has argued for greater parity between the *Nemeš* and Holtrup figures. Having had the opportunity of examining the Holtrup statues closely during a restoration in 1983 Wohl noted several details which in his view pointed towards the Holtrup Madonna having been conceived as a second version of a successful model rather than an inferior copy.¹⁷² His argument centres primarily on the crescent-shaped cuts made with a small gouge (Figures VIII-21 and VIII-22) which the carver of both figures used to terminate some of the secondary crumples and folds on both statues, some of which were applied in different locations. A number of other differences in the rendering of details can be added in support of Wohl's observation, and these are detailed in the corresponding catalogue entry.

¹⁷¹ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, pp. 45-46, pp. 53-54, p. 63.

¹⁷² Wohl 1984, p. 185.

In terms of quality the *Nemeš* Madonna has always been held to represent the higher standard, although Wohl disagrees with that assessment, and this thesis is inclined to agree with him up to a point.¹⁷³ The differences are marginal. The crisper outline of a passage in one figure is matched by another more carefully worked detail in the other. The different expressions are a matter of personal taste. To some, the quiet acquiescence of the Holtrup Madonna may seem banal, while others, the writer included, find the mask-like facial characterization of the *Nemeš* Madonna extremely unsettling. In her own time, the Holtrup Madonna is likely to have had the greater monetary value attached to her, since her polychromy was technically far more elaborate than that of her sister figure. Whereas the *Nemeš* Madonna shows evidence only of gilding, paint and an inscription on the hems, the Holtrup figure's polychromy was created using three-dimensional modelling techniques, punches, dies, foils and lacquer paints as well as matte and burnished gold and silver gilding.¹⁷⁴ Wohl's recent restoration has shown that the costumes of the Madonna and the apostles were also adorned with sumptuous painted patterns applied in a series of complex procedures, most of which are lost today or barely visible due to material deterioration. While the question of parity between the two figures may appear otiose, it does affect the attribution of both figures, especially since the Holtrup figures as a group point towards a different source. That source has already been implied by

¹⁷³ op. cit., p. 185.

¹⁷⁴ op. cit., p. 176 and p. 178.

those authors who in the past have associated the Holtrup figures with the retable in Enger, and indeed there are several indicators which suggest that the Holtrup figures at least should be considered in conjunction with the Urban Master's output.

There exists a remarkable likeness between the Holtrup Christ child and that of the New York *Emerentia* group, both in frontal (Figures VIII-23 and VIII-24) and profile views (Figures VIII-25 and VIII-26). Particularly the manner in which the dimples of mouth have been extended upwards to meet the nostrils and the profiles of the nose are very close. The hair is arranged in a stronger horizontal orientation than the other two, with more curls being concentrated around the areas above the ears. A similar orientation recurs frequently in the work of the Urban Master – it is apparent in the head of St. John from the Enger *Crucifixion* (Figure VIII-27), the heads of Peter (Figure VIII-28), Matthew (Figure VIII-29) and Simon from the apostle group in Aachen, and suggested in the head of the anonymous saint in the Henneckenrode retable. The beards of Simon and James the Greater end in the gently swinging curl also observed in the Enger relief figures. The similarity between the faces of saints John and Matthew from Holtrup and St. Urban from the Henneckenrode retable is striking (Figures VIII-30, VIII-31 and VIII-32) with their accentuated facial lines, deeply set eyes, prominent cheekbones, and slightly sunken cheeks that also recall the Enger St. Denis. Several drapery details, particularly the straight, concave hems that fall from the shoulder to the ground in a single

unbroken line, voluminous mantles and wider-than-usual silhouettes are also common to figures from both locations. These correlations between the Holtrup figures and other works by the Urban Master make a strong case for re-attribution.

With the Holtrup Madonna disassociated from the oeuvre of the Master of St. Benedict, the *Nemeš* Madonna represents an area of overlap between this artist and the Urban Master. There is no argument substantial enough to separate the *Nemeš* Madonna from the Master of St. Benedict's oeuvre. Her diagonal conception and introverted fold structures, which give the impression of an external force attempting to contain a freely billowing fabric, at first glance seems at odds with the more extrovert statement draperies of the Waddesdon Manor saints. The inclusion of the Everloh St. Catherine, however, provides a transitional point between the two that turns a seeming contrast into a smooth trajectory.

It is, of course, possible to view all of these correlations in the way Stuttmann and von der Osten did, that is as evidence of impulses that were transmitted from the works of the Master of St. Benedict to his contemporaries. His influence cannot be doubted – any carver who finds his work reach into localities at some significant distance to his own geographic area of activity clearly occupies such a position of significant artistic influence. Moreover, the tendency in the Urban Master's workshop to reuse existing models has been commented upon before, and this investigation can point to a number of further examples.

One such are the two Holtrup apostles John (Figure VIII-33) and Matthew (Figure VIII-34) who are virtually identical in face and pose and only differ in attire. Another correlation involves the Aachen figure of St. James the Less (Figure VIII-35) who is an adaptation of a highly distinctive pose that is also repeated twice in Holtrup. There, the statues of St. James the Less (Figure VIII-36) and St. Thomas (Figure VIII-37) both adopt the same distinctive pose with one raised and one lowered arm. This stance has its origins in Riemenschneider's sandstone James the Less (Figure VIII-38) which was carved for the Marienkappelle in Würzburg between 1500 and 1506, as Stuttmann and von der Osten had already noted. It is likely to have been transmitted to the Urban Master by another figure of the same subject attributed to the Master of St. Benedict, now in the collection of the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe.¹⁷⁵

For all their apparent differences and reattribution to an earlier oeuvre, the *Alfeld* Madonna and St. Urban display some structural principles in common with the *Nemeš* Madonna that exceed the scope of merely copying the more distinctive sculptural details. These details extend beyond the orientation of the arrowhead folds to include the consistent positioning of structural elements in the same areas on each of the sculptures. This includes the crumple zones to either side of the exposed foot section (Figure VIII-39, Pos. A), and the compacted passage set above it (Figure VIII-39, Pos. B). The visual unity is further

¹⁷⁵ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 54.

maintained through the inclusion of a small flourish above Mary's moving leg that mimics the more defined counterpart of the Nuremberg figure (Figure VIII-39 Pos. C). It constitutes another overlap between the two oeuvres that makes the separation of the works into different hands challenging, and feeds into Stuttmann and von der Osten's suggested order of primacy between the two workshops, yet this occurs only during a relatively short timeframe. It is evident only in this group of figures; the two standing figures associated with the Benedict retable already show a further evolution with the two clusters A and B merging into a single animated structure, and an increasing amount of fabric gathering in position C. This compositional feature suggests that the *Nemeš* Madonna predates the Benedict retable, as well as the Everloh St. Catherine and the Waddesdon Manor saints because of this correlation with a figure group dated to around 1515. It also raises the intriguing prospect of a possible, demonstrable evolution that moves from the *West Choir Retable* to the *Nemeš* Madonna via the *Alfeld* group.

This suggestion is not new. In 1923 Hubert Wilm linked the *Nemeš* Madonna and her counterpart from the *Alfeld* retable for the first time on the somewhat superficial grounds that both display an arrowhead formation, a feature which Wilm obviously had not encountered in great numbers in preparation of his monograph on the production processes

of Gothic sculpture.¹⁷⁶ It is also possible that Wilm noted the fold-over with a swinging planar passage beneath the right hand side of both figures, or the triangular extension of the fabric as it runs out in a sharp, narrow tip which in the *Nemeš* Madonna has been placed forward of her supporting leg, whereas the *Alfeld* Madonna's is positioned alongside. Wilm might also have viewed the mantle falling across the *Alfeld* Madonna's knees towards her left hand side as prefiguring the fold combination on the same side of the *Nemeš* Madonna, especially if one considers how much more prominent that mantle corner would be if the *Alfeld* Madonna's moving leg were more angled. The slight inclination to the softly swinging S-shape in both will not have escaped Wilm, nor will he have failed to notice how the left arm is drawn close to the body in both figure and how both hands were similarly formed to hold their now lost sceptre attributes.

The compositional commonalities highlighted here between the *Nemeš* Madonna and the *Alfeld* retable document a transition in style at the upper quality level of that production. In my view, the Master of St. Benedict as defined by Stuttmann and von der Osten represents the second phase, even a second generation, of the workshop that had already produced the *West Choir Retable* and associated works such as the *Trinitatis Pietá*, the Hannover *Church Fathers and Evangelists* panels and the *Virgin and St. Anne* group in Philadelphia during its first phase. The formal language that passes from the *West Choir Retable* to

¹⁷⁶ Wilm 1923, p. 177.

the *Alfeld* figures develops a new direction c. 1515 which leads from the *Nemeš* Madonna to the Benedict retable, the two female saints in the Rothschild collection at Waddesdon manor, and the *Holy Kindred* retable at Everloh.

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES

The dissolution of the oeuvre of the master of the Enger retable has left a number of works previously connected with that output in abeyance. Style-critical analysis cannot integrate them convincingly with the other works that have been re-attributed to the oeuvre of the Urban Master. Instead, they form two sub-groups that are rooted in his formal language, but which also expand that language into their own syntheses. This chapter summarises their distinctive styles, and offers some attributions to both.

The Breselenz Carver

Few art works have been at the centre of attributions and opinions for as long as the Breselenz retable (Figure IX-1) without being the subject of a dedicated appraisal. The retable was brought to Busch's attention in preparation of his 1931 monograph by Berthold Conrades, an art historian at the time employed to survey late medieval artefacts on behalf of the government of the Province of Hannover.¹⁷⁷ In anticipation of an independent publication by Conrades, Busch refrained from all but the most cursory reference, placing the retable in 'vicinity' (sic) of the master of the Enger retable without supporting evidence or further discussion.¹⁷⁸ Eight years later, with the Conrades

¹⁷⁷ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 2.

¹⁷⁸ Busch 1931, p. 134.

publication still expected, Busch purported to recognise the same assistant's hand in the retables in Enger and Breselenz, the three works currently attributed to Stavoer in the NLM and the architectural carvings that adorned the Butchers' Guildhall in Hildesheim.¹⁷⁹ Writing at the same time, and independent of Busch's deliberations, Gert von der Osten suggested for this retable a much earlier origin c. 1500 in an anonymous Brunswick-based workshop, a conclusion which he reiterated in his co-authored monograph.¹⁸⁰

The first impression conveyed by the retable to the opinion-weary art historian is an immense sense of homecoming. Amongst all the works that historically were attributed to the oeuvre of Hinrick Stavoer on the strength of the altarpiece in Enger, this retable is the only one that *feels* like a retable produced by the same artist. Its compressed scenes that are pushed to the front edge of the compartment, and figures with coquettishly inclined heads so studiously avoiding eye contact with each other they look like children trying to appear innocent after being caught kicking a football into a neighbour's garden conveys a sense of welcome familiarity. The trouble is that the only retable that *feels* like what in the past has been thought of as another retable by the same hand, on closer interrogation, reveals itself to be by a different carver altogether, albeit one that is acutely cognisant of the formal language of the Enger retable.

¹⁷⁹ Busch 1939, p. 214.

¹⁸⁰ Von der Osten 1939 II, p. 295; Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 79

In common with the Enger St. Denis, the silhouette of the Madonna (Figure IX-2) barely exceeds the width of her pedestal. Her stance describes a shallow S-shape with the left hip and right shoulder pushed out slightly. The supporting leg remains invisible beneath the drapery, while the knee of her slightly bent free leg gently interrupts the flow of folds in her voluminous skirt. A similar counter play between rounded and linear forms can be observed in the Enger St. Denis, although in the case of the Virgin Mary the straight lines are introduced through the concentration of tubular folds caused by her mantle being tucked under her right arm and which visually counteract the sweeping flow of the opposing hemline. The conception of the primary and secondary structures is different to that which underpins the composition of the figure of St. Denis. Denis' drapery is characterised by equilateral triangles that fill the spaces created by straight, compacted tubular folds, whereas in the Breselenz Mary the folds are of a more organic character, describing rounded as well as straight-lined contours, buckling more frequently on the crests of structures, and using those buckles to change the direction of the structures' flow. The secondary spaces are left partially open, but fill at the bottom with both scalene and equilateral triangles that give the appearance of being stacked on top of each other, rather than cascading. Although two definition folds emerge from the knee to frame Mary's protruding lower leg in the manner also known from the Enger sculpture, these peter out too early, and do not converge. The horizontal fold that was caused by

an excess of fabric dropping away across Denis' exposed right foot in the Breselenz statue is replaced by a single, arbitrarily placed pleat the cause of which is not discernible. This generates the impression of generic repetition of an established formula especially since Mary's emerging left foot beneath this passage also has no apparent effect on the fall of fabric around it.

The mourning Virgin's body is covered in a generous drape which, unusually for Lower Saxon sculpture, is tucked under both arms. A wide concave collar is formed over her left upper arm, while an arc-like cluster of fabric emerges behind her lower right arm. This recalls the Christ child that frequently occupies this space in other Lower Saxon depictions of the Madonna (and may also indicate the use of a block of wood which had previously been cut for a different figure composition). There are no flourishes such as the corner of fabric tumbling over the edge of St. Denis' pedestal to reduce the significant physical distance between the viewer and St. Denis while installed as part of the superstructure of the Enger retable. Instead this figure has a square-edged, heavy, and rigid surplus of fabric almost imperceptibly falling over the side of the pedestal that barely impacts on the figure's contours and is the conceptual opposite of St. Denis' light, almost playful flourish (Figure IX-3). It reminds of a similarly weighty excess falling onto the pedestal on which the apostle Judas Thaddeus from the Enger predella stands (Figure IX-4), and suggests that the Virgin Mary was conceived to be approached from more than one direction, a

concept that is easily reconciled with the function of the central figure in a moderately sized altarpiece. In comparison with the St. Denis in Enger, the latter appears softer, more rounded, and more fluently executed than the Virgin Mary whose drapery suggests it to have been carved by an artist at a transitional point of his development. It is difficult to say whether the triangles that congregate in the lower sections of the secondary spaces show their originator as trying to emulate the more organically cascading drapery of the Enger figure or trying to leave it behind. Their inert formality, however, makes them appear contrived, if not clumsy.

The relief scenes echo the structure of the panels in Enger with a depth of only ten centimetres; their depiction of spatial recession, however, is not as convincing. The figures that populate them owe much to their Enger counterparts in type, but show a different conceptual approach. The facial types from Enger are repeated in the Breselenz figures; the round face of the bystander peering out behind the high priest in the *Presentation in the Temple* relief (Figure IX-5), for example, is a cousin of the official presenting Christ to the crowds alongside Pilate in the Enger *Ecce Homo* (Figure IX-6). Similarly, the features of Nicodemus from the Enger *Lamentation* are repeated in the face of Joseph from the Breselenz *Presentation in the Temple* (Figures IX-7 and IX-8). For all their similarities, however, there are also distinct differences. The human body has far greater presence beneath the draperies and is more pivotal in directing the fabric flow than is the case

with the Enger figures. Particularly the depiction of legs pushing through loose-fitting, flowing drapery is more successfully rendered and better proportioned. In a visual comparison of the two figures of *Christ Bearing the Cross*, the proportioning of the Breselenz Christ (Figure IX-9) convinces more than the Enger Christ, whose small head appears grotesque on the much larger neck and upper torso (Figure IX-10). Differences can also be observed in the faces. The noses, while still displaying broad, flaring nostrils and the elongated septum that are typical of the Enger figures, are much straighter and not as flattened across the tip as their Westfalian counterparts. The cheekbones and chins are also less well defined in the Breselenz figures. Their short necks recall the squat appearance of the Enger figures, but the shoulders are rendered with greater anatomical accuracy. The heads are noticeably larger in relation to the body resulting in a bulkier appearance. The differences in proportioning and straight noses all point towards the possibility that the carver of the Breselenz retable was involved in the production of the Enger *Entombment*, a notion that is supported by a comparison of the stance and foreshortening of the high priest in Breselenz with that of Joseph of Arimathaea (Figures IX-11 and IX-12).

A fundamental difference between the Enger and Breselenz carvers exists in the hair depiction. Although some of the Breselenz figures may look as if their originator tried to emulate the finely crafted lozenge style of the figures in Enger, they attest to a different

conception of human hair which conforms neither to that characterizing the fully developed heads of the Enger relief figures, nor the semi-finished state of the apostles. Instead, it comprises a return to more naturalistic waves and curls as exemplified by the hair and beard of the Breselenz high priest, but is also found in the *Pilate washing his Hands* relief from the *Oppler* collection. This kind of hair formation constitutes a notable exception in Lower Saxon woodcarving, and is a trademark by which this carver may be recognized. An involvement in the carving of some elements of the Enger retable and knowledge of the *Oppler* panels would place the originator of the Breselenz retable in the Urban Master's sphere of activity, and would go some way towards explaining the recurring dialogue with that artist's formal language in his work.

This dialogue continues in another work that can now be added to the oeuvre of this newly identified artistic identity. In the sacristy of the parish church of St. Denis in Lindhorst near Minden, some seventy kilometres north-west of Hildesheim hangs a small relief that documents another step in the evolution of this carver. Illustrating Christ's journey to Mount Golgotha with the cross (Figure IX-13), it is generally accepted to have come from the now lost shutters of the church's sixteenth-century retable. The panel again shows the distinctive faces, comparatively large heads, short necks, and hair depiction that have already been noted in the context of the Breselenz figures and the Enger *Entombment* relief. The figure of the high priest in Breselenz is repeated here in the guise of Simon of Cyrene (Figures IX-14 and IX-

15). The gown of Christ shows the same structure as that of the corresponding figure in the Breselenz relief. Although the illusion of space is not as deep as in the Urban Master's reliefs, it is represented here to greater effect than in the Breselenz panels, while the landscape setting looks more realistic than the abstracted geology formations favoured by the carver of the Enger retable. The composition still owes something to the model also used in Enger and Breselenz in that the characters depicted and their positioning in relation to each other follows the same schematic format.

In the now shutterless central compartment (Figure IX-16) which today serves as the church's altarpiece, a range of influences becomes apparent in its references to the idioms of both the Urban Master and the Master of St. Benedict. The extremely narrow eyes of the individual figures recall the face of the *Nemeš* Madonna without imitating it; the contours of the head describe a more elongated oval with a shorter forehead (Figure IX-17). The draperies are characterized by straight tubular folds describing the primary structures in minimalist lines with smooth open internal spaces instead of compressed secondary structures. Arrowhead structures are still discernible as part of the heritage of this carver, but are – quite literally – fading from his repertoire. Single cuts with a narrow gouge set the only accents across the ridges of the folds. The diagonal conception of St. John's draperies is emphasised by the diagonal swathe of fabric that is a quotation of a similar feature on the Master of St. Benedict's St. Catherine from the

Everloh *Holy Kindred* retable (Figure IX-18 and IX-19). The hem that forms the outer contour of the mantle falling across John's moving leg is an echo of the crimp folds that typify the figures of Christ and the angels from the Enger and Henneckenrode retables. The most striking correlation, however, is the one that exists between the Lindhorst St. Denis, his Enger counterpart and the Henneckenrode St. Urban, whose facial features and aspects are virtually identical (Figures IX-20, IX-21 and IX-22).

The *Carrying of the Cross* scene is not the only carved relief to have survived of the Lindhorst shutters. Three further panels, now in the collection of the Focke Museum in Bremen, have been identified by Stuttmann and von der Osten as once having been part of this altarpiece.¹⁸¹ Illustrating the *Entombment*, *Resurrection*, and the *Incredulity of Thomas* (Figure IX-23) these panels display the same close affinity to the former Stavoer oeuvre. One of the mourning women behind the tomb into which Christ's body is being lowered (Figure IX-24) repeats the same figure type from the equivalent scene in Breselenz retable (Figure IX-25); she also references the more child-like facial type of the females gathered behind the cross in the *Christ Bearing the Cross* panel from the *Oppler* collection (Figure IX-26).

The last points in particular make it difficult to decide whether this retable was produced in the workshop of the Urban Master, or the independent work of a craftsman who had spent his formative years

¹⁸¹ op. cit., p. 34.

with that carver. The visual cohesions that exist between the figurative elements of the Lindhorst retable and the Urban Master's oeuvre suggest the former. However, the manner in which the pedestals of the central figures were integrated into a landscape setting that fills the whole compartment unified by distinctive deep incisions throughout is something that has not been observed in the context of works by the Urban Master, and therefore does infer a degree of autonomy from that workshop. The Breselenz retable creates a similar conundrum, adhering closely to the Urban Master's artistic language on the one hand, while also displaying signs of an independent conception and style that imply greater independence than a controlled manufacturing environment can reasonably be expected to permit. The identification of another relief from the collection of the RPM which can also be re-attributed to this master, helps settle the question.

The depiction of the *Adoration of the Magi* (Figure IX-27) comes from an unknown retable context. It shows Mary, with the Christ Child on her lap who is receiving a gift of an open box, presented to him by the eldest of the kings, Melchior. Behind Melchior stands Caspar with his right arm raised, pointing to a now imaginary star that would have been placed elsewhere above him in the panels' original retable context. Behind him is the negroid figure of Balthazar. The draperies and heads of the figures in these panels are closely allied to the Lindhorst relief, where the figure of Simon of Cyrene repeats the head of Melchior (Figure IX-28).

Taken in conjunction the works in Breselenz, Lindhorst and the RPM present a cohesive evolution which is only interrupted by the figures in the central compartment of the Crucifixion retable in Lindhorst. Both the Breselenz and Lindhorst retables reference enough of the Urban Master's artistic idioms to be deemed as coming from that workshop, but were carved by a third party whose personal style is also evident. At this stage the exact relationship between the Urban Master and that third party cannot be extrapolated securely without further research. The finesse of the RPM panel and elements of the Lindhorst retable attest to a significant level of autonomy, while the Breselenz retable represents a workshop product created under the auspices of the Urban Master. The *Adoration* shows what the Breselenz carver is capable of when working autonomously, while the Lindhorst *Crucifixion* figures represent the same autonomous master trying to recapitulate the Urban Master's artistic idiom. The Breselenz carver is an independent artistic identity whose origins lie in the workshop of the Urban Master, but who is also likely to have left more independent works outside the latter's immediate geographical catchment area.

The Meerbeck Carver

Another artistic identity to emerge from the commercial side of workshop of the Urban Master is the artist responsible for another group of stylistically cohesive works centred around the Passion retable in the church of St. Bartholomew in Meerbeck, near Minden, some seventy

kilometres north-west of Hildesheim. This carver can be associated with several works that show significant continuity in style of which one, five scenes from a lost passion altarpiece, have traditionally been placed in the context of the Urban Master or the workshop of Master Wolter.¹⁸² Until recently these panels had been displayed in the private chapel of the episcopal residence in Hildesheim (Figure IX-29). The group in fact comprises six carved panels, including two composite parts of a double-height *Crucifixion* scene, the others illustrating *Pilate washing his Hands*, the *Road to Calvary*, the *Crucifixion*, the *Deposition* and the *Entombment* (Figure IX-30).

The most striking aspect of these relief scenes is the caricature-like appearance of the individual figures. They have long, narrow faces, with sharply defined chins. The narrow mouths seem oversized in comparison to eyes and noses, however, this may be an effect of the renewed polychromy, rather than an original characteristic. The noses are elongated, with narrow nostrils. The faces of the holy women seem generic, with little to distinguish them from each other. There is more characterisation in Mary Magdalene than in any of the other female identities. With their current polychromy the faces look neither attractive nor empathy-inspiring, although, as is the case with the Enger retable, individual personifications readily reveal their individual charms when singled out. One such example is the (in the Lower Saxon context) unusual Mary Magdalene in the *Entombment* scene (Figure IX-31).

¹⁸² Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 61; Busch 1931, p. 117.

Despite the contrived effect of the awkwardly angled, exposed foot and the exaggerated headdress this is a beautifully crafted figure whose billowing cloak is finely structured and suffused with liveliness through the play of light on the sub-structures. The depiction suffers under the curious compulsion to show the left leg in profile which somewhat disturbs the natural flow of the foreshortened body as it is turned away from the viewer to the point that the leg appears entirely disconnected. There is a feel of the Urban Master about these figures and scenes. The ratio of forward and rearward facing figures is about what might be expected in the generously populated scenes emanating from that source. The henchman with the jauntily tied striped stockings in the *Pilate washing his Hands* scene (Figure IX-32) reminds one in the detail of his physiognomy of the rearward facing figures from the *Carrying of the Cross* scene from the *Brabantian* retable in Soest despite the much longer neck and sharply dropping shoulders (Figure IX-33). His knotted ties also recall a similar motif from the same scene from the *Breselenz* retable (Figure IX-9).

The same carver has also produced another work that forms part of this sub-group to the Urban Master. The altarpiece in the village church of St. Bartholomew in Meerbeck (Figure IX-34) is remarkably similar in conception and form to the Enger retable. It has a double-height *Crucifixion* scene flanked by two groups of six Passion scenes arranged across two tiers. Above the outer edge of each of the shutters, two additional compartments are placed to fulfil the closing function of

the retable when liturgy demands. These contain figures of St. Bartholomew and the Virgin and Christ Child respectively. Like the Enger retable the Meerbeck altarpiece takes its narrative depictions from Schäufolein's *Speculum Passionis* woodcuts, making the resemblances between this carver's style and that of the Urban Master all the more keenly felt. The carved scenes are terminated in the middle distance as they were in Enger. The effect in Meerbeck, however, is entirely different, as inserted behind them are painted landscape backgrounds, which rise above the carved scenes, and convey an entirely different sense of overall depth and attention to detail. It is doubtful that these are original survivals, although they may have replaced earlier versions.¹⁸³ One change that was first introduced to the *Ecce Homo* scene in Enger has been transmitted to this retable; the archway under the structure supporting Pilate presenting Christ to the crowd constitutes a rare departure from Schäufolein's print which its carver introduced in the Enger retable. The repetition of this detail in the Meerbeck retable suggests that for this altarpiece the one in Enger may have been more pivotal than Schäufolein (Figures IX-35, IX-36 and IX-37).

Despite these commonalities, there are also sufficient differences between the two retables, particularly in the figure carving, to reject the possibility of both having been produced by the same hand, while the distinctive style of the carvings also precludes the possibility that the

¹⁸³ I thank Oliver Glissmann for the extensive exchange on the subject (23 August 2012).

Meerbeck retable was produced as workshop product under the auspices of the Urban Master. Conversely, there is sufficient stylistic similarity between this retable and the Passion scenes from the Bishop's residence to recognise this carver as the originator of both, suggesting the emergence of another artistic identity. While his exact connection with the Urban Master will have to become part of the brief for the next stage of research, his style is sufficiently distinct to designate him after his only complete work discovered so far, as the *Meerbeck Carver*.

One option that warrants further investigation is the possibility that the Meerbeck Carver is also identical with one of the hands that contributed to the so-called *Brabantian* retable in the church of Maria-in-pratis in Soest (Figure IX-38). This retable constitutes the surviving relief scenes from a shuttered altarpiece with an elevated central section that recalls the shape of retables traditionally associated with production in the former duchy of Brabant, particularly the great sixteenth-century production centres of Antwerp and Mechelen.¹⁸⁴ Stuttmann and von der Osten associated the 'upper part' of the retable with the originator of the retable in Enger¹⁸⁵ The retable comprises four scenes from the life of the Virgin in the lower register. Above these are three two-tiered Passion scenes of which the central Crucifixion scene represents a split composition. Although such an arrangement is common in northern German retable design during the pre-reformation

¹⁸⁴ Lukas 2004, p. 136.

¹⁸⁵ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 79.

period, such compositions usually place the events taking place on the road to Calvary beneath the Crucifixion (Figure IX-39). Unusually in this retable it is the mourning group of Mary, John, Mary Magdalene, and attendant figures that are separated from the Crucifix by the separating ledge (Figure IX-40). The reliefs that are closest to the Enger reliefs in manner are the mourning group in the lower half of the *Crucifixion* scene, parts of the *Deposition* and the *Lamentation over the dead Christ* (Figure IX-41). Another hand is responsible for the co-production of the *Deposition* and the carving of the upper part of the *Crucifixion* plus *Pilate washing his Hands* and the *Carrying of the Cross* (Figure IX-42). These scenes are characterized by the extremely realistic rendition of the different characters' costumes, both as contemporary styles and the interpretation of ancient Roman uniform. Similar accuracy in costume depiction can be observed in the panels of the lower register, although here the heads remind more of the figures in the central compartment of the Lindhorst retable with their narrowed eyes and extended foreheads (Figure IX-43). Certainly the accuracy of the depiction of fashionable costume is common to this and the Meerbeck carver's work, as is the similarity in the structure of the Crowns of Thorns in both the Soest panels and the Passion scenes. Instead of the usual criss-crossing of individual branches, here the branches are aligned horizontally, and tied together vertically (Figures IX-44 and IX-45). In the *Lamentation*, Mary's more organic silhouette certainly places her very close to the figures of the Meerbeck retable as far they

can be judged from photographs alone, as well as those in the Passion panels from the episcopal residence. The draperies of the mourning group and the *Lamentation* quote the crystalline effect known from the Urban Master's apocalyptic Virgins and the Enger *Crucifixion*. At the same time, however, the reliefs illustrating scenes from the life of the Virgin have an air of Urban Master pastiches in their aquiline profiles and arbitrary rendering of the elongated lozenge style of the hair. The point has been reached at which the influence of the Urban Master is fading, either due to old age, a changing market demographic, or succession by younger craftsmen trained by him who blended his artistic idioms with their own to create a final synthesis of his carving style.

X. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ARTISTIC COMMUNITY IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY HILDESHEIM

The examination of the primary records has revealed a number of new conclusions in relation to the artistic community that was active in Hildesheim before and after the Reformation, which this chapter will summarise. The *Brühl* district in particular would appear to have been home to an artistic enclave that can, in some instances, be followed across three generations. That community is in the first instance associated with the St. Godehard works in particular, but is also involved in a number of civic projects, and is discussed here as a cohesive artistic group for the first time. The *Brühl*'s extraordinary position outside of the Hildesheim town walls conferred a number of advantages, but also disadvantages on its citizens. On the one hand, until Tile Brandis was elected to the council of the twenty-four men in 1536, the district had no representation on the town council, despite its residents paying taxes to the town.¹⁸⁶ On the other, its residents were able to trade outside of the somewhat conservative guild system that operated within the town walls.¹⁸⁷ Without guild restrictions, traders operating from the *Brühl* could offer their services not only more freely, but also to residents of the old market town, the new town, the abbey of Saint Godehard and the newly emerging settlements around *Gelber*

¹⁸⁶ Tile Brandis' Diarium, quoted in PS SAH 354 – 8, not dated, p. 2.

¹⁸⁷ PS SAH 354 – 8, not dated, p. 3.

Stern and *Lappenberg*.¹⁸⁸ Unsurprisingly, a number of domestic properties in the *Brühl* belonged to the abbey, whose register books record payments, presumably rents, received *de domibus Brulone*.

Master Wolter (b. c. 1475, d. 1532, Hildesheim)

Master Wolter appears in the primary sources from 1501, but may have arrived in Hildesheim earlier; neither the tax registers nor the register books from Saint Godehard are complete for the period 1492 to 1502. Local historian Hans Schlotter has suggested that Wolter occupied one of the houses near what today is the interchange between the *Vorderer Brühl's* and the *Neue Straße* (see Appendix A, Map 3).¹⁸⁹

The first documentary record for Master Wolter occurs in the Saint Godehard register book of 1501 as recipient of a part payment of three *solidi* for otherwise undocumented services.¹⁹⁰ In 1504, his name is mentioned several times in conjunction with the otherwise unspecified production of a retable for the abbey's infirmary.¹⁹¹ On 9 December 1504 he agreed terms with the abbey for the supply of a double-shuttered retable with painted and carved images, for the high altar of the abbey church. Once the retable had been delivered he appears to have received no further commissions from the abbey, although it must be remembered that the survival of its register books becomes more fragmentary after 1506, with the books of 1513 to 1521 comprising only

¹⁸⁸ Twachtmann-Schlichter 2007, p. 155.

¹⁸⁹ PS SAH 354 – 8, not dated, p. 4.

¹⁹⁰ PS DBH HS313d, Fol. 301^v

¹⁹¹ PS DBH HS318e, Fol. 213^r, 213^v.

274 folios as opposed to the 374 folios that make up the 1504 to 1506 volume. The 1532 book shows that a widow Wolter received a payment from the abbey. The actual sum is smudged, but involved shillings rather than pounds, and is not listed under *structura*, the heading under which the payments to Wolter were recorded. It is therefore possible that this payment reflects a gift to help the widow Wolter after her husband's death; the timing of the payment certainly coincides with the period in which all records for Master Wolter cease.

In the municipal records Master Wolter appears primarily as a taxpayer, and as recipient of small sums for occasional work carried out on behalf of the council. The table shown in Appendix B extrapolates the value of his taxable estate (orange graph) based upon the payments recorded in the tax registers. Superimposed onto Karl Josef Uthmann's model of the social structure and wealth development of the Hildesheim population in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, this shows that Wolter skirted the borderline between lower and middle class, but never acquired significant wealth.¹⁹² Nevertheless, Wolter achieved sufficient social standing to be created an alderman of the parish church of Saint Nicholas in the *Brühl* district, as two charters of 1513 and 1517, which Richard Doebner had published in 1901, record.¹⁹³

¹⁹² Uthmann 1957, p. 33.

¹⁹³ Doebner quoted in Habicht 1917, p. 204.

In 1506, Wolter became a citizen of Hildesheim.¹⁹⁴ In that year, the town's treasury accounts record an unusually high number of citizenship payments, in excess of four hundred as opposed to a more usual average of ten to fifteen. Wolter's final tax liability, discharged in 1531, is noticeably lower at six shillings, than the more usual two to three pounds of tax he paid during previous years. The working copy of the 1532 tax register lists Master Wolter's name, but without payment, while the clean copy for the same year omits his name entirely.¹⁹⁵ This suggests that Master Wolter was still alive at the time the tax declarations were made in February, but had died by the time of the collections in November..¹⁹⁶

In common with all extant literature, Schlotter assumed Wolter to have been a wood carver, rather than a painter or polychromer, although none of the records cited so far make that explicit suggestion, and the register books of Saint Godehard consistently refer to Wolter by name only, never by trade. Interestingly, Richard Doebner's transcriptions of a charter dated 09 August 1513 described Wolter as painter ('maler'), a fact which the subsequent literature has clearly chosen to ignore, or at least has reinterpreted.¹⁹⁷

Hildesheim's treasury accounts, however, support Doebner's transcription. In 1517 Master Wolter received fourteen pounds, seven

¹⁹⁴ PS SAH 50 – 700, Fol. 12^r; PS SAH 50 – 1876, Fol 11^v

¹⁹⁵ PS SAH 50 – 1876, Fol. 28^r; PS SAH 50 – 1877, Fol. 19^r.

¹⁹⁶ The Schlotter manuscript in the town archive collection also identifies 1532 as the year of Wolter's death. PS SAH 354 – 8, not dated, p. 4.

¹⁹⁷ UBH VIII, p. 462. Huth

shillings and two pence for making a *schildekenbom* ('de schildekenbom tho makende').¹⁹⁸ In 1519, he received two pounds from the council for six pictures, some lettering and other less clearly described work ('ij draken koppe vj belde und eyne schrift up dem slagen formen').¹⁹⁹ In 1524 he received fourteen pounds, six shillings and eight pence to make another *schildekenbom* ('vor den schyldkenbaam t[h]o makende').²⁰⁰ Finally, in 1526 he received his last payment from the council, six pounds, thirteen shillings and four pence, for the gilding of an unspecified number of knobs or buttons ('vor de knope to vorgulden up dat rundel an dem radhuse').²⁰¹

This relatively small record of works carried out at the behest of the council, however, is still ambiguous. '*Schildekenbom*' in this context is more likely to refer to the tree-like structure on which coats of arms were displayed during a tournament rather than the insignia of a judicial court, and at least implies both a structure and adornments that are made of wood, but which would also have been finished in some form of polychromy.²⁰² A dragonhead (dragen koppe) was not necessarily such an item in the literal sense, but, according to the Schiller-Lübben dictionary of Middle Low German, could also refer more generically to a fastening, anchoring point, or a bracket, while in Leo Nitsch's article on the market square fountain, dragon heads are described as water

¹⁹⁸ PS SAH 50 -704, Fol. 174^v.

¹⁹⁹ PS SAH 50 - 704, Fol. 160^v.

²⁰⁰ PS SAH 50 – 706, Fol. 134^r.

²⁰¹ PS SAH 50 – 707, Fol. 55^r.

²⁰² Schiller Lübben IV, p. 90.

spouts.²⁰³ Neither the dragonheads nor the pictures Wolter delivered to the council in 1519 offer absolute clarity, in that the production of any of the items described, including the lettering, could entail a multi-stage manufacturing process that involved both carving and painting. Other primary sources are equally ambiguous.

The 'Wolter Contract' - Transcription, Translation and Commentary

The only known contract from the period in question is one agreed between the abbey of St Godehard *outside* Hildesheim (*vor Hildensem*, see Appendix A, Map 3) and Master Wolter. Since the loss of the original document, the contract is known through transcriptions only. It has been published by W. H. H. Mithoff in 1885, V. C. Habicht 1917, and Hans Huth in 1957, the latter copying Mithoff's transcription.²⁰⁴ There are some minor differences between the two transcripts made by Mithoff and Habicht, mainly in punctuation, occasionally also in the spelling of individual words. Without access to the original document, it is impossible to judge which transcription represents this more accurately. Because the Habicht transcript also includes some additional palaeographic references in the text, it will serve as the basis for this discussion. The Habicht wording is as follows:

Tho ghedenkenn dat wij Henning abbett des münsters sinte Godhardes vor Hildensem up eyn unde mester wolter borgher to Hildensem up ander sydenn uns heben vereynighet unde vordraghenn

²⁰³ Schiller Lübben I, p. 565; Nitsch 1940, p. 34.

²⁰⁴ Mithoff 1885, pp. 430*431; Habicht 1917, p. 201; Huth 1967, p. 124.

alse umme eyne taphelen uppe dat hoymissen altar tho sinte Godeharde na disser na bescreven qyse. Wii van sinte Godeharde willen unde schullen latenn maken den voyt, taphelen unde twevelde vlogelen vann holte by unser koSaint Mester Wolter schal makenn dar up de kronen upp de taphelen unde in de bynnersten taphelen elven ghesneden bilde unde in de myddelsten achte bilde unde buten ver bilde malen alle twyer elen hoe unde schal unde wil de bynnersten taphelen unde elven bilde uppe guden grunt mjt gudem Ungarschen golde vergulden, des gheliken de cronenn, de myddelsten taphelen unde buten myt oren bilden wur id sik gheboret, unde schone blawe dar tho ghebruken. Hir vor schullen wij vann sinte Godeharde unde willen ome ver hundred lutke punt ghewen alsze namlikenn vertich rinsche gulden twischenn Michaelis vifftheynhundert unde viffe, unnde wynachten darnegest volgende, unde dar tho alle jar vertich lutke punt an ware effte ghelde Michaelis erstkomende anthorekende. He mach doch allikewol vann stunt na date disses dreffes holen uppe de rekensscopp korne in syn huysse efft he wolde. Deme nah schal unde wil mester Wolter de taffeln uns heffte uns nakommenn vor hundred lutke punt ewrdich in twen jaren erstvolgende na date disses breffes overantwordenn. Des to bekenntnisse hebben wij twey schriftte ghemaket eyn uthe der andern ghesneden lyke ludende, der wij vann sinte Gotherde eyne hebben unnde mester Wolter de andern. Unnde is ghesheyn umme jare viffteynhundert unnde verdenn des mandages na concepcionis Marie in bywesende des werdigenn hochgelerdenn errn

*Johannis Vos doctoris unnde errn Luleffes Platen parneres tho sintenn
Clawesz.*²⁰⁵

Translation:

In commemoration that we, Hennig, abbot of the minster of Saint Godehard outside [the walls of] Hildesheim [on] the one [hand], and Master Wolter, citizen of Hildesheim, [on] the other [hand], have just agreed [terms] and made a contract for a retable for the high altar of Saint Godehard, [to be delivered] in this, thus described manner. We of Saint Godehard shall and are contracted to have made the predella, panels and double shutters from wood [and] to our cost Master Wolter shall and is contracted to [supply] the crowns for the panels and eleven carved images for the innermost, as well as for the middle eight images and for the outer four images, all two cubits tall, and shall and is contracted to gild the innermost panels and eleven images on good ground with good Hungarian gold, the same also the crowns, the middle panels and the outer [panels] with their images, as is customary, and to use beautiful blue for this. For this we of Saint Godehard shall, and are contracted to, give him four hundred lutke punt [in the form] of forty Rhenish guilders between Michaelis fifteen hundred and five and the following Christmas, and [additionally] forty pounds in interest if the payment is owing on the first coming day of Michaelis. He may, from the hour after the date of this letter take corn to his house in lieu of [payment]. Following this, Master Wolter shall and is contracted to

²⁰⁵ Habicht 1917, p. 201.

deliver the retable to us or our successor[s] for one hundred lutke punt in two years from the date of this letter. To bear witness we have made two transcriptions and cut one matching to the other, of which we of Saint Godehard have one, and Master Wolter the other. In the year fifteen hundred and four, on the Monday after Mariae conceptionis, in the presence of the honourable and highly educated Mr. Johannis Vos, Doctor, and Mr. Luleffes Platen, priest to Saint Clawesz.

According to their own citations, the transcriptions which Mithoff and Habicht made were taken not from the original contract, but from a record of it in a monastic cartulary. The transcript does, however, contain much of principal information and phrasing normally associated with a late medieval contract, so that it can be presumed to be a reasonably complete recapitulation of the contract terms. While details of the iconography, or a list of the carved images, the *elven ghesnede bilde*, are missing from the transcription, this is not unusual where such specifications were expected to be the subject of further discussion. It is noted that the transcriptions have produced a document written entirely in Middle Low German. The nature of the deviations between the two transcript versions indicate that the transcripts were made from a document originally composed in Middle Low German, which seems unusual since all other preserved working documents of the abbey have been executed in Latin. One presumes that this was for the benefit of Master Wolter who is unlikely to have spoken or read Latin.

