

## DÜRER AND THE PRINTED BOOK

DAGMAR EICHBERGER

Albrecht Dürer earned his reputation as a gifted and highly productive artist not only for his achievements in the field of panel painting but also, particularly, for the vast corpus of graphic work that he created between 1489 and his death in 1528. The wide distribution of Dürer's single woodcuts and engravings, his thematic print series and his illustrated books contributed to his popularity in Germany and in other parts of Europe. Moreover, while during his lifetime his paintings were much sought after by wealthy burghers and merchants as well as by dukes and princes, it is his printed work which perhaps has had a stronger and more long-lasting effect on subsequent generations of artists.

Frequent travels during his formative years and in his later life brought Dürer into close contact with artists, art collectors and intellectuals in Italy and in other parts of Europe. This experience of the art and ideas, the lives and customs of different cultural environments is reflected in the experimental nature of his art, in his search for new themes and subject matter, and in his interest in theory. Contemporary intellectuals such as Erasmus of Rotterdam and Ulrich von Hutten expressed their admiration for his work by comparing him to the

ancient painter Apelles. Willibald Pirckheimer, his adviser and friend, paralleled his power of imagination with that of the Roman poet Lucian.<sup>1</sup> Dürer's entrepreneurial skills helped to spread his fame among his fellow artists and humanist friends,<sup>2</sup> and we know that he actively organized the sale of his prints through family members as well as through agents.<sup>3</sup>

In the last quarter of the fifteenth century, when the modern notion of the print as an autonomous form of art and collector's item was emerging in northern Europe, Dürer's art exerted a fundamental influence on the development of prints as an independent artistic medium. At the same time, he made his enduring mark on the history of the printed book. By producing works such as the *Life of the Virgin* and the *Small Passion*, he took the illustrated book to new heights: these highly artistic books are exceptionally lavishly decorated and represent the 'top of the range' in contemporary book production.

In the context of early printed books, the concept of the autonomous master print is generally not applicable, since prints in books were more dependent on the text they accompanied. However, the relative importance of text and image could vary considerably, as a closer investigation of the various printed books in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria will show.

This essay will not attempt to provide a comprehensive chronological account of the artistic achievements of Dürer the book illustrator, but rather will highlight issues of general importance to the history of the illustrated book and will discuss some of Dürer's manifold contributions to this field. These observations will be made in relation to the rich holdings of the National Gallery of Victoria, which can pride itself on owning more than twenty early printed books with illustrations by Dürer and his workshop. The Melbourne holdings comprise a complete set of the religious and theoretical books that Dürer either decorated or wrote, and a large number of single woodcuts that were initially designed for publication in books but never reached that stage. The woodcut series prepared for the *Comedies of Terence* and the story of *Freydal*, for instance, belong to this group.

### The Illustrated Book in Transition

In the wake of Johannes Gutenberg's invention of movable type in the mid-fifteenth century, printing

establishments within Germany not only played a major role in the development and dissemination of this new technique for printing plain text editions, but also made themselves a name by publishing large quantities of illustrated books. Editions with woodcut illustrations made up about one-third of the overall production of early printed books in the second half of the fifteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Among the 255 towns and cities that ventured into the printing business, there were six main centres of book production: Nuremberg, Basel, Augsburg, Cologne, Leipzig and Strassburg.<sup>5</sup> For most of Dürer's life, the imperial city of Nuremberg, where he had his workshop and printing press, remained his permanent base, but in his youth he also worked briefly as a designer of woodcuts in Strassburg and Basel. Included in the National Gallery of Victoria collection — both in books and as single-sheet impressions — are copies of most of the illustrations Dürer produced for publishers in Basel and Nuremberg, as well as a smaller number of early printed books decorated by other artists working in the same cultural environment. These riches enable us to document in considerable detail Dürer's contributions to this particular field of artistic endeavour: the printed book with illustrations.

When Dürer started his career in Nuremberg, the concept of the illustrated printed book was still a fairly new one and permanent solutions to the problem of combining images with text printed from movable type had not yet been found. The introduction of movable type around 1460<sup>6</sup> forced publisher, printer and collaborating artists to think about how they could best replace expensive illuminated miniatures with printed illustrations, without losing the aesthetic appeal of the handmade manuscript. The period around 1500 may thus be described as a transitional phase, in which publishers experimented with different approaches to the challenge of producing multiple copies of illustrated books. In the end the hand-illuminated manuscript made from expensive parchment, costly pigments and sometimes gold leaf had to give way to the cheaper product. Despite the printed book's immediate success, there was still a limited market for illuminated manuscripts in the first half of the sixteenth century, though their production was almost completely abandoned by the end of the century.

