

NOTES ON PICTURES IN THE ROYAL COLLECTIONS
XII—A PORTRAIT OF MARTIN LUTHER AS 'JUNKER JÖRG,'
BY LUCAS CRANACH

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IN a former number of this Magazine¹ some notice was given of the interesting paintings by Lucas Cranach and his school at Wittenberg, the majority of which had been acquired by H.R.H. Prince Albert, who, as a Saxon prince, showed a here-

ditary interest in the works of the great Saxon painter. Among the paintings there enumerated was a portrait of Martin Luther, in his soldier's garb as 'Junker Jörg' during his enforced captivity in the Wartburg. This portrait, which is painted on panel and measures 20½ by 14 inches, was then covered with much opaque varnish and repainted, and has since undergone restoration with a fairly satisfactory result. Among other disclosures has

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MARTIN LUTHER AS 'JUNKER JÖRG,' BY LUCAS CRANACH. IN
THE COLLECTION OF H.M. THE KING AT WINDSOR CASTLE

Notes on Pictures in the Royal Collections

been the original background of dull greenish grey, though it is possible that the original tint tended towards the green rather than to the grey, which at present predominates. On this background there appeared for the first time the well-known winged serpent with a ring in its mouth, the mark used by Lucas Cranach, and adopted with variations by the Cranach workshop in Wittenberg. In this instance the snake has bat's wings, as used by the elder Cranach, but the wings are more depressed rather than erect as in the elder Cranach's earlier signatures.

The episode of Martin Luther as 'Junker Jörg' is a landmark in history. Visitors to the famous castle of the Wartburg are still shown the rooms in which he lived, and in which he employed his enforced leisure in translating the Holy Scriptures into the language of his people. It was in the spring of 1521 that Luther, in order to save him from his enemies, was captured by his friends and secluded in the Wartburg under the assumed name of 'Junker Jörg.' Meanwhile the fire of reformation, which he had lighted, continued to spread, and in no town with greater freedom than in the University town of Wittenberg. Among those who accepted the Lutheran doctrines with enthusiasm was the painter and engraver, Lucas Cranach, a highly respected town councillor and leading citizen, who had a printing press and publishing house, as well as a wine-shop near the market-place. In spite of the patronage bestowed upon him by the greatest prelate of the neighbourhood, Albrecht, Cardinal-Archbishop of Brandenburg, Lucas Cranach became an unswerving disciple of Luther, and by his pencil and imagination contributed no small share to the propagation of the reformed religion among his fellow citizens.

In the early days of December, 1521, Luther, clad in his soldier's dress with beard and flowing moustache, appeared suddenly at Wittenberg in order to defend in person his doctrines against the great Cardinal himself. Disheartened by the situation, he returned speedily to his retreat, until March 1st, 1522, when he could endure the restraint no longer, and, leaving the Wartburg for good, appeared again in Wittenberg as the leading champion of the reformed religion. On this journey Luther stopped at Jena, where a young Swiss student, also on his way to Wittenberg, met him, "a solitary horse-soldier, sitting at a table, with a red cap on his head in the fashion of the century, in his vest and hose, having doffed his surcoat, a sword by his side, his right hand on the hilt, and his left grasping the scabbard."

In the town library at Leipzig there is preserved a small portrait of Luther as 'Junker Jörg,' which, according to Dr. Flechsig, was painted during his fleeting visit to Wittenberg in December, 1521. He is represented with full beard and moustache, in simple close-fitting dress, with his

right hand clasping the hilt of a sword. The picture is not signed, but is surely by the elder Cranach, although the reproduction lately issued by the Berlin Photographic Company only ascribes the painting to an unknown master.

In March, 1522, after Luther's arrival at Wittenberg, a woodcut was published, which is clearly the work either of Lucas Cranach himself or of some wood-engraver working from an original drawing by Cranach. The portrait is a bust only, in the reverse direction to the painting, and showing less of the body, though with indications of the same costume, and not including the hands. Two editions of this woodcut are known, one inscribed: 'Imago Martini Lutheri eo habitu expressa quo reversus est ex Pathmo Witembergam Anno Domini 1522.' This was probably a broadside issued to celebrate Luther's arrival in a form suited to the popular demand.

The portrait at Windsor Castle shows a great deal more of the figure, the body extending to below the waist, clad in a dark cloth close-fitting vesture, the hands both shown one above the other in a rather awkward attitude, but suggesting the action of the hands with the sword, as described by Kessler at Jena. The head and hands are less strongly painted than in the portrait at Leipzig, but they have both suffered so much by injury and repaints, that it is difficult to judge of the merits of the portrait in its original condition. Comparison with the Leipzig portrait and the Cranach woodcut leads to the impression that the two latter were done immediately from the same drawing, which had been taken from life by Lucas Cranach, and that the Windsor portrait was a later issue from the Cranach workshop, probably not executed by the elder Cranach himself. Two other portraits of Luther as 'Junker Jörg' are described by Schuchardt in his *Life of Cranach*:

(1) A bust portrait, measuring 2 ft. 7 in. by 2 ft. 1 in., then belonging to Herr von Schreienhofen, at Dresden. This portrait is dated 1532, and has the Cranach mark, as used in the workshop by the younger Cranach. In this portrait Luther holds the hilt of his sword in both hands.

(2) A half-figure on a smaller scale, 1 ft. 8 in. by 1 ft. 2 in., in the Grandducal Library at Weimar. The body is turned to the right, in black clothes, grasping a dagger with the left hand, and pressing it to the breast with the left elbow.

It will be seen that the four oil-paintings mentioned are in no case copies of each other, although they probably all derive from the same original by Lucas Cranach at Wittenberg. Possibly others exist elsewhere. It may be assumed that Luther divested himself of the name and habiliments of 'Junker Jörg' as speedily as he could after his arrival at Wittenberg in March, 1522, so that no likeness of him in this garb could have been taken from life at a later date.