The register books of 1504 to 1506 record payments to Master Wolter for all three years, first for the earlier infirmary retable, later also for the contracted retable for the high altar.²⁰⁶ Payments for the latter have been emphasised with a manicule subsequently, as have other entries relevant to the contract terms.²⁰⁷ On Fol. 230^v, details of the contractual terms as noted in the lost cartulary are summarised.

The contract details describe a double-shuttered retable with four painted scenes on the external shutter sides, eight painted scenes at internal shutter fields, and eleven carved images in the centre. This seemingly tallies with a list of eleven saints' names noted in the margin of folio 230^v. The full list comprises *Salvator, B[ea]ta V[ir]go, Godehardus, Epiphanius, Bernwardus, Benedictus, Joha[n]nes, ... , Barbara, Maurus, Placidus.*²⁰⁸ The missing name has been interpreted by Habicht to refer to Mary Magdalene.²⁰⁹ This, however, has to be regarded as doubtful, given that the name in the list appears to be ending in the usual symbol for -us. The list has been interpreted by Habicht as being the first draft of the iconography of the retable, and indeed represents an iconographic programme full of references being made to the abbey's founder, bishop Bernhard I (ord. 1130, d. 1153), the Benedictine order, and the diocese of Hildesheim. Habicht also noted the existence of a sketch in the same register book, folio 236^v, which, according to his interpretation of it, showed extended sculptural

²⁰⁶ PS DBH HS318e, fol. 213^r

²⁰⁷ PS DBH HS318e, fol. 213^v

²⁰⁸ PS DBH HS318e, fol. 230^v

²⁰⁹ Habicht 1917, p. 202.

iconography which in his view did not conform to the number of eleven sculptures specified in the original transcription.²¹⁰ It is a sign of Habicht's sculpture-focussed bias that he related the iconographic programme to the sculpture element of the contract only. Contrary to Habicht's interpretation of it, I would suggest that this drawing does, in fact, represent a record of the full iconography of the retable, as agreed between the abbey and Wolter subsequent to the signing of the contract. The table below shows a transcription of the actual sketch.

B[ern]w[a]rdus	Godeh[ardus]	b[ea]ta v[ir]go i[n] sole	Bernhard[us] fu[n]dator	Benedict[us]			
de rechter vlogel				de lochter vloghel			
Paul[us]	Petrus	Jo[hannes] Bap[tist]a	Epifa[nius]	Joh[annes] eva[n]gelista	Andreas		
Vit[us]	Urban[us]	Iero[nim]us	Greg[orius]	Urs[ula]	Bar[bara]	Kath[arina]	Maria m[a]g[dalena]
		Anna	God[e] har[dus]	B[er]n [ar]dus	Elisa[beth]		

Table 1 - Retable layout sketch PS DBH HS318e Fol. 236^v

To correlate the drawing to the contract, it must be read from the lowest tier upwards. That tier represents the four painted panels that were visible if the retable was in its closed state. The row above shows the retable in its first open state, with the eight painted scenes of the double shutters visible. Above that, subdivided into right and left shutters are shown a total of six carved images occupying the inner face of the second pair of shutters, adjoining the central section that was visible only on holy days. In that central section, the figure of *beata virgo in sole* was flanked by Bernward, Godehard, Bernhard, and

²¹⁰ op. cit., pp. 202-203.

Benedict making a total of eleven carved images, as the cartulary transcription recorded.

The reading of this sketch as representing the agreed iconography for the high altar retable Wolter was contracted to produce becomes even more compelling when one considers the pertinence of the figures thus shown as occupying the central shrine to the Benedictine abbey of Saint Godehard. Moreover, of the eighteen saints that adorned the shutters twelve are known to have been dedicatory saints to altars or chapels within the church at the time the retable was commissioned.²¹¹

Master Wolter – painter or carver?

If one looks again at the contract provisions, it is noticeable that those specifications that have been deemed important enough to be noted both in the cartulary and the register book specific stipulations are made only in the context of the polychromy. In light of Doebner's findings it is interesting to note that contract format and specification emphasis are very similar to contracts that commission works from a painter, rather than a wood carver, as discussed by Hans Huth in his seminal study of the organisation of medieval artists' workshops, originally published in 1925 and re-published in an extended version in 1957. The specification of 'good Hungarian gold', that is gold leaf beaten from mint gold mined in the former kingdom of Hungary, reflects the long-running fear of commissioners to pay for expensive pure gold,

²¹¹ Krumwiede 1960, pp. 116-117.

but receive an image covered in the less valuable *twystgolt*, an outer layer of gold beaten over an inner layer of silver which was prone to oxidisation.²¹² Equally, the requirement for the use of *schone blauw*, i.e. lapis lazuli, is intended to preclude the use of the cheaper azurite, a blue that was obtained from locally mined copper ore, but lost colour intensity proportionally to the fineness to which it was ground.²¹³ That painters or polychromers were more likely to be given the overall contract for an altarpiece that required the input from a number of different trades was one of the important conclusions Huth's monograph has put forward.²¹⁴ Taken in conjunction with the evidence from Doebner's charter transcription and the Hildesheim treasury accounts there can be no doubt that Master Wolter was painter.

The award of the contract for a complex altarpiece involving numerous production phases indicates that Wolter had access to all the necessary expertise to execute such a contract successfully, expertise which in all likelihood he had already successfully demonstrated in the production of the infirmary retable. While not making him a major entrepreneur, this does suggest that his workshop was operating along the established late medieval model described by Baxandall as an integrated monopoly, whereby a single craftsman controlled all aspects of the production process, arranging for the contracting-out of any

²¹² Huth 1957, p. 62-63 and Mithoff 1885, p. 460.

²¹³ Huth 1957, p. 63 and Hübner 1993, p. 44.

²¹⁴ Huth 1957, pp. 85-86.

expertise not indigenous to his own workshop.²¹⁵ Petermann's study of Bernt Notke and his working practices similarly have revealed a workshop that kept all aspects of production under a single roof, with assistants and so-called preparators being employed as casual labour to make up for any skills shortages in the workshop.²¹⁶ Wolter's business had, in all likelihood, moved more towards a similar one-stop solution in that he undertook all contract negotiations, and held the overall legal responsibility for all aspects of execution, but sub-contracted all those processes that exceeded the scope of his own workshop. At the same time it is unlikely that Wolter held a position of single monopoly whose dominance was founded on the artistic distinction and specialization of its leader, because, as the consideration of the local market for artefacts in Chapter IV has shown, the local economy only offered limited opportunity for such an enterprise. Since that form of monopoly, however, is what Busch had envisaged in his monograph, let us briefly consider the conditions under which it may have occurred.

History has recorded two prodigious sculptural talents which have come not only to dominate their craft, but who have done so simultaneously and, in a geographic sense, almost side-by-side. Tilman Riemenschneider (b. c. 1460, d. 1531) from Würzburg, capital of the Bavarian administrative district of Lower Franconia, and Veit Stoß (b. 1447/8, d. 1533) who was based in neighbouring Nuremberg, both

²¹⁵ Baxandall 1980, p. 117.

²¹⁶ Petermann 2000, pp. 132-137.

dominate to this day the perception of German woodcarving of the late middle ages. Theirs are the names most readily associated with German sculpture of the late Middle Ages, particularly when discussed outside of Germany, largely because their works are of a high quality, highly collectible, easily recognised, and most likely to be represented in publicly accessible collections abroad.

Baxandall has argued that only a great city was able to support a specialized workshop such as a high-quality sculptor or, to use his own example, a spice box maker, might have. Baxandall acknowledged that lesser quality wares with the same function might be created elsewhere, but then were executed by craftsmen who not necessarily had the right kind of specialization, and who thus produced an inferior product. Thus, Baxandall concluded, if high quality wood sculpture was found in a small town, it had been ordered from a high-quality workshop in a big city.²¹⁷ Veit Stoß was certainly resident in one such 'exceptional' city, Nuremberg, where a population density of twenty thousand, a thriving economy and ambitious cultural aspirations created the perfect environment for wood sculptor Stoß, the painter and printmaker Albrecht Dürer and the bronze and stone sculptor Peter Vischer to create some of the most sought-after art of the sixteenth century. That the city was free from guild restrictions, also helped.

Unlike Nuremberg, Würzburg, the home town of Tilman Riemenschneider, was a town of much less significance, with a

²¹⁷ Baxandall 1980, p. 97.

population of 5000, and an economy that was based largely on the distribution of produce from its surrounding regions, mainly wine, but also other agricultural food products.

Riemenschneider can be documented in Würzburg from 1483, when he entered an unknown workshop as a fully trained assistant sculptor. He was made a citizen of the town in 1485.²¹⁸ Whether Riemenschneider came to Würzburg in response to a specific demand for sculptors can no longer be reconstructed, but the rapid social and economic advancement that can be demonstrated for him certainly suggests so, and he rapidly achieved the status and wealth of a respected artisan craftsman, who was also entrusted with several civic offices.²¹⁹ Although his involvement in the peasants' revolt of 1525 led to significant loss of status and wealth, Riemenschneider was able to continue trading, although no more major works can be documented.²²⁰ Both the peasants' revolt and the Reformation had a negative impact on the economic and spiritual foundations of Würzburg's society, and the market for religious imagery collapsed as result. Consequently Riemenschneider's workshop did not survive his death in 1531.²²¹

During its pre-1525 heyday, however, Riemenschneider's workshop dominated the artistic landscape of Würzburg and the surrounding region, yet the socio-economic profile of the town hardly

²¹⁸ Stefan Kemperdick, 'A Sculptor in Würzburg' in Exh. Cat. Washington 1999, p. 73.

²¹⁹ Seemann VI, p. 157.

²²⁰ Jeffrey Chipps Smith, 'A Fragile Legacy: Würzburg's Sculpture after Riemenschneider' in Chapuis 2004, p. 179.

²²¹ *op. cit.*, p. 184.

conforms to the picture of Baxandall's 'exceptional city', in which a specialized workshop like Riemenschneider's might be expected to flourish.²²² This, however, was counteracted by the presence and vision of its prince-bishops, such as Rudolf von Scherenberg (r. 1466-1495) was, however, could contribute significantly to the creation of an atmosphere of confidence and security in which artistic endeavour was able to thrive. Von Scherenberg restored the city's finances and promoted the restoration and building of churches throughout the diocese, but also pursued a policy of economic expansion that encouraged the immigration of itinerant craftsmen and traders. Those whose skills were deemed desirable or necessary could be encouraged to stay through the award of free citizenship, and Riemenschneider was awarded that privilege in 1485.²²³ More importantly, Scherenberg and his successors, Lorenz von Bibra (r. 1495-1519) and Konrad von Thüngen (r. 1519-1540) all used for their main residence the fortress *Marienberg* high on a mountain above their cathedral city, so that many of the episcopal court's services were catered for from the town.

This political and economic background is exceptional, thus fulfilling Baxandall's criteria, but also quite unlike that of Hildesheim, where the incumbent prince-bishop instead pursued policies which brought him increasingly into conflict with his nobility, destabilised the

²²² Baxandall 1980, pp. 1-9 and p. 97.

²²³ Exh. Cat. Würzburg 1981, p. 20; Thomas A. Brady Jr., 'One Soul, Two Bodies: Lordship and Faith in the Prince-Bishopric of Würzburg c. 1500' in Chapuis 2004, p. 20; Stephan Kemperdick, 'A Sculptor in Würzburg' in Exh. Cat. Washington 1999, p. 73; Baxandall 1980, p. 182

region and would eventually result in a five-year-long armed conflict with the neighbouring duchies of Brunswick and Calenberg-Wolfenbüttel. While in Hildesheim the economic conditions could readily support one or more artistic workshops that were proficient in producing a broad range of goods such as the workshop of Master Wolter appears to have been, the economic pre-conditions for the successful establishment of a workshop specializing in luxury, bespoke woodcarving only, cannot be proven to have existed in this town. The primary sources all point towards the fact that Master Wolter, like Hinrick Stavorde, was a painter and polychromer, not a wood carver as has been assumed in the past. As was the case with Hinrick Stavorde, the records pertaining to Master Wolter do not indicate any involvement in the manufacture or supply of wood-based products. This and the evidence contained in Doebner's transcription of the St. Nikolai charter of 1513, which clearly states Master Wolter to have been a painter (*maler*), compellingly refute the notion that Master Wolter was the carver of wood sculpture.

Master Jacob

Master Jacob Stemwerder is a craftsman who has so far escaped scholarly attention, yet he is also of interest to this enquiry. He first appears in the November tax register of 1504 as *Jacop Steywerder*.²²⁴ From November 1505 (1505 II) he is listed as *Master Jacop*. His name

²²⁴ PS SAH 50 – 1873, Fol. 117^r.

consistently recurs until the 1537 *Vorschoss* register, usually as *Master Jacop* or *Jacob*, but from 1531 as *Master Jacob Stemwerde(r)*.²²⁵ His tax payments usually are noted in the immediate vicinity of those discharged by Master Wolter, customarily one or two lines above the latter, suggesting that their workshops were located in close vicinity to each other. The Saint Godehard register book of 1506 shows *Mester Jacob pictor* under the heading *De Domibus in Brulone*, a regular listing of income from properties the abbey held in the *Brühl*.²²⁶ Despite being a tenant of the abbey, Master Jacob would not appear to have received any payments from the abbey in the periods that can be documented. This suggests that he either followed a trade for which the abbey had no call, or that his trade made him a more natural sub-contractor to a more entrepreneurial workshop owner such as Master Wolter appears to have been. Master Jacob, did, however, receive payments from the town council.

In 1519, he earned twelve pounds to paint a roundtable (*xij η Mester Jacob vor de tabelrunde to malende*).²²⁷ In 1520, he again received twelve pounds, this time to make the roundtable (*xiiη vor de tabelrunden to makende Mester Jacob*). At the same time, Master Jacob's wife received twenty-seven shillings for sixteen cubits of linen and nails for the roundtable (*xxvijß siner fruwen vor xvi elen lenewands*

²²⁵ PS SAH 50 – 1873, Fol. 178^r; PS SAH 50 – 1876, Fol. 11^v.

²²⁶ PS DBH HS 318e, Fol. 352^v.

²²⁷ PS SAH 50 – 704, Fol. 159^v.

to der tabelrunden und negeſ).²²⁸ Finally, in 1530, Master Jacob received eight pounds, eight shillings and four pence compensation for the loss of an unspecified quantity of stones which he had lost during the great feud (*viiij xiiij iij d. Mester Jacob vor ithligen sten de ome in der feyde warth affghehalth*).²²⁹

As with Wolter, the primary evidence is confusing, rather than enlightening, although some basic biographic detail can be extrapolated. Master Jacob appears to have arrived in Hildesheim during the early part of 1504. The change of convention in the listing of his name from 'Jacob Stemwerder' to 'Master Jacob' and later to 'Master Jacob Stemwerder' suggests that he may have obtained master status after his arrival in the town, a process which would have required him to hold full citizenship. Although no citizenship payment has been traced at present, it is possible that Master Jacob was the descendant of an established Hildesheim family, in which case citizenship would have been granted automatically.²³⁰ His marriage is documented through the treasury accounts, but there are no records of any children. Entries for him in the tax registers cease after the last full tax register of 1535, making it likely that he died around the same time as Hinrick Stavorde, c. 1536 to 1537.

As was the case with payments to Master Wolter for the manufacture of several *schildekenboms* the payments to Master Jacob

²²⁸ PS SAH 50 – 705, Fol. 60^r.

²²⁹ PS SAH 50 – 708, Fol. 60^r.

²³⁰ UBH VIII, p. XXI.

for the production or painting of roundtable do not allow secure conclusions to be drawn as to his occupation. Neither does the adjunct *pictor* in the Saint Godehard register book offer further insights. More illuminating is the compensation payment he receives in 1530 for the loss of stones during the great feud. Although the treasury account does not state whether Master Jacob was acquiring the stones for domestic purposes, for example a building project, or for an artistic commission, there is some circumstantial evidence in the tax registers that proposes the latter.

In 1951, local historian Rudolf Zoder published an essay which, superficially at least, attempted to re-ignite the debate about the identity of the Upper Saxon master HW by proposing one Henny Wernecken as a possible candidate.²³¹ Henny Wernecken was identified by Zoder as the carver of who supplied the cut stonework and carved panels and central statue for the Town's new fountain in 1540 (see separate discussion of Henny Wernecken below) on the basis of specific payments made to him by the town council for his work. Zoder, however, had also noticed Wernecken's name appear several times in the tax registers above that of Master Wolter from 1522 to 1524. This led Zoder to believe that Wernecken had worked as an assistant in Wolter's workshop (like others before him, Zoder never questioned the accepted view of Wolter as a wood carver), before setting up his own

²³¹ Zoder 1951, p. 31.

establishment.²³² The flaw in Zoder's reasoning is in his interpretation of the position of Wernecken in relation to that of Wolter in the tax register, which is above Wolter's name, and below that of Master Jacob. Since there are numerous precedents which show that additions to a household were recorded as sub-entries, not as headers, it is in fact more likely that Henny Wernecken was initially employed not by Master Wolter, but by Master Jacob, suggesting that Jacob's business either had the scope to employ a stone carver assistant over a prolonged period of time, or that he himself followed a similar trade.

Nevertheless it would be a step too far to propose Master Jacob as the author of the numerous examples of stone sculpture surviving in Hildesheim today without further investigation. If anything, the payments he received for the procurement of the roundtable indicate that Master Jacob may have been able to supply items made from wood as well as stone, and the payment made to Master Jacob's wife for nails for the roundtable supports the view that this was a structure made from wood. In this case, Henny Wernecken might have found employment in Master Jacob's workshop to assist with the fulfilment of a specific requirement for stone carvings in the same way Tilman Riemenschneider is known to have employed stonemasons when necessary.²³³ Circumstantial evidence then suggests that Master Jacob may have been involved in the production of some carved products,

²³² op. cit., p. 33.

²³³ Baxandall 1980, p. 182.

albeit that the relatively scant evidence of the treasury accounts and tax registers. Once again is insufficient to draw secure conclusions.

Hinrick (Henny) Wernecken

As stated above, Henny Wernecken first appeared in the tax register of 1522 in the household of Master Jacob, where he stayed until after the tax collection of 1524.²³⁴ From 1525 to 1530 His name appears still in the *Brühl*, close to the dwellings of Master Wolter and Master Jacob, but without staying at either. His tax payments during this time, always less than one pound, are commensurate with the payments he made while working as an assistant in Master Jacob's workshop. The tax register of 1531 shows him once again in the household of Master Jacob. After this, Wernecken disappears from the registers until 1537, when the *Borschß* register captures his payment of one pound. After 1537, the tax registers cease until 1552. Wernecken appears once more in the tax register of 1552, while in the next surviving register of 1556 the widow Wernecken begins to discharge tax liabilities in his stead.

In the treasury accounts Wernicke's name appeared for the first time in 1525, when he received twelve pounds for the painting of the roundtable.²³⁵ In 1529, Wernecken paid two florins to acquire citizenship.²³⁶ The majority of payments he received from the council, however, recompense him for work carried out in conjunction with the

²³⁴ PS SAH 50 – 1874, Fol. 178^v.

²³⁵ Zoder 1951, m p. 33.

²³⁶ PS SAH 50 – 707, Fol. 205^v.

new well on the town's market square. Payments to Wernecken as a contractor to this project are recorded not in the usual general expenses (*Greene Upheave*) columns, but in a separate ledger (*the de pipenbornhe*), in which all expenditure for this major civic project was summarised. Late in 1539 Wernecken's wife collected a first payment of fourteen pounds on his behalf for unspecified work carried out. ('*up syn arbeit*').²³⁷ Throughout 1540 Wernecken received an agreed weekly wage of three pounds. Several of these payments are followed by equally regular payments of two pounds, thirteen shillings and four pence to one Marten Eyckenberch. The ratio of the two wages relative to each other fits that noted by Ohlmer as the difference between the wages paid to a master craftsman and his assistant, and Zoder also identified Eyckenberch as Wernecken's assistant.²³⁸ The wages for both significantly exceeded the average paid to casual qualified labour as extrapolated by Ohlmer from the town's treasury accounts, indicating the prestigious nature of this contract.²³⁹

In addition, between 1552 and 1554 Wernecken paid a regular fee of twenty-six shillings and eight pence to be relieved of his civic duty of maintaining the *Brühl* ditch which formed part of the town's defence system.²⁴⁰ In 1555, that payment is recorded as being discharged by the widow Wernecken.²⁴¹ In the same year, Henny Wernecken himself

²³⁷ PS SAH 50 – 710, Fol. 304^v.

²³⁸ Ohlmer 1921, p. 160.

²³⁹ op. cit., p. 272.

²⁴⁰ PS SAH 50 – 715, Fol. 17^r; 50 – 716, Fol. 15^v; 50 – 717, Fol. 14^v.

²⁴¹ PS SAH 50 – 718, Fol. 17^r.

also paid two pounds and eight pence *litkop* for the purchase of a croft from the widow Stemhop, a small tax which fell due to the town council every time a dwelling was sold.²⁴² According to Zoder, that property was situated in the *Hagae* district around the abbey of Saint Michael, within the walls of Hildesheim Old Town.²⁴³ The purpose of the purchase remains nebulous – if the intent was for the household to be moved from the *Brühl* to the *Hagae* district that intention must have changed with Wernecken's death, because his widow remained a taxpayer in the *Brühl* until 1569.²⁴⁴

Henny Wernecken's financial profile is less conclusive than those of some of his contemporaries. The fact that he received a payment for the manufacture of the roundtable suggests that by 1525 he was working independently, as does his purchase of citizenship in 1529. Yet his apparent return to Master Jacob's workshop in 1531 seemingly contradicts any notion of independence. This and his subsequent disappearance from the record books, suggest that Henny Wernecken may have found it difficult to sustain his own business in competition with Master Jacob, and it is only after Jacob's death c. 1536 to 1537 that Wernecken is able to establish himself properly in the *Brühl*. He certainly had both a wife and a workshop by the time he became a regular contractor to the well project in 1539, and was able to employ

²⁴² PS SAH 50 – 718, Fol. 12^r., UBH VIII, p. XIX.

²⁴³ Zoder 1951, p. 33; Uthmann, 1957, Appendix 4c.

²⁴⁴ PS SAH 50 – 1877, Fol. 172^r, 205^r; 50 – 1878, Fol. 26^r, 45^r; 50 – 1879, Fol. 113^r, 174^r.

an assistant in Marten Eyckenberch.²⁴⁵ He was an established craftsman in the 1540s, yet Wernecken's tax payments do not attest to his achieving great riches. The gap in the tax documentation between 1537 and 1552 means that his tax payments for most of his working life in Hildesheim including the time of the well contract are missing, and only a single payment of one pound and ten shillings in 1552 is recorded.²⁴⁶ Yet he is the only member of the artistic circle in the Brühl who can be shown to have purchased his own dwelling, albeit that he did not live to occupy it, assuming that had been his intent.

The work Henny Wernecken was paid for involved the cutting of stones (*'vor de stene to hauwen'*), as an entry from early 1540 reveals.²⁴⁷ In the autumn of the same year, he received eight pounds to make an image for the well (*'up dath belde to makende'*).²⁴⁸ From this Zoder concluded that Wernecken was responsible for the sculptural programme of the fountain column and basin, as well as the cutting of the structural stonework.²⁴⁹ If this suggests the basis for an art historical assessment of Henny Wernecken, then that basis no longer exists in an assessable condition after more than five hundred years of exposure to the weather and climbing children, to use Zoder's apt metaphor.²⁵⁰ The fountain structure that stands in the market square today is a late-

²⁴⁵ Zoder 1951, p. 33.

²⁴⁶ PS SAH 50 – 1877, Fol. 141^r.

²⁴⁷ PS SAH 50 – 711, Fol. 75^v

²⁴⁸ PS SAH 50 – 711, Fol. 85^v

²⁴⁹ Zoder 1951, p. 31.

²⁵⁰ *op. cit.*, p. 31.

twentieth-century reconstruction, created during the re-medievalisation of the post-war market square in the mid-1980s.

The original reliefs, now kept in storage by the RPM, are badly corroded and lack all definition, while the knightly shield-bearing figure that once stood at the top of the column was severely damaged during the American occupation of the town in 1945.²⁵¹ The surviving parts of the well comprise the feet, legs and lower torso of the knightly shield-bearer, fifteen base fragments, eight three-quarter columns, eight edging slabs with additional fragments, two relief panels showing one shield each borne by two putti, five relief panels showing a pair of male figures and two shaft sections and the capital of the central column.²⁵² One of the relief panels, identified as showing Jephtah and Samson, has a palimpsest from an epitaph dating back to the second half of the fifteenth century on the reverse.²⁵³ According to a nineteenth-century source, two reliefs on the east side of the fountain bore shields and marks beneath their cornice with the initials HS and HW respectively, of which only the former remains traceable today.²⁵⁴ Yet the deterioration of the relief panels and the destruction of the shield-bearer are such that little remains against which Werneck's artistic style may be defined. Georg Pencz's *Portal of Honour of the Twelve Heroes of the Old Testament* has been identified as the graphic source for eleven of the male figures who were identified by name and bible reference in

²⁵¹ Zoder 1955, p. 57.

²⁵² RPM inventory numbers 233 to 235 and 400 to 442.

²⁵³ Christine Wulf, DI 58, Nr. 235.

²⁵⁴ Johann Michael Kratz, cited in Zoder 1951, p. 31 and Christine Wulf, DI 58, Nr. 334(†).

inscription scrolls next to each. The twelfth figure, however, replacing Judas Macchabeus in Pencz's cycle, is unidentified apart from the Patrician clothing he is wearing and would once have offered some visibility of Wernecken's personal carving style. The only clue to the definition of a possible oeuvre comes via the three-quarter columns . These show a distinctive foliate ornamentation at the base of the shaft which recurs in a number of other works in Hildesheim, such as the epitaph of Christopher von Halle in Saint Godehard, and the two surviving coats of arms formerly attached to one of the town gates, the *Almstor*. While the recurrence of such a motif is by no means conclusive in itself, its occurrence in conjunction with other figurative work provides a starting point for a more detailed cataloguing and assessment of Henny Wernecken's output at least.

Brandt Stavorde

Brandt Stavorde first comes to the attention of the researcher as a sub-entry to his father's tax record in the working copy of the 1532 tax register.²⁵⁵ There he is listed as *Brandt filius*, and his name is crossed out, suggesting that at the time of the declaration, but not at the time of collection, he was still living at home. In the same year, he also appears as a tax payer in his own right, resident in the *Brühl*, discharging a tax liability of two pounds.²⁵⁶ Whereas his first entry in the *Brühl* part of the register is listed as an *addendum* to the list of regulars, subsequent

²⁵⁵ PS SAH 50-1876, Fol. 26^v.

²⁵⁶ PS SAH 50-1876, Fol. 28^r.

entries in 1533 and 1535 place him in the same relation to Master Jacob and other longer established tax payers as Master Wolter once occupied. This raises the possibility that Brandt Stavorde took over Master Wolter's premises, although there are no transaction records to prove beyond doubt that this has happened. In the 1537 *Vorschöß* register his mother (*et mater*) is listed as living in his household.²⁵⁷ Brandt Stavorde's last payment is made in 1559; in 1560 Diric Shavorde (Schaforde) appears in his place.²⁵⁸ Brandt Stavorde's tax payments indicate a regular income and steadily increasing prosperity. Making regular payments of two pounds in the years before the register gap, his payments recommence in 1552 at four pounds, rising to five pounds in 1556, a significant increase in wealth in comparison to his father.²⁵⁹ An entry in the 1537 treasury accounts for the first time suggests a guild affiliation. Under the heading for the Smiths' Guild (*Smede Gilde*) a payment of thirty shillings is recorded, which the council note has having been passed to the daughter of one Harmen Zesen.²⁶⁰ Richard Doebner has interpreted similar payments recorded under individual guild headings as representing a percentage the council took of the fee paid by each new guild member, because the listing, which forms part of the regular annual treasurers' report, comprised only those guilds incorporated by the town council during the

²⁵⁷ PS SAH 50-1877, Fol. 80^r.

²⁵⁸ PS SAH 50-1878, Fols. 26^r and 45^r.

²⁵⁹ PS SAH 50-1877, Fols. 141^r and 172^r.

²⁶⁰ PS SAH 50-710, Fol. 90^r.

fifteenth century.²⁶¹ Since neither Hinrick Stavorde nor Master Wolter make such payments and yet are still able to trade as masters, the origin and purpose of these sums is likely to be more complex. Since the payment coincides chronologically with the death of Brandt's father Hinrick and the dissolution of the Stavorde household in *Sutorum*, the most obvious conclusion is that the council were involved in the redistribution of a gift of cash the guild had been left in Stavorde's will.

After Henny Wernecken, Brandt Stavorde is the craftsman who appears most frequently in the treasury accounts. While a number of entries relating to him continue to defy analysis, others have proven less elusive, and sufficient to draw reliable conclusions about his artistic activities. According to these, Brandt Stavorde appeared in the treasury accounts for the first time in 1535, receiving sixteen pounds for the painting of the roundtable.²⁶² Two years later, he received payments for a number of tasks, including the restoration of seven pictures (*vij belde tho entwerpende*), the striking of a coat of arms (*de wapen anthostrikende*) and the coating in gold of seven globes and weather vanes (*vij tynappel und wedrfanen tho verguldend*).²⁶³ In 1538, Stavorde painted some boards at the church of Saint Andreas (*de serger brede an de kirken andree to vermalende*).²⁶⁴ In 1544, he received one pound twelve shillings for the supply of three pots of lacquer paint to the

²⁶¹ UBH VIII, pp. XXI to XXII.

²⁶² Zoder 1951, p. 34.

²⁶³ PS SAH 50-710, Fols. 140^v, 149^r and 150^v. In case of the last entry quoted here, the source is ambiguous as to the exact process by which the globes and vanes are made to appear golden.

²⁶⁴ PS SAH 50-710, Fol. 218^v; Fol. 294^r;

fountain project (*Item noch jñ xijß vor iij tt vornis thom pipenborne Stanv[o]rde*).²⁶⁵ Eleven years later, in 1555, Stavorde was paid sixty pounds for a depiction of the Last Judgement and other, unspecified artworks for the council chamber (*vor dath ghestrenghe gerichtte unnd kunst up de rath dornsen*).²⁶⁶

From these records can be concluded that Brandt Stavorde's trade was that of a painter, and possibly a polychromer and/or glass painter, since the lacquer paint supplied to the fountain project also found use in both applications. The supply of a *Last Judgement* to the council in itself is insufficient, however, to suggest convincingly that Brandt Stavorde was a panel painter, since the artefact in question could easily have been a polychromed woodcarving, as the discussion of the function of Master Wolter's workshop has shown.

To sum up, the surviving records, although plentiful, nevertheless only serve to provide tantalising glimpses of the activities of the town's artistic community. While it is possible to expand that community by several names, the exact nature of their occupation remains nebulous, leaving an air of tentativeness that seems to detract from some of the more important findings that have been made in conjunction with Master Wolter in particular. The town's ruling council does not reveal itself as a generous commissioner. The solitary major commission for a Last Judgement being awarded to Brandt Stavorde in 1555 suggests an environment in which conspicuous display was neither sought nor

²⁶⁵ PS SAH 50-712, Fol. 141^v.

²⁶⁶ PS SAH 50-718, Fol. 59^r.

encouraged. It again underlines the sense one derives from the surviving records of Hildesheim as a location of cultural ambivalence that presented only limited opportunities for an artistic elite without regular recourse to markets further afield. Any commercially aware enterprise such as the combined Urban Master/ Master of St. Benedict workshop undoubtedly would have been, is unlikely to have flourished in such a constricted environment, and must therefore be sought in another, more profitable location.

XI. SOME NOTES ON SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL CARVINGS FROM HILDESHEIM

The adumbration of the existing market conditions for wood carved products in Hildesheim outlined in Chapter IV has suggested a greater appetite to have existed for secular sculpture rather than devotional goods commissioned specifically for ecclesiastic settings. Carvings produced for the domestic and built environments, however, comprise largely works that in the past have been categorized as 'low quality', and excluded from scholarship. While their intended use and positioning may place fewer demands on their author in terms of technical ability or artistic flair, their existence straddles two wood processing trades that traditionally have existed as separate entities, and where overlaps in the past have led to disputes between different guilds that could only be settled through arbitration. Extant examples of secular carvings from local buildings can make several important contributions to our understanding of local sculpture production. As carved products they are commissioned by the same clientele that was also likely to purchase figurative sculpture. Consequently, as expressions of taste, they can also act as indicators of current stylistic trends. At the same time, since as construction elements they are made from oak rather than the more pliable lime wood preferred for the carving of statuary, they can be subjected to additional analytical methods to which lime wood is not suited, such as dendrochronological analysis. Accordingly,

assuming sufficient specimens survive to be analysed, an immutable framework of dates can be established to support and enhance the analysis of lime wood sculpture, and for this latter reason alone, the architectural carvings can no longer be excluded from academic discourses. This chapter will introduce a number of such carvings where the results of conservation-technological examinations, and show how these results can underpin and enhance our understanding of Lower Saxon sculpture as a whole.

How widespread the practice of carving decorative patterns or figurative cycles into the exposed woodwork of Lower Saxon half-timbered buildings once was, is still evidenced by those historic town centres which have avoided destruction during the most recent conflicts. Locations such as Einbeck (Figure XI-1) or Goslar (Figure XI-2) today are popular tourist destinations at least in part because of the unique atmosphere the often elaborately carved exteriors of their original structures convey. The historic town centre of Hildesheim was lost in 1945, leaving only a small area around St. Godehard to transmit a sense of the town's historic character (Figure XI-3).

The preservation of the architectural carvings is the result of a burgeoning interest in the preservation of historic environments during the second half of the nineteenth century. The demolition of a number of medieval and early modern buildings during one of the town's phases of urban regeneration prompted an altruistic interest in the preservation of the material culture that was being lost with each demolition. That

interest led to the foundation of a society dedicated to the preservation of the antiquities and historic artefacts headed by the town's mayor, Gustav Struckmann, in 1887.²⁶⁷ The society found a display space for their assembled examples of historically important architecture elements in the tower of the church of St Andreas, quickly leading to it being dubbed the Andreasmuseum.²⁶⁸ Today the collection has been integrated into the RPM, with selected items on permanent display in the Stadtmuseum, a department of the RPM with a dedicated display space occupying the upper levels of the reconstructed Knochenhaueramtshaus.

Parallel to the efforts exerted by the society to save and preserve the evidence of Hildesheim's historic buildings, they were recorded through a number of studies. Apart from wider-ranging architectural gazetteers such as Mithoff's *Kunstdenkmale und Alterthümer im Hannoverschen*, which captured Hildesheim as part of a wider brief of recording the historic structures of what was then the administrative province of Hanover, studies relating specifically to the architectural history of Hildesheim were published by Carl Lachner in 1882, and Adolf Zeller in 1912 and 1913 respectively. In addition, students of the local technical college for the construction industries were encouraged to produce floor plans of existing ancient buildings, particularly those about to be demolished, while professional photographers deposited copies of their photos with the museum. In addition, the society

²⁶⁷ Stein 2002, p. 139.

²⁶⁸ Fleige 1977, p. 2.

commissioned the production of a number of watercolours to record the appearance of the town's historic streets, as well as individual buildings and building fragments.²⁶⁹

Late medieval houses in Hildesheim (Figure XI-4) typically consisted of an open-plan, double-height basement that provided passage from the street through to the inner courtyard large enough for a cart, cooking facilities and access to the smaller rooms which comprised the business and domestic parts of the house. These were located, one above the other, in one of the street-facing corners of the house. Houses also had a cellar and extensive loft space for the storage of provisions and materials.²⁷⁰ Additional storeys or roof spaces often projected beyond the original ground plan, giving the street-facing elevations an imposing, sometimes claustrophobia inducing, upwards vista (Figure XI-5). Console brackets (Figure XI-6) tied any projecting super-incumbent storeys into the structural support framework, and ensured the even vertical loading of the whole structure. Weatherboards (Figure XI-7) sealed the areas between the brackets and under the upper storey against the prevailing atmospheric conditions, preventing movement or uplift caused by heavy winds, and the ingress of water and ice. The brackets and boards, as well as the huge horizontal support beams on which the upper storeys rested soon invited ornamental embellishment. Moreover, during the sixteenth

²⁶⁹ Stein 2002, p. 140.

²⁷⁰ Based upon a model of a typical artisan croft of c. 1480, produced for an exhibition of medieval life in Hildesheim by students of the HAWK, from the records described above, in 2010.

century it became increasingly popular to cover the spaces between the support beam and windowsills with wooden aprons that could be similarly decorated (Figure XI-8), while the introduction of the bay window around the middle of the century presented further surfaces for potential embellishment (Figure XI-9).

Brackets, beams, window aprons and weather boards could be carved, or painted, or both. Early decorative schemes typically added horizontal profiling to beams and brackets and placed a triangle in their intersections such as can still be seen on the building Vorderer Brühl 31 (Figure XI-10), to name but one of numerous known examples. The reason why initially only the triangle was used in this fashion can no longer be reconstructed. Zeller reported and rejected a locally held tradition which suggested that it was derived from joiners' assembly marks, positing that it represented no more than a decorative motif which was easily replicated and enlivened the otherwise rigid monotony of the profiled banding.²⁷¹ The writer believes that initial popularity and adaptability of this shape, which could be deemed to have religious meaning as well as ornamental merit, coupled with its frequent incision into parts of the architectural structure that could not easily be replaced or visually updated, simply had greater longevity than other, more fashion-dependent motifs. This allowed the triangle to remain part of the overall building appearance through successive alterations and decorative schemes. Rather than acting a mystic carrier of meaning, the

²⁷¹ Zeller 1913, p. 15.

triangle should be seen as an indication that, while its exterior may suggest an origin in a later time period, a building's historic fabric dates back to an earlier time period.²⁷²

Another pattern frequently used during the late Gothic period were the twisting foliage motifs that Chapter IV has already noted as occurring in architectural decorations and altarpieces (Figures IV-05 and IV-05). From the later fifteenth and early sixteenth century increasingly complex patterns of checkerboards and knot-work banding (Figure XI-11 and XI-12) gained in popularity as late Gothic themes transitioned into Renaissance-derived subjects.²⁷³ Parallel to these, figurative religious programmes are recorded for the first time on private and public buildings whose origins can be dated to the second half of the fifteenth century, such as the so-called *Trinitatis* hospital (1459, Figure XI-13), Grocers' Guild Hall (Kramergildehaus, 1482, Figure XI-14), and the private dwellings at Eckemeckerstrasse 4 (1491), Osterstrasse 51 (c. 1500, Figure XI-15), and Hoher Weg 10 (1519). With the construction of the Knochenhaueramtshaus in 1529, Renaissance-derived motifs were introduced, and rapidly gained in popularity, forming the departure point of what might be described as a second phase of architectural ornamentation, in which allegorical and mythological figures superseded saints and geometric patterns, and swags of fruit and harvest produce replaced the twisting foliage bands (Figure XI-16).

²⁷² Twachtmann-Schlichter 2007, pp. 137-138.

²⁷³ Zeller 1913, p. 15.

The extant examples of architectural elements with decorative carvings comprise weatherboards, window aprons, supporting beams and console brackets. For obvious reasons, this chapter's main focus will be on the figure-carved console brackets and the sole surviving carved window apron showing a figure scene that show stylistic parallels to the sculpture at the centre of this thesis, and which can also be dated securely to the pre-Reformation period. With such a limited brief it is not intended that the observations put forward in this chapter be understood as firm conclusions, but as proposals based on a balance of probabilities that are to be tested through further research. Nevertheless, they present valuable additional insights for the categorization and classification of Lower Saxony woodcarving.

Broadly speaking, and based upon a combination of dendrochronological analysis and other features to be discussed in the course of this chapter, the pre-Reformation brackets can be divided into three groups: pre-1500, 1500 to c. 1525, and post 1530. The first group, shown in Figure XI-17, displayed as such in the former Andreasmuseum, is distinguished by the setting of the figures beneath a four-sided canopy, slightly raised vertical edges (to protect the undercut space behind the figure) and standing on a tapering profiled pedestal. Dendrochronological analysis has dated three of the figures (RPM Inv. No H 4.003, Figure XI-18, H 4.062 and H 4.163) to the last

quarter of the fifteenth century.²⁷⁴ Overall, this group displays remarkable consistencies in their settings, dimensions, style and execution, although three of the brackets are noticeably taller than the rest, offering, but not compelling, the conclusion that they may have come from two different structures. Their profiled pedestals show that these figures have come from neither of the two most comprehensive religious figurative programmes of their time, the Trinitatishospital and the Kramergildehaus. Photographs, however, suggest considerable consistency between the settings of this early group and those pictured on the two historic locations, so that a common origin in the same workshop environment might be proposed. There is little suggestion of the human physiognomy beneath the draperies. The drawing of the gown across the front of the body creates a flow of diagonal folds that counter the vertical linearity of the draperies' primary structures. The faces are based on an elongated oval with little characterization or individualization except that which is prescribed by iconographic traditions. As reliably dated survivals from the late fifteenth century, these figures substantially add to the very small number of examples that can be produced for this period, the only other being the remnants of the St. Godehard choir stalls of c. 1466, with which they appear to have little in common in stylistic terms. The fold structures of the draperies vary, as do the shapes of the heads and hair formations, so

²⁷⁴ Alles 1995, p. 35.

that, for now, they must be treated as having come from two different sources.²⁷⁵

The second group of brackets comprises a number of individual survivals from a variety of mostly unknown locations which all stand beneath the same type of rounded canopy with tapered pendants. Of this group, a further three examples have been subjected to dendrochronological examination. The oldest of these, a bracket depicting the Virgin and Child in a unique setting under a rounded arch with crockets (RPM Inv. No. H 4.004), has been dated to post-1510.²⁷⁶ A second bracket bearing an image of St. Bernward (RPM Inv. No. H 4.000) and formerly part of the decorative programme of Eckemeckerstrasse 4, has been dated to c. 1520, post-dating the house from which it came by nearly thirty years.²⁷⁷ This suggests that features such as brackets, weatherboards, or window aprons may have been treated as efficient and relatively inexpensive means of visually modernising an existing structure. Alternatively, the dendrochronological analysis might have highlighted a previously undocumented phase during which more extensive works were being carried out to expand or renovate the building. The final figure-carved bracket to have been analyzed, a depiction of St. Bartholomew (RPM

²⁷⁵ It should be noted in this context that it had not been possible to access all of the figures in this group, due to external circumstances affecting on the RPM's storage arrangements. Observations are based on the brackets currently on display in the Knochenhaueramtshaus and bracket H 4.003 which was accessed in the stores.