In the early phase of changed production methods many different approaches were taken to solving the

problem posed by the move away from the handwritten and illuminated book. In some cases the book was printed in two consecutive phases, that is the text was printed using movable type and printer's ink, whereas the illustrations were printed with brown ink in the manner of block books.<sup>7</sup> In other cases the printed text was treated as though it were a handwritten manuscript awaiting illumination. In these examples the printed text was embellished with hand-illuminated initials and narrative marginal scenes.

A small German prayer-book for private use called *Salus Animae* ('The Salvation of the Soul'), dating from 1503, is a case in point (see NGV Book no. 13). Here, the beginning of the gospel section is highlighted by a hand-illuminated T-initial and marginal decorations. Leaves and flowers embellish all four margins, and a young lady playing with a dog decorates the lower right-hand corner (plate 2). Dürer himself was on occasion commissioned to embellish printed books with individually painted initials and delicate border decorations,<sup>8</sup> notably for his bibliophile friend Willibald Pirckheimer (1470–1530), who while in Italy had purchased some fourteen locally printed classical texts in Greek and Latin.

A further possibility was that a handwritten text would be accompanied by printed images.<sup>9</sup> However, the most common and least expensive form of imitating an illuminated manuscript was to colour a plain black and white woodcut with a combination of translucent watercolour and brilliant body colour. The increasing demand for such illuminated woodcuts is evidenced by the large number of books with hand-coloured woodcuts and also by the creation of a new type of profession, that of the so-called *Briefmaler*, who specialized in decorating printed images with a brush or stencil, using a broad range of colours and sometimes even gold.

The *Salus Animae* prayer-book is a good example of the flexibility of the printing workshops, which catered for the needs of a diverse clientele. It appears that this book was issued in two separate editions, one on paper, the other on parchment; the Melbourne copy combines sections from both editions, most likely bound together by a later owner, probably in the seventeenth century. Of the three copies inspected by the author, the Melbourne *Salus Animae* is the only composite version of the book and the only one with uncoloured illustrations. The copies in Vienna<sup>10</sup> and Washington DC<sup>11</sup> were printed on

parchment throughout and were embellished — particularly lavishly in the Washington copy — by a professional *Briefmaler*. The subtle grades of costliness reflected in this small group of books suggest that publishers were able to adjust to the needs of a wide range of customers, those with small purses and those with not-so-small purses.

The *Eichstätt Missal*, printed in Nuremberg in 1517, is another example of the successful combination of two traditions in book production (see NGV Book no. 17). Here the main body of the text is printed on paper and all of the woodcut initials are coloured in by hand. The special significance of the Canon of the Mass, which starts approximately in the middle of the book, is highlighted, however, by a sequence of full-page coloured woodcuts, three of them printed on parchment. The full-page coat of arms of the owner, Archbishop Gabriel von Eyb, faces a depiction of St Willibald, patron saint of the city of Eichstätt. On the following parchment double spread is a *Crucifixion with the Virgin and St John* (B.56; plate 3), situated opposite the *Te-igitur* page showing the *Sacrifice of Isaac* (plate 4).

The considerable difference in value, quality and prestige between a printed and a hand-illuminated book becomes obvious in the case of the so-called *Hallesches Heiltumsbuch* (*Halle Relic Book*),<sup>12</sup> of which the National Gallery of Victoria owns a very rare printed copy (fig. 1; see NGV Book no. 18). This *Heiltumsbuch* contains a detailed inventory of an extensive collection of relics and reliquaries from the collegiate church of SS Mauritius and Magdalene in Halle. According to the text itself the indulgences attached to these relics amounted in all to 39,245,120 years and 220 days' remission of sins. The owner of the treasury, Cardinal Albrecht von Brandenburg, commissioned two versions of the same book — a lavishly handwritten and hand-illuminated manuscript for himself<sup>13</sup> and a simpler printed version for distribution among the wider community of relic worshippers. The book in Melbourne is one of these multiple copies, which were published in Halle in 1520 on the occasion of the consecration of the collegiate church in which the treasury was initially housed.<sup>14</sup> This printed version of the *Heiltumsbuch* contains a large number of woodcuts depicting the reliquaries, which are described in more detail in the text itself. At least four illustrations in this book have been assigned to one of Dürer's workshop assistants,



Fig. 1 *Reliquary Bust of St Mary Magdalene*, woodcut, fol. X3v of *Hallesches Heiltumsbuch*, 1520.