²⁷⁶ Dendrochronological analysis results according to Alles 1995, p. 35.

²⁷⁷ Zeller 1913, p. 62, the house there dated to 1491, and *op. cit.*, Fig. 89. According to Alles, the actual date given in the analysis report is 'no earlier than 1519'; Alles 1995, p. 35.

Inv. No H 4.005), has been shown to have been carved no earlier than 1532.²⁷⁸

Stylistically and chronologically, this group overlaps with the active periods of both the Urban Master and the Benedict Master, making a comparative analysis even more pressing, and this begins with figure bracket H 4.004. Although Mary's finer contours are no longer discernible under multiple coats of thick oil-based paint, the flow and arrangement of her drapery allow for recognition of established contemporary local sculptural conventions. Her primary structures copy those of the statue of the Virgin Mary in the centre of the retable formerly in St. Nikolai in *Alfeld* and now in the NLM (Cat. No. 2, Figure XI-19 and XI-20), albeit that the two figures are arranged in mirror image to each other. Both figures display the same unusual overlap of the mantle across the upper part of the legs. In both figures, the fabric has also been folded back on itself above the static leg, and laid over a deeply undercut ridge fold, with a horizontal indentation animating the fold at approximately half-length. A horizontal pleat indicates where the moving legs are pushing through the fabric, and in both carvings excess fabric crumples around the exposed tip of the Virgin's shoe. The draperies of both figures are dominated by a central arrow-head structure, with that of the Virgin Mary on the bracket being carved in a simplified form that nevertheless acknowledges the usual sub-structural elements, and which emulates their cascading fall. In principle, the

²⁷⁸ Dendrochronological analysis results according to Alles 1995, p. 35.

console bracket figure quotes the same structural formulae that have also been shown to connect the Hannover Virgin to the St. Urban from the same retable and the *Nemeš* Madonna (Figure VIII-39). As if to dispel any final, lingering doubts the dating of the bracket to post-1510 would also be commensurate with the putative origin of the sculptures c. 1515.

While console bracket H 4.004 displays significant parallels to the sculpture of the Benedict Master or his forerunner, window apron H 4.024 (Figure XI-21) relates to works most recently attributed to the Urban Master. Likely to be the sole survivor of the pre-reformation decoration programme that adorned what was once the largest dwelling in early sixteenth-century Hildesheim, the board depicts the Last Judgement in a vertically arranged narrative with Christ sitting in judgement on a rainbow above trumpeting putti emerging from a diagonally arranged band of clouds on the right. The righteous and condemned share the other half of the available space, with the righteous occupying what might be, quite literally, described as the moral high ground to the left. The central theme of the depiction, however, appears to be the condemnation to hell as result of wrongdoing with the condemned taking up centre space in the panel.

Despite being covered by thick layers of polychromy, the close proximity of these figures to a number of works associated with the Urban Master and his workshop is immediately apparent. The praying female figure in blue, for instance, with a slightly upturned nose, chubby

cheeks, and hair falling in thick plaits over the shoulders references the same female type as the princess held captive by the dragon from the panel illustrating the legend of St. George in Enger (Figure XI-22 and XI-23). As well as recalling the princess in the St. George relief, the praying female figure in blue also references Eve from the *Christ in Limbo* relief in the Enger retable, who displays a similarly upturned nose, chubby cheeks and hair falling in thick plaits over the shoulders (Figure XI-24). At the same time, the child-like appearance of the of personages depicted also recalls the second hand of the Road to Calvary scene from the *Oppler* panels in the NLM in their naive bearing (Figure XI-25). Moreover, it is possible to see the face of the male figure on the extreme left of the righteous group as a scaled-down, universal version of that of St. James the Less from the Holtrup group of Apostles (Figure XI-26). Finally, the manner in which the landscape is broken up by grouping of small, flat triangles to indicate rocky or stony ground is also a device that is common to both this carver, and the workshop of the Urban Master (Figure XI-27 and XI-28).

More congruencies exist between another pair of brackets, and Lower Saxon wood carving in general, as well as the Enger retable in particular. Console bracket H 4.005 depicting St. Bartholomew (Figure XI-29) quotes some of the more recognisable artistic formulae of Lower Saxon figure carving in the auricle flourish and down-turned hem which exposes the left arm. In the form presented here, radiating outward from a centrally encapsulated point like a fan, the auricle flourish

recapitulates a formulation that is commensurate with the much earlier sculptural tradition practised by the Master of St. Benedict's predecessor as evidenced in the figures from the *West Choir Retable* and related works. There, the auricle flourish was conceived of as having a horizontal orientation, erupting when the flow of a drape is interrupted by a vertical force, such as a foot pushing through under a hem, or when fabric is compacted from two opposing horizontal points to form a peak. Contrarily, the auricle flourish here is arranged in a vertical orientation, and without discernible cause, suggesting that the inspiration for it may have come from a desire to emulate locally established, distinctive sculptural forms, rather than formal understanding of their use and accurate deployment. By the time the Master of St. Benedict's style emerged from the workshop that is associated with the early, showy carving style of which the auricle flourish was a trademark, c. 1515, that feature had already passed into disuse. The overturned hem, on the other hand, was a feature that remained popular with the second generation, but usually shows greater depth of carving, and a wider variety of internal structures to create a more realistic impression of compressed, bulging fabric. In this figure, however, such internal forms are barely hinted at by the shallow, straight-lined incisions that, although enlivening the outward turned lining of the cloak, nevertheless fail to convince as renditions of textile matter. Nor is Bartholomew's lowered arm convincing. Comparison with the apostles in Aachen or Holtrup highlights the lack of deep

undercutting and massing of fabric which would normally animate that passage, and shows that the overturned hem has also been used in the wrong context, being more commonly deployed when the arm is held higher with the elbow at no more than a right angle.

Although the appearance of Bartholomew's hair and beard (Figure XI-30) is somewhat diminished by the eleven layers of polychromy that have been applied to the figure over time, the tight, regular arrangement of the beard sub-structures is still evident, as are the broad outlines of the semi-finished lozenge shapes that form the head hair.²⁷⁹ His features have been optimized for the three-quarter view he is presented in with the right side of the face less evenly developed, and the beard unevenly carved (Figure XI-31). The layers of polychromy do not allow for secure conclusions to be drawn about the original shape of the eyes, which now appear small and widely set, or the original shape of the nose, which has either suffered some loss on the hidden side of the face, or was never built up fully. There is a suggestion of a typical 'Urban' nose in the three-quarter profile view which seems to quote the elongated septum and squashed appearance of the relief figures from the Enger retable, for example, but the pronounced aquiline arching also associated with that style is missing. The tight arrangement and semi-finished carving of the hair, however, do reference another figure from the Enger retable, that of St. Bartholomew in the predella (Figure XI-32).

²⁷⁹ Birkenbeul061213

Correlations can also be observed between the final console bracket under discussion here, H 4.006, with a depiction of St. Andrew on the display side (Figure XI-33). The semi-circular arched canopy and straight-edged, unprofiled lower edge suggest this bracket and that showing St. Bartholomew to have come from the same workshop, if not the same urban location. The less complex figure of St. Andrew constitutes a more likely representation of the usual output of the workshop that carved both this and the bracket H 4.005, and appears to show the carver at greater ease. The straight tubular folds of the gown are unfussy, uncomplicated, and visually unambiguous. They betray neither artistic ambition, nor a desire for unnecessary detail. The drapery structures are far simpler than those of the Enger predella figures while their uncomplicated structure draws the viewer's attention to the presence of Andrew's saltire cross. The figure's bare right foot is prominently displayed under the straight hems with outward pointing toes; a variant of the distinctive off-set positioning of the feet that has also been noted in conjunction with a number of works from the workshop of the Urban Master, including the Enger and Holtrup apostles. St. Andrew's head bears similarities in proportion and execution to some of the Enger apostles. With the hair and beard structures in this instance characterized by counter-orientated crescent cuts carved using a wide, shallow-mouthed gouge, this figure relates most closely to the Enger St. Andrew and St. Judas Thaddaeus (Figures XI-34 and XI-35), an impression that is sustained through the

similarity of the bulging-out cushion effect of the hair formations. As was the case with the draperies of St. Bartholomew, St. Andrew's sleeves are lacking the depth of carving and structure that one would normally expect in Lower Saxon carving. Instead, the right sleeve appears barely animated by four shallow cuts that criss-cross it almost randomly, and which must have been barely distinguishable in the half-light under a projecting upper storey or roof.

The similarities between the console brackets and weather board on the one hand, and sculpture from the oeuvres of the Urban Master and the Master of St. Benedict on the other, strongly suggest regular artistic exchanges to have taken place between the workshops of the sculpture specialists, and the joiners responsible for the construction of Hildesheim's crofts and houses. But while the depictions of the Madonna and Child and the Last Judgement weatherboard may be of a sufficiently high quality to suggest that they may have originated in a specialist woodcarving workshop, the unsatisfactory treatment of console bracket H 4.005 and the infelicities observed in H 4.006 point towards the opposite. The cursory deployment of the auricle flourish, the unsatisfactory correlation between the arm and gown of St. Bartholomew's arm, and, most of all, the shallow structure of the sleeves of both figures all is atypical in the context of larger-scale figure sculpture. Although they quote the established formulae of this sculptural tradition, their execution shows weaknesses that are unlikely to have occurred if the formulae were straightforward copies from

venerable exemplars or the brackets had been created in the environment that deployed those idioms them regularly. The suggestion is therefore that, unlike bracket H 4.004 and weatherboard H 4.024, the youngest of the surviving brackets were produced outside of the established figure-sculpting environment dominated by the Urban Master and the Master of St. Benedict, but with deliberate references to it.

It is, of course, possible to put these imperfections down to technical and artistic compromise forced upon the carver by considerations of intended use, display location, and budget, particularly in light of the fact that these carvings' purpose was functional and within the built environment, not as objects of veneration to engender spiritual meditation or feelings of devotion. Such an explanation, while expedient, is precluded by the fact that the same deficiencies can also be observed in an almost life-sized depiction of *Christ Bearing the Cross* (Figure XI-36), historically part of the extant sculpture in the Kreuzkirche (Collegiate church of the Holy Cross) in Hildesheim. The figure was tentatively attributed to Hinrick Stavoer by Stuttmann and von der Osten, a designation that the findings of this thesis have already made obsolete.²⁸⁰ Comparison between this figure and the other works formerly attributed to Stavoer does reveal some overlaps with the apostles Andrew and Bartholomew from the Enger retable (Figures XI-37 and XI-38), however, as will be shown, these are

²⁸⁰ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 78.

insufficient to propose figure sculpture and retable to be of common origin.

The simple, unfussy silhouette of this carving is interrupted only by the two raised hands with their noticeably elongated fingers that once supported the substantial cross. The figure is not worked as consistently or vigorously as other Lower Saxon sculpture, nor is the carving as deep in the light and motion critical areas. Although some depth is achieved under the cloak, around the waist and between the arms, the structure of these spaces lack the sophistication and structural variation one has come to expect from Lower Saxon sculpture. The same can be said for the treatment of the 'crush zones' - although fabric appears to gather in the right places, i.e. over the elbow and lower arm, around the waist and over the protruding leg, the fold formations are barely worked out of the wood, and lack variety, depth and sense for realism.

Although the carver of this sculpture has used some of the conventional animation techniques, such as single gouge cuts to indicate the creasing and compacting of the fabric, these appear as if administered randomly, with little sense for the form or flow of the drapery. The absence of clearly defined primary and secondary structures results in a drapery that does not appear to have been conceived of as a whole, but which has been sub-divided into individual areas of attention. Sleeves, waist, and moving leg all have received what appear to be no more than token applications of cuts to imitate the

compaction of the fabric, but little thought seems to have been given to the dynamic and flow of the whole figure, and the animated areas appear disjointed and unconnected. The moving leg has been carved from the wood in overstated physicality whereas established style conventions would merely hint at its presence through a gently pushed out knee and partially exposed foot beneath the drapery.

The combination of its imperfections makes this figure appear clumsy and lacklustre. Despite its lack of sophistication, or perhaps because of it, parallels to other works can be drawn, namely two of the console brackets and the Enger apostles. The shallow and seemingly random rumpling of the sleeves over the arm is one feature that is unique to both this figure, and the two brackets H 4.005 and H 4.006. The manner in which the upper part of the gown has been shown sagging over the suggested chorded waistband is a common feature that occurs in this sculpture and bracket H 4.005. Conversely, the exaggerated right leg under the drapery recalls the same feature in the apostles Andrew and Bartholomew in Enger (Figures XI-37 and XI-38), and their related figures in Eime and Ribbesbüttel. The similarities in hair formation, pose and drapery between brackets H 4.005 and H 4.006 and the Enger apostles is strengthened by the congruencies with the figure of *Christ Bearing the Cross*, which, in turn, points back to the Enger apostles through the curious but eminently recognisable feature of the overtly fashioned moving leg.

Although a number of congruencies can be shown to have existed between the two brackets H 4.005 and H 4.006, the figure of *Christ Bearing the Cross* and the oeuvre of the Urban Master, it is noted that these overlaps only occur in those passages of the Enger retable which display sufficient stylistic difference to have caused authors such as Kornfeld and Busch to challenge its authenticity as a masterpiece. Equally, weatherboard H 4.024 references an atypical part of the retable. If the commonalities between the more sophisticated bracket H 4.004 and weatherboard H 4.024 point towards their origin in one or the other sculptor's workshop, the later works suggest to the opposite, namely, that they were produced by someone whose capabilities were functional, rather than refined in an artistic sense. Certainly, the infelicities displayed by the *Christ Bearing the Cross* figure strongly suggest it to have been produced by someone not fully versed in both the conception and execution of local figure carving, and for this a joinery assistant with limited carving skills might provide a suitable candidate.

Such a proposition seems a convenient and fitting solution that would account for all the peculiarities that set this figure group apart from the other architectural carvings on the one hand, as well as the figurative sculpture on the other. A problem remains, however, in the implication that patrons were able to choose freely whether to place orders for carved woodwork with joinery or sculpture workshops. That this was not the case at the beginning of the century is demonstrated by

the contract agreed between Master Wolter and the abbey of St. Godehard, which contracts Wolter to organize the 'artistic' part of the retable, that is, the carved and painted elements, but not the carcass, which St. Godehard were sourcing themselves elsewhere.

Although a degree of interchangeability between sculpture and joinery workshop seems evidenced, in practice this was unlikely. Huth's study of the market conditions that underpinned the creation of artworks in the late Gothic period show increasingly competitive and sometimes subversive practices from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards, coincidental with the demand for religious imagery peaking towards the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries.²⁸¹ These conditions increasingly pitched established systems of market and product control against the flexibility required by individual workshop heads to respond to the unprecedented levels of demand for what Michael Baxandall so aptly summarized as 'cultural hardware'.²⁸² In the case of the largest production centre of northern Germany, Lübeck, scholars have shown repeatedly that the means existed to circumvent the normally inflexible guild prescriptions for staffing levels in individual workshops during periods of peaking demand.²⁸³

Where commercial opportunities first forced the temporary relaxation of local guilds' market control strategies, these soon resulted in disputes over boundaries of responsibilities, particularly between

²⁸¹ *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21; Baxandall 1980, p. 117; Petermann 2000, p. 136.

²⁸² Baxandall 1980, p. 99.

²⁸³ Petermann 2000, pp. 136-137.

related crafts.²⁸⁴ Michael Baxandall cites a number of cases where the overlapping interests of joiners and carvers had to be resolved by arbitration.²⁸⁵ Although in the case of Hildesheim contemporary guild records have not survived, it seems likely that here, too, workshop owners were able to circumvent guild prescriptions temporarily when market conditions or pressures of work demanded such. The overlaps observed between the architectural and figurative carvings discussed here might conceivably be seen as the result of such an exceptional situation. Such circumstances may have made it likely for an assistant from a sculpture workshop to have spent some time 'on loan' to a joiner in order to execute that part of the contract in situ, and without potentially upsetting any locally existing guild prescriptions.²⁸⁶ It is my suggestion that the chronologically earlier architectural carvings, such as console bracket H 4.004 and weatherboard H 4.024, were produced in a sculptor's workshop – most likely that of the Urban Master -, and shipped to the joiner who incorporated them into the building fabric. The chronologically later brackets H 4.005 and H 4.006, as well as the figure of *Christ Bearing the Cross*, however, were produced by a casual worker quoting some of the established local sculptural formulae, but unable to fully conceptualize a complete figure. Whether that person worked as an independent subcontractor to the joinery workshop, or was 'loaned' by a carving workshop, is impossible to state with absolute

²⁸⁴ See, for example, Huth 1967, pp. 17-18; Baxandall 1980, pp. 103-104 and 106-107.

²⁸⁵ *op. cit.*, pp. 112.

²⁸⁶ Baxandall 1980, p. 98 and pp. 116-122.

certainty. The unfortunate appearance of the *Christ Bearing the Cross*, however, at our current level of knowledge, weighs the balance of probabilities towards the former option, since the quality level achieved differs so significantly from even the least sophisticated output local carving workshops have shown themselves capable of.

XII. CATALOGUE OF WORKS

1. **The ‘*West Choir Retable*’. Double shuttered retable with standing figures. 160 cm x 147 cm. Lime wood and oak, polychromy renewed. West Choir, St. Michael’s, Hildesheim. *Master of the West Choir Retable, 1500-1505.***

The altarpiece currently located on a side altar in the west choir of the church of St Michael is of a shuttered altarpiece format with a single pair of shutters, painted on the outside, and containing carved figures within. A second pair of outer shutters survives in the RPM. Being placed in its present prominent location post-WWII, the altarpiece is generally accepted to have come from the *Johanniskirche*, the church of St. or Sts. John (the German name can apply to both). It is thought to have been transferred to the Protestant church of St. Martin when the *Johanniskirche* had to make way for town fortifications in 1547.²⁸⁷ The altarpiece is understood to have arrived in St. Michael's when St. Martin in turn was closed in 1857 and its congregation transferred to the former abbey church.²⁸⁸ According to several sources the altarpiece

²⁸⁷ Mithoff 1875, p. 154

²⁸⁸ Stuttmann/von der Osten, 1940, p. 60, and re-iterated in Wulf, 2003, p. 508. The same information is also given in the accession book for the two shutters in the RP Museum. Although the entry is not dated, the use of Latin handwriting script rather than the very distinctive German script suggests this to be a twentieth-century record, made before the publication of Stuttmann/von der Osten's catalogue, since some speculative information regarding the provenance of the altarpiece given there is added to the accession book in pencil.

was located in the confessional chapel of St. Michael's during the years preceding WWII.²⁸⁹

The suggestion that the altarpiece may have originally come from the *Johanniskirche* first emerged in Busch 1931, without reference to specific sources.²⁹⁰ The suggestion was taken up by Stutmman/von der Osten in 1940, and has been cited by Hans-Georg Gmelin in 1974 and Christine Wulf in 2003 respectively.²⁹¹ The primary evidence which might have underpinned Busch's observations, however, remains inconclusive. Two inventories drawn up prior to the church's dissolution in 1547 survive; one of vestments, treasure and [legal] letters, and another listing estates, incomes and names of patrons.²⁹² Neither inventory lists altar furnishings other than textile drapes and hangings (*ein grön stuck damask ... vor datt altar gingk*). A cartulary book of the Collegiate foundation of St Johannes, which also survives in the SAH, lists some inventories of estates and livestock as well as registers of income, expenses and household goods, but, as far as has been ascertained so far, does not mention altarpieces or furnishings either.²⁹³

A summary of all the pre-reformation patronages of churches and altars in Lower Saxony published in 1960, however, notes the donation in the *Johanniskirche* of an altar with curacy in 1472, dedicated to

²⁸⁹ Habicht 1917, p. 176. The copy of a letter dated 31 July 1939 signed by Gert von der Osten also refers to this altar's location in the Confessional Chapel, NLM NB Vol IV.

²⁹⁰ Busch, 1931, pp. 13-14.

²⁹¹ Stutmman/von der Osten 1940, p. 60; Gmelin 1974, p. 346; Wulf 2003, p. 508. Gmelin 1974 cites a nineteenth-century source, which Stutmman/von der Osten also acknowledge in their generic bibliography, but do not link to their discussion of this altarpiece. I have so far been unable to view a copy of that source, attempts to rectify this situation are ongoing.

²⁹² SAH, 100-91 Nr. 428 and SAH, 100-91 Nr. 132

²⁹³ SAH, 52-180.

Saints John Evangelist and Baptist.²⁹⁴ In his eight-volume publication of transcriptions of Hildesheim Medieval Documents Richard Doebner published a summary of the original donation document, which at the time of publication formed part of the collection of the State Archives in Hannover.²⁹⁵ According to this transcription Ilsebe Heysen, widow of Hermann Heysen, donated a permanent curacy at the altar of Our Dear Ladies [sic Doebner] in honour of Sts. John Evangelist and Baptist on January 13th, 1472. The charter also records the frequency of masses and vigils, as well as the endowments into place by the donor to fund the curacy. Provisions for the presentation of an altarpiece, however, are not mentioned. Nor is this the only dedication to both saints John in Hildesheim. In the collegiate church of the Holy Cross an altar dedicated to both saints John with a curacy was installed in 1398.²⁹⁶ In 1428 in the church of St. Andrew, the altar dedicated to St. John Baptist was endowed with a curacy in honour of St. John Evangelist.²⁹⁷ In addition, Krumwiede records a number of other endowments of chapels, altars, or divine services in honour of one or the other saint John. Neither saint occurs in conjunction with any of the other three figures included, that is, Sts. Barbara, James the Greater, or Elizabeth of Hungary. Nor do any of the endowments include the Virgin Mary, except that in the *Johanniskirche*, as part of the dedication of the altar to 'Our Dear Ladies'. The proposition of a location of origin for this

²⁹⁴ Krumwiede 1960, p. 115.

²⁹⁵ Doebner VII, 1899, p. 437

²⁹⁶ Krumwiede 1960, p. 114.

²⁹⁷ op. cit., p. 113.

altarpiece based purely on a correlation between its iconography and chantry endowments in Hildesheim's churches cannot be upheld, particularly not when one also bears in mind that the most recent of these endowments predates the altarpiece by some forty to fifty years.

The altarpiece is arranged in the form of a triptych, with a central *shrine* and inner shutters which today remain permanently opened. Seven figures stand beneath a canopy of renewed foliate tracery. In the centre of the *shrine* the Virgin Mary is depicted as the Woman of the Apocalypse, flanked by St. John the Baptist to her left and St. John the Evangelist to her right. St. Barbara and St. James the Greater stand in the left shutter, St. Andrew and St. Elizabeth stand in the right-hand shutter. Inscriptions can be found in the saints' halos and on the hems of St. John Evangelist, St. John Baptist, St. Barbara, and St. Elizabeth. In its fully assembled state with both pairs of shutters, its closed phase showed the two saints John, St. John the Evangelist writing on the island of Patmos on the left, and St. John the Baptist baptising Christ on the right. In its first interim phase, opened for the first time, four scenes from the Marian legend were revealed: the Annunciation, Visitation of the Virgin to Elizabeth, the Birth of Christ, and the Adoration of the Magi. Opened for a second time, in its final phase, the altarpiece revealed the richly carved and decorated statues. As has already been stated, the painted iconography taken in conjunction with the three central figures proposes a dedication to all three, with the Virgin Mary as the primary, and the two saints as the secondary focus. The

remaining iconography is, however, not suggestive of any particular association. The theme of baptism does occur in the legends of St. Barbara and St. James the Greater, while the invocation of St. Elizabeth is said to have cured a Franciscan monk in the diocese of Hildesheim.²⁹⁸ These links appear too tenuous, however, to suggest that the altarpiece contains a coherent iconographic programme, especially since neither baptism nor local miracles are associated with St. Andrew. The analysis of the inscriptions undertaken by Christine Wulf, and their translations, again suggests no cohesive, themed iconography, although all inscriptions appear to come from readily identifiable texts or hymns, commonly in use in pre-Reformation liturgy.²⁹⁹

According to Stuttmann/von der Osten, the altar's overall dimensions when fully opened are 160cm x 297cm with the central section, the so-called *Schrein* or *shrine*, measuring 160cm x 147cm. The files of RPM give the dimensions of the shutters in their collection as 135cm x 47.5cm. More accurate dimensions are likely to be included in a more recent restoration report held at the offices of the *Evangelische Landeskirche*.³⁰⁰ The entries in the RPM's accession book suggest that at the time of compilation the shutters were enclosed

²⁹⁸ Legend of St Barbara, see [www\(dot\)heiligen-lexikon\(dot\)de/BiographienB/Barbara\(dot\)htm](http://www(dot)heiligen-lexikon(dot)de/BiographienB/Barbara(dot)htm); legend of St James the Greater, see Golden Legend II, pp. 3-9; Legend of St. Elizabeth, see Golden Legend II, pp. 302-317.

²⁹⁹ Wulf 2003, pp. 510-511, footnotes 4, 5, and 6.

³⁰⁰ That report, accessed 16 November 2009, relates only to a treatment against a fungal infection. Enquiries with the restorer regarding further details of the altarpiece are ongoing. This section will be revised when that information has been received.

in the modern frames that still hold them today. If, as the various sources suggest, the altarpiece was transferred from the church of St. Martin to the church of St. Michael then it seems likely that the decision to separate the shutters from the altarpiece was made at the time of transfer. That is not to say that in 1857 the altarpiece still had both sets of shutters attached. Christine Wulf cites a photograph which shows the altarpiece with a painted predella which she describes as having been added in the seventeenth century and which is now lost, inviting the conclusion that this altarpiece has not been in its original form for a significant time.³⁰¹

In its present form, the crowned Virgin Mary stands in the central location with her left leg raised lightly onto a crescent moon before an aureole, holding the Christ child on her right arm, and carrying a lily sceptre in her left hand. Her gaze does not engage the viewer, but instead is fixed on a neutral distance. Her head is slightly tilted over her right shoulder in counter-accent to the movement suggested by the slightly raised leg. The Christ child, dressed in a short-sleeved coat, is shown in profile supporting the orb which is balancing on his left knee, which, in turn, is resting against Mary's upper torso. Mary is wearing a fashionable outer garment with a square neckline that is gathered at the waist by a single fabric knot, over which her maphorion falls in a series of sweeps, folds, and creases.

³⁰¹ Wulf, 2003, p. 508. Enquiries with the Niedersächsisches Landesdenkmalamt (NLD) are ongoing.

In the favoured position to Mary's right, St. John the Evangelist is pictured holding the chalice in his left hand, with the right hand held in blessing. His left foot is partially exposed under the hem of his undergarment, and, again, the leg is slightly angled, with the upper torso gently inclining in a counter movement. He is shown wearing a contemporary high-necked tunic held at the waist with a swathe of fabric beneath a billowing cloak. To the left of Mary, St. John the Baptist is depicted with his left hand holding the book and lamb, and his right hand in a blessing attitude which echoes the positioning of the Evangelist's hand. His hair shirt is visible beneath his cloak on his chest and right arm, and the camel's head emerges from between his feet. His cloak folds back to reveal the right leg exposed to the calf in three-quarter view.

The shutter to the right of St. John Evangelist is occupied by St. Barbara on the left, and St. James the Greater on the right. St. James the Greater wears the traditional pilgrim's hat with the shell emblem. His left hand holds a closed book at waist level, while the right carries the pilgrim's staff from which a small water skin is suspended. The ball filial which tops his staff appears to be a later addition or replacement.³⁰² St. James' cloak loops back in a generous sweeping fold to reveal his left leg, slightly angled and wearing a contemporary boot, beyond the knee, and his undergarment. St. Barbara wears a crown of a similar style to that worn by Mary. She also wears a contemporary dress with a high-

³⁰² Enquiries relating to restoration reports or similar are ongoing.

collared under-garment. Her attire is largely hidden by the cloak which almost completely envelops her. A small earlobe fold reveals the tip of her left foot. In her left hand she holds a closed book over which the hem of her cloak extends almost like a platter. Her right hand rests in a downward position on her attribute, an elongated, slender tower which extends from her pedestal to her shoulder which is partially obscured by her right arm.

The other shutter contains the figures of St. Andrew on the left, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary on the right. St. Andrew's garments are almost entirely disguised by his voluminous cloak which folds back brim-like to reveal the toes of his bare right foot. As an attribute he holds in his right hand a single naturalistic branch that is slightly curved towards the middle to suggest the cross that would normally complete the symbol. His left hand supports a closed book which is partially obscured by a fold of his cloak which is more restrained than that forming over the book carried by St. Barbara. St. Elizabeth is shown wearing fashionable dress and a wimple in allusion to her status as a married woman. She carries a pitcher in her right hand at waist level, and has two loaves tucked under her arm. Her left hand supports a plate bearing a further two loaves of bread in allusion to her legend as an alleviator of poverty and suffering. Her over-garment is barely discernible under her voluminous cloak which uniquely partially obscures her right arm under a horizontal array of folds and creases. The tip of her right shoe is just visible beneath her lower hems.

All seven figures are individually animated in their positioning through the use of a raised leg over which folds fall and creases break. The second, supporting leg remains either invisible beneath the mass of drapery displaced by the 'active' limb. The Virgin Mary is arranged in a gentle S-Shape reminiscent of Dürer's bent attitude.³⁰³ The positioning of St. Andrew's visible right foot suggests that his legs and feet should, if not crossed over, be positioned at least at right angles to each other, giving him a stance similar to that of Mary, albeit more accentuated, and on a narrower plane. With the exception of St. James the Greater, all figures appear to be of similar height. St. John the Evangelist and St. Elizabeth both stand slightly elevated on pedestals raised by a smaller step, now painted black, which lift them by approximately 2.5cm to 4cm. St. James, without similar compensation, stands significantly lower than St. Barbara and St. John Evangelist to either side of him, his head covering only the lower third of his halo. St. Barbara, similarly, is not much taller than St. James in the shoulder, her lack of height, however, is compensated for by addition of her crown. The reason for the discrepancy in height between St. James the Greater and the other figures is not easily discernible particularly when one considers that the figure to the other side of St. James, that of St. John Evangelist, is also standing on the highest adjusted pedestal.

The faces are all carefully characterised, with greater virtuosity shown in the carving of the male faces. The three female faces and the

³⁰³ Baxandall 1980, pp. 156-157.

youthful, beardless, face of St. John Evangelist all indicate a slight double chin such as would occur when inclining the face downwards from a higher level. The eyes do not follow that inclination, but instead are fixed on the middle distance. The eyes are set widely apart and of a shape that reminds of the Egyptian *wadjet* eye with a gently convex lower lid and an upper lid which arcs steeply upwards before tapering out to form an elegant long and narrow shape that is more accentuated in the female faces. The eyes are further emphasised by painted shadings of the eyelid crease, a thin painted parallel line beneath the equally painted eyebrow, and one or more lines beneath the lower lid. It is presently impossible to say whether these are original or a later addition, and whether they follow a carved pattern. The noses vary not only between the male and female faces, but also between individual figures of the same gender, suggesting the artist to be concerned with individual characterisation. St. John Evangelist, the Christ child, and the three females have straight noses which up-turn slightly before forming the tip. The other noses all show varying degrees of ascetic buckling and crooking, in the case of St. John Baptist used to emphasise his emaciated appearance in the desert. Flaring of the nostrils is variable. The lips are full and appear slightly down-turned. The corners of the mouth end in deep dimples. Only Mary's and St. Andrew's lips are slightly parted.

Each figure is dominated by a sequence of long straight hems and tubular folds which arrest the spectator's gaze and guide it from waist-

level downwards. This linear framework retains geometric surfaces bordered by straight pipe folds which follow the same progression downwards. The surfaces are enlivened by shallow kinks and creases, which suggest enough of each statue's physiognomy to enable to viewer to supplement mentally those aspects of the body that remain hidden beneath the billowing drapery. These linear forms are supported and sometimes interrupted by earlobe folds and turnovers which accentuate the long sweeping flourishes. The sense of active and inactive components, which has already been observed in the hair depiction, is equally pertinent here. Tubular folds and creases represent the fixed, inactive parts of the overall structure, while the active play of arcing hems, folds, and turnovers add a sense of movement and voluminousness.

Naturally occurring recesses, such as that created by the two loaves held under St. Elizabeth's arm, or where a cloak falls over an arm, are deeply carved. The almost sheer blackness of their depth successfully masks the fact that these figures are created with shallow backs, and not carved in the round. Each figure displays at least the tip of one foot. The leg of St. John the Baptist is exposed to the calf muscle with a camel's head alongside. St. James' leg is revealed to the thigh by his gown under an earlobe fold so large that it dominates the whole figure. All seven figures have inscriptions carved as part of their halos. Further inscriptions are borne on the hem of the gowns of alternate figures.

2. **Saint Anne Teaching Her Daughter the Virgin Mary to Read (The Education of the Virgin). 95.9 x 81.3 x 24.8 cm. Painted and gilded wood.³⁰⁴ Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia. Master of the *West Choir Retable*, c. 1510.**

This sculpture (Figure XII-1) belongs to the group of works that mark the transition between the Master of the West Choir retable and the Benedict Master. The references to the earlier generation of works are maintained in the inclusion of auricle flourishes and organically sweeping hems that characterize the drapery and hide the human body beneath. Although the knees are indicated, the fall of the drapes completely disguise the presence of lower legs and feet, suggesting a similar form of textile independence to that seen also in the figures of the *West Choir Retable*. The fabric, however, is drawn closer to the body in anticipation of the lighter and more controlled drapery forms of the *Alfeld* and *Benedict retable* figures. The short torsos and narrow waists further emphasize the transitional position of this sculpture, which lead via the *Nemeš* Madonna to the Waddesdon Manor saints.

The design of the whole sculpture from a very low viewpoint, and on a steeply angle plane is one that will become a typical feature of works attributed to the Master of St. Benedict. It can also be seen, for example, in the central group of the *Benedict Retable* or the *Holy Kindred* Altarpiece (Figures XII-2 and XII-3). Moreover, it also reaches into the oeuvre of the Urban Master, where it is echoed in the steep

³⁰⁴ Web PMA

angling of the floors of the reliefs of the Enger retable and the *Oppler Panels*, to name just two of a far greater number of appropriate examples.

The face of St. Anne has the same features as St. Elizabeth from the *West Choir Retable* and the *Trinitatis Pietá* (Figures XII-4, XII-5 and XII-6), while Mary's head prefigures the Waddesdon Manor saints (Figures XII-7 and XII-8), although there are some proportional differences that separate them chronologically. Another parallel to these much later figures and other works attributable to the Master of St. Benedict are the cascading crumples carved into the raised ridges of the folds, particularly clearly visible on the passage that has been laid across St. Anne's right foot to her left knee (Figure XII-9). As well as referencing similar forms deployed for the carving of the Waddesdon Manor saints, it also represents a softer, more organic form of the sharp, rigid diagonal drapery arrangement used by both the Master of St. Benedict and the Urban Master for the *Nemeš* and Holtrup Madonnas, and the New York *Emerentia* group.

If this sculpture represents an important step in the evolution of this woodcarving style from the showmanship of the Master of the *West Choir Retable* to the sophistication of the later works of the Master of St. Benedict, it also contains some strong links to the output of the Urban Master. Of these, the deployment of the steeply angled picture plane is one. Another is the active engagement of St. Anne with the book (Figure XII-10), holding a number of pages open with one hand, while

pointing to the text passage with the other. It belongs to a number of similar highly realistic depictions of seemingly spontaneous, momentary snapshots, such as the pages of the book held by the New York *Emerentia* (Figure XII-11) opening independently, for example. Similarly, the positioning of Mary's hand across the edge of her book, with the outstretched thumb and the finger curled, is a device that recurs in numerous similar depictions, such as the New York St. Anne (Figure XII-12) and the representations of St. Andrew from the Enger predella and other locations.

The pivotal position of this sculpture between the works of the Master of the *West Choir Retable* and the Master of St. Benedict proposes a production around 1510, prior to the *Alfeld* and *Benedict Retable* figures, and certainly pre-figuring the *Nemeš* Madonna. While a number of parallels with the Waddesdon Manor saints may tempt a location of this sculpture amongst the later works of the Master of St. Benedict, the presence of the auricle flourishes and the sweeping hemlines strongly suggest the earlier date, and the authorship of the earlier master. Any lingering doubt, however, is assuaged by the characters of the inscription on Mary's hems (Figure XII-13) whose highly stylized *capitalis* lettering is commensurate with inscriptions from other earlier works, including that of the *Nemeš* Madonna. Consequently, von der Osten's proposal that the Waddesdon Manor

saints once flanked the Philadelphia figures in the same retable, can no longer be sustained.³⁰⁵

**3. Mary lamenting the dead body of Christ (the *Trinitatis Pietá*).
Limewood with old (original?) polychromy. 70.5 x 57 x 20.5
cm.³⁰⁶ Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Inv. No K2681. Master of the
West Choir retable, 1510 to 1515.**

According to the first inventory of the RPM sculpture collection this figure originally stood in the chapel of the so-called Trinitatis hospital, a charitable foundation located on St. Andreas' Square. No further history is known. The feet of Christ have been replaced since the photographs were taken for Stuttmann and von der Osten's monograph, and are unlikely to represent the original appearance of this figure group accurately.

This is one of the most expressive figure groups of this sculptural style (Figure XII-14). Mary averting her head in silent dialogue with an invisible presence while holding her dead son's body represents a remarkable and highly innovative symbiosis of her roles as grieving mother and tool of divine purpose that is full of pathos and emotional realism.

The sweeping hemlines of her gown and the animation of her headdress and the manner in which the edge of her mantle is blown open (Figure XII-15) represent sophisticated evolutions of the

³⁰⁵ von der Osten 1972, p., 57.

³⁰⁶ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 43.

flamboyant carving manner associated with the Master of the *West Choir Retable* (Figure XII-16). The drapery, however, is more restrained in its structure and execution, pointing towards a slightly later production date. Mary's face closely resembles that of St. Elizabeth from the master's eponymous retable with its finely arched upper lip and downward orientated eyes (Figures XII-17 and XII-18), although her chin is more pointed, perhaps to echo the fall of her headscarf across her throat and upper torso.

Christ's lifelessness is emphasized through the strand of hair that falls from his shoulder parallel to his dead-weight arm, placing the viewer in the position of casual observer of a transitory moment time, an effect similar to that achieved by the moving pages of books that will be noted in conjunction with later figure groups. His loincloth is tied over his waist in a single looped knot with distinctive twist in the fabric (Figure XII-19). A similar knot, more elaborately rendered, also gathers Mary's belt around her waist in the *West Choir Retable* (Figure XII-20). The same motif is also used for another figure, that of an unknown male saint in the collection of the RPM (Inv. No K 1633, Figure XII-21).³⁰⁷ From here it appears to have been transmitted to the workshop of the Urban Master, where it recurs in the *Christ Bearing the Cross* scene of the Enger and Breselenz retables, to name but two examples.

³⁰⁷ This figure, again, lacks provenance beyond its entry into the collection of the RPM. Its facial characteristics of narrow eyes, shallow cheeks and thin lips, together with the flamboyantly animated gown, strongly suggest it to have originated close to the *West Choir Retable* in both style and chronology.

The more restraint execution of the drapery across Mary's legs, and the evolution of the auricle flourishes into flatter, up-turned hems that prefigure the fold-overs typical of the second-generation works, suggests this figure to be a later production by the Master of the *West Choir Retable*, c. 1510 to 1515.

- 4. Altarpiece dedicated to the Virgin Mary (the 'Alfeld Retable').**
Carved and polychromed altarpiece depicting Mary as the Woman of the Apocalypse, flanked by St. Urban and St. Maurice. St. Catherine and St. Lucy on the outside of the shutters.³⁰⁸ Approx. 205 cm x 130 cm. Figures lime wood, case oak. Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover.
***Master of the West Choir Retable*, c. 1515.**

This retable, which originally came from the church of St. Nicholas in Alfeld, some 25 kilometres south-west of Hildesheim, was acquired for the museum in c. 1861.³⁰⁹ It comprises a central compartment and two shutters which are kept permanently open. The internal compartments each contain a wooden ledge on which the figures stand, and are terminated by a section of openwork foliate tracery suspended beneath a batten painted to give the impression of guttae.

The altarpiece has undergone several interventions. As has already been alluded to in Chapter VIII, the figures of St. Urban, and the Virgin Mary show evidence of re-carving, particularly around the nose

³⁰⁸ Busch 1931, p. 229.

³⁰⁹ Osten 1957, p. 148.

and mouth passages, while the Christ child has lost much of his originally more substantial head of hair. The areas around the eyes and the lips have been repainted in different shades of brown at some point, possibly at the same time as the pomegranate patterns were painted onto the inside walls of the compartments and the diaper pattern at the base of the back wall was added. Whether at this point the beads were painted onto Mary's neck, or whether these are an earlier addition cannot be ascertained without paint sample analysis. In 1954 measures were undertaken to secure the polychromy against further damage and losses. The museum catalogue of 1957 includes a photograph that shows a sword in Mauritius' right hand which has since been removed. Six holes in the back wall of the retable compartment suggest that other elements have been lost. Von der Osten has suggested that the Virgin's aureole may once have been framed by a rosary, and comparison with the retable in Henneckenrode confirms this; the photograph clearly shows the addition of Christ's hands and feet bearing the stigmata marks in positions that correspond to four of the holes.

5. **Virgin Mary with Child on a Crescent Moon. Carved and polychromed figure depicting the Virgin Mary depicted as the Woman of the Apocalypse, 114 cm x 51 cm x 30 cm. Lime wood with polychromy. Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg. Master of St. Benedict, c. 1515.**

According to Stuttmann and von der Osten this figure passed from an unknown church first to an unknown Hildesheim based art dealer and from there to the dealers Galerie Schäfer in Munich, before being sold at auction in 1931 with other items from the collection of Marzcel Nemeš.³¹⁰ The figure takes her name from her last private owner.

The figure has lost her crown which was once cast separately. The sitting groove is still visible. The Madonna has also lost the ring finger of her right hand, her sceptre, and the spikes of the crescent moon on which she stands.

This figure is one of the most iconic compositions of Lower Saxon woodcarving. Several workshop copies exist of her extensive and recognisable drapery structure, and her primary forms are transmitted beyond the Lower Saxon boundaries into the neighbouring modern federal states of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Brandenburg. A retable in a village church near the town of Stendal has a retable which offers an unexpected extension to this already distinctive figure in the form of two angels which kneel behind the spikes of the crescent moon, and support the extended drapery of the Virgin while holding on to the moon

³¹⁰ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 45.

with the other hand (Figure XII-22).³¹¹ It is impossible to say whether this addition has been transmitted from Lower Saxony, or whether it represents an extension of this iconography that is unique to this altarpiece.

6. Reliefs of the Four Evangelists and Church Fathers. St. John 46 x 28.5 cm; St. Matthew 46 x 32 cm; St. Luke 48.5 x 34 cm; St. Mark 48 x 28 cm; St. Ambrose and St. Augustine 50 x 61 cm; St. Gregory and St. Jerome 50 x 63 cm. Limewood, monochrome.³¹² Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hanover. Inv Nos HS899 -902. Master of St. Benedict, 1515 to 1518.

The six reliefs that make up this sculpture group (Figures XII-23, XII-24, XII-25 and XII-26) are the only items that can be securely documented to have come from the sale of the collection of Hildesheim bishop Eduard Jakob Wedekin. Their provenance prior to the sale is not known. Stuttmann and von der Osten speculated that the reliefs represent a figure group once placed in the predella of an altarpiece, with von der Osten later proposing that they belonged to the same altarpiece as the reliefs that now make up the altarpiece in St. Mary Magdalene in Hildesheim.³¹³ This proposal, however, does not account for the different formats of the Evangelists, which are depicted as individual reliefs, and the Church Fathers, which are arranged in pairs.

³¹¹ Knüvener 2011, p. 110, fig. 277.

³¹² von der Osten 1957, p. 146.

³¹³ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 48ff.; von der Osten 1957, p. 146.

All figures are shown seated, and engaged in a variety of activities; whereas the Evangelists are writing scripture, the Church Fathers are engaged upon the dissemination thereof. Each is carefully stage-set; the Church Fathers paired to share a single table, while the Evangelists each work at their own writing desks. All furniture details are minutely observed and rendered in meticulous detail; the desk shared by saints Gregory and Jerome with its books strewn across the shelves (Figure XII-27) is a particularly fine rendering of such a casual detail. With their compositional device of activities taking place at a table or desk these reliefs seamlessly fit with other works by the Master of St. Benedict, such as the *Benedict Retable* and the *Holy Kindred* altarpiece in Everloh. The increasing amounts of fabric that are gathered across the sleeves, and the complex drapery structures which interleave strong primary lines with increasingly agitated, cascading and crumpling secondary forms are all devices that are also deployed in the draperies of the Waddesdon Manor saints and the two standing figures from Everloh. Passing references to the Master of the *West Choir Retable*, however, remain, such as the auricle flourish next to St. Ambrose's foot or the long, thin strand of hair that encloses a cluster of smaller forms on the heads of St. John and St. Matthew, which recalls a similar arrangement from the heads of St. Andrew and St. John Baptist. The chubbier faces and broader noses also clearly belong to the Benedict Master, as do the more bulkier hair formations. Feet, knees and lower legs are visible beneath the draperies, and are positioned in

mannerist affectation that is not always wholly successfully rendered (see, for example, the foreshortened leg of St. Gregory). The unrealistic positioning of the legs in relation to furniture and physiognomy seem to prefigure the crossed-over positioning of the legs of the Holtrup and Enger apostles.

While individual passages clearly reference the later works by the Master of St. Benedict, the draperies still lack the restraint and order of their successors. Although some structuring of the raised ridges is evident in the draperies of these figures, this is not as highly developed or as critical to the overall structure of the drapery as in the Waddesdon Manor figures, for example. Instead, the Evangelists and Church Fathers provide the transitional link from the rigid linearity of the *Nemeš* Madonna to the more complex structures of the Waddesdon Manor saints and the Everloh retable, and must be regarded as contemporaneous with the figures of the *Benedict Retable*, giving them a date of origin between 1515 and 1518.

7. **Panel depicting St. Benedict, flanked by saints Maurus and Placidus, and two accompanying figures of St. Martin and St. Blaise. Carved and polychromed panel from altarpiece context, 160 cm x 126 cm.³¹⁴ Lime wood, later polychromy. St. Martin, 135 cm x 36.5 cm x 25.5 cm. St. Blaise, 134 cm x 38 cm x 25.5 cm.³¹⁵ Basilica St. Godehard, Hildesheim. Master of St. Benedict, 1518.**

The retable in its present form consists of a relief of three figures arranged around a centrally located table, and two free standing statues. The two independent figures stand on raised plinths which elevate them to the same level as the group seated around the table, which stands in what appears to be purpose-built niche, and forms part of a larger late-Baroque altar structure with a (later) figure of the Virgin Mary in the upper tier. The two supporting figures are identified by inscriptions on their plinths as St. Martin and St. Blaise. Each stands on an angled pedestal that is integral to the figure, and compensates for a much steeper viewing angle than that which they are currently displayed at. St. Martin has his attribute of a beggar at his feet, whereas St. Blaise is depicted without attributes, in the attire of a bishop. Of the central group the two seated saints, Maurus and Placidus, are also identified by inscription, whereas the identity of the central figure, St. Benedict of Nursia, is iconographically established through association with his two students, and his attitude of blessing the poison cup prior to

³¹⁴ Wulf 2003, p. 490.

³¹⁵ Berg-Lohse 2002, p. 150 and p. 154 fn. 21.

its breaking. The group is located in the Southern transept of the Benedictine abbey church of St. Godehard, near the access to the sacristy and the former cloisters.

The relief is constructed from three sections of lime wood with some smaller additions, arranged so that the grain runs vertical, with the exception of the inscription boards, where the grain runs horizontal. The larger blocks show remnants of bark. The relief has been produced in two sections, of which saints Maurus and Placidus form the forward part, while Benedict has been carved as a separate half-figure, and added subsequently.³¹⁶ The blocks have been joined by large butterfly joints, which can be seen clearly on the table surface. Investigations have revealed the existence of dowel holes at the feet of St. Maurus which indicate the likely historic presence of attributes or donor identification, while thick glue remnants and a 10 cm long incision to Benedict's right shoulder suggests another lost addition.³¹⁷ Repairs have been made to the pedestals of both free-standing figures, and the central panel. The tip of St. Martin's right foot has been replaced. St. Martin's left hand, in Stuttmann and von der Osten's view, also replaces an earlier, more angled version which passed a corner of the cloak to the beggar.³¹⁸

Treated by the previous literature as always having been part of the fittings of St. Godehard because of its Benedictine iconography, this

³¹⁶ op. cit., p. 150.

³¹⁷ op. cit., p. 152.

³¹⁸ Stuttmann/ von der Osten 1940, p. 46.

group, according to Berg and Lohse, first appears in its present form in an inventory from 1841.³¹⁹ An earlier inventory dated to 1829 lists under position 4 two side altars, the second of which is recorded as standing 'in front of the sacristy, and without paintings'.³²⁰ It is possible that this entry relates to the retable in its present position in the Southern transept, which connects to the sacristy, and the former cloisters.

On the reverse of the retable a handwritten inscription records a restoration in 1868 which speaks of the retable being newly painted and restored. Berg and Lohse have taken this to mean that the retable gained its present colouring in 1868. The German text '*Dieser Altar wurde neu vergoldet und gestrichen im Jahre 1868. Am 12. September wahr derselbe fertig, und war drei Wochen in Arbeit...*', however, is ambiguous, and could also mean that an earlier colour coating had been renewed. It is the writer's opinion that the colouring goes back to the time when the chapel was converted to its present Classicist appearance, which, according to Berg and Lohse, took place in the late eighteenth century.³²¹

Conservations measures in 2001 prompted the investigations undertaken by Annette Berg and Corinna Lohse, which were able to show that both the panel and free-standing figures had originally been produced in monochrome.³²² This makes the retable the third documentable monochrome work in the Hildesheim context, together

³¹⁹ Berg-Lohse 2002, p. 154.

³²⁰ BAH Hild. St. God. Nr 130, p. 9.

³²¹ Berg-Lohse 2002, p. 148.

³²² op. cit., p. 153.

with the *Evangelists and Church Fathers* panels in Hannover, and the altarpiece in St. Mary Magdalene.

The donors of the retable are recorded in the second of the two inscriptions appended to the panel, recording them as being Hennig Warlmann and his wife, Sophie (Soffke). According to Christine Wulf, a memorial for Henning Warlmann and his wife Sofke, is recorded in the St. Godehard *necrologium* for the 4th of March, another for Sofke Warlmann on 1st Mai. The first entry also records their son, also Henning Warlmann, being a monk and priest at St. Godehard. The wording of the inscription leads Dr. Wulf to conclude that this donation was the result of a will, and not commissioned during the donors' lifetime.³²³

Attributions of this sculpture have varied between different sources. Both Habicht and Busch identified the fragments in St. Godehard as coming from an anonymous altarpiece which was documented in the transcription of a cartulary note of 1504, citing a Master Wolter as the supplier.³²⁴ Meier, on the other hand, followed his own bias and attributed both the Everloh retable and the Benedict Fragment to Stavoer.³²⁵ In Stuttmann and von der Osten's monograph the artist finally metamorphosed into the *über-craftsman* who has dominated their discourse, and to whom they attributed a total of fifteen

³²³ Wulf 2003, p. 491.

³²⁴ Habicht 1917, pp. 201-202; Busch 1931, p. 40.

³²⁵ Meier 1937, p.19.

works.³²⁶ Critical for their definition of the Master of St. Benedict's mature style have to be the two pieces which bear the same characteristics: the relief and figures in St Godehard and the *Holy Kindred* retable in Everloh. Around these two works the authors have constructed an oeuvre of approximately fifteen works. That oeuvre is now difficult to assess, since it included a number of figures from private collections, which have now disappeared from view. For example, the collection once owned by Joseph Bohland went to the open art market in 1972; of this it has only been possible to trace the statue of St. James the Less which has gone to the *Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe* in Hamburg.³²⁷ Of the other two collections it has not been possible to find further information.

As with works discussed earlier, there are numerous works with which the Benedict Retable interconnects. The most obvious of these is the *Holy Kindred* altarpiece, which shows similar concentrations of small, competing sub-forms intersected by large primary forms without infill. Small details abound that recall other works – the vertical pleats under the arms recall the vertical fold arrangement across the non-supporting legs of the Holtrup and *Nemeš* Madonnas, while lanceate tips, projecting folds and fold-backs attest once more to their position as staples of the Hildesheim style. New are the hems that swing in a gentle zig-zag motion towards the ground in a more horizontal motion than has been used before. It is prefigured in the two figures of Mary and St.

³²⁶ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, pp. 34-52.

³²⁷ Wohl 1984, p. 185; Kitzlinger 210812.

Urban from the altarpiece in the NLM, where the cloaks terminated in a horizontal hem across the knees. The drapery characterisation still uses long established formulae such as the whirlpool flourishes, which is visible here, albeit heavily disguised, at the feet of Maurus. Despite the deep carving and undercutting, one senses the gentle influx of Mannerist restraint as it begins to calm both primary and secondary forms. The sleeves are heavily gathered over the lower arms, as they were in Everloh, Waddesdon Manor, and Hannover, but also in the retable in St. Mary Magdalene. It is tempting to think of this as the maturing of what was a youthfully exuberant carving style into something more commensurate with a more self-assured, even successful middle age, although this would be entirely speculative, even if the artist who has carved the spatial recession of this table has long mastered the prescriptions of linear perspective. Indeed, the effect of this group of works is so painterly that a parallel study of developments in the local panel painting style could yield some interesting results. However, with such a great number of lost shutters, it was not possible to explore this line of thought as part of this thesis.

The facial characterisation has been executed with same desire for realism and accuracy that has embodied all of the higher quality works, without being able to draw the minute distinctions Stuttmann and von der Osten believed present. Variations in the character lines and levels of fleshiness tend to depend on the artist's interpretation of his subject's age. The arrowhead forms have moved from the front of the

figure to the side, drawing an interesting parallel with the Enger retable, where it is also revealed because Mary is seen in profile. As a guide to the earlier or later creation within the cumulative Hildesheim production of figures bearing it, however, the arrowhead is destined to fail, bearing in mind the concurrent production of the Enger and Holtrup Marys.

8. A pair of carved female saints, one carrying a palm leaf, the other a book and a sword. 98.4 cm and 97.2 cm tall.³²⁸ Lime wood, original polychromy removed. The National Trust, Waddesdon Manor. Master of St. Benedict. 1515-1520.

The two female saints in the National Trust collection at Waddesdon Manor are amongst the finest carvings to have been produced in Hildesheim. Both figures have a very strong presence, and are carved with extreme attention to detail.

The figures are known to have entered the collection of Miss Alice de Rothschild in 1885, from the sale of the collection of M. E. Vaïsse of Marseille, described in the sales catalogue as 'beautiful works of the Rhenish borders'.³²⁹ It is not known how long the two statues had been in the Vaïsse collection. Details of their earlier history are also not documented. At some point, both figures have been converted from flat-backed into free-standing sculptures by adding a considerable amount of wood, possibly sycamore, to the backs, which, apart from the clearly visible joint, has been sympathetically blended in. Although the figures

³²⁸ Hodgkinson 1970, p. 146 and p. 148.

³²⁹ *op. cit.*, p. 146. Citation of sales catalogue after Hodgkinson's transcriptions – author's own translation.

are of such high quality that it is difficult to draw the line, it is unlikely that they had been conceived in monochrome, as the usual indicators, such as paint remnants that once emphasised the eyes and lips, are not traceable. It is more likely that any remaining polychromy was removed at the time of the backs being added, to make the figures more appealing in the sale rooms. The multiple repairs that have been carried out on the figures suggest that their condition at one point was far from desirable. Both saints have had at least one hand replaced, as well as numerous sections of the draperies. The figures show evidence of extensive worm damage all over which has been filled in. In some of the deeper crevices some remnants of the original gesso and bole layers may have survived.

Since the attributes for both figures are more modern replacements, their identities are not guaranteed. It is entirely conceivable for one of the figures to have been designated as St. Catherine, and a sympathetic restoration, such as these figures seem to have undergone, would, in all likelihood, have replaced like for like. The combination of book and sword would also not be unheard of – the RPM have in their collection a figure of Catherine with sword, Maxentius, and a book in a book bag. The direction of the lower arms and their orientation towards the side with much plainer drapery forms suggests the possibility that this may have been Saint Barbara, with the tower attached to the base where today there is a replacement visible.

The two female saints at Waddesdon Manor represent the strongest display of the carver's art as practised in Hildesheim and its surrounding areas. They are, technically, the most accomplished and complex pieces that survive. They are both incredibly deeply undercut, with sections carved in absolute three-dimensionality. An example is the passage of hair that is resting on the book carried by St. Catherine. Two plaits of hair fall from Catherine's shoulder and land on the book, where one plait buckles and lifts off the book's surface completely, while the other is embraced by a runaway strand of hair that bridges the plait, without touching it. It represents a display of carving virtuosity that is unequalled in wood carvings from this region. One of the deep carved passages is visible in the same illustration where Catherine's arm rests against her body. The visual centre of St. Catherine lies just below the left breast, over her heart, and where all the defining lines congregate. The primary structure is defined through straight, tight ridge folds which are enlivened or terminated by substructures towards the end of their run. A shortened projecting fold, with fold-over on one side, and a break-out lanceate form on the other recall the dramatic language of the silhouettes of the *Nemeš* and Holtrup Madonnas, to name but two of a number of figures. The outstretched elbow above the break-out cluster, as well as the more gentle bulging in the silhouette beneath it, alongside Catherine's knee, create a gentle, visual progression that harmonises what is otherwise a more expressive silhouette. The array of creases, compressions, and extrusions is staggering; each passage

makes its own statement. Some segments suggest deliberate showmanship - the contrast, for example, of the rigid pleat and the gently lapping hairpin hem which have been laid side-by-side alongside the left foot suggests a demonstration of two different approaches to the same problem – how to characterise the lowest part of the drapery. At the same time, amongst this tour-de-force of Hildesheim craftsmanship can also be glimpsed constituents of a more familiar artistic language, such as gouge cross-cuts and ridge fold flourishes.

The anonymous saint is characterised by a greater emphasis on the upper torso. With no book or fold arrangement concealing her upper body, the details of her undergarment as it falls over her shoulders and tucks into the bodice is carefully visualised, as are the three chains that fall in different configurations following the figure's physical contours. Her gown is belted at the waist, and falls from there to the pedestal in long straight pleats. The right knee is pushing gently through the fabric, framed by two converging ridge folds, representing the most realistic depiction of its kind observed so far. The drapery gathers at the feet in a number of horizontally orientated configurations, from which a shoe with distinctive ribbon ornamentation emerges. The martyr's right arm is carved entirely in the round, with no evidence of a join visible at the shoulder. Unusually, the mantle is worn over one shoulder only, concentrating the bulk of the drapery effects on one side of the figure. The lanceate tip that falls diagonally across the legs is an essential device in maintaining a visual balance as it extends the fold formations

towards the other side of the sculpture. The primary structures are created by the mantle being gathered on the outside of the left arm, and being tucked under, the deep carving giving this section the appearance of a starburst that emerges from under the lower arm. The variation of folds, creases, compressions and bulges shows off the artist's capabilities to great effect. A particularly fine passage is the drawing out of the extremely convex collar in a ridge fold flourish that only reveals itself as caused by a flue-pipe configuration when seen from exactly the right angle.

The figures were attributed to the Master of St. Benedict not by Stuttmann or von der Osten, but by Terence Hodgkinson and Michael Baxandall on the basis of the former's monograph.³³⁰ Hodgkinson's observations were based on comparison of the saints to other works by that master, such as the so-called Benedict Retable in St. Godehard, the *Holy Kindred retable* from Everloh, and the *Education of the Virgin* panel, now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.³³¹ As Hodgkinson rightly observed, the drapery structure under St. Blaise's arm (wrongly identified as St. Paul in Hodgkinson's text) recalls that of the anonymous martyr exactly. There is more fabric gathered over the female saint's arm with a greater number of deeply carved crevasses, while some of the sub-structures of St. Blaise are less articulated. Hodgkinson's comparison between the palm-bearing saint at Waddesdon and the figure of 'St. Barbara' in Everloh, on the other

³³⁰ Osten 1972, p. 57.

³³¹ Hodgkinson 1970, p. 146.

hand, is based on a distinct similarity between the two faces. Apart from the fact that both have almond eyes, a straight nose that turns up slightly at the tip, and a thin mouth with a very prominent lower lip. Striking is also the similarity of the profile of the two strands of chain that fall across Barbara's chest.

9. The Virgin and Christchild with St. Anne and St. Emerentia (*Emerentia Selbviert*).98 x 68 x 16.5 cm. Limewood with polychromy remnants.³³² Cathedral St. Gorgonius and St. Peter, Minden. Master of St. Benedict. c.1520-1525.

This figure group (Figure XII-28) represents St. Emerentia, St. Anne and the Virgin Mary in a typical *Emerentia Selbviert* arrangement. The Christ child is missing; a dowel hole to one side of Mary's left knee (Figure XII-29) suggests a former anchoring point. Other notable losses include Mary's lower arms and hands, Anne's lower left arm and left hand, Emerentia's right hand, and the noses of all three figures. A section of Emerentia's drapery appears to have been turned or replaced altogether (Figure XII-30). The folds immediately adjacent to Anne's shoulder run counter-directional to the rest of the drapery, and Emerentia's left arm holding the book also appears less somewhat ill-fitting in relation to the rest of her upper torso. Cut lines can be seen clearly around the outline of the book, and the reverse of the figure does suggest a later insertion at that point (Figure XII-31). A fold

³³² Pieper and Chadour-Sampson 1998, p. 796

running along Anne's upper left arm has been replaced, as have sections of the pedestal.

It is not known how this figure group came to be in Minden Cathedral. The earliest documented record of it may be in an inventory of 1887 listing a 'relief group of three holy women'. From 1886 until c. 1910 the group temporarily passed into private hands. In 1940 it was discovered once more, this time on top of a cupboard in the former cathedral treasury, after which it was displayed in the Sacristy, before being moved to its present location in a niche in the north aisle of the cathedral.³³³ With such little information Stuttmann and von der Osten's suggestion that the group may have been made for one of the side altars cannot be followed.³³⁴

The loss of the Christ child and both of Mary's arms, together with Emerentia's right hand, allow only for a cautiously speculative reconstruction of this group. The deep dowel hole in the group's pedestal between the gowns of Mary and Anne indicates a substantial addition to have been located there in the past (Figure XII-32); Stuttmann and von der Osten have proposed a vase with a lily stem.³³⁵ Two alternative suggestions warrant consideration. The first is the possibility that the hole represents the siting point for a relic-containing fixture that could be removed for specific functions, such as processions. The second, and in the author's view more likely

³³³ History according to op. cit., p.798.

³³⁴ Stuttmann-Osten 1940, Appendix, no pag.

³³⁵ op. cit., p. Appendix, no pag .

possibility, is that it once held the branch that symbolised Emerentia's future role as progenitor of the family that would produce both the Virgin Mary and the Saviour, according to the Carmelite legend that first perpetuated the myth of St. Emerentia.³³⁶ The positioning of the now missing hands is such that both Mary and Emerentia could have reached for or touched this branch, as could the Christ Child if he occupied a prominent, forward location as the dowel hole in Mary's leg suggests.

In this post-transitional period figure group the draperies appear much closer to the bodies. Unlike in the transitional works, the presence of human physiognomy is indicated by the knees and lower legs pushing through the loose, but closely layered fabric. The folded fabric sections which fall forward onto the distinctive semi-circular ledge to frame the now missing branch represent a rare return to the first-generation auricle flourish, updated into a more realistic shallow form turning around its own axis, to the left of the hole as the viewer would see it. On the other side is a flourish with a crumpled raised ridge centre that references similar forms animating the Waddesdon Manor saints.

The semi-circular ledge has two parallels in Lower Saxon woodcarving. It serves as a pedestal for the Virgin Mary of the *Coronation of the Virgin* group in Hannover (Figure XII-33), and can also be seen hidden under the table around which the *Holy Kindred* group in Everloh is arranged (Figure XII-34). Above the hidden ledge, at

³³⁶ Brandenburg 1987, p. 101 and p. 106.

the head of the table is St. Anne in a remarkably similar position that copies the extensive lean of the Minden St. Emerentia (Figure XII-35), suggesting that the Master of St. Benedict, like the Urban Master, occasionally re-used compositional motifs.

As is the case in other works by both carvers, a book is being actively used. In this instance, however, it is handled only cursorily, with St. Anne's fingers marking a section in an otherwise closed tome, or in the process of casually opening it. The effect of spontaneous observation of a transitory moment, however, equals that of the other occurrences.

The compositional modes and the carving of the drapery structures marks this figure group out as a work of the Master of St. Benedict that was produced close to the Waddesdon Manor saints, and the Everloh *Holy Kindred* retable, c. 1520 to 1525.

10. Altarpiece of the *Holy Kindred* with Saints Augustine and Catherine. Carved and polychromed central section of former altarpiece. 176 cm x 174 cm x 43 cm (25cm figure niches). Lime wood, restored original polychromy. Protestant chapel, Everloh. Master of St. Benedict, c. 1525-1530.

This is a small shuttered altarpiece with a central relief depicting the *Holy Kindred* arranged around a central table. In the left shutter stands St. Augustine, while the right shutter is occupied by a female saint. On the upper gallery the altarpiece bears the inscription beneath

a coat of arms gules, three wheels or. The arms are generally accepted to be those of the von Haselhorst family.³³⁷

In front of the table, three children are depicted as miniature adults, and dressed in contemporary adult clothing. Behind them, five women are arranged seated around the table, three with small children. Beyond the women, seven men are grouped in the upper half of the relief. Two of the men, and the woman at the head of the table are depicted with open books, one of the men also has a small child on his lap. Depicted are St. Anne, her three husbands Joachim, Cleophas, and Salome, her three daughters Mary with their children, together with St. Elizabeth and the infant St. John the Baptist.³³⁸

According to local tradition, this altarpiece was given to the owner of the land on which the chapel stands in 1595 by Margareta of Haselhorst, abbess of the nearby Augustinian convent in Wenningsen, either in gratitude for protection offered to the convent during times of unrest, or as part of the removal of idolatry images from churches following the Reformation.³³⁹ Today, the retable stands in the small nineteenth-century Protestant Chapel in the village of Everloh some 20 kms to the west of Hannover, which replaced an earlier structure nearby.³⁴⁰ The *Holy Kindred* scene has been assembled from several component parts; fractures in the wood can be seen running vertically in

³³⁷ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 45

³³⁸ op. cit., p. 335.

³³⁹ Strecker 1989, p. 1; Martin 86/87, pp. 9-10.

³⁴⁰ Martin 86/87, p. 5.

the centre across the length of the table, and to the left across Mary's skirt.

Stuttman and von der Osten note the loss of the shutters in 1877 which displayed paintings of the *Birth of Christ* and the *Adoration of the Magi*.³⁴¹ Bernd Martin, in an unpublished seminar script, has related the missing shutters to an entry in the 1585 inventory of the goods of Wenningsen Convent which mentions a 'homissen altar', a wooden altarpiece, with 'Tafell geburdt Christi et Trium Regnum', i.e. 'panels [depicting] birth of Christ and Three Kings'.³⁴² During the twentieth century, the retable gained a new polychromy with (erroneous) inscriptions identifying some of the depicted characters, and which was reversed in a restoration in the workshops of the NLM in 1948/1949.³⁴³ The original polychromy, as far as possible, was restored in that restoration and a later one carried out in 1972.³⁴⁴

St. Anne occupies the most prominent position at the head of the table. Behind her stand her three husbands. In front of her lies an open book. To her right sits Mary, with Jesus standing on the table and holding the orb, and Joseph standing behind her. In front of Mary and Joseph are Mary and Alpheus with their four children, one seated on Mary's lap and the other three playing in front of the table. To the left of St. Anne are Mary and Zebedee, in front of whom are their two children

³⁴¹ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, pp. 44-45.

³⁴² Martin 86/87, p. 9.

³⁴³ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 45. Image of the retable and figures pre- and post-restoration are also available on www.fotomarburg.de (accessed 300812). The captions reference the restoration to have been undertaken by the workshops of the NLM.

³⁴⁴ Dieselhorst CR 1972, pp. 1-2.

John (the Evangelist) and James the Greater). James is depicted here as a young man as opposed to the child-like John, as an allusion to his name in German, which translates as James the Elder. In front of James and John are Elizabeth and the infant John the Baptist. In the right hand niche, St. Augustine is easily recognisable by the heart which is displayed on the book he carries. The second niche is occupied by St. Catherine, who in the past has been incorrectly identified as St. Barbara.³⁴⁵

This altarpiece has been discussed extensively in the existing literature. Habicht was reminded of the Benedict Retable because of the bookrests used in this altarpiece by Alphaeus, and John and James the Greater at the opposite side of the table, which, in his view, reflected the arrangement and siting of Maurus and Placidus in the former.³⁴⁶ Busch 1931, contrarily, separated this work from both the Benedict Altarpiece and the Retable of the Master of Saints John, drawing links with the Passion Altar now in St. Magdalene instead. He noted the different linear structure of the Everloh figures in comparison to those in St. Godehard, and pointed towards the deep folds and hollows, as well as the increasingly rounded and padded fabric bulges, citing a comparison between the Everloh St. Catherine, and similar configurations in the St. Magdalene retable to support his argument. He further pointed towards the manner in which drapery gathered around a 'bottleneck' point before falling evenly towards the ground, elements

³⁴⁵ Stutmman and von der Osten 1940, p. 44; Hodgkinson 1970, p. 146.

³⁴⁶ Habicht 1917, p. 195.

which he felt had also been used to characterise the figures of the Madonna and St. Urban from the retable in the NLM.³⁴⁷ Meier discussed the Everloh retable mainly in conjunction with the so-called *Church Fathers and Evangelists* reliefs, also in the NLM, but also as part of his analysis of the lozenge hair carving style, which led to observations of similarities in the hair structures of the Holtrup Madonna and St. Catherine (in Meier's discourse still wrongly identified as Barbara). He also observed links between the tight vortex curls used to characterise some of the male figures in this retable, and the head of St. John the Baptist in Brunswick Cathedral, the attribution of which to Hinrick Stavoer was central to a number of Meier's arguments.³⁴⁸ Busch followed Meier's attribution with a revision of his own, giving the retable to the anonymous artist he now termed his 'ex-Wolter' with the previously quoted acknowledgement that this could still be Hinrick Stavoer, provided he had not carved the Enger retable.³⁴⁹ Finally, Stuttmann and von der Osten, rejecting both Meier and Busch, returned the retable to the oeuvre of the Master of St. Benedict. In their view, there existed significant similarities between the heads of Catherine (Barbara) and Mary, the wife of Zebedee, and those of St. Anne and Mary from the *Education of the Virgin* panel in Philadelphia. Furthermore, they viewed the mantle draping around Augustine's staff as an early form of a similar flourish in the costume of St. Blaise which

³⁴⁷ Busch 1931, pp. 24-25.

³⁴⁸ Meier 1937, p. 18.

³⁴⁹ Busch 1939, p. 208 and p. 214.

accompanies the Benedict Retable, and that the draperies of one of the sons of Mary and Alpheus were prefigured those of one of the Hannover *Church Fathers*. Meier's attribution of the retable to Stavoer was specifically rejected.³⁵⁰ Finally, Hodgkinson and Baxandall attributed the two female saints at Waddesdon Manor to the Master of St. Benedict following comparison with this retable in Stuttmann and von der Osten's monograph.³⁵¹ It would be small wonder, if the reader, faced with so much differing opinion, was not left feeling grateful for Stuttmann and von der Osten's confident assertions. The reality, however, is even more complex.

Beginning with St. Catherine, it is easy to see where Hogkinson's observation may have come from. With her orientalisised eyes, straight nose and thin upper lip that is offset by a more prominent lower one, her profile matches that of the Waddesdon saints. The chain motif is also carried forward in the two strands that fall across St. Catherine's breast. Her hair shows another motif that has been encountered before. The insertion of a row of small lozenges shapes to mark the transition from face to hair is a device also used to characterise Mary's hair in the Minden *Emerentia* group. The modulation of Catherine's drapery recalls the deep crevices and padded cluster formations of the two figures from the Rothschild collection, although here their interchange with the straight, linear passages appears more managed in the way the cluster zones are arranged in three horizontal bands across the feet, ankles,

³⁵⁰ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 45.

³⁵¹ Hodgkinson 1970, p. 146; Osten 1972, p. 57.

and waist. The primary structures also reference other works. The lanceate tip with overlaid projecting fold, for example, which forms part of Catherine's silhouette on the right, is also a feature of the Holtrup and *Nemeš* Madonnas. The swathe of fabric that runs diagonally across Catherine's body like a sash is also indicated in the significantly smaller statue of Mary Magdalene in the shutter of the Eime retable, there clearly visible only when viewed at eye level. The purpose of the sash is ambiguous; some photographs from the 1948/1949 restoration suggest that it delineates an arrowhead configuration that falls over Catherine's left hip.³⁵²

That configuration becomes clearer when comparing it with the corresponding side of the figure of St. Augustine. Due to St. Augustine's orientation within the niche, the correlation between the sash and the arrowhead structure are clearly visible. St. Augustine's face is remarkably close to that of the Henneckenrode St. Urban, with any differences introduced to articulate the more advanced age of the Everloh figure. While Augustine's face is squarer than Urban's features both reveal a similar jaw line with the former's prominently squared jowl just beginning to emerge in the face of the latter. The almond eyes and straight, flattened nose, as well as the mouth and chin areas, are identical. The facial character lines, which the polychromy emphasised in the case of the St. Urban, are escalated in St. Augustine's face and neck in remarkable naturalism. The freely moving, in parts three-

³⁵² <http://www.bildindex.de/?+pgesamt:%27everloh%27#|home>; accessed 310812.

dimensional, lappets in their twists and turns recall the agile plaits of the Waddesdon Manor figures, and represent another device popular amongst Hildesheim carvers. The hair, which emerges beneath the mitre in three distinct tufts, has been carved using a finely detailed form of the lozenge structure, with numerous parallel cuts and the occasional thin breakaway curl. As already stated, St. Augustine's drapery, like that of Catherine, forms a sash that delineates an arrowhead cluster. Alongside this, and in place of Catherine's lanceate tip, St. Augustine's mantle forms a fold that doubles back on itself twice, and reminds in both shape and location of Stavoer's Schäufolein-derived backwards fold. The left hand holds what remains of a crozier, around which the opposite end of Augustine's mantle has wrapped itself. The same motif recurs in the figure of St. Blaise from the St. Godehard group, whose drapery also echoes that of St Augustine in some detail.

If the discussion of the two supporting figures has already flagged up parallels to a number of works, its position within the wider context of Hildesheim sculpture can be expanded upon even further through the *Holy Kindred* panel. Alpheus and the most centrally located of Anne's three husbands have facial features that are very close to those of St. Maurice from the retable in the NLM. The facial types of the other four male characters share a common source with those of the *Martyrdom of St. Elmo* panel from Klein-Escherde (Figure XII-36). St. Elizabeth (Figure XII-37), who is seated on the right, wears a very distinctive headdress that is also worn by St. Anne from the *Emerentia Selbviert*

group in in Minden cathedral (Figure XII-38), and by Mary Magdalene in the Retable of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary-retable from Eime (attributed to the *Master of the West Choir Retable* in St. Michael's, Figure XII-39).³⁵³ The final connection in this group concerns the rolled up brim of the hat worn by the first of Anne's husbands. This not only points towards the retable in Enger, where these rims have first been encountered by this thesis, but also brings another, somewhat unexpected, addition into the discussion – the retable which today stands in the church of St. Mary Magdalene in Hildesheim (Figure XII-40). There the rolled up brims also occur, as this illustration of Longinus shows (Figure XII-41). Busch has also pointed out the similarity between the sleeve structure of St. Catherine's costume in Everloh, and that of the sleeves in the St. Magdalene retable, and this correlation can be readily followed.³⁵⁴ Not only do both retables show the same tendency to the gathering of what would essentially be excess fabric with numerous folds pushing liberally against each other, they also repeat certain design formulae, such as the vertical fall of the sleeve over the upper arm, which changes to a horizontal arrangement over the lower. Two of the 'children' from the Everloh retable show this configuration, as does Mary Magdalene in the St. Magdalene retable. The commonalities between the two retables, however, go further. For example, Mary Alpheus and one of the mourning figures beneath the cross not only have very similar facial features, they are also both

³⁵³ Attributions according to Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, *Addendum* and p. 58.

³⁵⁴ Busch 1931, p. 24.

carved to the same high standard of execution. Another is the fine detailing of the hairnets that is evident both in the figure of the younger St. James the Greater and two of the characters from the St. Magdalene altarpiece, one mocking Christ, the other raising the arm to beat him as he carries the cross. The suggestion is that again we have an overlap between supposedly separate workshops. Unusually, however, this time the overlaps occur not between the bespoke production and its more commercialised arm, but between two seemingly unconnected productions of equally high quality and distinction.

11. Console Bracket H 4.004, 'The Virgin and Child'. Oak with multiple layers of polychromy. 84.8 cm x 35.5 cm x 26.5 cm. Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim, Workshop of the Master of St. Benedict, c. 1510-1515.

Inventory Reference H4.004 refers to a console bracket with an image of Virgin Mary and Child shown in three-quarter profile standing beneath the remnants of a Gothic architectural canopy. The original location of this bracket is not documented. It is shown in a watercolour by Richard Heyer as part of a composite scene made up from various museum pieces, including a cross beam with a known provenance. Studies which have extended that provenance to the two brackets shown as part of the same composite, however, do so erroneously, as

Iris Alles has pointed out.³⁵⁵ The carvings have been coloured several times; Petra Brockow has uncovered three different eye contours in the thickly layered polychromy.³⁵⁶ The polychromy has been applied to the display face only, the sides of the bracket have been kept in monochrome. Dendrochronological analysis has dated the bracket to no earlier than 1510.³⁵⁷

The Virgin Mary is shown supporting the Christ child on her left arm. In her right, she holds a now unidentifiable object which the Child is also grasping with both hands. The rounded nature of the object proposes it to have been either the orb, and apple or a pomegranate; since in the large majority of similar depictions the Child is holding an orb, it can be suggested with some certainty that this also applies to the object here. Mary wears the crown of the 'Queen of Heaven', and is depicted with her hair falling over her shoulders in two thick plaits.

12. Emerentia Selbviert. Carved, polychromed and gilded figure group depicting Mary and the Christ child, Mary's mother Anne, and Anne's mother Emerentia, 84.5 cm x 57.5 cm x 27.9 cm, hardwood, some original polychromy. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Urban Master of Hildesheim, c. 1515-1520.

Mary and St. Anne are seated on a bench, behind which St. Emerentia is standing. Mary holds the Christ Child who is reaching

³⁵⁵ Alles 1993, p. 31

³⁵⁶ Brockow 1990, p. 10.

³⁵⁷ Alles 1993, p. 43.

across her to touch the outstretched right hand of St. Anne. With her left hand, St. Anne supports a closed book on her lap. Behind Mary and Anne stands St. Emerentia. In her right hand she holds the branch that was at the centre of the Carmelite vision while her right hand supports an open book.

The group was acquired by J. Pierpoint Morgan from the French art dealer Georges Hoentschel. It was gifted to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York by Morgan in 1916.³⁵⁸ There are no records of restorations or other measures.³⁵⁹

This image group belongs to the very rich body of works relating to the progeny and kinship of St. Anne that resulted from the sudden surge in popularity of this saint in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. It is expressed through the sudden emergence of this genre in both two-dimensional and three-dimensional arts, caused by the publication in the early 1490s of a number of revisionist tracts of her life, coupled with a targeted promulgation of her cult through a number of Humanist writers also concerned with wider aspects of social, religious, and political reform.³⁶⁰ The cult became particularly popular in Northern Germany, where it merged concerns for personal salvation, a rich culture of ritual obedience, and ritual interaction with imagery with newly defined ideals about family life and marriage as expressed by the

³⁵⁸ MetMus16.32.208

³⁵⁹ Korn180512.

³⁶⁰ Nixon 2004, p. 42; Brandenburg 1987, p. 124.

emerging new social elite – the urban, merchant middle class.³⁶¹ As well as popularising St Anne at the centre of the concept of human salvation, the imagery also located her in the context of her wider kinship which, apart from the Saviour and his mother, also comprised St. John the Baptist, five apostles, one disciple, and two important early Rhineland bishops.³⁶²

The emergence of Emerentia as a separate identity in this iconography is likely to be the result of Carmelite intervention. Through their claim to have envisioned Emerentia's role as the tree that grows the branch (Anne) which bears the fruit (Mary) from which germinates the flower (Christ), the Carmelites not only fabricated an illustrious foundation story.³⁶³ They also presented themselves both as favoured by God with visions of his will, and as privileged interpreters of that will. The Carmelite order was certainly implicated in the promulgation of the cult of St. Anne in the late fifteenth century.³⁶⁴ It is therefore conceivable that the instigation of an Emerentia-related sub-cult was the result of the order's attempts to ring-fence some of the devotional benefits of a cult that had very rapidly grown out of all proportion. This particular figure group, showing Emerentia holding the branch that stood at the centre of the Carmelite vision and interpretation, certainly conjures up a Carmelite connection in the commissioning of the piece.

³⁶¹ Nixon 2004, pp. 51-52, pp. 73-74.

³⁶² Brandenburg 1987, p. 105; Nixon 2004, p. 1.

³⁶³ Brandenburg 1987, p. 101 and p. 106.

³⁶⁴ Nixon 2004, p. 31 and p. 85.

The distinctly round faces of this figure group instantly locate it in the oeuvre of the Urban Master of Hildesheim. Mary and her son are given virtually identical features, a childlike appearance with full cheeks and small chins tucked in above a chubby jaw, throat, and neck passage. Their fleshiness is emphasised by the deliberate carving of additional feature lines where jaw meets chin, and where the conflicting forces of neck and shoulders create small compressions under the ears and around the side of the neck. In keeping with an infant's physiognomy, the Christ Child has further feature lines on the elbows, lower arms, wrists, thighs, knees, and ankles. The purpose of this is to distinguish the matriarchal role of St. Anne from the subordinate role of the Virgin Mary as Anne's daughter, and to emphasise Saint Anne's position as progenitor of Mary and Jesus through the creation of a visual dependence between the two child-like figures and the matronly saint.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁵ Nixon 2004, p. 56.