Wolf Traut (1480–1520). The master himself was commissioned to produce 200 proofs of an engraved portrait of Cardinal Albrecht von Brandenburg, one impression of which was later glued into each book.<sup>15</sup>

### Experimentation with Layout and Design

The transition from the handwritten manuscript to the printed book brought about another change in the appearance of the book, namely the invention of the title page. In previous centuries a book usually started with the *incipit*, the opening words of the text itself. The concept of a title page, providing information on the author, the printer and the place of publication, etc., was unknown. Fifteenth-century publishers of printed books, however, quickly discovered the advantages of the title page, which developed into an independent feature of the book in the 1470s.<sup>16</sup>

Many of these early title pages were designed with particular care and contained beautifully calligraphed

lines of text as well as ornamental embellishments. In the case of Dürer's *Apocalypse*, for instance, we can observe how the layout of the title page changed between the first German edition of 1498 (see NGV Book no. 20) and the second edition of 1511 (NGV Book no. 21). While in 1498 the artist had restricted himself to the title of the book in decorative lettering (*Die heimlich Offenbaru(n)g Ioh(an)nis (The Secret Revelations of St John)*), he later decided to create a new front page, giving it even more prominence by adding a woodcut illustration: for the second edition the calligraphic title was enhanced by an image of St John the Evangelist writing down his vision while looking at an apparition of the Virgin and Child. Dürer produced this new design in order to unify the appearance of his three large printed books, which now formed part of a set — the *Life of the Virgin*, the *Large Passion* and the *Apocalypse*. When published in 1511, all three books thus had equally elaborate frontispieces with woodcuts and text.

The increasing demand for illustrated books also encouraged publishers to commission sequences of images for texts that had never been decorated in such detail before. This challenging task inspired artists such as Dürer to create completely new sets of illustrations for which no models were available. Many of the woodcut illustrations in books such as the secular volumes the *Ritter vom Turn*, the *Ship of Fools* and *Quatuor Libri Amorum* are fine examples of this trend and reflect the search for new artistic solutions.

Many of the illustrations used for religious texts, on the other hand, depended on the long history of pictorial representation in illustrated manuscripts and other media. This tradition was consciously utilized by publishers and book illustrators, who did not always consider originality to be their foremost goal. If a certain type of illustrated text proved successful, publishers opted frequently for reproducing its layout in a later edition. Similarly, artists were encouraged to use compositions employed in earlier editions as a starting point for their own designs. This happened, for example, in the case of the *Revelations of St Birgitta* (see NGV Book no. 9). Emperor Maximilian I commissioned the Nuremberg publisher Anton Koberger (c.1445–1513) to print Latin and German editions of this text, closely following the earlier Lübeck edition of 1492.<sup>17</sup> The complex and decorative layout of the Lübeck model was truthfully reproduced by Koberger's printing workshop

(fig. 2). Some pages were composed, like a jigsaw puzzle, of up to ten different blocks of text and images,<sup>18</sup> the individual woodblocks being designed as flexible units capable of rearrangement.

When Anton Koberger asked a Nuremberg printmaker, most probably his godson Dürer,<sup>19</sup> to provide him with the designs for these woodblocks, he did not expect the artist to strive for originality in composition or layout but rather to come forward with compositions that were drawn in a contemporary style and showed a high level of draughtsmanship. While the Nuremberg edition, therefore, closely follows the designs of the Lübeck model, it abandons the flatness and simplicity of its prototype in favour of the technically and stylistically more sophisticated style developed by Dürer.

### Dürer's Formative Years: The Basel Interlude

The introduction of the medium of printing led not only to a number of changes in the appearance of the book but also to changes in the process of production. While in the past the illustrator had worked directly on the original picture surface, the parchment page, the illustrator of the printed book took on a different role. No longer involved in all steps of the production process, he increasingly became a designer who provided only the models for the illustrations. In the worst of all cases the artist who created the image (an individual usually referred to as the *Reißer*) exerted little control over the way in which his sketch was translated into a print by the wood-cutter, the *Formschneider*.<sup>20</sup>

When dealing with illustrations in printed books we are frequently faced with woodcuts that are unsigned and are therefore difficult to attribute to a specific artist. In the case of Albrecht Dürer this problem arises in particular in relation to his years of apprenticeship in Nuremberg and to the time he spent as a journeyman in Basel and Strassburg. The separation of hands in books such as the *Ship of Fools* or the *Ritter vom Turn* has repeatedly given rise to disputes among specialists.