13. Altarpiece with Mary, St. John Evangelist, and St. John Baptist. Carved and polychromed, three-figured altarpiece with pendant saints in double-tiered shutters. Dimensions unknown. Village Church, Nätebow-Bollewick. Lime wood and oak (?), Anonymous Follower of the Urban Master of Hildesheim, 1522.

This altarpiece is known to the author only from photographs and references to it in Knüvener 2011.³⁶⁶ The central figure of the Virgin Mary presenting the Christ child quotes the fold structures and extensions of the Urban Master's figures based on the *Nemeš* Madonna without the crescent moon. The attendant figures of St. John Evangelist and St. John Baptist recall the spirit, but not the technical ability, of Lower Saxon sculptors – the orientation and head of St. John Evangelist, for example, echo that of the same figure from the Enger Crucifixion without being sufficiently detailed to be deemed a copy as such. The unidentified saint with the skull attribute has been posed in the same exaggerated T-shaped stance that also characterises some of the apostles in Enger and Holtrup, while the anonymous female saint next to him quotes the primary structures of the Crucifixion Virgin in Enger.

The retable is unlikely to have been exported to Nätebow-Bollewick from the Brunswick – Hildesheim region. As Knüvener has noted, the retable architecture conforms to other examples of locally

³⁶⁶ op. cit., p. 256 and p. 258. I also thank E. Prillwitz for generously making his photographs available to me.

produced works, and his monograph illustrates a number of other Madonna figures in the region that present the Christ child in similar pose, including examples from Mellen, Pröttlin, Prenzlau and Dobbin.³⁶⁷

The retable has acquired an interesting, for the first quarter of the sixteenth century unusual, polychromy. It can be seen in the figure of St. John Baptist, whose hair shirt has been painted with a succession of black horizontal lines. The Virgin Mary's hems have been overpainted in distinctive lettering in red lacquer paint separated by carnations. The carnation pattern in particular suggests these additions to have been made in then nineteenth century. The added polychromy would attract no further attention were it not for the fact that in the course of the research for this thesis, a second example has been found that bear the same additions. The so-called *Brabantian* retable in the church of Maria-in-pratis in Soest has a retable that stands in close connection to the Enger retable and the workshop of the Urban Master (see catalogue number 19). There the same additions to the polychromy have been noted. The stripes can be seen in the Annunciation scene where they appear on the angel Gabriel and the drape of honour behind the Virgin Mary, while the red lacquer lettering is particularly noticeable on the shoulder of St. John Evangelist in the crucifixion scene.

³⁶⁷ Knüvener 2011, pp. 260-261, ill. 708, 710, 711, 712.

14. Madonna and twelve Apostles. Carved and polychromed figures formerly set into an altarpiece. Madonna 104 cm x 41 cm x 15 cm; Apostles 60-61 cm x 20-29 cm x 12 cm.³⁶⁸ Lime wood, some original polychromy. Parish Church, Holtrup. Urban Master of Hildesheim and workshop, 1525.

This group comprises thirteen figures, the Madonna with the Christ Child depicted as the Woman of the Apocalypse, and twelve smaller Apostles, which have come from an altarpiece context. The Madonna and Child occupy a niche in the north wall of the parish church, whereas the apostles are arranged in a shutter-like setting on the east wall behind the altar. According to Dietmar Wohl, the altarpiece was described in an eighteenth-century, Antiquarian source as a 'heavily gilded and valuable altarpiece dated to the year 1525'.³⁶⁹ It appears to have still existed in its original form in the 1820s as von Ledebur described it in his survey notes. These imply, however, that by the time of his visit, the gilding and date had been overpainted.³⁷⁰ By 1893, the altarpiece had been dismantled, and the figures incorporated into an organ gallery. The black-and-white photographs of 1893 also give an indication of the somewhat neutralised colour scheme of the figures at that time. In 1928 the figures were re-assembled in a specially made shrine which housed them until 1955, when the choir was restructured and the new altar installed. At that point, the apostles were distributed

³⁶⁸ Wohl 1984, p. 179.

³⁶⁹ Anton Gottfried Schlichthaber 1723, cited in Wohl 1984, p. 172.

³⁷⁰ Ledebur 1825 (2009), p. 39.

around the church walls, placed on individual pedestals.³⁷¹ Since 1984, the apostles have been displayed in their current setting behind the altarpiece.³⁷² The original polychromy of the figures was restored in 1938. Further conservation measures were undertaken in 1966 and 1978. The last documented restoration was carried out by Dietmar Wohl in 1983 details of which were published by the restorer in 1984.³⁷³

Details of a commissioner are not recorded. Elements of the church go back to the twelfth century. In 1517 the choir was extended or remodelled which may, in turn, have led to the commissioning of a new retable.³⁷⁴ Von Ledebur's notes the existence of an aristocratic family von Holtorp, which he found documented in local archives until 1394. He also notes local road names that suggest the existence in the past of a castle locally, and proposed descendants of these as commissioners of the retable.³⁷⁵ A Johan Holtorpe is mentioned in a charter of the Monastery of St. Michael in Lüneburg dated 06 October 1520, and it takes little effort to find the family name continuing into the eighteenth century.³⁷⁶ A definitive link to the village of Holtrup, the –trup ending of which, according to von Ledebur, is an ambiguation of the earlier –torp – cannot be established.

The Holtrup apostle figures are unique in their extraordinary conception. It is unusual to find single, standing figures that have a

³⁷¹ Wohl 1984, p. 172.

³⁷² *op. cit.*, p. 177.

³⁷³ *op. cit.*, p. 172.

³⁷⁴ Ledebur 1825 (2009), p. 39.

³⁷⁵ *op. cit.*, p. 40.

³⁷⁶ Web AIDA Holtrup (accessed 180812).

height to width ratio of almost 2:1, as James the Greater and Bartholomew do here. Another unfamiliar feature is the manner in which the drapery is being held (Simon, Peter), or is arranged to fall outward over one arm in a large swathe (Philip). Equally extraordinary is the manner in which Andrew is posed leaning into his cross in a half-stride. Their animation, characterization and individuality all suggest that a carver whose creativity was being curtailed in the design and execution of the main figure of this retable. The inclusion of a number of figures that clearly share a common model either with other works in the same context or other works from the same workshop output again suggest a need for compromise in the manufacture of the altarpiece. Whether this was due to budgetary or time constraints cannot be reconstructed, although the contemporaneous completion of the Enger retable may constitute a clue. The frequent recourse to models that can be shown for the workshop of the Urban Master, however, may suggest the existence of production processes that were more commercialized than has so far been considered or accepted.

- 15. Altarpiece of St. Gregory's Mass. Carved and polychromed, tiered altarpiece depicting in the central section St. Gregory's Mass, flanked in the upper tier by Anna Selbdritt and the Virgin and Christ Child, and in the lower tier by saints Cosmas and Damian. In the shutters, depictions of the twelve apostles, several with lost attributes. 129 cm x 284 cm. Lime wood or poplar, some original polychromy with nineteenth-century additions. Domschatz, Aachen. Urban Master and workshop, with anonymous workshop (Bartold Kastrop?), c. 1525.**

This is an altarpiece of typically Lower Saxon structure, with a single pair of shutters. The *Mass of St. Gregory* relief is flanked by four figures in niches depicting the Virgin and Child above St. Cosmas on the left and St. Damian underneath *Anna Selbdritt* on the right. In the shutters the twelve apostles are arranged across two tiers. Their attributes have been lost over time; those that remain are later replacements which are unlikely to be correct in every case. The identifications used in this thesis are based not on those attributes alone, but the comparison with other apostle groups, particularly those in Enger and Holtrup. This places Peter, John and Paul (currently holding Bartholomew's knife) above Simon, James the Greater and Judas Thaddeus in the left hand shutter as seen by the viewer, and Philip, Andrew and James the Less above Matthew, Bartholomew and Thomas in the right hand shutter. The identity of Philip must be

regarded as speculative since there is no 'typical' corresponding figure that shows the apostle in his customary guise as a balding or tonsured middle-aged man included in this retable.

Nothing is known of the retable's provenance.³⁷⁷ Ernst Günther Grimme has suggested that the retable was acquired for the altar in the chapel dedicated to St. Anne in the Cathedral at an unknown point in time.³⁷⁸ It is possible that the retable was originally produced for local context, that is, a location in or near Hildesheim. There, a chapel dedicated to St. Gregory was located in the cloisters of the monastery of St. Godehard.³⁷⁹ A confraternity dedicated to saints Cosmas and Damian was also based at the church of St. Paul.³⁸⁰ The central iconography of St. Gregory's Mass, however, was such a popular subject during the pre-Reformation period that it would have been equally possible to produce such a retable speculatively for sale on the open market.³⁸¹

The central scene, depicting the moment in which Christ appeared to St. Gregory in a vision in the guise of the *Man of Sorrows*, does not appear in any of the published lives of St. Gregory. The subject had a very short iconographic life of around 140 years, emerging initially mainly on epitaphs and in wall paintings. From c. 1450 a sudden

³⁷⁷ Personal communication, Dr. Minckenberg 09 July 2013.

³⁷⁸ Grimme 1973, p. 134.

³⁷⁹ Krumwiede 1960, p. 116.

³⁸⁰ op. cit., p. 120.

³⁸¹ Lepie, Minkenbergh 2010, p. 62. For the speculative production of altarpieces and part-finished altarpieces, see; Filip Vermeulen, 'The Commercialization of Art: Painting and Sculpture in Sixteenth Century Antwerp' in Wynn Ainsworth 2001, p. 50.

increase in popularity resulted in its use for altarpieces, as a subject for small-scale devotional paintings, stained glass windows, and textiles. It was also widely disseminated as single sheet prints, of which the best known is the print by Israel von Meckenem. It is a sign of its enduring appeal during pre-Reformation times that an academic database of depictions of this subject, which lays no claim to completeness, lists 516 extant examples.³⁸² One of the reasons for the widespread appeal of St. Gregory's Mass as a subject, as well as its abrupt disappearance after the Reformation, may lie in its association with papal indulgences. In a number of examples, including Meckenem's print and the retable under discussion here, the illustration is accompanied by a text promising relief from purgatory in exchange for prayers being said before this image.

16. Two fragments of a Passion Retable (The *Oppler* Panels), 49cm x 83cm and 40cm x 84cm; hardwood with original polychromy, some retouched. Acquired 1913. Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover. Urban Master of Hildesheim and workshop, c. 1525 to 1530.

This pair of panels from an unknown passion altarpiece depicting *Pilate washing his Hands* and *Christ Bearing the Cross* was acquired by the museum in 1913 from the sale of the collection of the noted Hanover architect Edwin Oppler (1831 – 1880).³⁸³ The two scenes were

³⁸² Web Gregorsmesse (accessed 2008102); Meier 2006, pp. 12-13.

³⁸³ Dates according to Web Oppler, accessed 21 July 2013.

carved from an unidentified hardwood; the original sale catalogue cites the material as being oak, while Stuttmann and von der Osten proposed alder, although a definitive independent analysis of the wood has never been undertaken.³⁸⁴

Nothing is known of the panels' earlier history, and no provenance is recorded in the sale catalogue.³⁸⁵ It is impossible to assess fully the condition of the reliefs at the time of the sale from the photographs included in the catalogue, although the black-and-white images indicate at least two major interventions to have taken place.³⁸⁶ The catalogue photograph (Figure XII-42) shows the two panels assembled into a single frame as a two-tier arrangement, separated by a narrow ornamental moulding representing a neo-Gothic interpretation of the curved dagger tracery motif. The condition of the polychromy at that point was far from stable; the black-and-white photographic reproductions clearly showing numerous locations in both panels where polychromy losses had exposed the gesso layer beneath.

The separation of the reliefs from their retable setting offers a rare opportunity to study their production. The *Pilate washing his Hands* relief is made up of three roughly equal sections joined by two butterfly joints, and appears to have been hollowed out after assembly. Above the left-hand side some damage has been made good, using pink putty

³⁸⁴ Sale Cat. Lepke 1913, p. 27, No. 109; Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 81; Osten 1957, p. 158. Dr. Herpers of the NLM has confirmed that no wood analysis has ever been undertaken, Personal Communication Dr. Iris Herpers 05/07/12.

³⁸⁵ Sale Cat. Lepke 1913, p. 27, No. 109.

³⁸⁶ *op. cit.*, Pl. 21.

and a section of wood which has been inserted against the grain. The repair is also visible in the illustration accompanying the sale catalogue. The *Carrying of the Cross* relief also comprises three sections: two halves of almost equal width joined by a single butterfly joint, which have been attached to a horizontal, narrow stepped section at the base, presumably by dowels since there are no other means visible. This assembly of one shallow and two upright pieces to make a single, larger one reminds of the Enger *Lamentation* scene, where the pre-restoration photograph reveals a similar construction.

The first observable intervention is the one which resulted in the two panels being assembled into the single frame, as shown in the sales catalogue illustration. It is possible that at the same time the damaged sections of the *Calvary* cross and the missing section behind Pilate's servant were replaced. The second intervention must have taken place after 1913, once the panels had been transferred to the museum. At that point, the panels were removed from their frame, and the missing polychromy touched in. Since then a small loss has occurred on the right of the *Road to Calvary* panel, where a section is missing from the edge of the panel. The resinous deposit which has run from the rock behind Christ's hand over the rock face, the cause of which can no longer be ascertained, also has to be a more recent

addition, since it is not visible on the photograph used for the 1957 catalogue of the museum's sculpture collection.³⁸⁷

17. Altarpiece illustrating the Passion of Christ. Carved and painted altarpiece of the Passion of Christ, 630 cm x 269 cm, lime wood with remnants of old polychromy and late-nineteenth-century additions, replacement oak case, extensively restored 1898 – 1900. Signed (A) Mester Hinrick Stavoer and dated 1525. Sub-signed (B) wiederhergestellt: 1900: Hans: Hampke: Schleswig.³⁸⁸ Figure of St. Denis, 105 cm, carved and polychromed. St. Denis, Enger/Westfalen. Workshop of Urban Master, 1525.

Hinrick Stavoer's signature retable stands in the Collegiate church dedicated to St. Denis in Enger, a small market town some seven kilometres north-west of Herford (Appendix A, Map 2). The altarpiece has a single pair of shutters which are now fixed in the open state. It is not possible to say whether the retable was once of a single or double-shuttered format. The paintings which would have adorned the external shutter surfaces are now lost. The carved pictorial programme of the interior comprises an over-height central Crucifixion scene, flanked by a double-tiered arrangement of twelve illustrations from Christ's Passion. Above the outer edge of each shutter, two additional panels are attached depicting the legends of St. George and St. Eustace

³⁸⁷ Osten 1957, p. 159, Fig. 177.

³⁸⁸ Restored: 1900: Hans: Hampke: [of] Schleswig.

respectively. Above the central scene, two sections of non-symmetrical superstructure, carved to resemble intertwining foliage and flowers, flank a central shaft. This replaces an earlier arrangement of a statue of St. Denis (Figure XII-43) standing above the *crucifixion* scene between two shallower sections of foliate tracery (Figure XII-44). The foliate theme is also carried forward in the hanging fasciae that terminate each of the individual compartments, and in the narrow band that is inserted beneath the Crucifixion scene; the latter a common addition to Lower Saxon retables. Slender twisted columns mask the divisions between the individual compartments, and maintain visual unity across the retable interior. The retable is supported by a separately constructed predella that has been renewed with the rest of the casing. A single shelf contains figures of the twelve apostles in two compartments. Foliate tracery fasciae and twisted columns maintain the visual unity between casing and predella, whose plain, arched side extensions, have been painted with a nineteenth-century acanthus leaf design.

The earliest mention of the retable is made in Joachim H. Hagedorn's *Entwurf Vom Zustand der Religion Vor der Reformation überhaupt Vornämlich in Absicht Der Grafschaft Ravensberg* of 1747. The discussion here, however, is limited to the retelling of a pious, but highly improbable legend suggesting that the retable had originally been intended for one of the churches in nearby Osnabruck, seat of the diocese and regional trade centre, but horses pulling the cart had

refused to carry it beyond Enger.³⁸⁹ Regardless of veracity, the Hagedorn legend does suggest an early sense of value attached to the retable - implicit in the suggestion that it may originally have been intended for a much grander church in a more important location -, as well as a tacit appreciation of the retable's origins outside of the local area.

Thereafter, several nineteenth-century inventories of ancient monuments and artefacts record the existence of the retable. Of these, two are of interest to this enquiry, the first compiled by the scholar Leopold von Ledebur in 1825 (issued in 2009 as an edited re-print), and the second published in 1908 by Albert Ludorff, Conservator-in-Chief for what was then the Province of Westfalia. Although both accounts describe the altarpiece only in rudimentary terms, and without art historical appraisal, Ledebur's supplementary material and the pre-restoration photographs included in Ludorff's publication represent valuable additional records.

Through these and archive documentation held by the regional administration of the Protestant church, no fewer than five restorations can be documented. The first took place before c. 1850, as restorer Hans Hampke records as part of his pre-restoration inspection communications, although the exact details are not recorded.³⁹⁰ A further intervention was noted by Hampke in 1898 to have taken place '...some forty to fifty years ago'. This is also alluded to in surviving

³⁸⁹ Hagedorn, quoted in Kornfeld 1932, p. 65.

³⁹⁰ PS LkA EKvW 4.61–192, I, p. 1.

supplementary documentation in the archives, dated back to 1849, but, again, without details of the works carried out. It is possible that this marks the restoration during which the casing was replaced. The third event was the comprehensive restoration carried out by Hampke at his Schleswig workshop 1898 to 1901. This is documented through the surviving, albeit fragmentary, correspondence between Hampke and the church authorities, as well as an essay published in 1901 by Hampke's colleague and confidant, Carl Mühlke. Ludorff's photographs document the poor state of the individual reliefs prior to their transport to Hampke's studio (Figure XII-45). In his initial report, Hampke described the reliefs as '...in critical condition, often reduced to nothing but wood dust and kept in shape only by their gesso layer.'³⁹¹ Work undertaken by Hampke included the permanent reversal of the insect infestation by placing each section in a vacuum chamber infused with poisonous chemicals – a revolutionary treatment, which, according to Mühlke, had been developed by Hampke himself.³⁹² The fragile structure of the individual scenes and figures was then injected with a wood/resin mixture that not only preserved the carvings under their polychromy in their original form, but also significantly increased the weight of each item, in some cases more than doubling it.³⁹³ Once set, several layers of paint were chemically removed to reveal the original polychromy, which, Mühlke reported, consisted of paint and gilding,

³⁹¹ PS LkA EKvW 4.61–192 I, p. 1.

³⁹² Mühlke 1901, p. 78.

³⁹³ Op. cit., p. 78 and PS LkA EKvW 4.61–192 IV, p. 2.

including 'polished gold, matt gold and silver'.³⁹⁴ Lost sections were re-carved and attached, and the original polychromy was supplemented where missing. The arcaded tops above each scene were replaced by newly carved ones, the design of which was based upon the surviving sections in the superstructure. Finally, the rear walls were made good; the sources are ambiguous as to whether the existing backboards were repolychromed, or whether they were completely replaced. Discussions also took place with Ludorff over the correct order of the scenes in their compartments. In a letter to the church authorities dated Nov 11th, 1900, Hampke gives vent to his frustration about Ludorff's instruction to change the order, pointing out that the scenes were not universally interchangeable in their compartments, and that some back boards would have to be completely re-made as a result.³⁹⁵ Examining the retable today, it would appear that Hampke lost the argument, as the order today is different from that shown on Ludorff's photograph. The majority of scenes have also clearly been modified in order to fit them into their recesses (Figure XII-46). The painted acanthus pattern on the predella is also likely to be a Hampke introduction. Not only is a different pattern shown on Ludorff's image, the pattern also occurs elsewhere in the church, namely, on a smaller former retable which in the past had been converted into a shrine for the display of relics. The final surviving letter in the archive indicates that further items from the church had been sent to Hampke for restoration after the altarpiece was

³⁹⁴ Mühlke 1901, p. 78.

³⁹⁵ PS LkA EKvW 4.61–192 IV, pp. 2 and 3.

completed, and the pattern similarity between the two altarpieces confirms both to have gone through Hampke's workshop (Figures XII-47 and XII-48).

The fourth intervention occurred in 1915 by a local sculptor in wood and stone, identified from his invoice as W. Hartmann.³⁹⁶ The invoice describes the works carried out as 'augmentation works', and a note in the files of the department responsible for the conservation of church property in Westfalia indicates this to relate to the removal of St. Denis from the retable superstructure.³⁹⁷ Why St. Denis was removed is not recorded. The archive evidence relates to repairs and conservation of the church fabric only, although a memorandum also discusses the repositioning of the retable deeper into the choir.³⁹⁸ At the time, the choir apse was dominated by a large fresco showing Christ as pantocrator, while the retable still had St. Denis as part of the superstructure, creating a visual conflict between the Ruler of All and the retable's dedicatory saint. That conflict appears to have necessitated the removal of St. Denis from the superstructure and prompted his installation on the first pillar of the north side of the choir. With the removal of the figure from the upper tier of the structure, the original tracery fragments (Figure XII-49) were extended to their present format (Figure XII-50), and the spindle installed as the new centrepiece

³⁹⁶ PS LkA EKvW 4.61–190, p. 1.

³⁹⁷ Personal Communication Dr. Ulrich Althöfer, Landeskirchliches Baureferat EKvW 02/02/11.

³⁹⁸ PS LkA EKvW 4.61–190, there referred to in meeting minutes, Personal Communication Wolfgang Günther, Archivist, Landeskirchliches Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche von Westfalen 29/04/11.

(Figure XII-51). The final conservation and cleaning of the altarpiece was undertaken by a local artist and conservation specialist in 1973, after more restoration work and archaeological excavations had taken place in the church.³⁹⁹ Since the retable fabric is once more showing signs of wear and there seems to be no record of a more recent conservation-technological assessment, such should be considered now. In several compartments the rear walls are beginning to buckle and crack, causing sometimes severe splitting of wood, gesso and gilding. The figure of St. Denis and the background of the *Crucifixion* scene behind Christ's right hand on the Cross are also beginning to show damage.

As already indicated, the painted scenes which would have once adorned the outside of the shutters can no longer be reconstructed, although they are likely to have included references to the legend of the dedicatory saint of the retable. The carved interior reliefs depict incidents from the Passion of Christ in thirteen scenes, with the Crucifixion taking up the most prominent position in the central shrine. Hans Kornfeld has shown that all but three of the passion scenes were based on woodcuts produced by Hans Schäufelein for Dr. Ulrich Pinder's publication *Speculum passionis domini nostri Jhesu Christi*, published in 1507. The exceptions are the *Betrayal of Christ*, the *Bearing of the Cross*, and the *Crucifixion*. According to Kornfeld, the *Betrayal of Christ* was carved after a Passion cycle by Lucas Cranach

³⁹⁹ Personal Communication, Dr. Ulrich Althöfer, Landeskirchliches Baureferat EKvW 20/02/11; Ewe 2002.

the Elder from 1509, while the scene depicting the *Bearing of the Cross* quotes from Albrecht Dürer's *Great Passion* book of 1498.⁴⁰⁰ For the *Crucifixion* scene, Kornfeld suggests elements to have come from Hans Baldung Grien's contributions to Pinder's *Speculum*, but without specifying them. At the same time, Kornfeld acknowledged the possibility of further identifications being made 'once the German graphic output of the early sixteenth century was sufficiently [widely] published', suggesting that some of his proposals might have failed to convince even their proposer entirely.⁴⁰¹ The two Saints' reliefs Kornfeld associated with two illustrations by Dürer; his observation that the *St. George* panel constituted a 'more liberal interpretation [of the graphic source]', however, indicates the tentative nature of his suggestion. For the apostles in the predella and the statue of St. Denis Kornfeld proclaimed himself unable to offer specific graphic sources.⁴⁰²

In terms of the Schüfelein and Cranach sources, there can be little doubt of the accuracy of Kornfeld's observations, so that these require no further reiteration. It seems noteworthy that for the *Betrayal* the Cranach version was chosen in favour of the same scene from Schüfelein's cycle. From a production point of view, there are no apparent reasons why the Cranach version might have been favoured; the difference is purely iconographic with Cranach's version showing Christ miraculously healing Malchus after Peter's sword strike had

⁴⁰⁰ Kornfeld 1932, pp. 59-63.

⁴⁰¹ op. cit., p. 62.

⁴⁰² op. cit., p. 63.

separated the latter from his ear, whereas Schäufelein's woodcut shows this incident about to happen.

Unlike the *Carrying of the Cross* relief, the *Crucifixion* panel (Figure XII-52) continues to elude attribution to a single graphic source. The writer cannot follow Kornfeld's suggestion that it may have been inspired by Hans Baldung Grien's *Crucifixion*, except perhaps in the quotation of individual figures such as that of the Virgin Mary which is based on the same figure from a painted scene now in Berlin, but whose drapery has been modified to include the typical arrowhead formation (Figure XII-53). Nor does the scene bear any relation to Schäufelein's illustration for the *Speculum*, which depicts a three-figure *Golgotha Group* of Christ on the Cross, flanked by the grieving Mary and St. John. A possible source from Dürer's works is also not apparent. Instead, other figures or figure groups appear to quote a number of sources. For example, two of the mounted figures to the right of the Cross were copied from Lucas Cranach the Elder's woodcut *The Martyrdom of Saint Philippus*, as the detail of the unnatural knot in the horse's tail documents (Figure XII-54). Conversely, the tumbling man losing the fight for Christ's cloak is more likely to have come from one of Martin Schongauer's prints (Figure XII-55).

While the St. Eustace relief clearly relied on Dürer's engraving of 1501, as Kornfeld had already noted, the source for the St George

scene is less readily identified.⁴⁰³ Dürer's interpretations of this subject are restricted to depictions of the saint and the dragon without landscape or additional figures included in the background. Instead, the Enger scene appears to be a construct of the legend of St. George that imitates the layout of the St. Eustace scene in the order in which key elements of the narrative are posed within the relief. It is therefore more likely that both scenes epitomise popular and easily recognizable forms of iconographic 'shorthand' representations of their subjects that have their root in a number of sources.

Within the Passion scenes, clear iconographic distinction is made between the representations of biblical figures and the ordinary populace through the deliberate use, in some instances misuse, of items of head- and footwear. In the Enger retable, the scenes depicting generic crowd scenes always attract attention through the inclusion of often out-sized and entirely impractical, elaborately styled headwear, while scenes such as *The Arrest in the Garden*, the *Christ bearing the Cross* and, possibly, *Ecce Homo* all contain figure groups where shoes are partially or wholly missing, stockings of different patterns are worn by the same individual, or part of the legwear has been cut away. As Andrea Reichel has shown, and has already been discussed in Chapter VI, the depiction of garments in general was not a matter of coincidence, artistic preference or personal taste, but part of a visual language that strictly codified the participants of such crowd scenes.

⁴⁰³ Kornfeld 1932, p. 63.

The hats, missing trouser legs, and partial or extinct footwear Reichel explains as being the result of losses incurred during gambling, thus characterising the participants as socially, morally, and intellectually deficient.⁴⁰⁴ By contrast, religious figures are modestly robed in figure-concealing cloaks, long habits and either wearing a headdress, in the case of females, or bare-headed. In using components of dress to codify the moral stance of the participants in these narrations, clear distinctions are drawn between the 'good' and 'bad' elements of the biblical story. Their inclusion in the Enger retable indicates not only the artist's awareness of this complex visual tradition, but also suggests that other intricate details designed to distinguish individual characters might have been lost or given different meaning as a result of several restorers re-interpreting the retable in the light of their own times.

Kornfeld's discourse was unable to identify possible graphic sources for the twelve apostles in the predella or the figure of St. Denis. This may be because of the easily recognisable nature of their depictions through the inclusion of attributes, but also, in case of the apostles at least, because of, their relatively low quality in comparison to the St. Denis, which suggests they should be viewed as generic rather than bespoke production. Noteworthy, however, is the distinctive pose of the apostle Andrew (Figure XII-56). The same figure composition recurs in retables in Eime (Figure XII-57), and in Ribbesbüttel (Figure XII-58). In both Enger and Ribbesbüttel the same

⁴⁰⁴ Reichel 1998, p. 93.

pose is also adapted for the depiction of St. Bartholomew (Figures XII-59 and XII-60). This again points towards the reuse of existing workshop models.

In all instances the hair formation conforms to the so-called 'bunched' type typically found in Lower Saxon woodcarving, although it varies in its application by degrees. In many instances it appears excessively voluminous, such as in Pilate's Beard. In others, however, it is carved in the most intricate detail even at exceptionally small scale, following the contours of the head closely. Characteristic is also the manner in which individual strands often run out into single, thin curls. The bunches are usually finely ridged. There are, of course, instances where the ridges are less evident; assistants' contributions or restoration consequences can be equally likely causes for this.

As with head and legwear, costume defines the social environment of its wearer. Holy figures, or those of saintly character, are defined by the voluminous nature of their cloaks, which often encircle the body, falling to the ground in generous swathes, before ending in a series of creases and crinkles pushing against each other, seemingly without underlying structure or order. Mary Magdalene is a figure of compromise in this scheme, without cloak, but with voluminous skirt that echoes the linearity of the Virgin Mary's gown. Noticeable in this context is the noticeably linear approach taken in the Crucifixion scene in particular. This runs through repeated use of rigid, seemingly immovable tubular folds to distinguish the Mary – John – Magdalene

group beneath the cross, which are echoed in the gowns of the bystanders to the left of the cross, including the weeping woman drawing her gown to her eyes, and the figures to the immediate right of the cross. The arrowhead configuration these folds create represent a recurring theme in Lower Saxon carving.

The individual Passion scenes are carved from remarkably shallow pieces of wood of no more than 13 cm depth. This requires a certain amount of technical compensation in order to give the carvings optical depth and still allow individual figures to appear distinct and distinguishable within the depicted narrative. As a result, individual scenes often display peculiar perspective constructions within which people and furnishings are arranged along strictly linear planes. The success of these compensations is variable, and occasionally the foreshortening seems to suffer. However, it must be remembered that the scenes in Eger no longer occupy their original compartments, and this almost certainly affects their perception. The *Crucifixion* scene contains some additional devices designed to increase the illusion of spatial depth in the form of the foreshortened rider shown heading into the distance, and the sponge-bearer behind the cross. This figure has been deliberately carved so as to have the cross effectively become part of his physiognomy to create the impression of deeper space behind the cross. The figures do not interact with each other; instead they are posed so as to avoid almost studiously even the slightest hint of eye contact. Georg Weise has shown this to be a device developed

from the theatrical conventions of mystery play positioning and articulation which transferred into the visual arts and was used throughout high and late Gothic art as an indication of escalating emotional and spiritual tension.⁴⁰⁵ This lack of interaction, and the resultant formal, almost theatrical, stiffness of the individual figures, may well be at the core of the earlier assessments that have described Stavoer's work as 'rustic' and 'deliberately archaic'.⁴⁰⁶

The apostles stand apart from both the Passion scenes and the St. Denis figure in quality and detail of execution. Both Kornfeld and Meier have therefore proposed an assistant's hand to have been responsible for their production.⁴⁰⁷ Stuttmann and von der Osten, on the other hand, saw no reason to assume the apostles to be by anyone other than Stavoer himself.⁴⁰⁸ The twelve figures in the predella certainly represent a mixture of merit and defect. On the one hand, they show a positive level of animation in the variety of poses they strike, the effort of ensuring that they avoid direct contact with each other resulting in the figures being depicted in a series of frontal, three-quarter and profile views. Moreover, each figure is individually articulated through drapery structures and expressions. Although the draperies are much simplified in comparison to those of St. Denis or the holy figures of the Passion scenes, they nevertheless bear witness to a good attention to detail and form variation. There is, however, a distinctly generic air

⁴⁰⁵ Weise 1949, p. 187, pp. 189ff.

⁴⁰⁶ Stuttmann, Osten 1940, p. 80; Busch 1931, p. 133.

⁴⁰⁷ Kornfeld 1932, p. 65; Meier 1937, p. 16.

⁴⁰⁸ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 81.

about the figures that detracts from their positive characteristics. Particularly the hair and beard formations are neither as successful, nor as intricately carved, as the much smaller figures of the individual scenes. Their shape deviates from that of St. Denis. They have neither his bulky silhouette, nor the rounded, double-chinned jowl, while the noses are straight, well proportioned, and without the typical elongated arching of the relief figures. Only the tendency to flatten out the nostrils reminds of the typical 'Stavoer' noses.

One stylistic deviation must be noted in this context because of its significance for a discussion to follow. There is one panel in the Enger passion cycle that stands out against all others because of subtle changes in the way individual figures are carved. In the *Entombment* (Figure XII-61) the heads are suddenly larger in comparison to the body than in the other panels which are noted for their more diminutive heads, while the female heads are squarer, flatter and have a more realistic cranial shape (Figure XII-62). There are fewer tendencies to emphasise the cheekbones, the upper lips are more prominent than the lower lips and the noses are straight, not aquiline. The headwear, although based on contemporary forms, also quotes different forms to those used in the rest of the retable and appears softer, more pliable. On the other hand, the proportions and foreshortening of Nicodemus standing before the tomb with his back turned to the viewer are more successfully executed in this panel than any other. It suggests this

panel to be the contribution of the newly identified artistic identity, the Breselenz Carver.

18. Altarpiece dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Carved, and polychromed figure altarpiece depicting Mary as the Woman of the Apocalypse, flanked by St. George and St. Pancras of Rome.⁴⁰⁹ In the shutters Anna Selbdritt with St. Catherine, and Mary Magdalene with St. Urban. 141 cm x 330 cm x 24 cm. Figures lime wood, case oak and softwood, some original polychromy. Predella late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century.⁴¹⁰ St. Joseph, Henneckenrode. Workshop of the Urban Master, c. 1525.

The retable stands on the high altar of the church of St. Joseph in the grounds of Schloss Henneckenrode, a late-sixteenth century country house. The altar is made up of several parts of varying provenance, with the casing and figures the only survivals of the sixteenth-century retable. The altarpiece is of a standard Lower Saxon rectangular format, with two shutters which are kept permanently open. The central compartment is of an open construction with individual section visually subdivided by slender twisted columns which stand slightly forward of the architectural pedestals on which the figures stand. The upper edge of all three sections is terminated by openwork

⁴⁰⁹ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 63.

⁴¹⁰ Personal communication Dr. Monika Tontsch, Kirchliche Denkmalpflege Bistum Hildesheim, 13/05/12.

foliate tracery fasciae. The retable sits on a late-nineteenth century predella with four painted medallions depicting the symbols of the Evangelists. The tabernacle houses a small safe concealed behind small double doors decorated with an embossed diamond pattern and nine semi-precious cabochon stones.

The Virgin Mary occupies a double width space in the centre of the retable. She has her left foot on a crescent moon, the Christ Child on her right arm, and a sceptre in her left hand. Behind her is a rosary aureole with two attendant angels and four stigmata of Christ. Standing to either side of Mary in the central compartment are St. George, and an anonymous male saint, identified by Stuttmann and von der Osten as St. Pancratius, and previously inscribed on the pedestal as be St. John the Evangelist.⁴¹¹ Located in the right shutter are St. Catherine and St. Anne with the Virgin and Christ Child (*Anna Selbdritt*). The left shutter is occupied by Mary Magdalene and St. Urban.

According to Stuttmann and von der Osten, the retable originally belonged to the church of St. George in nearby Volkersheim.⁴¹² It was transferred into private ownership at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and eventually was gifted to the church in Henneckenrode in c. 1860.⁴¹³ The retable's restoration history is sketchy. In 1901 the retable was being worked on by the painter F. Eltermann and a sculptor known only by his surname, Böhme. During that restoration several

⁴¹¹ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 63.

⁴¹² *op.cit.*, p. 63.

⁴¹³ Personal communication Dr. Monika Tontsch, Kirchliche Denkmalpflege Bistum Hildesheim, 13/05/12

replacements were made, including the feather held by the anonymous saint, the staff carried by St. Urban, sections of the tracery and the frieze. The polychromy was also renewed with pattern work based on remnants of the original polychromy found under the more recent paint layer. It is likely that this is the restoration to which Stuttmann and von der Osten refer in their monograph.⁴¹⁴ In 1964, the paintings on exterior side of the shutters were uncovered. Depicting the *Coronation of the Virgin* and the *Legend of St. George* respectively, the original tempera paint had survived an attempt to wash the paintings off with water, a procedure which did cause significant losses to both panels.⁴¹⁵

The two representations of St. George make sense in a retable that originally stood in a church dedicated to the saint. The identification of the second saint in the central compartment as St. Pancratius, however, has to be regarded as doubtful, since that saint is usually depicted as a young man, and in armour.⁴¹⁶ Stuttmann and von der Osten's assumption is based on the historic fact that, prior to regular services being introduced at St. George's in 1576, the pastoral care for the parishioners was the responsibility of the church of St. Pancratius in nearby Bockenem.⁴¹⁷ The identity of the anonymous saint cannot be reconstructed. His feather attribute is likely to be the result of a misinterpretation of an earlier version, such as a lily (Thomas Aquinas) or a more generic martyr's palm frond. The figure's mercantile attire is

⁴¹⁴ op. cit., p. 63.

⁴¹⁵ Gmelin 1974, p. 340.

⁴¹⁶ Melchers 1978, p. 288.

⁴¹⁷ Web Volkersheim; Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 63.

not unique in Lower Saxon art. St. Cosmas is often depicted wearing only a calf-length tunic and mantle, but since he is never depicted without his counterfoil, St. Damian, the statue is unlikely to represent him.

This retable is frequently discussed in conjunction with the Master of St. Benedict's so-called *Nemeš* Madonna and a repetition of that figure from the village church of Holtrup, attributed to the workshop of the same carver.⁴¹⁸ The Henneckenrode figure quotes the distinctive silhouette and primary structures of these figures, but instead of the triangular compressions one might expect to find alternating with the linear primary structures, the Henneckenrode Madonna has a cascade of broad V-shaped folds that are highlighted with small triangular accents. The other figures in the Henneckenrode retable place similar emphasis on primary structures, with underdeveloped or minimal secondary features that suggest the anticipation of polychrome effects. The moving legs are neither as articulated nor as detailed as those of the Nuremberg and Holtrup figures, nor those of the Aachen apostles or the New York Emerentia group. On the whole, the structures are less complex and the surfaces less developed, giving the impression that this retable uses 'watered-down' workshop formulae in the same way the Enger retable did, and should therefore be regarded as a workshop product.

⁴¹⁸ op. cit., p. 61.

19. Window Apron H4.024, 'The Last Judgement'. Oak, multiple layers of polychromy. 105 cm x 47.5 cm x 12.8 cm.⁴¹⁹ Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim, Inventory Number H 4.006. Workshop of the Urban Master c. 1520-1525

RPM Inventory No H4.024 refers to a weatherboard depicting the Last Judgement. On the right of the board, Christ is shown seated on a rainbow, with a sword and a lily stem piercing his neck. Billowing clouds, from which four trumpeting angels emerge, surround him, and create a physical barrier between him and the Judged. The figure group in the centre represents those condemned to eternal hell, recognisable only by their raised arms, and their slightly lower positioning within the scene. Separated by a raised ledge, and gathered in the left background, are those who enter Paradise, distinguishable by their pious attitude in prayer.

This board was found in the loft of the former Brewers' Guild Hall when the building was being demolished in 1885. The Brewers' Guild acquired the building in 1584 from the debtors of the former burgomaster Hermann Sprenger. In its time, the building was said to be the largest half-timbered building in Hildesheim.⁴²⁰ The window aprons were replaced by the Brewers' Guild with boards featuring a profane, rather than secular, iconography more in keeping with the primary purpose of the guild, as one of the surviving boards in the collection of

⁴¹⁹ Pelludat 1991, p. 1.

⁴²⁰ Zeller 1912, p. 116.

the RPM, featuring a beer-drinking woman, illustrates.⁴²¹ The conclusion has to be that this board represents a fortuitous survival of an earlier religious iconographic programme of this house that failed to meet the taste, or religious sensibilities, of the new owners.

Although the board is dated in the RPM inventories as '1550 to 1575', dendrochronological analysis has shown the timber to have been felled in the decade 1514 to 1524. Assuming a two-year drying time, the investigating conservator, Inga Pelludat, concluded that the first layer of polychromy had been applied around 1520.⁴²² Pelludat also noted that the board showed few signs of weathering, suggesting that its location protected it against the weather, or that it had spent limited time in an exposed position.⁴²³

Christ seated upon a rainbow, displaying his wounds and with the lily and sword issuing forth epitomizes a typically Late Gothic visualisation of the subject. Unlike the majority of Last Judgement scenes, Christ is depicted here not as presiding over events from the centre, but from the extreme right hand side. He is clearly separated from the resurrected 'crowds', represented here by two groups of three and four figures respectively, by the bank of clouds that surrounds him, and from which angels blow their trumpets to raise the dead. The customary visual references to heaven and - more so - hell, however, are omitted from this scene, so that the distinction between the damned

⁴²¹ RPM Inv No H4.078.

⁴²² Pelludat 1991, p. 14.

⁴²³ *op. cit.*, p. 9.

and the blessed has to come from other visual clues. The reason for this unusual arrangement appears to lie in the conceptualising artist's desire to maintain the physical distinction between the righteous ascending into paradise and eternal life, and the damned descending into hell – quite a challenge on a board that is nearly twice as wide as it is tall, and was intended to be seen at long distance only.

The distinction between the ascent into heaven and the descent into hell is made through the positioning of the two figure groups in relation to each other. While the righteous group is placed at the same level as the figure of Christ in Heaven in the upper half of the depiction, the damned are sited near the lower edge of the panel, and in the lower half of a very horizontal composition. A small strip of rocky landscape creates a physical barrier between the damned and the righteous. The arrangement of the Blessed to the extreme left, and the Banished to the right is prefigured by the respective placements of lily and sword as they issue forth from Christ. Some effort has been made to characterise the two groups by their attire and positioning, although this is only partially successful. While the Blessed are easily identified as such through their modest attire and hands held in prayer, the Damned appear to have lost some of their finer characterisation through the multiple layers of polychromy. Although the three very distinct costumes do suggest that attempts had originally been made to define the nature of their individual sin by their costume, that meaning is now largely lost. Only the female figure on the right appears unambiguous, although any

temptation to interpret her remarkably low neckline as indicative of her particular form of sinning is tempered by the knowledge that the polychromy has been subject to change, and therefore subsequent interpretation. While the other two figures try their best to wave arms or rub their hands in a semblance of despair, they are such generic representations that one can only conclude them to be quotations from a readily recognised, local tradition that made the whole panel readily 'legible' to its contemporary audience.

20. Crucifixion Retable. Central compartment of formerly shuttered altarpiece, with a single shutter scene stored in the church. Three more scenes in collection of the Museum Focke in Bremen. Carved and polychromed altarpiece, and four Passion scenes. Central Section 207 cm x 204 cm x 23 cm; panel 58 cm x 44 cm x 10 cm. Lime wood, some original polychromy.⁴²⁴ Church of St. Denis, Lindhorst. Breselenz Carver, c. 1520-1525.

Stuttman and von der Osten cite an eighteenth-century source according to which this retable was purchased in Hildesheim specifically for the church after the choir was added in 1500.⁴²⁵ The actual date of the purchase has not been transmitted.⁴²⁶ The Crucifixion scene depicts Christ between the two malefactors, flanked by Mary and John. They are framed by Longinus, and another figure depicted in armour,

⁴²⁴ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 34.

⁴²⁵ op.cit.,p. 34.

⁴²⁶ Stoffels 200p, p. 14

presumably Stephaton, on the other side, who in all likelihood once held a rod with the vinegar-drenched sponge. St. Denis, an anonymous cardinal, Anne with the Virgin and Child and another anonymous saint in deacon's robes are arranged in double-tiered niches at each end. The small panel depicting the *Road to Calvary*, an adaptation of the same scene from Dürer's *Large Passion*, dated to 1498 hangs in the sacristy. Little is known of the retable's history. In their monograph, Stuttmann and von der Osten mention losses to the limbs of S. John, both anonymous figures and the tracery.⁴²⁷ These have now been made good apart from the missing attributes. The polychromy has been renewed. The retable was treated against worm damage in 1938. In 2007 a comprehensive restoration was undertaken by a local specialist firm.⁴²⁸

21. The Breselenz Retable. Carved and painted altarpiece, 243cm x 251cm, hardwood with remnants of old polychromy, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century additions, original (?) oak case. In the central compartment figure of Virgin Mary, 135cm x 35cm. St. Martin, Breselenz. Breselenz Carver, c. 1525.

In the church of St. Martin in Breselenz, a village some fifty kilometres east of Uelzen (Appendix A, Map 2) is located the retable

⁴²⁷ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 33.

⁴²⁸ Stoffels 2009, p. 27.

that was first attributed to Hinrick Stavoer by Berthold Conrades.⁴²⁹ The altarpiece has a single pair of shutters, which are kept permanently open. The exterior panels show traces of painted scenes, suggesting that the retable survives at least partially in its original form. Six carved individual scenes flank a full-sized the central compartment, in which a figure of the Virgin stands on a pedestal, between two pillars topped by urn-like finials. Two shields are attached to the rear wall of the central section, above which an enclosed niche houses a figure of the Christ child as *Salvator Mundi* which is not part of the original. The pictorial programme of the interior represents six of the Seven Sorrows of Mary, a theme that is complemented by the central figure which is depicted in an attitude of grief. The six individual scenes are set in solid, thick-walled compartments of remarkable shallowness, and terminated by six identical foliate tracery fascias. In the centre, the Virgin stands beneath an elaborate canopy of architectural and foliate open-work tracery. The internal corners of the central compartment have been rounded off by concave fillets which are now obscured by the pillars. The fillets, shields, canopy, fascias, as well as possibly the Christ child, are later additions, while the back walls and reliefs show evidence of repair or replacement.

The retable stands on a separately constructed predella with a painted image of angels holding the sudarium aloft. It survives fundamentally in its original, late medieval form, but with later additions,

⁴²⁹ Conrades quoted in Busch 1931, p. 134.

the result of an up-dating, or contemporising of the retable. The additions comprise the convex fillets that mask the sidewalls of the central compartment, the attachment of the urn finials to the pillars and their placement therein, and the attachment of the shields to the compartment's rear wall. The placement of the Christ-child in the enclosed niche above the central section is likely to have occurred at the same time. The shape of urns, the shields and the figure of the nude Christ holding the orb propose these changes to have taken place during the early part of the eighteenth century: the urn-shape recalls the forms and proportions favoured during the Classicist period, while the shape of the shields is entirely fanciful, quoting a format not found until the late seventeenth century at the earliest.⁴³⁰ The mirror-image arrangement of the *rampant lions or* in the first and last quarters, and the similar orientation of the two now indiscernible animals adorning the lozenges, adhere to aesthetic concerns rather than heraldic convention and meaning. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it has not been possible to identify the arms depicted.⁴³¹ The inclusion of the Christ-child as *Salvator Mundi* is also unusual in pre-Reformation retables from the region. While the subject itself has been known since Byzantine times, Christ was customarily depicted as an adult, as the example of the recently discovered painting of this subject attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, demonstrates. The earliest examples of the Salvator being

⁴³⁰ Slater 1999, p. 57.

⁴³¹ Mülverstedt 1900, p. 110. Mülverstedt states that the only Altmark arms to use lions are those of the von Krakow family whose arms do not match those inserted into the retable at Breselenz.

depicted as a child appear to emerge around the mid seventeenth-century, and it is worth noting in this context that the scholarly on-line photographic resource *Foto Marburg* dates the Breselenz figure to the eighteenth century.⁴³² With this series of additions all referencing varying periods from the second quarter to the end of the seventeenth century, their amalgamation into this altarpiece is unlikely to have happened before the early eighteenth century. A photograph published by von der Osten in 1939 also shows a different canopy above the Virgin's head, made from wood with painted ornamentation.⁴³³ Prior to 1877 the original foliate tracery fasciae were replaced with metal-cast and gilded reconstructions. In 1968/1969 a restoration report noted that 70 per cent of the original polychromy was preserved under a newer layer of paint and gilding, and recommended the reinstatement of the original colours, as well as the carving and installation of a new canopy.⁴³⁴ The retable's appearance today is commensurate with those works having been carried out. Whether at that point the backboard behind the central scene was also replaced or reworked cannot be reconstructed. Certainly the gilding is significantly newer than on other parts of the retable, as are the painted fringes. The last restoration in 1993 undertook standard conservation measures including secured unstable parts of the polychromy and replacing missing sections,

⁴³² FM Breselenz IFDN 10 643

⁴³³ Jones 1910 (1997), p. 232, pl. Elizabethan II.

⁴³⁴ *op. cit.*

cleaning the retable and treatment against woodworm damage to the urn finials.⁴³⁵

The carved scenes illustrate six of the seven sorrows of Mary, an iconographic theme that is reinforced by the figure of the Virgin herself, with hands pointing downwards as a representation of grief. The arrangement of the scenes places the events from the life of Christ – *Presentation in the Temple*, *Flight into Egypt* and *Christ disputing with the Doctors* – in the right hand shutter, while the scenes from Christ's Passion – *Carrying of the Cross*, *Lamentation* and *Entombment* – occupy the left hand shutter. The *Crucifixion*, an integral part of the Seven-Sorrows iconography, has been lost. It is likely that the missing *Crucifixion* scene once stood in the space currently occupied by the Christ-child.

22. Adoration of the Magi. Carved and polychromed panel from altarpiece context. 54 cm x 51 cm. Lime wood, some original polychromy. Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim. Breselenz Carver, c. 1525 to 1530.

Nothing is known of the history of this panel prior to its arrival in the collection of the RPM. In a letter dated 16th May, 1938, the museum confirms the absence of provenance.⁴³⁶

The scene looks to have been carved from a single block of wood, with very little evidence of radial splitting. The polychromy appears to be

⁴³⁵ Breselenz 1993.

⁴³⁶ RPM160538

in its original state, although small sections may have been touched in. Jasper's painted 'five-o'clock'-shadow' is unlikely to be original. There is evidence of some damage incurred. Stuttmann and von der Osten record damage to the limbs of Jasper and Balthazar.⁴³⁷ Today the left arm of Balthazar is missing, which Stuttmann and von der Osten in their monograph described as 'replaced'. Jasper's lower left arm is also missing, as is the index finger of his right hand.

The arrangement of this scene follows a long-established model of Melchior, the eldest, kneeling before Christ, and presenting a gift, with Jasper and Balthazar standing behind him. The conspicuous character of the clothes and jewellery worn by all figures including the Virgin Mary are a rarity in lower Saxon woodcarving. Another curious aspect of this scene is the throwing open of Melchior's cloak to reveal his left foot as he is kneeling in front of the Christ child. This detail has been noted both by Busch and Stuttmann and von der Osten in conjunction with the Enger retable, where Mary Magdalene's foot is similarly exposed, and another panel from an unknown passion retable now in the episcopal residence in Hildesheim.⁴³⁸ The detail also occurs in other contexts, including a repetition of the Enger Mary Magdalene depicted at the foot of the cross in a passion altarpiece in Meerbeck near Stadthagen.

⁴³⁷ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 62.

⁴³⁸ Busch 1931, p. 117; Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 62.

23. Five Scenes from a lost Passion altarpiece. Carved and polychromed scenes from altarpiece context. Various sizes. Hardwood, modern polychromy. Bischöfliches Generalvikariat Hildesheim. Meerbeck Carver, c. 1525 to 1530.

The panels have no known provenance. They formed part of the private collection of Bishop Eduard Jakob Wedekin (1796-1870), a known connoisseur, collector of medieval art and spiritual father of the Cathedral Museum. Wedekin had acquired the panels for an altar which stood in the episcopal residence's private chapel (Figure XII-63), and had bequeathed them to his successor in his testament. The panels were restored and re-polychromed in 1970.⁴³⁹

The figures are carefully characterised through their contemporary clothing which is enlivened with fashionable detail such as slit sleeves across the elbows, extra-wide cuffs, trims and edgings. There is a recurring iconographical theme of the deliberately exposed left foot running through several works which is manifest here in depictions of Mary Magdalene. In the *Entombment* she can be seen clearly wearing a red foot in a golden slipper-style overshoe, while in the *Crucifixion* part of the slipper has been lost. Pilate is also depicted wearing the specially emphasised, golden overshoes.

⁴³⁹ Christine Wulf, DI 58, Nr. 274, accessed 080812

24. The *Brabantian* Retable. Carved, polychromed, and gilded triple-tiered altarpiece depicting the stories of Mary and the Passion of Christ, 235 cm x 212 cm x 19 cm, lime wood, and oak with some original polychromy and late nineteenth-century additions. St. Maria zur Wiese (St. Maria-in-pratis), Soest. Unknown carver and Meerbeck Carver. 1525-1530.

The so-called *Brabantian Retable* in the church of *St. Maria zur Wiese* in Soest represents the surviving central section of a shuttered altarpiece with a combined narrative of the stories of Mary and the Passion of Christ. Its traditional designation, *Brabanter Altar* (retable from Brabant) relates to the shape of its central section, which reminds of retables produced in the towns of Antwerp or Mechelen in the former duchy of Brabant. The upper zone comprises three compartments, the central one of which is both slightly narrower than the two outer ones, and extended to almost double its height, terminating in a shallow rounded arch. The lower zone is made up of four smaller compartments.

The three compartments of the upper zone contain five carved narrative scenes from the *Passion of Christ*. The central, double-tiered *Crucifixion* scene is flanked to the left by a similarly arranged depiction of *Pilate washing his Hands* above a scene illustrating the collapse of Christ under the cross on the *Road to Calvary*. To the right, the narrative continues with a depiction of the *Descent from the Cross*, beneath which is the *Lamentation*. The unusual arrangement of these

scenes in landscape format is predetermined by the more traditional layout of the double-tiered *Crucifixion*, and offers an instant explanation of the similar orientation of the two *Oppler* panels.

The four compartments of the lower tier contain four scenes from the *Life of the Virgin Mary*: the *Annunciation*, the *Visitation*, the *Birth of Christ*, and the *Adoration of the Magi*. Unlike the double-tiered scenes of the upper register, these are arranged in portrait format.

The structural features that signify the sub-divisions have been partially renewed, so that the carcass structure no longer has the visual unity that could be observed, for example, in the retable at Enger. The upper register is framed at its extreme boundaries by two gently twisted columns with crocket finials set before a simple string moulding. It is likely that a similar arrangement also divided the central compartment from its neighbours. Instead, a concave trim strip that protrudes slightly beyond the initial dividing wall has been inserted using modern screws. The result is an addition that visually disturbs, and dominates the internal structure of the retable. Similar trim strips have also been used to mask the dividing walls of the compartments in the lower register, making the sub-divisions of the retable interior look entirely out-of-sympathy with the older stepped moulding that separates the upper from lower register, and frames the overall carcass.

Set into the elevation, which may also have a replacement arch – the light conditions in the church were insufficient to make a reliable

judgement - is a fourteenth-century crucifix.⁴⁴⁰ Shading of the exposed wood and extant polychromy at the lower edge of the elevation, however, suggest this to have once been filled with carved imagery, rather than a tapestry-style background or a canopy.

The inner dividing walls and ceilings of the individual compartments, where visible and not covered by narrative-related details, have been painted with light-coloured imitation tracery on blue back-ground, the authenticity of which as a sixteenth-century ornamentation presently can neither be ascertained, nor guaranteed. The sidewall of the *Annunciation* compartment shows a small section where an attempt has been made at creating the tracery effect in three-dimensional format. The retable rests on a deeper, featureless predella that is unlikely to be the original, and which, in its present form, would not have been able to support the shutters in their opened state.

The earliest mention of the altarpiece occurs in an inventory of Antiquities published in 1853.⁴⁴¹ It can no longer be determined whether the retable has always been part of the furnishings of this church, or whether it was transferred from another church. In 1822 the congregation of St. George's was merged with that of St. Mary's.⁴⁴² Artefacts deemed worthy of preservation were transferred; inventories or other records documenting those transfers, however, have not

⁴⁴⁰ Schäfer 1996, p.584.

⁴⁴¹ Gaffron130712

⁴⁴² Lukas 2004, p. 12.

survived.⁴⁴³ Both Busch and Stuttmann-von der Osten have proposed links between the retable and Hinrick Stavoer; their observations, however, do not extend beyond a cursory connection of ‘the upper part’ with Stavoer or his workshop. An essay published in 1996 by Ulrich Schäfer re-examined the possible Stavoer link, and sought to ascribe the individual scenes to graphic sources. Finally, the art guide published in 2004 by Viktoria Lukas re-iterated the earlier literature without further insight or critical examination.

The present condition of the retable suggests a number of interventions to have taken place during its history. There is, of course, the loss of the shutters with the narrative scenes presumed to have been included therein. The earliest records of the retable do not mention the shutters, so that their loss prior to 1853 is assumed.⁴⁴⁴ It is, however, possible that elements from them survive in the form of some of the scenes from the lower register. In his essay, Schäfer commented upon what he described as losses to the rear wall of the compartment containing the *Annunciation* scene, which he presumed to have contained a personification of the Holy Father. At the same time he noted the unsuccessful spatial arrangement between the Angel Annunciate and the smaller angel drawing the curtain back behind, which merges almost imperceptibly into the larger figure’s wings.⁴⁴⁵

While Schäfer’s observation may be correct for the current positioning

⁴⁴³ Rueffer080712.

⁴⁴⁴ Gaffron130712.

⁴⁴⁵ Schäfer 1996, p. 587.

of the *Annunciation*, all incongruities are resolved when the scene is seen from a more shallow angle, suggesting that it may not be in its correct position within the retable, but may have occupied the missing left shutter instead. The ill-fitting *Birth of Christ* relief in the third compartment seems to substantiate the notion of altered siting positions in the lower tier further, where the painted imitation tracery can clearly be discerned through the half-inch gap that exists between the architecture which frames that scene, and the compartment ceiling. The majority of gilded surfaces, where not part of a landscape setting, have been extensively embossed. These include strips of gilding that frame architectural features such as arches or window frames, the cuffs, collars and hems of gowns, and the furnishings of individual scenes, including the three major crosses in the individual narratives, which have also been gilded and adorned with a scroll-work pattern in a manner untypical of Lower Saxon sculpture decoration.

Wall sections within the architecture have been painted either pink, with added trompe l'oeil effects, or charcoal grey with further scroll-work designs; pink columns have been inserted above the upper *Crucifixion* scene, extending into the otherwise empty elevation. Some backgrounds and figure details have also been added or re-painted in blue, while some landscape details and individual figures have also been re-painted. The rock-face above Mary's head in the *Visitation* has also had an additional crack cut into it. A black, horizontal stripe pattern has also been painted onto a number of seemingly unrelated sections,

such as the cloak worn by Gabriel and the remaining curtain in the *Annunciation*, Mary's headdress in the *Crucifixion*, two attendants' headdresses in the *Lamentation*, and the drape used to lower Christ from the cross in the *Deposition*. Lustre paints have been used to create both additional inscriptions, or to create or enhance additional patterns to hems and shoulders of figures in scenes such as the lower part of the *Crucifixion scene*, and the *Deposition*. The overall sense is one of a visual up-dating of the whole retable, from the late-Gothic to a seemingly more refined, but later, period. The type of ornamentation, and the colours used, but in particular the Antiquity-derived form of the column on the right hand side of the elevation suggest these additions to date back to the eighteenth century.

A more recent intervention has replaced the three crosses on Mount Golgotha, in the upper level of the *Crucifixion*, with more modern versions. Remnants of the gilded and assayed cross that originally held Christ at the centre of the group are still visible, with the replacement cross unsympathetically added at the fracture point. There are no records to suggest when this was done, and may be the result of damage sustained during WWII, when the church was damaged extensively during a raid in December 1944.⁴⁴⁶ The retable had not been evacuated, but moved to a side room within the church and covered with a protective casing.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁶ Lukas 2004, p. 30.

⁴⁴⁷ Gaffron130712.

Conservation measures undertaken in 1950 and 1962 aimed at securing the surviving polychromy were only partially successful, leading to a more comprehensive conservation in 1974, which was reported briefly in a regional journal.⁴⁴⁸ On this occasion, the sketch on the recto side of the *Lamentation* was discovered, and the photographs referred to earlier, were taken.

25. Altarpiece illustrating the Passion of Christ. Carved and polychromed altarpiece, approximately 420 cm x 120 cm; Carvings lime wood, casing oak. St. Bartholomew, Meerbeck. Meerbeck Carver, 1525 to 1530.

This polyptych is a late addition to this thesis. Twelve smaller carved reliefs illustrating events from the Passion of Christ and Easter are arranged in double tiers around a central, elevated crucifixion scene. Two extension panels above the outer edge of each shutter feature St. Bartholomew above the Passion scenes and the Virgin Mary and Christ child above the Easter scenes. The backgrounds to each compartment are painted with land- and townscapes; although renewed part of the paintings are thought to date back to the sixteenth century.⁴⁴⁹ The oak casing has been replaced. A restoration was carried out in 1988 to clean the retable, secure the polychromy, and supplement it where necessary.

⁴⁴⁸ Westfalen 1978, p. 631.

⁴⁴⁹ I thank Mr. Oliver Glißmann for his information on this altarpiece.

26. Console Bracket H4.005, St. Bartholomew. Oak and polychromy. 65.8 cm x 22 cm x 35.3 cm.⁴⁵⁰ Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim, Inventory Number H 4.006. Unknown carver, c. 1532-1535.

This console bracket depicts an anonymous male figure in three-quarter profile, facing towards the left. The figure carries no recognisable attributes. The iconographic details of short curly hair and short beard suggest him to represent either St. Peter or St. Bartholomew. The clearly exposed shoes, however, denote him as St. Bartholomew, since in Lower Saxon art St. Peter is usually shown with just the tip of a foot emerging beneath the hem of his own. Stephanie Nagel has confirmed that the first layer of polychromy gave the figure a dark head of hair, placing the identification of this figure as St. Bartholomew beyond doubt.⁴⁵¹

It is not documented from which building this bracket has come. The bracket is shown alongside the previous catalogue number in the watercolour painting by Richard Heyer, which has led to an unsuccessful attempt to allocate the bracket to the same house as the cross beam depicted in the same painting. The figure has been dendrochronologically dated to after 1532.⁴⁵² A former location cannot be reliably reconstructed.

⁴⁵⁰ op. cit., p. 18 and p. 63. Measurements given in 1993 as 65 cms x 24.5 cms x 34.5 cms, see. Nagel 1993, p. 2.

⁴⁵¹ Nagel 1993, pp. 31 to 33.

⁴⁵² Alles 1995, p. 43.

Today the figure is shown with short grey hair and a beard. He carries no openly recognisable attribute and his right hand is missing. The left hand has been flattened, possibly to reduce its three-dimensionality in relation to the rest of the figure, and is therefore unlikely to have held anything. The missing hand could easily have held Bartholomew's flaying knife attribute, perhaps even presented lying on a book, without any aspect of the visibility of the figure being compromised.

27. Console Bracket H4.006, 'St. Andrew'. Oak with renewed polychromy. 75 cm x 32 cm x 25 cm.⁴⁵³ Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim, Inventory Number H 4.006. Unknown carver, c. 1535.

A carved console bracket depicting St. Andrew in right profile, leaning on the saltire cross, and pointing to a section in a book.

The origin of this bracket is not documented. It may have come from former Grocers' Guild Hall, old photographs of which clearly show a saltire cross on the extreme left bracket of the lower tier.⁴⁵⁴ Neither the photographs, nor a collection of watercolours depicting the medieval buildings of Hildesheim during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, show the bracket clearly enough for a positive identification.

⁴⁵³ RPM Inv H4.006

⁴⁵⁴ Zeller 1912, p. 118, Fig. 70.

Zeller 1912 proposes a protective rationale behind the inclusion of the St. Andrew in the bracket iconography. The Grocers' Guild Hall fronted onto the former market square around St. Andrew's church, in the sixteenth century still one of the main trading areas of Hildesheim.⁴⁵⁵ In Zeller's view, St. Andrew was included in his function as a patron saint of the market church and with it the market quarter. Even if this bracket were to be proven to have come from the Grocers' Guild Hall, the proposed correlation between the positioning of a saintly figure on a building, and its function, is more likely to reflect late-nineteenth-century, rather than early sixteenth-century understanding of late Medieval Hildesheim architecture.

The straight pleats of the saint's gown and the manner in which that gown is gathered at the waist recall the interpretations of Hans Schäumelein's costumes in the Enger reliefs. The hems do not mass and crumple at the feet of the figure, but instead remain unruffled, straight and easily legible as is appropriate for figures intended for display amongst the half-shadows generated by an overhanging upper storey. Two vertical incisions into the lower left diagonal of the cross, which occur in line with the recesses of the pipe fold drapery suggest that at one point there was a proposition to partially obscure the lower part of the cross behind the drapery, or that the fall of the drapery had been interpreted incorrectly.

⁴⁵⁵ op. cit., p. 118.

28. *Christ Bearing the Cross.* Carved and painted figure formerly in the Heilig Kreuzkirche in Hildesheim, 148 cm x 49 cm (pedestal), limewood with several layers of polychromy. Klosterkammer Hannover. Unknown carver, c. 1535.

The almost life-sized figure of Christ bearing the cross was first attributed, tentatively, to Hinrick Stavoer by Stuttmann-von der Osten.⁴⁵⁶ Although the cross is no longer present the positioning of the hands is appropriate for that iconography alone. Christ is presented barefoot on a pedestal carved to imitate the uneven road to Calvary. His floor-length gown is gathered at the waist and slightly raised at the front to reveal the stepping motion of his feet, with his left leg placed higher up on the picture plane, and marginally ahead of the right leg. Behind the left leg, a section of drapery, now partially lost, once fell over the edge of the pedestal, suggesting that this part of the figure may have once have been visible. Around the rear, folds and structural features have been simplified, but not omitted. The figure has not been hollowed out.

The figure today presents itself in a poor, but conserved, condition, with numerous damaged sections. Tissue paper remnants remind of earlier attempts to stabilise some critical areas, while others reveal cracking or missing polychromy. The statue is no longer presented in the original polychromy. Instead it has been painted with a layer of grey, oil-based paint to give the impression of being carved from stone, rather than wood. The crown of thorns has been fashioned

⁴⁵⁶ Stuttmann and von der Osten 1940, p. 78.

from a section of braided rope, set into a carved groove around the back of the head and fixed using wooden pins inserted into the head. Similar pins of matchstick size were fashioned and placed to imitate the thorns.

Nothing is known of the figure's provenance; it seems accepted that it has always been part of the church or Collegiate. With seven different layers of paint uncovered during the last conservation investigation, and at least two restorations either documented or at least evidenced on the figure itself through unfinished treatments, the material evidence suggests that it has been part of devotional life for a sustained period of time, its outward appearance repeatedly adapted to suit the taste of the day. Beneath six layers of different colour schemes, the original polychromy can still be traced, consisting of azurite blue for Christ's gown, a reddish-brown cloak with gilded hems, flesh-tone for feet, hands and face, a brown colour under a red lacquer paint for the hair and beard, and a greenish earth colour for the pedestal.⁴⁵⁷ Both the appearance and the consistency of the individual colours in the polychromy conform to established late Gothic conventions.

The *Via Crucis* is one of a category of *Andachtsbilder* which became increasingly popular during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. These devotional images focussed on the depiction of individual episodes of Christ's sufferings. Despite progressively divorcing their subjects from their biblical contexts, the *Andachtsbilder*

⁴⁵⁷ Hübner 1993, pp. 43-44.

also invited the individual participation of their audience in the depicted act through contemplation and meditation. Other subjects commonly depicted are the *Christ as the Man of Sorrows* and the *Lamentation*, or *Pietà*. The Collegiate church of the Holy Cross in Hildesheim still displays both of these, suggesting that they might once have been part of an established contemplative cycle. The commonalities highlighted in chapter XII between this figure and the two console brackets H 4.005 and H 4.006 propose a date for this figure of c. 1535.

XIII. COMPETITION OR COALITION? SOME THOUGHTS ON THE POSSIBLE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE URBAN MASTER AND THE MASTER OF ST. BENEDICT

There are significant indicators of far more commercialized production methods than have previously been accepted, or considered possible in this context. Retracing the possible reasons for Wilm's proposal of a link existing between the *Nemeš* and *Alfeld* Madonnas has led the writer to a slightly different way of thinking about Lower Saxon sculpture of the first two quarters of the sixteenth century. It proposes that instead of trying to define that production by the number of hands into which it may be divided, a more rounded approach is taken. Such an approach requires acceptance of certain pre-existing conditions tested in different environments to make it work. The first is the recognition that not all sculpture production is governed by a striving for excellence, indeed, the majority of production involves several levels of compromise. Albrecht Dürer has alluded to this in the letters to his patron Jakob Heller of 1507 to 1509, which yield some interesting insights.⁴⁵⁸ To Dürer, autography was not pertinent to the minutiae of production, but instead applied to the conceptual framework that led to the creation of a finished piece of work. Dürer readily acknowledged the collaborative nature of art production, claiming the creative process for himself while delegating the mundane execution to pupils, assistant or

⁴⁵⁸ Albrecht Dürer cited in Exh. Cat. Washington 1999, pp. 36-37.

hired help such as preparers.⁴⁵⁹ Dürer's clients appear to have been cognisant that each painting they bought was unlikely to be the result of the sole effort of the leading artist, but of the combined efforts of several contributors at different stages of the production process. For the art historian it means the engagement with groups of works that deploy a remarkably consistent formal language, but vary in the quality of their execution and the complexity of their designs.⁴⁶⁰ This potential for variation, while vexing to the modern connoisseur and the food of art markets and collectors everywhere, was another factor readily accepted by the artists and clientele of the day, as Dürer also enlightens us. In his letter to Heller dated 26 August 1509, Dürer speaks of the hierarchy of quality in painting, acknowledging three levels of standard to which work was produced – peasant, common and accomplished. These levels were governed largely by price, with the most favourable effort:reward ratio not represented, as one might anticipate, in the highly prized, exclusive, bespoke works, but the more flexible 'common' category. Dürer's comment that 'one cannot live from accomplished painting alone' is particularly telling in that it infers that profitability lay in the products that had been adapted for a less affluent, and significantly more populous, audience.⁴⁶¹ This lets the deliberate scaling down of complexity in the production of works like the Enger and

⁴⁵⁹ This raises an interesting parallel to Petermann's study of the workshop practices of Bernt Notke, where the use of preparators is acknowledged as a means to bypass guild prescriptions for staffing levels in workshops. See Petermann 2000, pp. 135-136.

⁴⁶⁰ Exh. Cat. Washington 1999, p. 39.

⁴⁶¹ *op. cit.*, p. 39.

Henneckenrode retables appear in a different light. The successful workshop, it would seem, regarded technical and artistic compromise as part of its stock-in-trade. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, its customers expected it to do so.

The most highly developed example of the commercialization of retable production during the early sixteenth century is that of the art market in the city of Antwerp, and it is worth superimposing the experience of the Antwerp sculptor onto the Lower Saxon production. Antwerp was the epitome of 'right time, right place' for commercially ambitious artists. A mercantile centre without royal or ducal court, or the patronage patterns of a wealthy elite that had governed art production in neighbouring Bruges twenty-five years earlier, Antwerp thrived on the rapid turnover created by its temporary mercantile visitors entering the city willing to spend money on luxury items, and intent on making purchasing quick, often impromptu, decisions.⁴⁶² Distribution became more important in this one-stop centre where customers looking for readily available goods with little to no waiting time attached, came to make their selections, and dedicated sales centres for luxury commodities, the *pands*, emerged.⁴⁶³ The changing nature of commerce also forced changing trading patterns; speed of delivery became essential due to the limited time their clientele spent in town, making contracts that agreed the production of a retable over a period

⁴⁶² Filip Vermeylen, *The Commercialization of Art: Painting and Sculpture in Sixteenth-Century Antwerp* in Wynn Ainsworth 2002, p. 56; Woods 2007, p. 33.

⁴⁶³ Vermeylen, p. 47; Woods 2007, p. 33.

of two years or more, such as Master Wolter had agreed with the abbey of St. Godehard, unfeasible. Consequently, standardization and speculative production increased, with traders offering semi-finished altarpieces that often combined a standard corpus and statuary with scope for personalization.⁴⁶⁴

While there is no reason to presume that the Hildesheim/Brunswick region equalled such an active and thriving commercial centre, the proliferation of retables and religious statuary that can be dated to the decade 1515 to 1525 in northern Germany suggests the presence of an economically confident, spend-happy clientele. High demand creates increasing competition, and in such an environment, only a commercially orientated workshop was likely to succeed.

It is my belief that the production of devotional culture goods in Lower Saxony was more commercially orientated than the current art historic classification systems reflect, and there is some circumstantial evidence that supports this view. One is the remarkable consistency of retable architecture which points towards at least partial development of mass, or at least standardized, production techniques. The majority of retables have a uniform structure into which internal sub-divisions are easily inserted. Particularly the frieze decorations and foliate tracery fasciae reiterate patterns that have been used over a long period of time. Another is the recurring use of models which is one of the characteristics of the Urban Master's workshop. The recurring

⁴⁶⁴ Vermeulen, p. 50.

recapitulation of successful models has to be regarded as the strongest indicator of mass production practices that come into play when a thriving market is indicated.

The manner in which complete figurative motifs such as the *Nemeš* Madonna and the Riemenschneider-derived St. James the Less are transferred between the workshops of the Master of St. Benedict and the Urban Master and frequently recur in the latter's oeuvre, also gives cause to re-evaluate the relationship between the two masters. Stuttmann and von der Osten solved this by proposing a progenitor: disciple relationship to have existed between the two masters. This, however, leaves a number of questions unanswered, not least of which is the observation that, if we are to assume both to have operated separate workshops parallel to each other, why is one master represented through a broad range of works whereas the other is represented through his high-quality output alone (and perhaps a single console bracket)?

This thesis interprets the relationship between the two carvers differently. Far from trying to divide the extant examples of sculpture between two workshops headed by two separate historic entities, I suggest all to have come from a single workshop. The Master of St. Benedict was the head of this workshop, and his own contribution to its output is evidenced in the complex, sophisticated and dramatic carvings traditionally associated with him by the existing literature. The Urban Master, however, should be seen in the a-historical sense, as an

umbrella term for the more commercialized, 'common' production emanating from the Master of St. Benedict's workshop. That production was carried out not necessarily by the master himself, but by a succession of largely anonymous assistants and journeymen, who, although largely emulating the master's style, occasionally also introduced notable variations of their own. Re-framing the Urban Master in this way would explain how this overtly commercialized output might have co-existed alongside the other, more sophisticated artist, as well as accounting for the frequent overlaps in style and motifs between the two workshops. It would confirm the Master of St. Benedict in the position as the leading artistic figure in the region, a position which he has always occupied, whether in the guise of Bush's Master Wolter or the independent artistic entity first proposed by Stuttmann and von der Osten. It must, however, be stressed again that it is unlikely that such an enterprise was based in Hildesheim.

XIV. CONCLUSION

This thesis is putting forward a number of fundamental changes to our perception of the sculpture production in Hildesheim during the early sixteenth century. Two names that traditionally have been associated with the production of wood sculpture can no longer be regarded in this way. Analysis of the archival records has shown that both Hinrick Stavoer and Master Wolter were painters, not carvers, thus removing from the discussion of sculpture its only documentable cornerstones (although, of course, early sixteenth-century painting has now gained two potential candidates). As an aside to the original archival enquiry, it has been possible to establish that the Brühl district of the town was home to a mixed artistic community that can be traced over a number of generations, and be associated with a number of crafts. This constitutes a significant expansion to our current knowledge base. Its diversity means that it was able to furnish the citizens of Hildesheim with a number of products and services ranging from household to luxury items. With the recognition of such a community comes the opportunity of comparison, and the early – theoretical – indications are that we can now move forward and examine the art history of the town in a more encompassing manner. The existence of a well-organised wood processing workshop capable of producing works of the standard achieved by the Master of St. Benedict cannot be proven in the town, and nor can the economic foundations for an

appropriate market be demonstrated. The likelihood is therefore that the high-quality production which the existing literature has always associated with Hildesheim, has in fact originated elsewhere. Despite being one of the largest towns in the region, Hildesheim had neither the economic nor cultural profile of a location capable of sustaining a major, specialist sculpture workshop, and over more than one generation, such as the one from which the Master of St. Benedict emerged. Nor does the local appetite for sculpture for the domestic environment justify the assumption that the commercially orientated enterprise of the Urban Master should have been located there. If anything, the fact that the audit of almost fifty years' worth of treasury accounts failed to reveal a single entry that documented the purchase or commissioning of a product made from wood is suggestive in itself. In addition, the contract agreed between Master Wolter and the abbey of St. Godehard clearly demonstrates that joinery products were readily available locally for the abbey to source themselves, whereas the sculptures for the retable interior had to be acquired through Master Wolter. While a minor wood-processing workshop allied to the building trades can be assumed to have existed in the town, the producers of figurative sculpture must be sought elsewhere.

Although no major breakthroughs have been made in identifying new archival sources to supplement the somewhat meagre survival especially in relation to the guild activities of the first half of the sixteenth century, this broadened horizon will allow greater scope for

comparison with other regions and towns for which more documentation exists. The abbey of St. Godehard has also emerged as major patron of artists during the first quarter of the sixteenth century. This enquiry has focussed only on identifying records pertaining to specific names, but here, too, there is scope for more discoveries to be made.

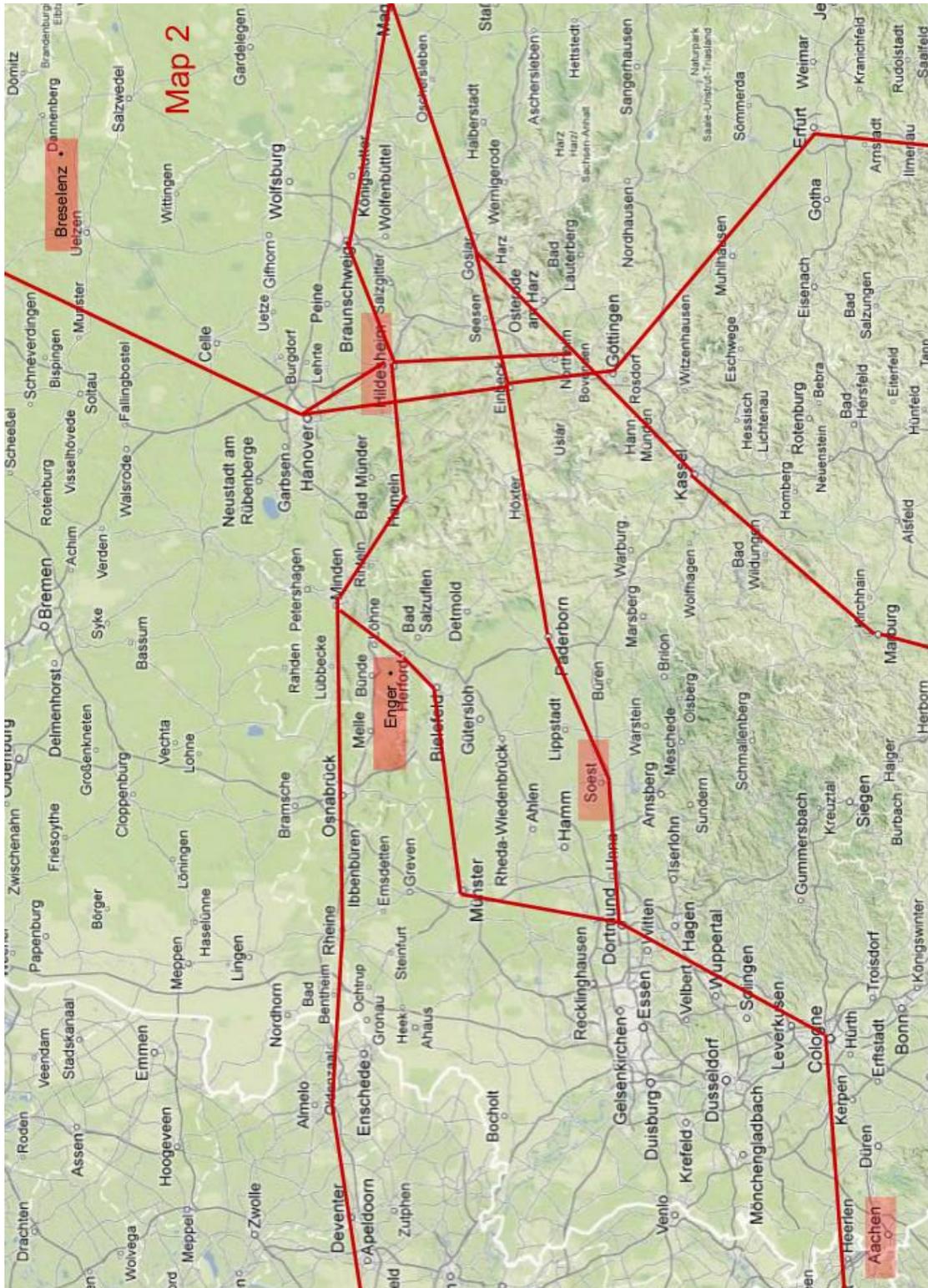
The dissolution of the carved Stavoer oeuvre and the reassignment of a number of benchmark pieces to the Urban Master of Hildesheim has expanded the oeuvre of that master significantly, and presented him as one of the most prolific producers of his time. At the same time, a number of works previously associated with Hinrick Stavoer have been left in abeyance. This is not because the 'new' Hildesheim art history does not know what to do with them. Their non-specific appearance, however, allows them only follow the better carvings formerly associated with Stavoer into the oeuvre of the Urban Master, while individually they contribute few insights. Some it has been possible to re-attribute to an entirely different hand, showing that the Lower Saxon carving style does evolve at the hands of a later generation of artists. The geographic spheres in which the Breselenz and Meerbeck Carvers spent their active periods once they had separated from the workshop of the Urban Master remain to be established. For the Meerbeck Carver at least a prolonged stay in the Minden/ Höxter area seems indicated, which, if substantiated through further research, would throw also some long-overdue light onto one of the least illuminated areas of northern German art history of this period.

Over the course of the research period this project has fundamentally changed in its scope. Having begun with the perhaps romantic notion of defining or redefining one individual craftsman, it has led to significant revisions instead of the sculpture production in the Hildesheim/ Brunswick region during the early decades of the sixteenth century, while also introducing new impulses into the study of contemporary painting. As such, while perhaps a failure in one sense, it also represents a major achievement in that it represents a fundamentally revised basis from which future research can, and will, develop.