While identification of the master's hand cannot always be conclusive, it is known that Dürer's contacts with the printing business go back to the first years of his life in Nuremberg. His parents chose Anton Koberger as his godfather — a choice that would prove to be most fortunate for the future painter and printmaker. Koberger was not only a neighbour of the Dürer family but, more importantly, was the most productive and powerful

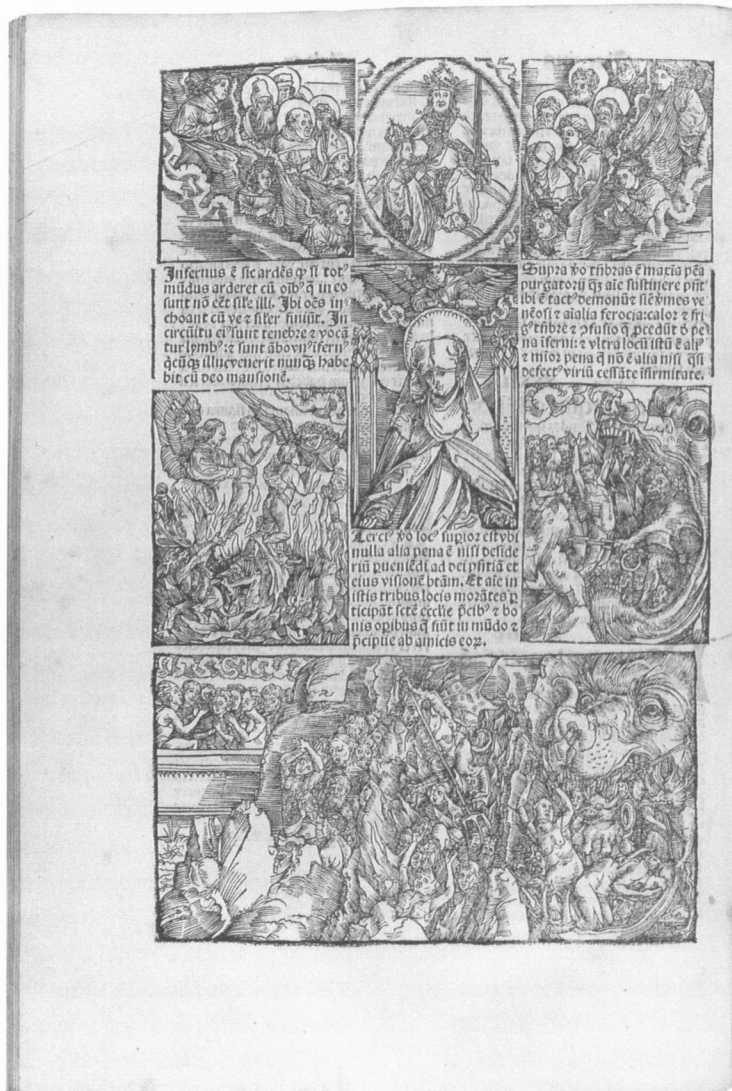


Fig. 2 *St Birgitta and the Virgin Interceding for the Damned*, woodcut (K.139), fol. H6v of the *Revelations of St Birgitta*, 1500.

printer-publisher within Germany. Later, while apprenticed to the painter and printmaker Michael Wolgemut (1433/34–1519), Dürer would have witnessed, and was perhaps even involved in, such ambitious projects as the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, published in 1493. As a young apprentice he may also have been involved in the decoration of a small, pamphlet-like publication, the *Allerhailsamste Warnung vor der falschenn Lieb diser Werlt* (*A Most Salutory Warning of False Love in This World*), which was published around 1489 (see NGV Book no. 2). This fairly traditional moralizing treatise, which deals in three chapters with the reality of death, the eternal pain of the condemned in hell (fig. 3) and the joyful life of the

blessed in heaven, employs a full-page woodcut to announce the beginning of each new chapter.

While our knowledge of Dürer's link with the printing business in Nuremberg during his apprenticeship years is still circumstantial, his activity as a book illustrator in Basel was proven conclusively when his signature was found on the back of the woodblock used for the frontispiece of the *Epistolare beati Hieronymi* (*Letters of St Jerome*) (see NGV Book no. 4): the block is signed with the words *Albrecht Dürer von nörmergk* (Albrecht Dürer from Nuremberg). Dürer's talent must have been quickly recognized in Basel, for he was soon entrusted with the decoration of books that had never before been illustrated in detail. This would



Fig. 3 *The Eternal Pain of Those Condemned to Hell*, woodcut, fol. [b]2r of *Allerhailsamste Warnung vor der falschenn Lieb diser Werlt*, c.1489.

have presented a stimulating challenge to any budding artist, especially one with Dürer's exceptional artistic and intellectual abilities. The Melbourne collection is fortunate in having examples of most of the prints linked to Dürer's activities as a book illustrator in Basel between 1491 and 1493.

In the case of the *Ship of Fools*, Dürer had to visualize the satirical and moralizing poems of Sebastian Brant (1458–1521), a teacher from the University of Basel, who had prepared the text for the carnival season of 1494 (see NGV Book no. 8). Panofsky attributed approximately one-third of the 106 woodcuts of the first edition to Dürer;<sup>21</sup> Winkler, however, saw his hand in more than two-thirds of the images.<sup>22</sup> The differences in quality and style of the illustrations leave no doubt that several artists were employed to design the woodblocks for the first edition, published in early 1494. By the time of the third Latin edition (the edition represented in Melbourne), the book had been provided with additional woodcuts by an anonymous artist and with a commentary by Sebastian

Brant. Many of the illustrations from the earlier German edition were reused, despite the fact that some of them incorporated German text.

The charm of the *Ship of Fools* lies in the way in which the reader is introduced to different kinds of human follies and stupidities through the conjunction of burlesque rhymes and witty illustrations (fig. 4). The content of both image and text is underlined by bold and slightly larger headings. Picture and poem take up an equal amount of space on the page — here the woodcut is given as much weight as the text it illustrates. The subjects Dürer had to deal with in this secular text are, as we shall see, of a very different nature from those with which he was occupied later in his life. The *Ship of Fools* provided the young artist with a high degree of freedom, as he was not dependent on fixed iconographic traditions but was invited to translate Brant's literary images into equally imaginative designs.

Another secular book from this period that contains illustrations by Dürer is the *Ritter vom Turn* (*The Knight of Turn*), also published in Basel (see NGV Book no. 14). Written by Geoffroy de La Tour-Landry in 1371–72, it contains a collection of didactic stories put together for the moral education of the author's two daughters.<sup>23</sup> The text combines historical, biblical and everyday-life stories, which were intended to give young people guidance and consolation. The account of a man who kicks his wife and breaks her nose, for example, is told side by side with the story of Samson and Delilah. Each story is preceded by a woodcut with ornamental border decorations, and by a short heading that summarizes the content of the narrative (fig. 5). These stories would have given an artist ample scope to display his virtuosity, to depict people in contemporary interiors, and to show scenes full of psychological drama and physical tension. As we have already noted, the question of the authorship of the forty-five woodcut illustrations of the *Ritter vom Turn* is a contentious issue, though scholars have increasingly accepted Burckhardt's vote for Dürer as the designer of this series.<sup>24</sup>

The third project of book illustration in which Dürer participated while still in Basel was the *Comedies of Terence* (K.23–35), a publication that never reached the stage of the finished book. The period around 1500, when the influence of Italian humanist thought finally reached Germany and its neighbouring countries, was characterized by a lively interest in classical literature

De cura astrologiæ.  
 Est fatuus liquidē/vanusq; incredulus atq;  
 Ex astris cupiens nosse futura poli:  
 Rusticus & quiuis indoctus: certat haberi  
 Astrologus: fatuas fingit ephimeridas.



**Astrolo-**  
 giæ vanitas

Futura p̄scire so-  
 lius dei ē: q̄ in sui  
 cōtēplatiōe etiā  
 angelis illa p̄scire  
 facit. Non liceat  
 igit̄ xp̄ianis tene-  
 re traditiōes gēti-  
 liū & obseruare &  
 colere elemētum  
 aut lunę: aut stel-  
 larū cursus: aut in  
 anē signorū falla-  
 ciā p̄ domo fatiē  
 davel p̄pter sege-  
 tes v̄l arbores plā-  
 tandas vel coniu-  
 giā socianda.

Astrologus etiam decet huc arcessere vanos:

Atq; mathematicos/ariolosq; simul:

Huc ades astronōe/atq; plāetista/augur/aruspex

Sortilege/& quisq; sydera sola colis. k.iii.