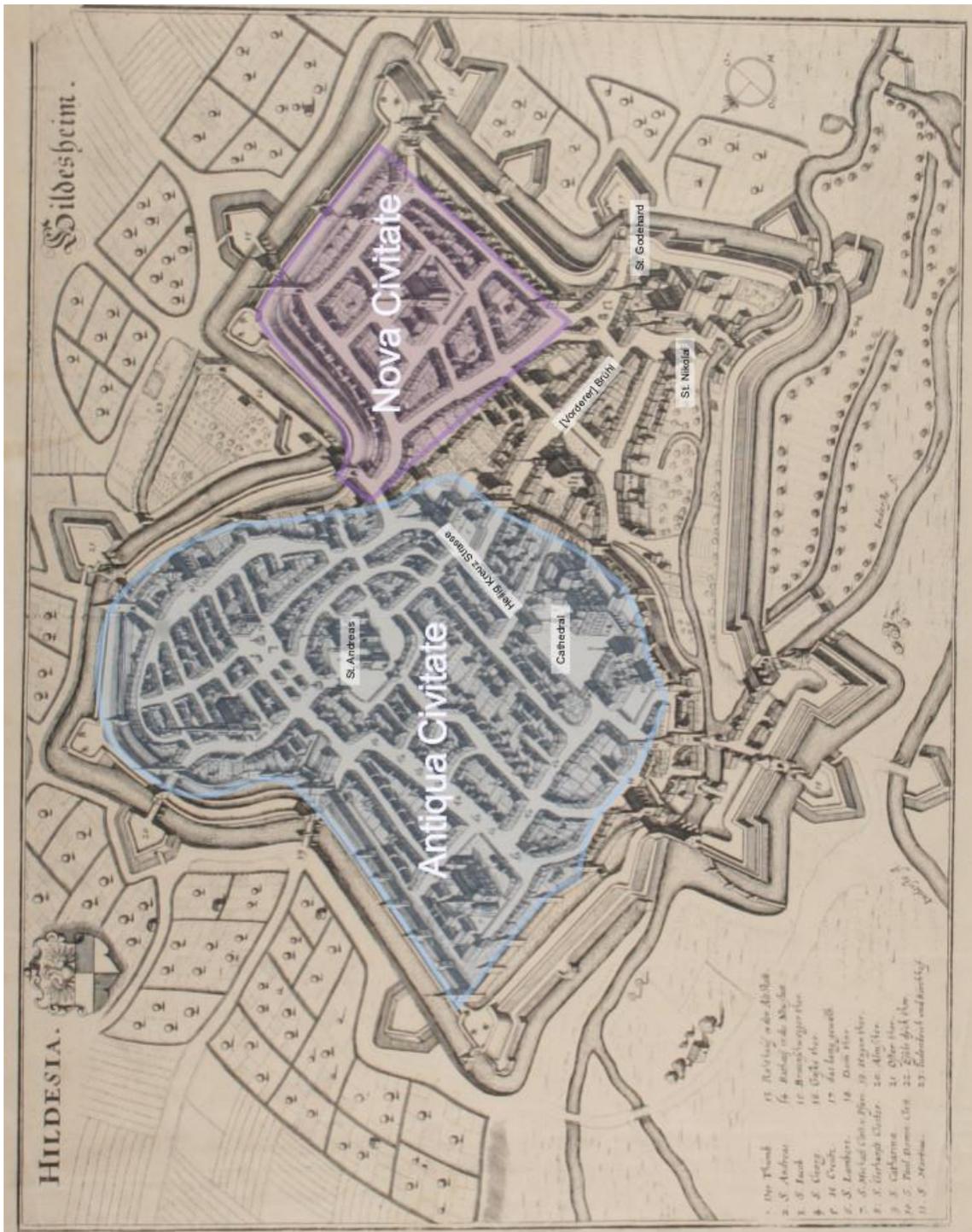
Map 1 Northern Germany



**Map 2 Major trade routes c. 1450 and key locations after Brun-
Weczerka 1962**



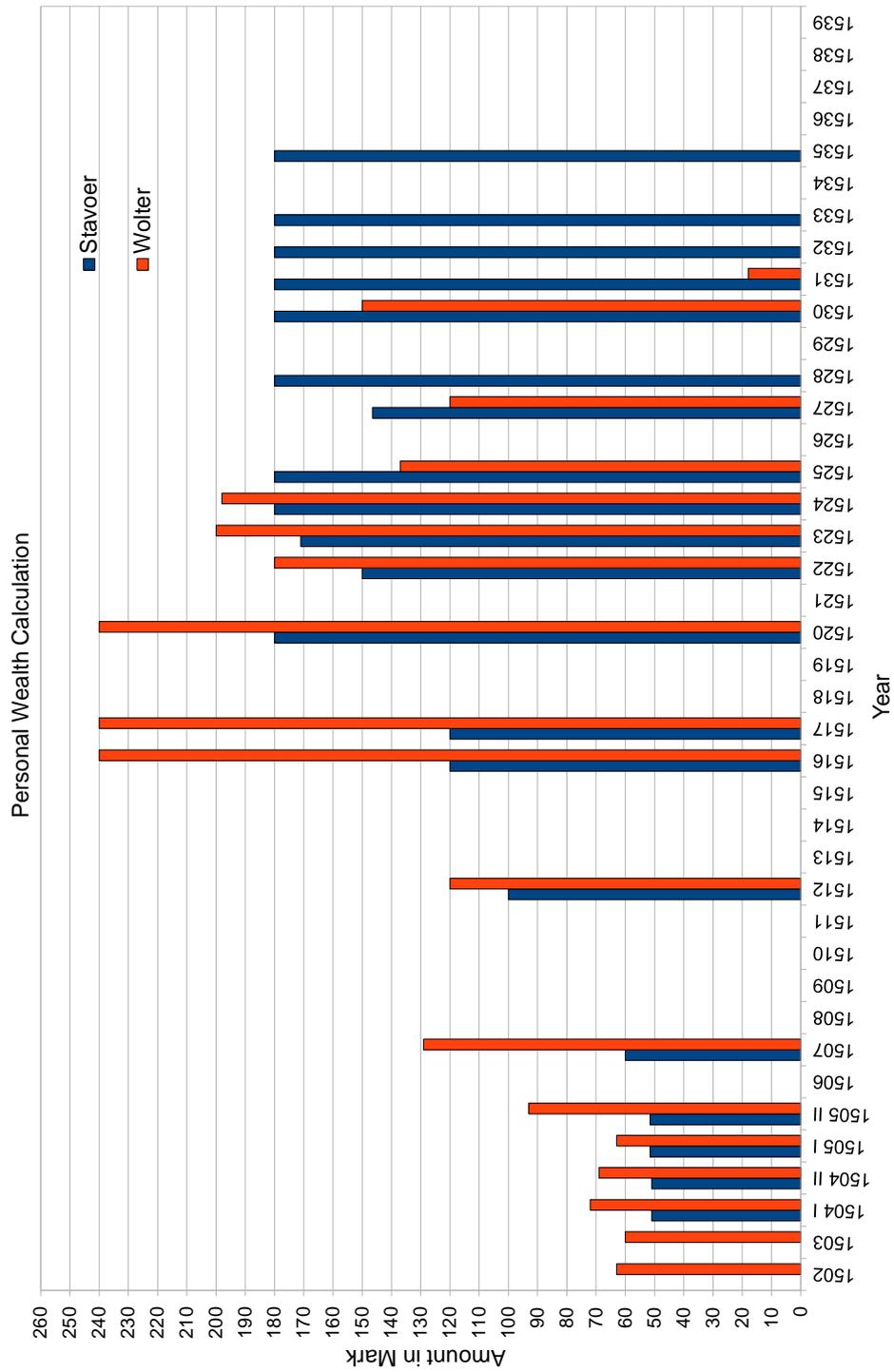
Map 3 Hildesheim in the sixteenth century



XV. APPENDIX B

Graph-1, Comparison Personal Wealth Calculation Hinrick Stavoer – Master

Wolter



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**CARVING A NICHE? A REASSESSMENT OF EARLY
SIXTEENTH-CENTURY SCULPTURE PRODUCTION IN
HILDESHEIM**

CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

at the University of Leicester

by

Conny Bailey MA

Department of the History of Art and Film

University of Leicester

2012

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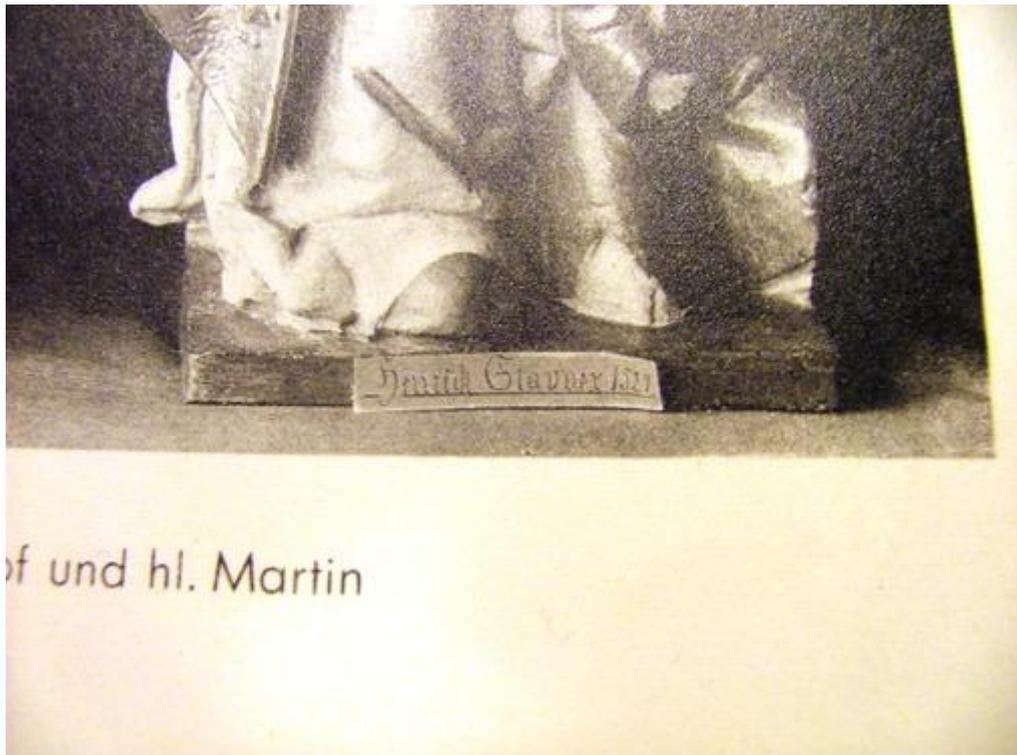


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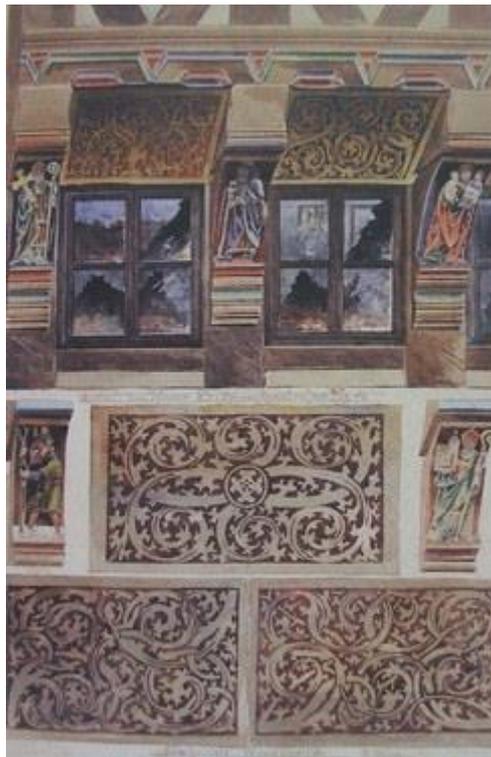


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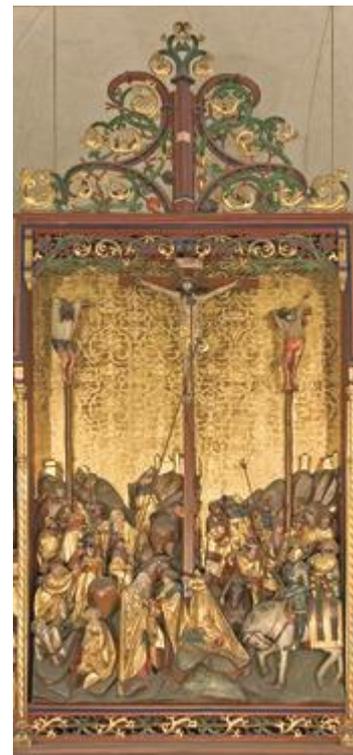


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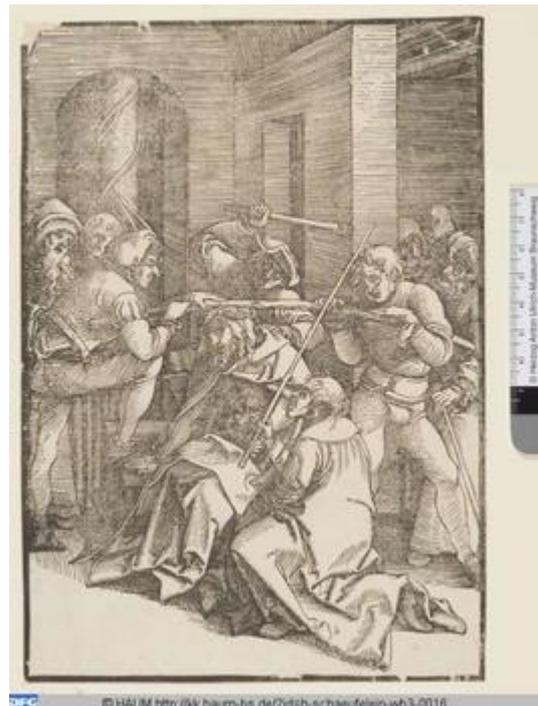


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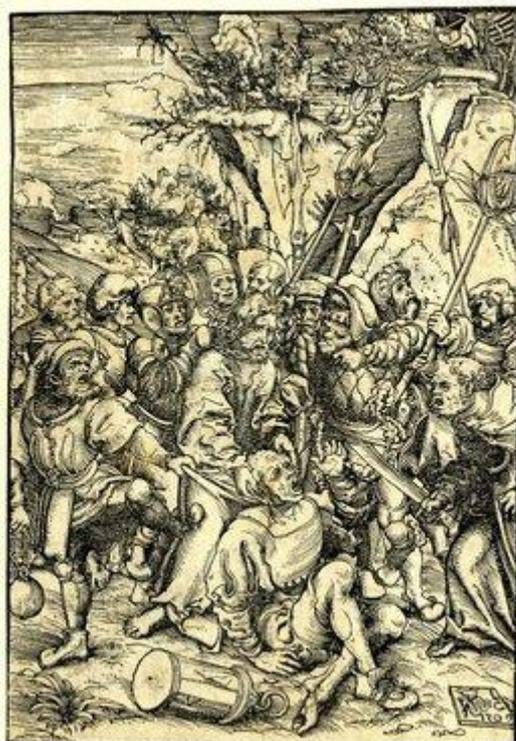


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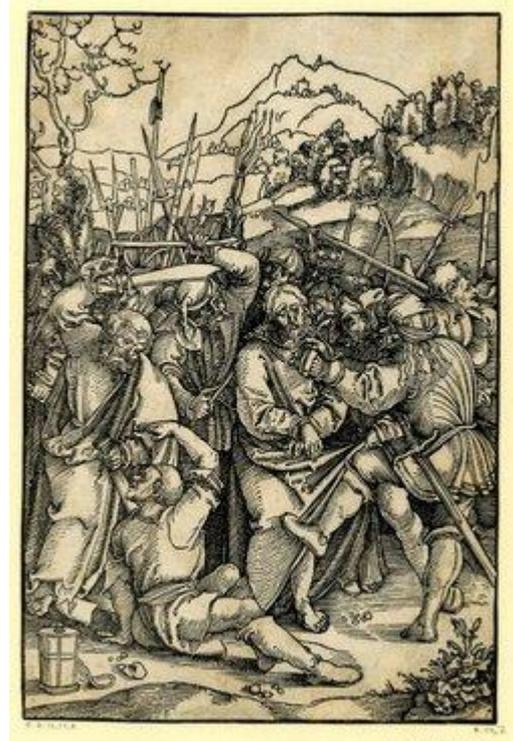


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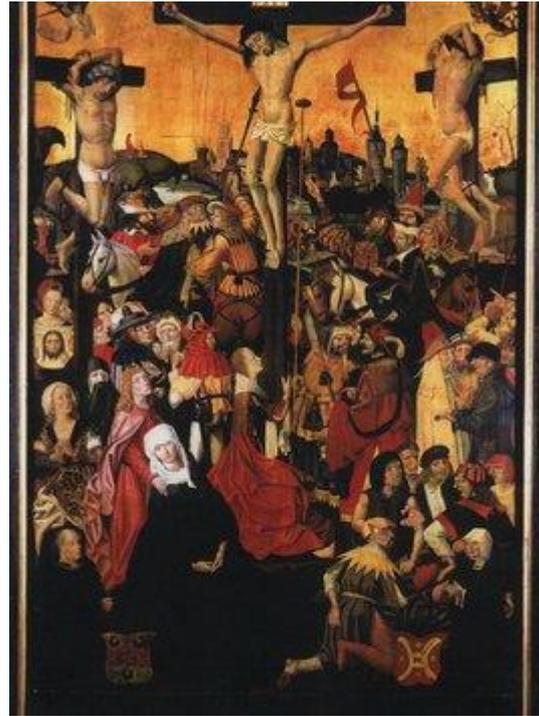


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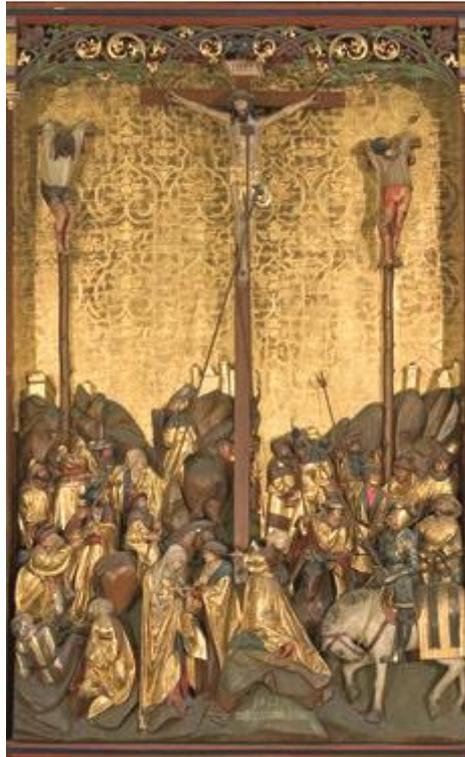


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VI. SIGNATURE OR AUTOGRAPH? THE ENGER RETABLE AS A TOUCHSTONE FOR THE STYLE-CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF HINRICK STAVOER



Fig. VI-57, Examples of bulked up hair formation, Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia

VII. STAVOER'S METAMORPHOSIS: THE ENGER RETABLE AND THE URBAN MASTER

**VII. STAVOER'S METAMORPHOSIS: THE ENGER RETABLE AND THE
URBAN MASTER**

VII. STAVOER'S METAMORPHOSIS: THE ENGER RETABLE AND THE URBAN MASTER



Fig. VII-1, St. Urban, Altarpiece with Madonna and Saints, St. Joseph, Henneckenrode



Fig. VII-2, St. Denis, Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia

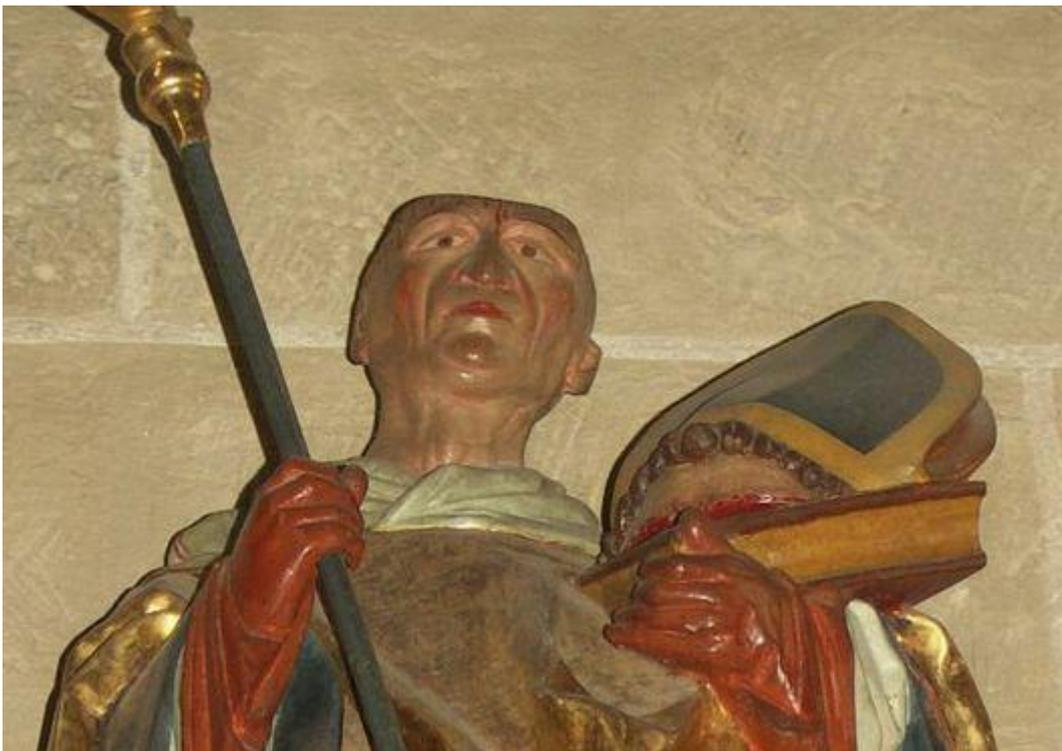


Fig. VII-3, Detail, St. Denis, Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. VII-4, Detail, St. Urban, Altarpiece with Madonna and Saints, St. Joseph, Henneckenrode



Fig. VII-5, Mary Magdalene and St. Urban, Altarpiece with Madonna and Saints, St. Joseph, Henneckenrode



Fig. VII-6, St. Catherine, Altarpiece with Madonna and Saints, St. Joseph, Henneckenrode

VII. STAVOER'S METAMORPHOSIS: THE ENGER RETABLE AND THE URBAN MASTER



Fig. VII-7, Mary Magdalene, Altarpiece with Madonna and Saints, St. Joseph, Henneckenrode



Fig. VII-8, Anonymous male saint, Altarpiece with Madonna and Saints, St. Joseph, Henneckenrode



Fig. VII-9, The Virgin Mary with the Christ Child standing on a crescent moon, Altarpiece with Madonna and Saints, St. Joseph, Henneckenrode



Fig. VII-10, Virgin Mary with arrowhead configuration, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia

VII. STAVOER'S METAMORPHOSIS: THE ENGER RETABLE AND THE URBAN MASTER



Fig. VII-11, St. Anne with the Virgin and Child (Anna Selbdritt), Altarpiece with Madonna and Saints, St. Joseph, Henneckenrode



Fig. VII-12, Angel from central compartment, Altarpiece with Madonna and Saints, St. Joseph, Henneckenrode



Fig. VII-13, The Carrying of the Cross (Detail), Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. VII-14, Example of 'wainwright's beret', Crowning with Thorns, Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia

VII. STAVOER'S METAMORPHOSIS: THE ENGER RETABLE AND THE URBAN MASTER



Fig. VII-15, Example of 'wainwright's beret', Ecce Homo, Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. VII-16, Example of 'wainwright's beret', Deposition, Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. VII-17, The Virgin and Child, Saint Anne, and Saint Emerentia (Emerentia Selbviert, acc. no. 16.32.208), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Fig. VII-18, Detailed View, Mary and Christ Child, The Virgin and Child, Saint Anne, and Saint Emerentia (acc. no. 16.32.208), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Fig. VII-19, Mary Magdalene, Altarpiece with Madonna and Saints, St. Joseph, Henneckenrode removed from retable



Fig. VII-20, Profile View, Emerentia, The Virgin and Child, Saint Anne, and Saint Emerentia (acc. no. 16.32.208), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

VII. STAVOER'S METAMORPHOSIS: THE ENGER RETABLE AND THE URBAN MASTER



Fig. VII-21, Profile Views, Mary, Christ Child and St. Anne, The Virgin and Child, Saint Anne, and Saint Emerentia (acc. no. 16.32.208), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Fig. VII-22, Half Profile View, The Virgin and Child, Saint Anne, and Saint Emerentia (acc. no. 16.32.208), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Fig. VII-23, Hand closing around Book, St. Andrew, Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. VII-24, Hand closing around book, St. Anne, The Virgin and Child, Saint Anne, and Saint Emerentia (acc. no. 16.32.208), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Fig. VII-25, Book with 'moving' pages, St. Anne, The Virgin and Child, Saint Anne, and Saint Emerentia (acc. no. 16.32.208), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

VII. STAVOER'S METAMORPHOSIS: THE ENGER RETABLE AND THE URBAN MASTER



Fig. VII-26, 'Oppler' Panel, Christ Before Pilate, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. VII-27, 'Oppler' Panel, Christ Carrying the Cross, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover

VII. STAVOER'S METAMORPHOSIS: THE ENGER RETABLE AND THE URBAN MASTER



Fig. VII-28, 'Brabantian' Retable, St. Mary-upon-the-Meadow, Soest



Fig. VII-29, Detail View, 'Oppler' Panel, Christ Carrying the Cross, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. VII-30, Overhead View, 'Oppler' Panel, Christ Before Pilate, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. VII-31, Detail View, 'Oppler' Panel, Christ Before Pilate, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. VII-32, Detail, 'Oppler' Panel, Christ Before Pilate, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. VII-33, Facial Profile, Soldier pulling rope, 'Oppler' Panel, Christ Carrying the Cross, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. VII-34, Detail of Christ on the Cross, Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. VII-35, Christ on the Cross, Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. VII-36, Brushes binder from the Flagellation relief, Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia

VII. STAVOER'S METAMORPHOSIS: THE ENGER RETABLE AND THE URBAN MASTER



Fig. VII-37, Overhead view of brushes binder from the Flagellation relief, Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. VII-38, St. Gregory's Mass Retable, Cathedral Museum, Aachen

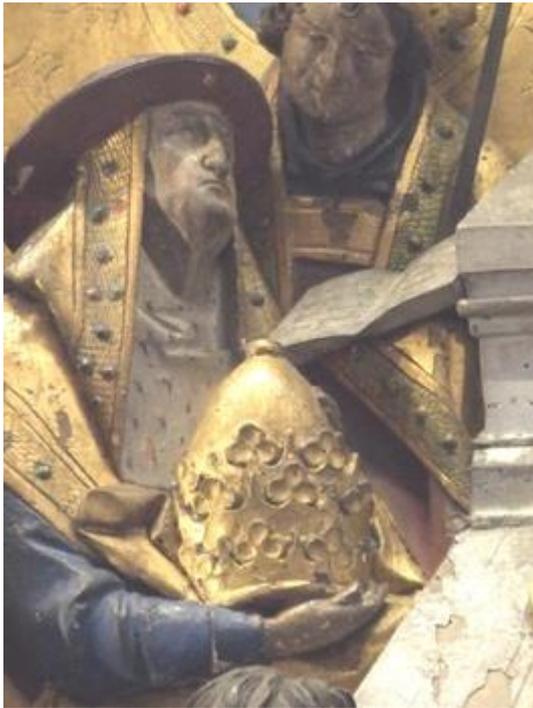


Fig. VII-39, Cardinal I, St. Gregory's Mass Retable, Cathedral Museum, Aachen



Fig. VII-40, Cardinal II, St. Gregory's Mass Retable, Cathedral Museum, Aachen



Fig. VII-41, St. Phillip, St. Gregory's Mass Retable, Cathedral Museum, Aachen



Fig. VII-42, Apostles, left shutter, St. Gregory's Mass Retable, Cathedral Museum, Aachen

VII. STAVOER'S METAMORPHOSIS: THE ENGER RETABLE AND THE URBAN MASTER



Fig. VII-43, Apostles, right shutter, St. Gregory's Mass Retable, Cathedral Museum, Aachen



Fig. VII-44, Altarpiece with Virgin Mary, St. John the Evangelist and St. Vitus, St. Alexander, Einbeck



Fig. VII-45, St. Anne with the Virgin and Child, St. Gregory's Mass Retable, Cathedral Museum, Aachen



Fig. VII-46, St. Damian, St. Gregory's Mass Retable, Cathedral Museum, Aachen



Fig. VII-47, St. John the Evangelist, Altarpiece with Virgin Mary, St. John the Evangelist and St. Vitus, St. Alexander, Einbeck

VIII. RE-FRAMING THE URBAN MASTER



Fig. VIII-1, The Alfeld Retable, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. VIII-2, Frontal View, Virgin Mary, Alfeld Retable, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. VIII-3, Detail View of Mary, Mary, The Virgin and Child, Saint Anne, and Saint Emerentia (acc. no. 16.32.208), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Fig. VIII-4, St. Urban, Alfeld Retable, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. VIII-5, St. Mauritius, Alfeld Retable, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. VIII-6, West Choir Retable, St. Michael's, Hildesheim



Fig. VIII-7, Holy Kindred Retable, Parish Chapel, Everloh



Fig. VIII-8, Coronation of the Virgin Group, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. VIII-9, St. Andrew, West Choir Retable, St. Michael's, Hildesheim



Fig. VIII-10, St. Elizabeth, West Choir Retable, St. Michael's, Hildesheim



Fig. VIII-11, The Virgin and Child, West Choir Retable, St. Michael's, Hildesheim



Fig. VIII-12, The Virgin and Child, Alfeld Retable, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. VIII-13, Death of the Virgin, High Altar, Veit Stoss, 1477-1489, St. Mary, Cracow



Fig. VIII-14, Detail View, Death of the Virgin, High Altar, Veit Stoss, 1477-1489, St. Mary, Cracow



Fig. VIII-15, St. Catherine and Anonymous Saint, The National Trust, Waddesdon Manor



Fig. VIII-16, Central Section, Benedict Retable, Southern Transept, St. Godehard, Hildesheim



Fig. VIII-17, Mary and Christ Child, Parish Church, Holtrup



Fig. VIII-18, Nemeš Madonna, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg



Fig. VIII-19, Madonna, Village Church, Nätebow-Bollewick



Fig. VIII-20, Detail from Baptismal Font, St. Peter, Braunschweig



Fig. VIII-21, Crescent cut, Nemeš Madonna, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg



Fig. VIII-22, Crescent Cut, Holtrup Madonna, Parish Church, Holtrup



Fig. VIII-23, Christ Child, Parish Church, Holtrup



Fig. VIII-24, Detail View of Christ Child, Mary, The Virgin and Child, Saint Anne, and Saint Emerentia (acc. no. 16.32.208), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Fig. VIII-25, Profile View, Christ Child, Mary, The Virgin and Child, Saint Anne, and Saint Emerentia (acc. no. 16.32.208), Parish Church, Holtrup



Fig. VIII-26, Profile View of Christ Child, Mary, The Virgin and Child, Saint Anne, and Saint Emerentia (acc. no. 16.32.208), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Fig. VIII-27, St. John, Crucifixion, Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. VIII-28, St. Peter, Mass of St. Gregory Retable, Cathedral Museum, Aachen

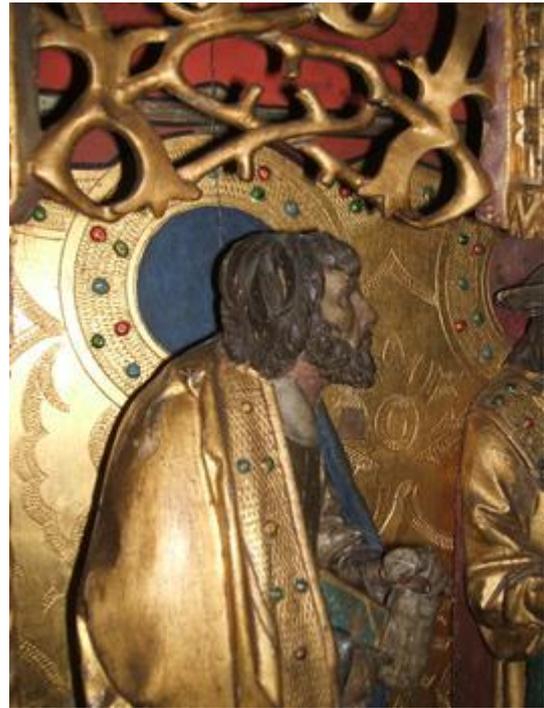


Fig. VIII-29, St. Matthew, Mass of St. Gregory Retable, Cathedral Museum, Aachen



Fig. VIII-30, Detail, St. John, Parish Church, Holtrup



Fig. VIII-31, Detail, St. Matthew, Parish Church, Holtrup



Fig. VIII-32, Detail, St. Urban, Altarpiece with Madonna and Saints, St. Joseph, Henneckenrode



Fig. VIII-33, St. John, Parish Church, Holtrup



Fig. VIII-34, St. Matthew, Parish Church, Holtrup



Fig. VIII-35, St. St. James the Less, Mass of St. Gregory Retable, Cathedral Museum, Aachen

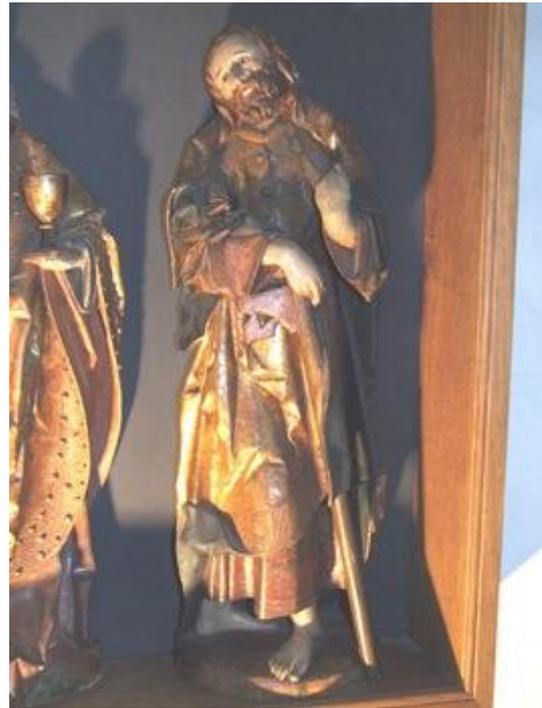


Fig. VIII-36, St. Thomas, Parish Church, Holtrup



Fig. VIII-37, St. James the Less, Parish Church, Holtrup



Fig. VIII-38, St. James the Less, sandstone, 1500-1506, formerly Marienkapelle, now Mainfränkisches Museum, Würzburg



Fig. VIII-39, Comparison of Positioning of Structural Features, Virgin Mary and St. Urban, Alfeld Retable, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover and IX.Nemeš Madonna, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg

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IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK
RETABLES

**IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ
AND MEERBECK RETABLES**

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES



Fig. IX-1, Seven-Sorrows-Retale, St. Martin, Breselenz



Fig. IX-2, The Virgin Mary, Seven-Sorrows-Retale, St. Martin, Breselenz

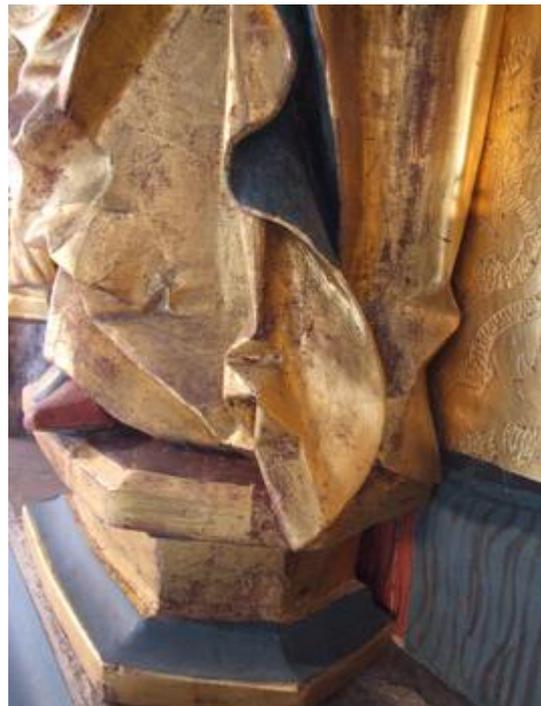


Fig. IX-3, Dropping fold, The Virgin Mary, Seven-Sorrows-Retale, St. Martin, Breselenz

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES



Fig. IX-4, St. Judas Thaddeus, Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. IX-5, Presentation in the Temple (detail I), Seven-Sorrows-Retable, St. Martin, Breselenz



Fig. IX-6, Ecce Homo (detail), Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES



Fig. IX-7, Lamentation over the dead Christ (detail), Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. IX-8, Presentation in the Temple (detail II), Seven-Sorrows-Retable, St. Martin, Breselenz

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES



Fig. IX-9, The Carrying of the Cross, Seven-Sorrows-Retable, St. Martin, Breselenz



Fig. IX-10, The Carrying of the Cross (detail), Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES

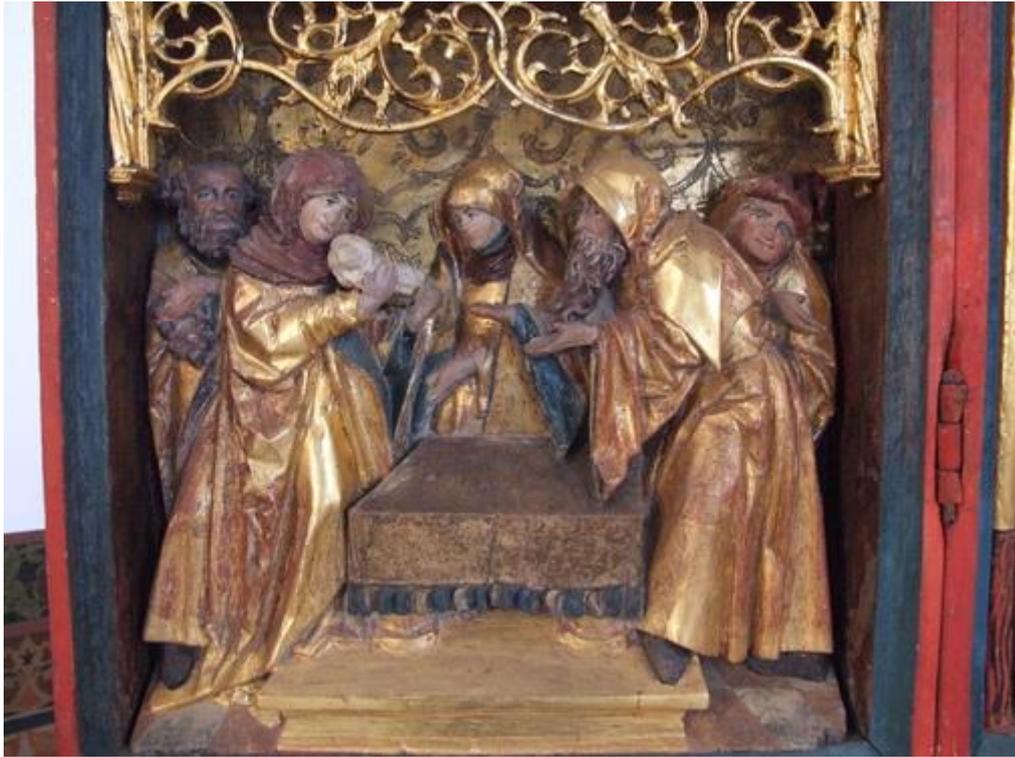


Fig. IX-11, Presentation in the Temple, Seven-Sorrows-Retablo, St. Martin, Breselenz

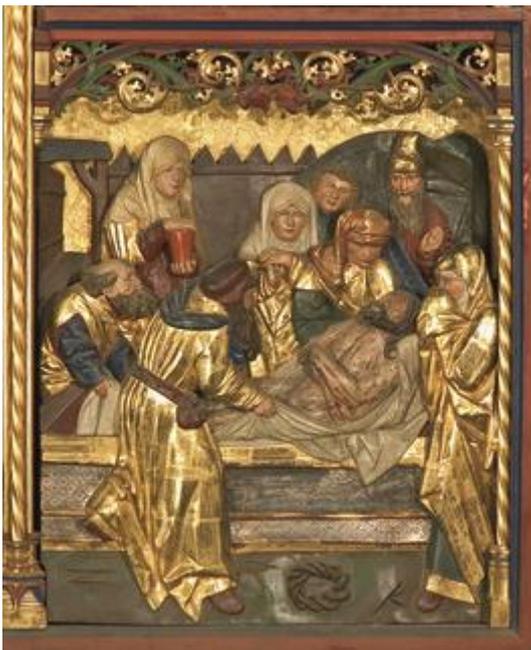


Fig. IX-12, The Entombment, Passion retablo, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. IX-13, The Carrying of the Cross, Crucifixion Retablo, St. Denis, Lindhorst

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES



Fig. IX-14, Presentation in the Temple (detail 3), Seven-Sorrows-Retablo, St. Martin, Breselenz



Fig. IX-15, The Carrying of the Cross (detail), Crucifixion Retablo, St. Denis, Lindhorst



Fig. IX-16, Central Compartment, Crucifixion Retablo, St. Denis, Lindhorst



Fig. IX-17, Head of St. John, Central Compartment, Crucifixion Retablo, St. Denis, Lindhorst

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES



Fig. IX-18, St. John the Evangelist, Central Compartment, Crucifixion Retable, St. Denis, Lindhorst



Fig. IX-19, St. Catherine, Holy Kindred Retable, Parish Chapel, Everloh



Fig. IX-20, St. Denis, Crucifixion Retable, St. Denis, Lindhorst

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES



Fig. IX-21, Figure of St. Denis, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. IX-22, St. Urban, Altarpiece with Madonna and Saints, St. Joseph, Henneckenrode

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES



Fig. IX-23, Three Reliefs formerly from Crucifixion Retable, St. Denis, Lindhorst, now Focke Museum, Bremen



Fig. IX-24, Relief illustrating the Entombment, formerly part of the Crucifixion Retable, St. Denis, Lindhorst, now Focke Museum, Bremen



Fig. IX-25, The Entombment (detail), Seven-Sorrows-Retable, St. Martin, Breselenz

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK
RETABLES



Fig. IX-26, 'Oppler' Panel, Christ Carrying the Cross (Detail), Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. IX-27, Adoration of the Magi, Inv. No. K1623, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES



Fig. IX-28, Head of Melchior, Adoration of the Magi, Inv. No. K1623, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim

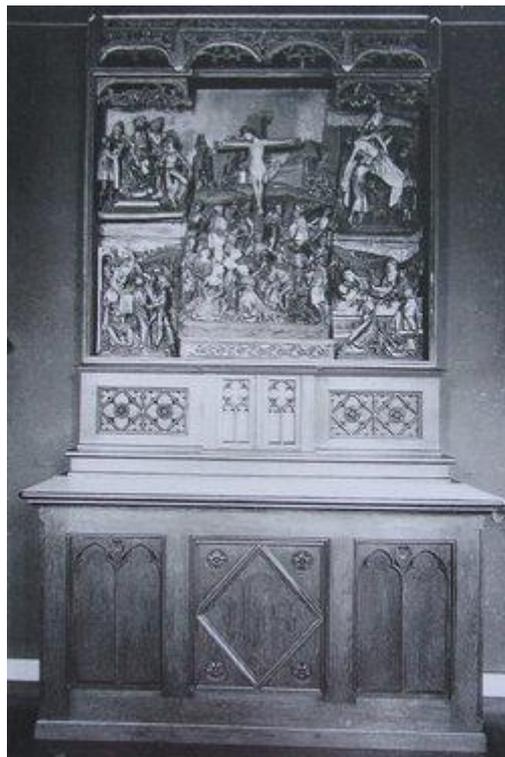


Fig. IX-29, Display of Passion scenes in private chapel, Episcopal Residence, Hildesheim

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES



Fig. IX-30, Six panels displaying five Passion scenes as displayed in private chapel, Episcopal Residence, Hildesheim



Fig. IX-31, Mary Magdalene, Entombment Scene, Passion Retable, Diocese of Hildesheim



Fig. IX-32, 'Brabantian' Retable, St. Mary-upon-the-Meadow, Soest

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES



Fig. IX-33, Carrying of the Cross, 'Brabantian' Retable, St. Mary-upon-the-Meadow, Soest



Fig. IX-34, Passion Retable, St. Bartholomew, Meerbeck

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES



Fig. IX-35, Ecce Homo, Hans Schüfelein, Speculum Passionis, wood cut, 1507

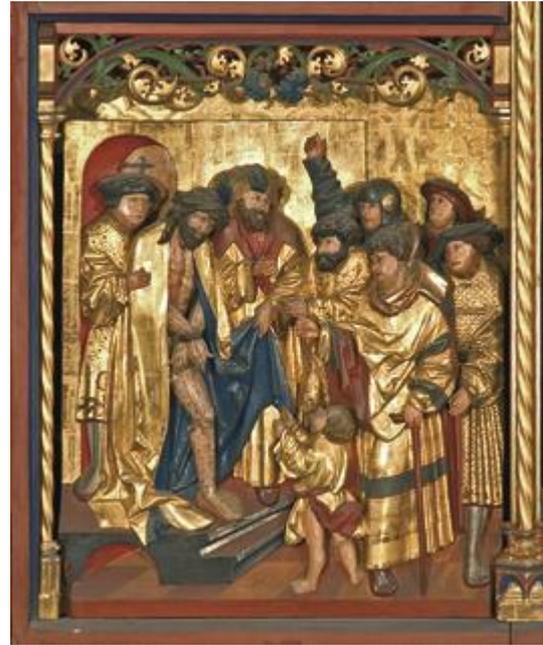


Fig. IX-36, Figure of St. Denis, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. IX-37, Ecce Homo, Passion Retable, St. Bartholomew, Meerbeck

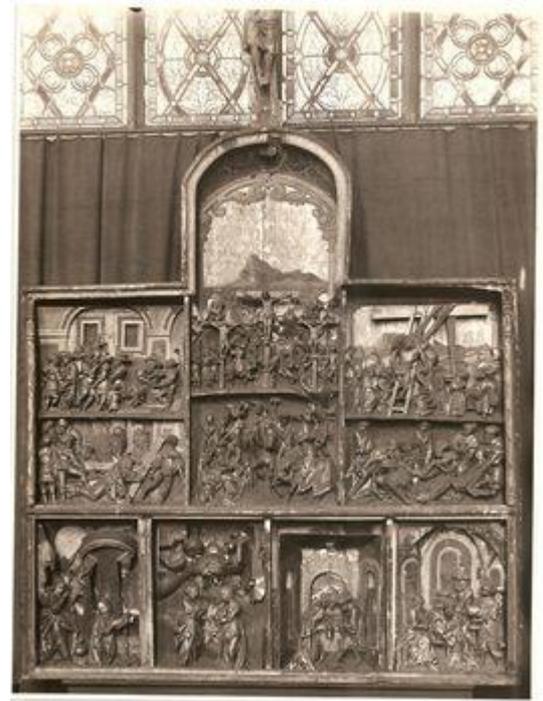


Fig. IX-38, 'Brabantian' Retable c. 1920, St. Mary-upon-the-Meadow, Soest

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES

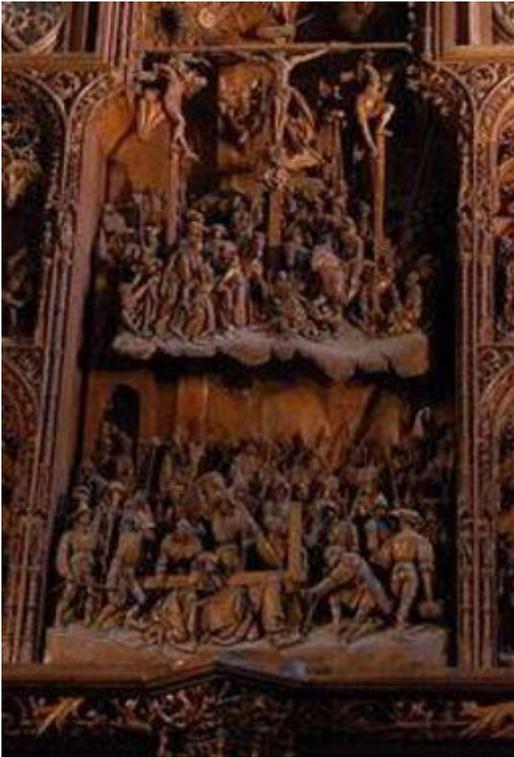


Fig. IX-39, Double tiered Carrying the Cross/Crucifixion Scene, Hans Brüggemann, 1521, Cathedral of St. Peter, Schleswig

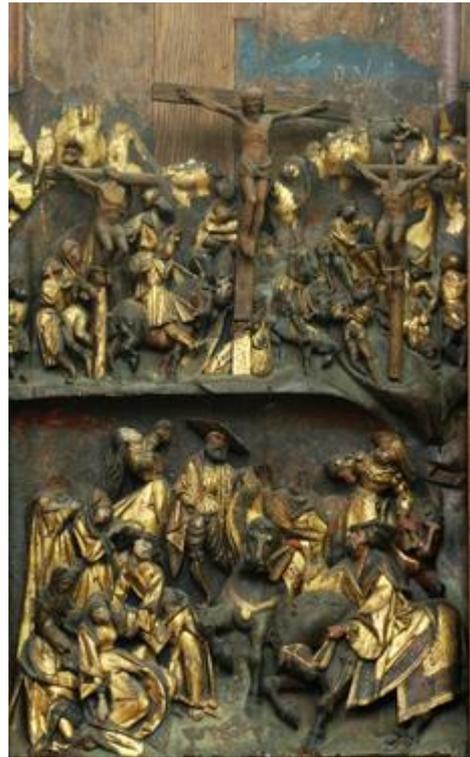


Fig. IX-40, Double-tiered Crucifixion scene, 'Brabantian' Retable, St. Mary-upon-the-Meadow, Soest

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES



Fig. IX-41, Double-tiered Deposition/Entombment scene, 'Brabantian' Retable, St. Mary-upon-the-Meadow, Soest

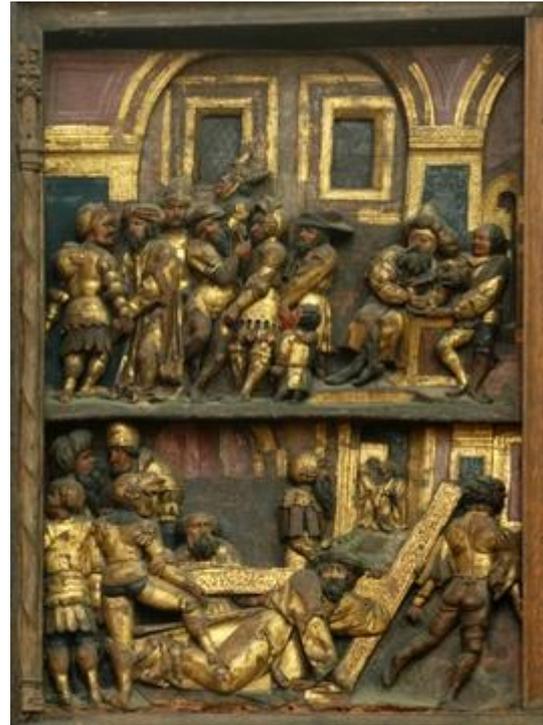


Fig. IX-42, Double-tiered Carrying of the Cross/Christ Before Pilate scene, 'Brabantian' Retable, St. Mary-upon-the-Meadow, Soest



Fig. IX-43, The Annunciation, 'Brabantian' Retable, St. Mary-upon-the-Meadow, Soest

IX. URBAN DEVELOPMENTS? THE CARVERS OF THE BRESELENZ AND MEERBECK RETABLES



Fig. IX-44, Detail, Carrying of the Cross, 'Brabantian' Retable, St. Mary-upon-the-Meadow, Soest



Fig. IX-45, Carrying of the Cross, one of six panels illustrating the Passion of Christ formerly in the private chapel of the episcopal residence in Hildesheim, Diocese of Hildesheim

XI. SOME NOTES ON SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL CARVINGS FROM HILDESHEIM

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Fig. XI-1, Tidexer Straße, Einbeck



Fig. XI-2, Detail, House No. 1, Hoher Weg, Goslar

XI. SOME NOTES ON SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL CARVINGS FROM HILDESHEIM



Fig. XI-3, View from Kehrriederturm into old town, Hildesheim



Fig. XI-4, Model of typical artisan house c. 1480, assembled by HAWK students from original records and plans for exhibition Familie Lautensack: Ein Michaelistag im Mittelalter



Fig. XI-5, Pre-WWII view of Eckemeckerstrasse Hildesheim

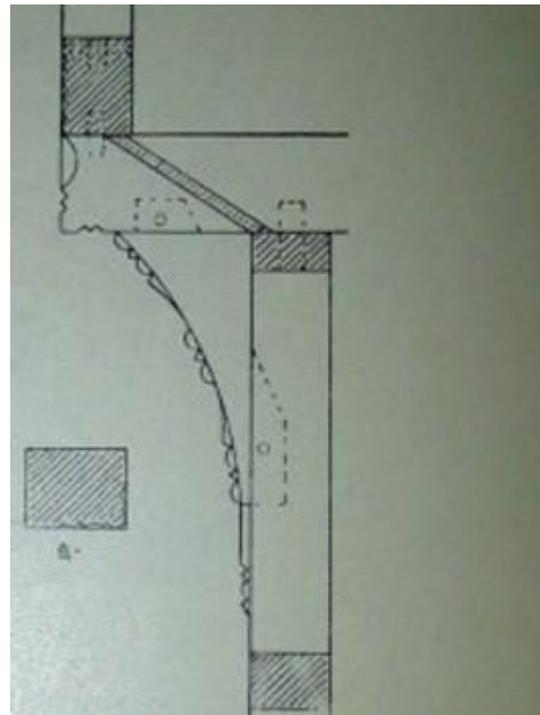


Fig. XI-6, Line drawing of console bracket located in structural frame

XI. SOME NOTES ON SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL CARVINGS FROM HILDESHEIM



Fig. XI-7, View of weather boards sealing space between console brackets, house Bernwardstr. 2, Warburg/Westfalia



Fig. XI-8, Pre-WWII view of houses at the corner of Eckemeckerstrasse and Andreasplatz, Hildesheim

XI. SOME NOTES ON SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL CARVINGS FROM HILDESHEIM



Fig. XI-9, Bay window, house at Osterstrasse 59, Hildesheim. Watercolour by Heinrich Quint, 1898.



Fig. XI-10, House No. 31, Vorderer Brühl, Hildesheim

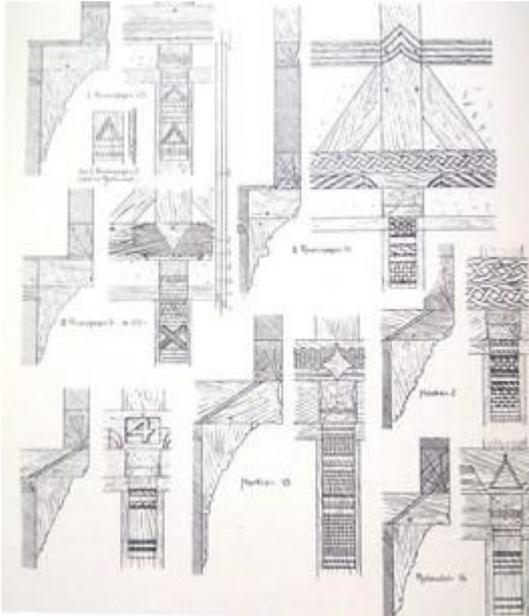


Fig. XI-11, Examples of geometric decoration patterns of console brackets

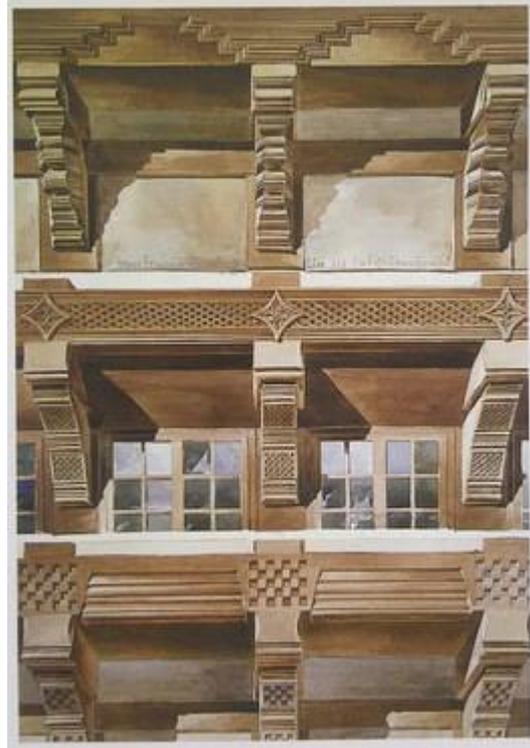


Fig. XI-12, Examples of patterned banding, house No 39, Rosenhagen and House No. 51, Neustädter Markt, both Hildesheim. Watercolour by Richard Heyer, undated.

XI. SOME NOTES ON SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL CARVINGS FROM HILDESHEIM

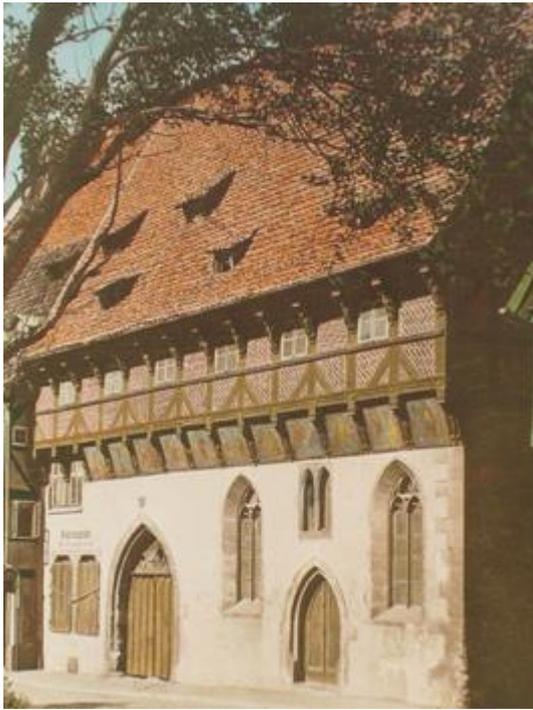


Fig. XI-13, Trinitatis Hospital, Hildesheim



Fig. XI-14, Kramergildehaus, Andreasplatz, Hildesheim

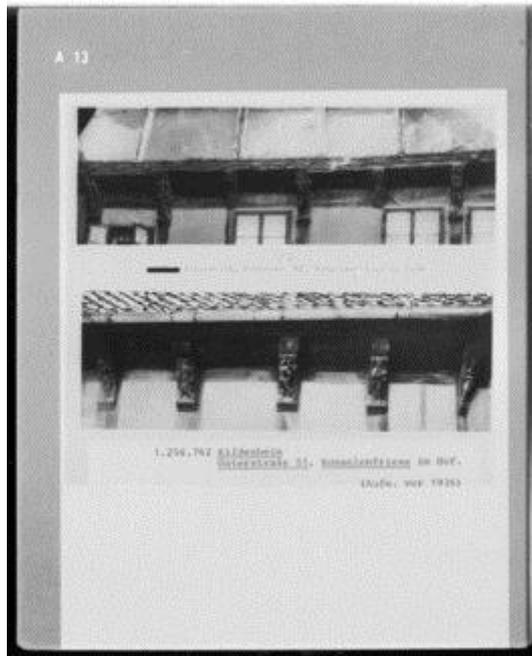


Fig. XI-15, pre-1936 photograph of console frieze and brackets, inner courtyard, Osterstrasse 51.

XI. SOME NOTES ON SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL CARVINGS FROM HILDESHEIM

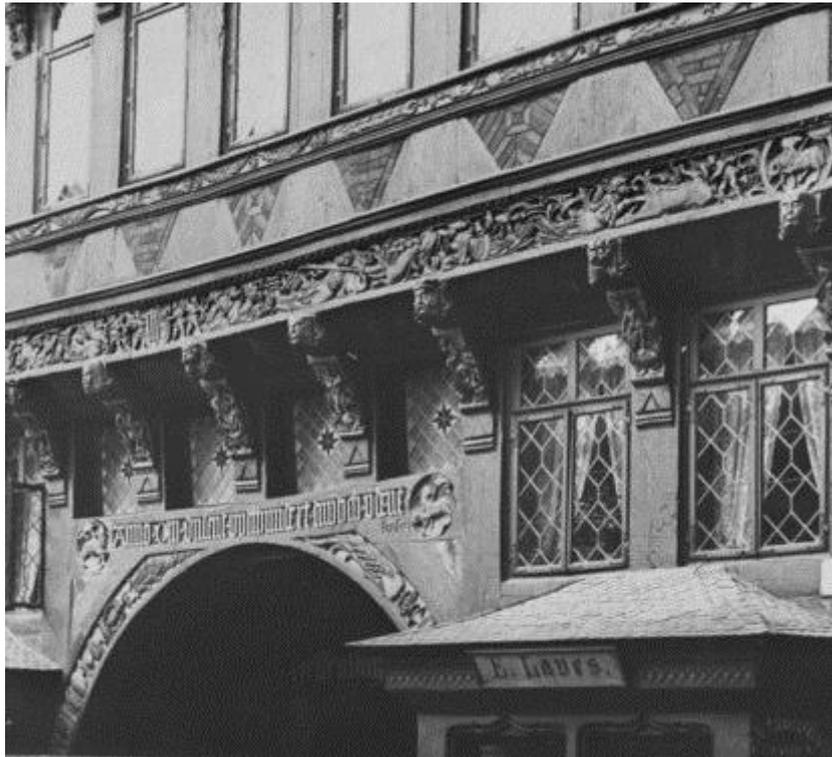


Fig. XI-16, Detail of lower friezes and brackets, Knochenhaueramtshaus, Hildesheim



Fig. XI-17, Carved figurative console brackets, pre-1500 (Group 1), on display in former Andreas Museum, Hildesheim, c. 1910

XI. SOME NOTES ON SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL CARVINGS FROM HILDESHEIM



Fig. XI-18, Console bracket H4.003, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim Fig. XI-19, Console Bracket H4.004, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim



Fig. XI-20, The Virgin and Child, Alfeld Retable, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover

XI. SOME NOTES ON SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL CARVINGS FROM HILDESHEIM



Fig. XI-21, Window Apron H 4.024, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim



Fig. XI-22, Group of the Righteous, Window Apron H4.024, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim

XI. SOME NOTES ON SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL CARVINGS FROM HILDESHEIM



Fig. XI-23, Detail of Panel illustrating the legend of St. George, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. XI-24, Detail from Christ in Limbo, Passion retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. XI-25, Detail from 'Oppler' panel Christ Carrying the Cross, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover

XI. SOME NOTES ON SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL CARVINGS FROM HILDESHEIM



Fig. XI-26, Detail View, St. James the Less, Village Church, Holtrup



Fig. XI-27, Panel illustrating the legend of St. George, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia with landscape detailing

XI. SOME NOTES ON SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL CARVINGS FROM HILDESHEIM



Fig. XI-28, Landscape detailing of Window Apron H 4.024, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim



Fig. XI-29, Console Bracket H4.005, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim



Fig. XI-30, Detail 1, Console Bracket H4.005, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim

XI. SOME NOTES ON SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL CARVINGS FROM HILDESHEIM



Fig. XI-31, Detail 2, Console Bracket H4.005, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim



Fig. XI-32, Detail view of St. Bartholomew, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. XI-33, Console Bracket H4.006, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim



Fig. XI-34, Detail view of St. Andrew, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. XI-35, Detail view of St. Judas Thaddeus, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia

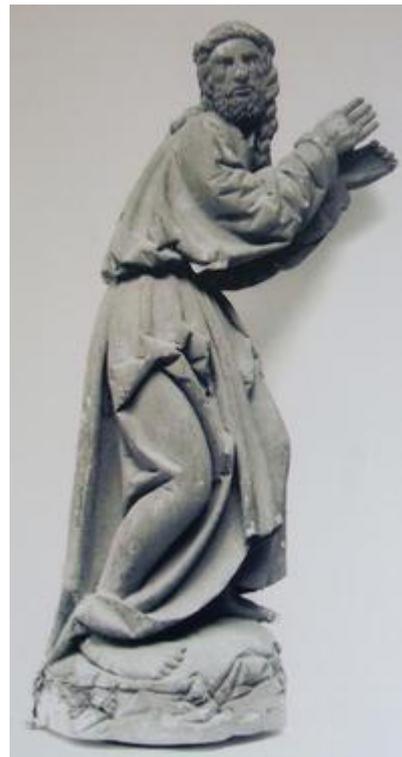


Fig. XI-36, Christ Carrying the Cross, Klosterkammer Hanover

XI. SOME NOTES ON SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL CARVINGS FROM HILDESHEIM



Fig. XI-37, St. Andrew, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. XI-38, St. Bartholomew, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia

XII. CATALOGUE OF WORKS



Fig. XII-1, St. Anne teaching the Virgin to Read, Museum of Art, Philadelphia



Fig. XII-2, Relief depicting saints Maurus, Benedict and Placidus, Benedict Retable, St. Godehard, Hildesheim



Fig. XII-3, Central Section, Holy Kindred retable, Parish Chapel, Everloh



Fig. XII-4, St. Anne, St. Anne teaching the Virgin to Read, Museum of Art, Philadelphia



Fig. XII-5, St. Elizabeth, West Choir Retable, St. Michael's, Hildesheim



Fig. XII-6, Virgin Mary, Trinitatis Pietà, Inv. No. K2186, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim



Fig. XII-7, Virgin Mary, St. Anne teaching the Virgin to Read, Museum of Art, Philadelphia



Fig. XII-8, St. Catherine , The National Trust, Waddesdon Manor



Fig. XII-9, Drapery structures, St. Anne teaching the Virgin to Read, Museum of Art, Philadelphia



Fig. XII-10, Book detail, St. Anne teaching the Virgin to Read, Museum of Art, Philadelphia



Fig. XII-11, St. Emerentia with book, The Virgin and Child, Saint Anne, and Saint Emerentia (Emerentia Selbviert, acc. no. 16.32.208), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Fig. XII-12, St. Anne with book, The Virgin and Child, Saint Anne, and Saint Emerentia (Emerentia Selbviert, acc. no. 16.32.208), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Fig. XII-13, Auricle Flourish, St. Anne teaching the Virgin to Read, Museum of Art, Philadelphia



Fig. XII-14, Trinitatis Pietá, Inv. No. K2186, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim



Fig. XII-15, Profile view with blown back mantle edge, Trinitatis Pietá, Inv. No. K2186, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim



Fig. XII-16, St. James the Greater, West Choir Retable, St. Michael's, Hildesheim



Fig. XII-17, St. Elizabeth, West Choir Retable, St. Michael's, Hildesheim



Fig. XII-18, Virgin Mary, Trinitatis Pietá, Inv. No. K2186, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim



Fig. XII-19, Knot detail, Trinitatis Pietá, Inv. No. K2186, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim



Fig. XII-20, Virgin Mary with knot detail, West Choir Retable, St. Michael's, Hildesheim

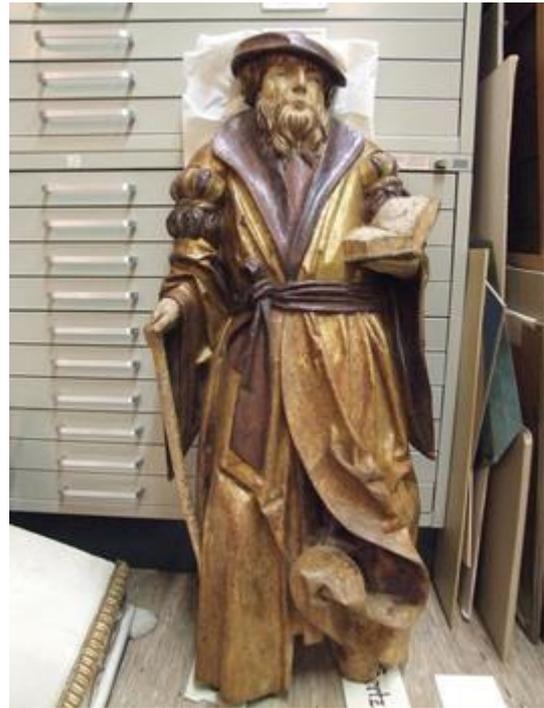


Fig. XII-21, Anonymous male saint, Inv. No. K1633, Roemer Pelizäus Museum, Hildesheim



Fig. XII-22, Central Section of retable in village church near Stendal, Sachsen-Anhalt



Fig. XII-23, Relief depicting saints Gregory and Jerome, The Evangelists and Church Fathers, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. XII-24, Relief depicting saints Ambrose and Augustine, The Evangelists and Church Fathers, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. XII-25, Reliefs depicting saints Luke and Mark, The Evangelists and Church Fathers, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. XII-26, Reliefs depicting saints John and Matthew, The Evangelists and Church Fathers, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. XII-27, Detail view of writing desk with books, relief depicting Saints Gregory and Jerome, The Evangelists and Church Fathers, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. XII-28, Emerentia Selbviert Group, Cathedral St. Gorgonius and St. Peter, Minden

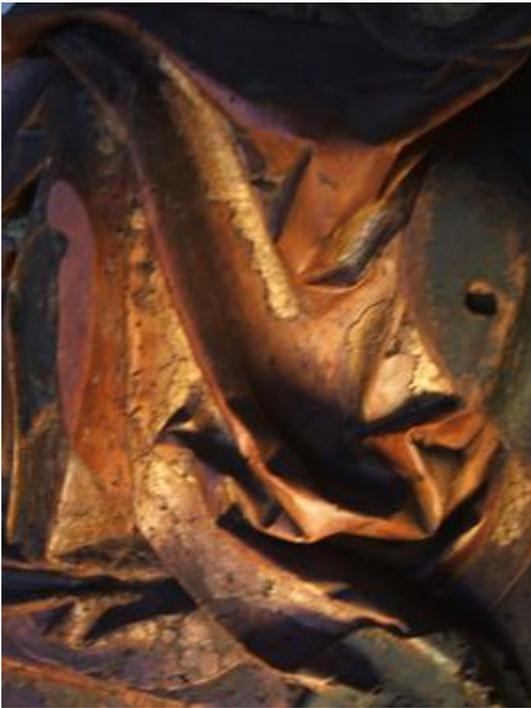


Fig. XII-29, small dowel hole detail, Emerentia Selbviert Group, Cathedral St. Gorgonius and St. Peter, Minden



Fig. XII-30, detail view of damaged areas, Emerentia Selbviert Group, Cathedral St. Gorgonius and St. Peter, Minden



Fig. XII-31, Rear view of damaged areas and replacement fold on left sleeve of St. Anne, Emerentia Selbviert Group, Cathedral St. Gorgonius and St. Peter, Minden



Fig. XII-32, Large dowel hole and semi-circular ledge, Emerentia Selbviert Group, Cathedral St. Gorgonius and St. Peter, Minden



Fig. XII-33, Coronation of the Virgin Group, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover



Fig. XII-34, Detail view of space under table, Central Section, Holy Kindred retable, Parish Chapel, Everloh



Fig. XII-35, Central Section, Holy Kindred retable, Parish Chapel, Everloh



Fig. XII-36, Martyrdom of St. Elmo panel, Catholic Chapel, Klein-Escherde



Fig. XII-37, St. Elizabeth and St. John, Holy Kindred Retable, Parish Chapel, Everloh



Fig. XII-38, St. Anne, Emerentia Selbviert Group, Cathedral St. Gorgonius and St. Peter, Minden



Fig. XII-39, Mary Magdalene, Entombment, Seven-Sorrows-Retable, St. James, Eime



Fig. XII-40, Passion Retable, St. Mary Magdalene, Hildesheim



Fig. XII-41, Longinus, Crucifixion scene, Passion Retable, St. Mary Magdalene, Hildesheim



Fig. XII-42, Assembly of Oppler panels
c. 1913



Fig. XII-43, Figure of St. Denis, St.
Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. XII-44, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia, c. 1894



Fig. XII-45, Crowning with Thorns,
Passion Retable, St. Denis,
Enger/Westfalia, c. 1898



Fig. XII-46, Two sections showing cut-
away corners of reliefs to fit column
bases and reliefs into compartment,
Passion Retable, St. Denis,
Enger/Westfalia



Fig. XII-47, Left hand side of Predella showing painted acanthus leaf pattern,
Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. XII-48, Relic Shrine, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. XII-49, Tracery Sections, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia

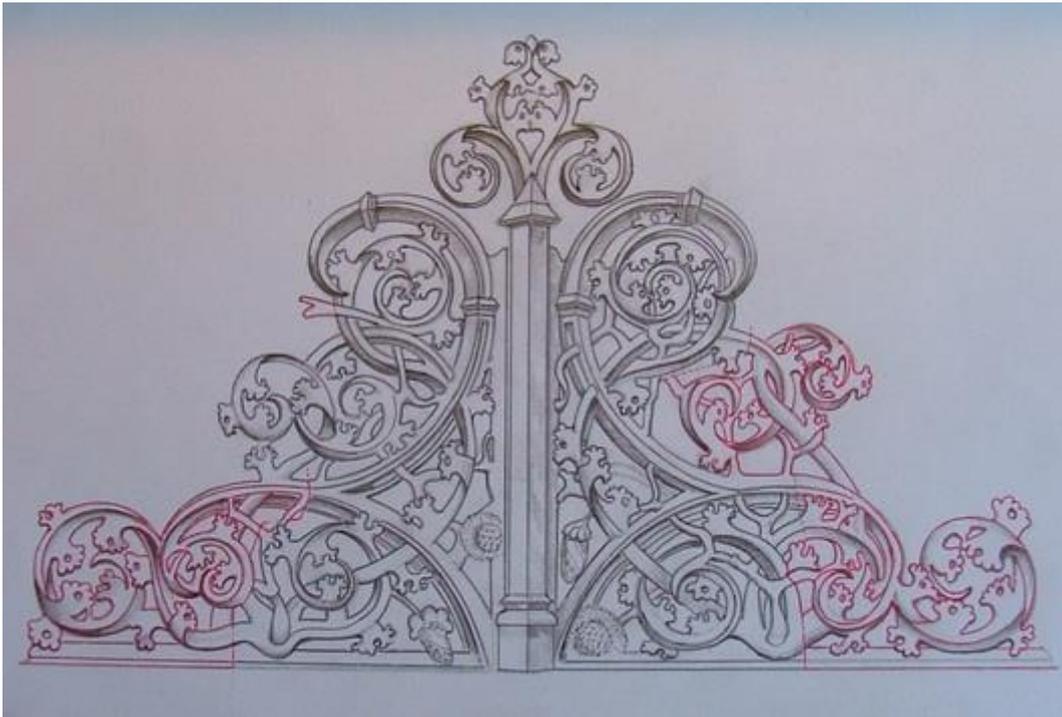


Fig. XII-50, Expansion of Tracery Sections, c. 1915, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. XII-51, Tracery Superstructure, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia

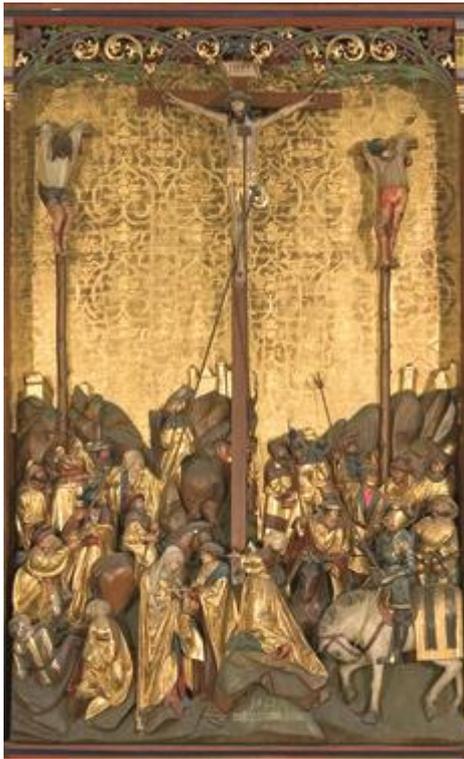


Fig. XII-52, Crucifixion, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. XII-53, Crucifixion, Hans Baldung Grien, 1512, oil on limewood panel, 152 x 104 cm, Staatliche Museen Berlin

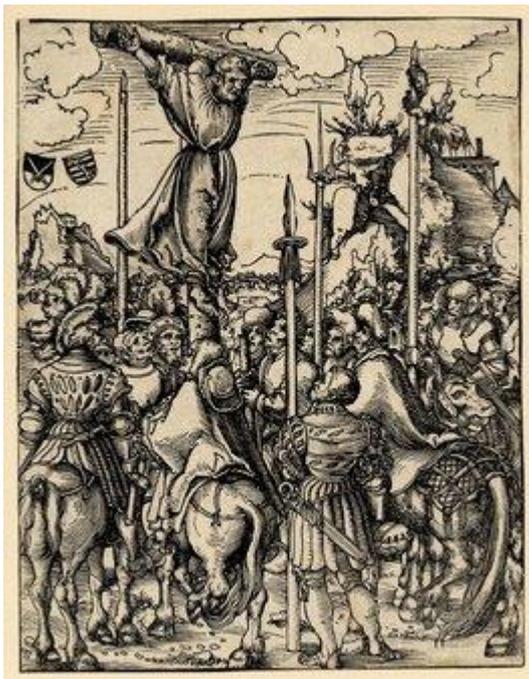


Fig. XII-54, The Martyrdom of St. Phillip, Lucas Cranach the Elder, wood cut, 1510-1515

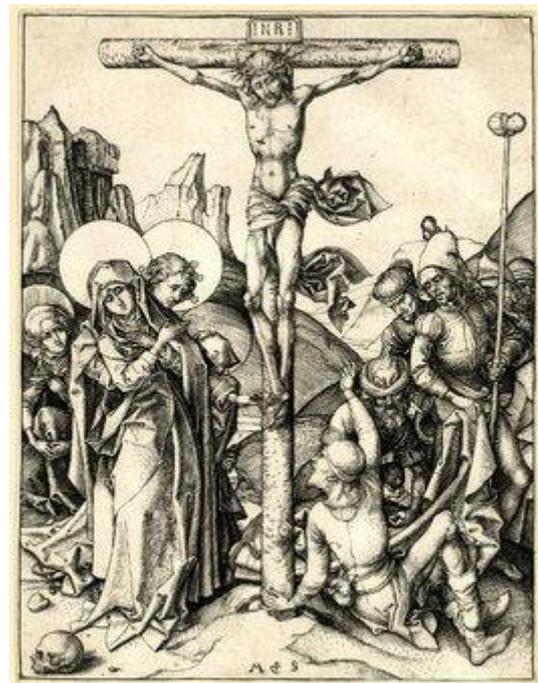


Fig. XII-55, The Crucifixion, Martin Schongauer, wood cut, 1475-1479



Fig. XII-56, St. Andrew, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia

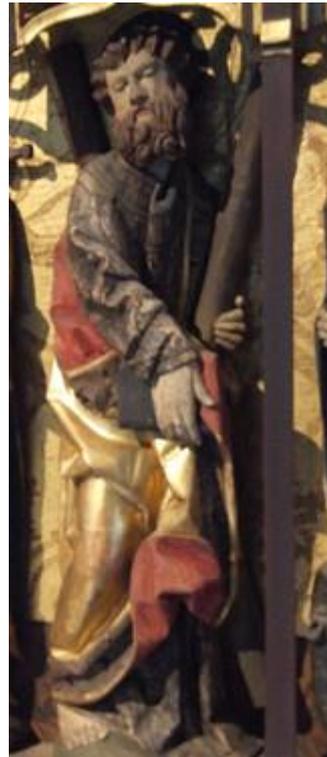


Fig. XII-57, St. Andrew, Seven-Sorrows-Retale, St. James, Eime



Fig. XII-58, St. Andrew, St. Peter, Ribbesbüttel



Fig. XII-59, St. Bartholomew, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia

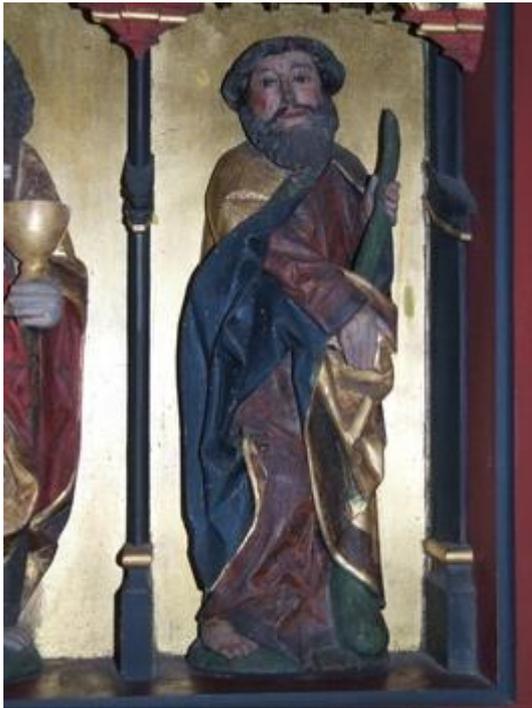


Fig. XII-60, St. Bartholomew, St. Peter, Ribbesbüttel

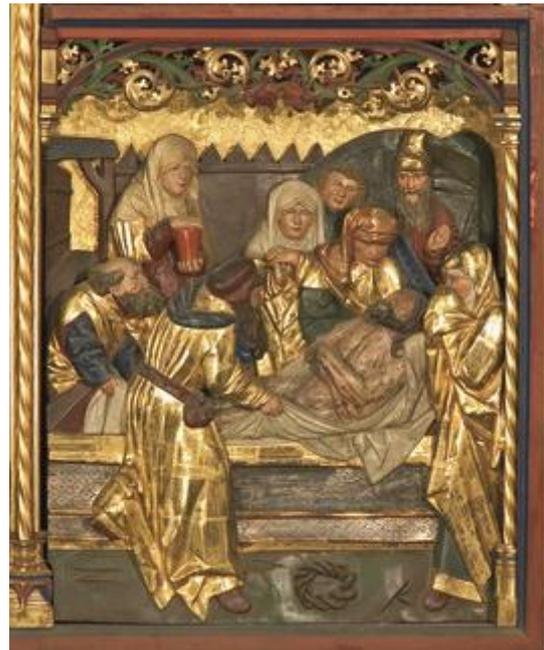


Fig. XII-61, The Entombment, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia



Fig. XII-62, Detail, The Entombment, Passion Retable, St. Denis, Enger/Westfalia

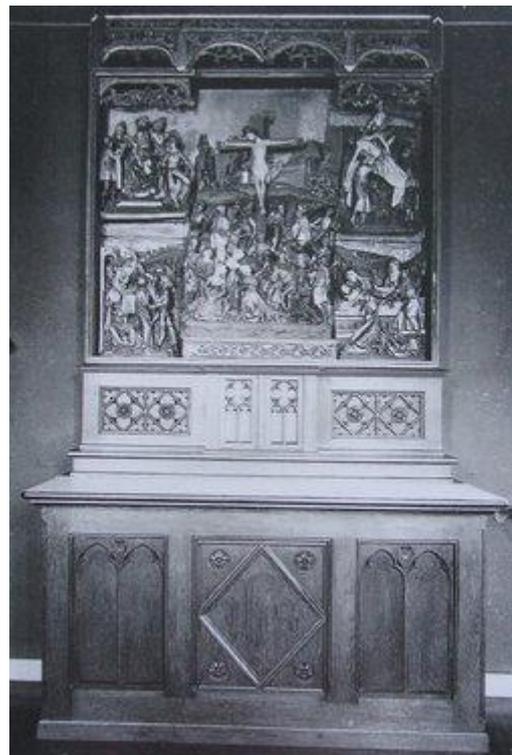


Fig. XII-63, Passion reliefs formerly assembled into retable of private chapel of Episcopal Residence, Diocese of Hildesheim, Hildesheim