29.q.5. non li-  
 ceat ch̄ristia.  
 et p̄ totum et  
 26.q.7. nō ob-  
 ūctis & c. fe

Fig. 4 'Astrologie Vanitas' (The Star-Gazer Fool), woodcut (S.W. 13j), fol. k3r of Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools*, 3rd Latin edn, 1498.

and by the circulation of authors such as Terence among the educated readership of the northern cities.

### Dürer as Designer and Publisher of Illustrated Books

Most of the illustrated books discussed so far contain some woodcuts designed by Dürer himself while the rest were executed by other artists. Up to 1495 Dürer had been only one of several artists contributing to the production process controlled by printers and publishers.

This was to change after he returned to Nuremberg from his first trip to Venice in 1495 and, no longer an apprentice, was free to practise his trade in his home town. It has been suggested that Dürer and

his teacher Michael Wolgemut may have entered a kind of agreement about their respective areas of specialization, so that they would not compete on the comparatively tight panel painting market<sup>25</sup> — for it seems as though Wolgemut's production of woodcut illustrations ceased at the very moment when Dürer established himself as a 'free' artist in Nuremberg. From then on Dürer earned his living on a regular basis through the sale of woodcuts and engravings rather than panel paintings. In one of his letters he states that it takes much longer to produce paintings than prints and that the former cannot be sold quite as readily.<sup>26</sup>

Given his basic training as a goldsmith in the workshop of his father and his excellent contacts to



**E**r güt einſidel der ſynet rechten vernunfft beroubet was/  
 gieng wyder in die bittenen/vmd er ſüt noch vil mer dann  
 vorz/ Also berufft in die ſrow/ Aber der kam gar ſete zy-  
 terende da deckt in die ſrow warm zü/ Vnd gieng ſie byn  
 weg von jm/ Da er nun er warmet da entſchleiff er ſo hat  
 das er nit wider er wachet byß ſpatt am morgen/ Vnd  
 was im gar we in dem houpt von dem win/ Da kam zü im  
 eyn alter kaplan der fragt in wie im were/ Vnd als der eynſidel ſach wie er  
 die nacht gelegen was er ganz ſchwambafft/ in verwundern/ wie er zü ſöll-  
 cher dinge komen were/ Vnd marckt wol das ſy höheres verdienen wa-  
 ren der ſchultheiß vmd ſyn ſrow dan er wart daruff den caplan von item  
 leßc fragc/ Sage er im wie ſy herin hander trugen/ Duch waß ſy ertwas  
 güter ſpyßen von im hetten/ das ſy die durch gotz willengeben/ vmd ſy rich  
 brot vmd gar wenig luſtiger ſpyßen eßen/ Sonder den meren teyl all tag  
 waſteten/ Frage er in warumb die byttenen mit waſſer by irem bet ſün-  
 de/ Sprach er das wer darumb/ Wan von iren eym ſyn fleiſch bewegte zü  
 geluſt/ fleiſchlicher werken/ allein eyn tag in der wochen/ Sagten ſy ſich in  
 die bittenen wider zü erkalten/ Da der eynſidel ſöllchs hou/wie wol das der  
 ſchultheiß vßwendig mitt ſyden bekleidt were/ vmd mit deßiminder hein

Fig. 5 *The Mayor's Wife Lecturing the Hermit*, woodcut (S.W. 12q), fol. 15r of Geoffroy de La Tour-Landry's *Der Ritter vom Turn*, 2nd edn, 1513.

Anton Koberger, Dürer's first experiments in the realm of publishing and printing may be called a calculated risk. At the time, it was not uncommon for Nuremberg authors to publish their texts in their own printing workshops, as can be seen, for instance, in the case of the mathematician Regiomontanus and the poet Hans Folz. It may have been their example that inspired Dürer to take a more entrepreneurial approach. From 1498 onwards he not only provided designs for woodblocks but also started to commission religious texts appropriate for his prints and to determine the kind of type to be used for these texts, together with the layout of the books. In other words, he assumed the role of publisher and consequently controlled the printing process himself. Four of the religious books that Dürer published between 1498 and 1511 — the *Apocalypse*, the *Life of the Virgin*, the *Large Passion* (see NGV Book no. 21) and the *Small Passion* (NGV Book no. 22) — appear to have been produced in this way. In the colophon of the first German edition of the *Apocalypse*

the artist proudly proclaimed his input into the making of the book: 'Gedrucket zu Nurnbergk durch Albrecht Dürer maler nach Christi geburt M.cccc. und darnach im xcviij. iar' (Printed in Nuremberg by Albrecht Dürer, painter, in 1498 AD).

Dürer set up his first printing press in 1497, at the family property located on 'Unter der Vesten'. At around the same time, his new status as entrepreneur and independent artist was publicly acknowledged by the city, which decided to give him full citizenship. The publication of his own books would not have been quite as easy for Dürer had he not been able to take advantage of the know-how and infrastructure provided by Anton Koberger, who ran his printing business only a few doors away from Dürer's home. In the case of the *Apocalypse*, the first printed book that Dürer published himself, his collaboration with Koberger can be seen, for example, in the choice of the movable types, which were made available by the Koberger workshop:<sup>27</sup> in order to vary the style of the German and Latin editions, both published in 1498, Dürer used Koberger's *Schwabacher* type for the former and his *Rotunda* type for the latter. Dürer's close contact with Koberger is also apparent in the role played in the *Apocalypse* project by the so-called *German Bible* published by Koberger in 1483. Printed in Nuremberg, this book contained woodcuts taken from the slightly earlier *Cologne Bible* dating from c.1478.<sup>28</sup> The text used by Dürer in the German edition of the *Apocalypse* was based on the text of the *Apocalypse* in Koberger's Bible.<sup>29</sup> When designing the twelve major illustrations for the *Apocalypse*, moreover, Dürer studied not just this text, but also the rich sequence of illustrations that accompanied it, borrowing individual motifs and using several of its compositions as starting points for his own unique and stylistically independent illustrations.<sup>30</sup>

While the above comparison may show that Dürer was not an isolated creative genius but acted according to the workshop traditions of his time, the *Apocalypse* was in another respect highly innovative. For its two-column text pages are preceded by full-page woodcuts of unprecedented richness and technical virtuosity — a format that gives equal weight to both image and text and takes to the limit the emerging struggle for supremacy between text and illustration. In the *Apocalypse*, both elements herald the end of the world in their own language.



While the manner in which Dürer used them was clearly an innovation, full-page woodcut illustrations had already appeared in another edifying text, Stefan Fridolin's *Schatzbehalter*, which had been published by Koberger in 1491. In the introduction to this book the author, a Franciscan preacher, clearly states the intended function of these illustrations. According to Fridolin the images were meant to help the lay person who, unaccustomed to the written word, required the woodcuts as an aid to understanding and memorizing the *Schatzbehalter's* contemplations on salvation.<sup>31</sup> To what degree this was also the purpose of Dürer's illustrations remains unresolved, but the idea may well have been on his mind. While Dürer's books, like the *Schatzbehalter*, were probably produced for a non-ecclesiastical audience, they must also have targeted a highly educated audience as they were predominantly written in Latin.

In the *Life of the Virgin*, for instance, Benedictus Chelidonius (d. 1521), the humanist cleric who composed the Latin text in rhyme format, made frequent references to classical imagery, using terms such as *Olympus* instead of *heaven* and *Avernus* instead of *hell*. Such allusions required a considerable knowledge of classical mythology and literature in order to be appreciated by the reader and were intended to please the circle of humanist friends to which Dürer and Chelidonius both belonged. Willibald Pirckheimer and his sister Caritas (1467–1532), for example, were each honoured by the inclusion of an individually dedicated Latin poem at the end of the *Small Passion*<sup>32</sup> and the *Life of the Virgin* respectively.<sup>33</sup>

Dürer's publication of the *Apocalypse* in 1498 as a separate book rather than as part of the Bible was not in itself a new concept, but should be seen as a continuation of a long-standing tradition exemplified by the many block books that dealt with the same subject matter.<sup>34</sup> Nor was the timing of the publication accidental. In late medieval society many people strongly believed in the coming of the Antichrist in the year 1500 and were watching for cosmic signs announcing the beginning of his reign. When Dürer prepared the designs for this book, he was hoping to create images that would appeal to the prevailing mood of the people while enabling him at the same time to express his own fears and anxieties. Although the world did not come to an end in 1500, the prevailing religious

fervour, which had caused a high demand for devotional and eschatological books, increased rather than declined.<sup>35</sup> After the turn of the century Dürer even decided to reissue the *Apocalypse*, on this occasion in a Latin version with a new title page. This second edition formed part of what was now a small group of illustrated books, all of the same format and consisting of an equal number of images and text pages. The detailed pictorial narrative in the *Apocalypse*, the *Life of the Virgin* and the *Large Passion*, and the systematic arrangement that gave equivalent weight to both text and image, allowed the reader to meditate on the scenes from the life of the Virgin or the Passion of Christ by looking at either the text or the illustrations or by studying both in tandem.

At this time Dürer seems to have followed the example of Anton Koberger, who specialized in publishing religious texts rather than scientific or secular books. However, Dürer's books are also a reflection of the depth of religious feeling that prevailed in late medieval Nuremberg. The founding of hospitals and houses for the poor, the donation of Masses for the souls of the deceased, the veneration of relics and the praying for indulgences, all give testimony to the hope of the pious for salvation through leading a Christian life.<sup>36</sup> Reading religious texts and performing specific devotions formed part of this system of thought, which helped to temper the ever-present fear of sudden corporal death and of eternal death in hell. This religiosity led to a strong veneration of the Virgin Mary, and in particular to a spiritual concentration on the Passion of Christ, in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Both the *Life of the Virgin* and the two versions of the *Passion*, which Dürer published together with the second edition of the *Apocalypse* in 1511, catered to this religious feeling.

### **The Arrival of Humanism in Germany**

Important though late medieval religiosity was for the development of illustrated books, equally important was the arrival in Germany of humanism, which proved to be stimulating for artists and intellectuals alike. With regard to the printed book, the humanist movement generated the publication of a wide range of new texts and also contributed to major changes in typography and layout.

The humanist movement gained momentum in Nuremberg only in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. Given that the city did not have a university,

it comes as a surprise that it nevertheless became an important centre of intellectual life and a meeting point for humanists and reformers. The reason for this lies in the fact that it had by this time become customary for the sons of well-to-do Nuremberg citizens to be sent to Italy to study law, medicine or theology. In places such as Bologna or Padua, these students came in touch with the all-embracing revival of classical language, literature and thought, which had dominated the artistic and literary life of the south for most of the century. On returning to Nuremberg these young men brought with them a strongly developed enthusiasm for classical culture and learning, and an eagerness to further cultivate their interests among like-minded spirits. The medical practitioners Hartmann Schedel and Hieronymus Münzer, the poet laureate Conrad Celtis,<sup>37</sup> the lawyer Johann Pirkheimer and his son Willibald, the cleric Benedictus Chelidoniumus, the treasurer Sebald Schreyer and many other individuals participated in this movement, which introduced new ideas to the civic and intellectual fabric of Nuremberg.<sup>38</sup>

The presence of a small group of well-educated, ambitious and politically active people with a passion for books, classical learning and scholarship thus helped to shape and alter the cultural landscape of Nuremberg. As a consequence, a new type of school, the so-called Poets' School, was founded as the first educational institution to be completely independent of the schooling system provided by the Church.<sup>39</sup> Private collections and private libraries of classical and non-classical material began to flourish in the households of the intellectual elite.<sup>40</sup> A remarkable thirst for knowledge and education drove people to travel abroad, to learn new languages, to translate books from Greek into Latin or from Latin into German, and to make their newly gained knowledge available to others. Individuals such as Dürer's close friend Willibald Pirkheimer<sup>41</sup> kept in touch with intellectuals across Europe. Pirkheimer corresponded with Erasmus of Rotterdam, Johannes Reuchlin, Ulrich von Hutten and Martin Luther, among others, and contributed to the discussions of the day, whether of a theological, philosophical or literary nature.<sup>42</sup> Dürer, who was part of this circle and benefited from the lively exchange of ideas and the knowledge and learning of his friends, taught himself Latin to such a degree that he was able to participate in the erudite discussions of his fellow humanists and patrons.

Kauffmann<sup>43</sup> and Wuttke<sup>44</sup> have characterized the specific brand of humanism flourishing in Nuremberg as a movement consisting of three main elements: firstly, a general interest in antiquity, in particular Greek and Roman language, literature and philosophy; secondly, a general interest in church reform, combined with an endeavour to reconcile newly gained knowledge from pagan antiquity with Christian concepts and ideas; thirdly, a feeling of national pride and a new consciousness of one's own past. Reflections of all three elements can be found in the examples of early printed books held in Melbourne.

An interesting example of the influence of classical culture on the printed book is the 1525 edition of Ptolemy's *Geography*, translated from Greek into Latin by Willibald Pirkheimer (see NGV Book no. 19). This translation, together with the accompanying detailed commentary to the original text, was Pirkheimer's most important scholarly undertaking. The lavishly illustrated

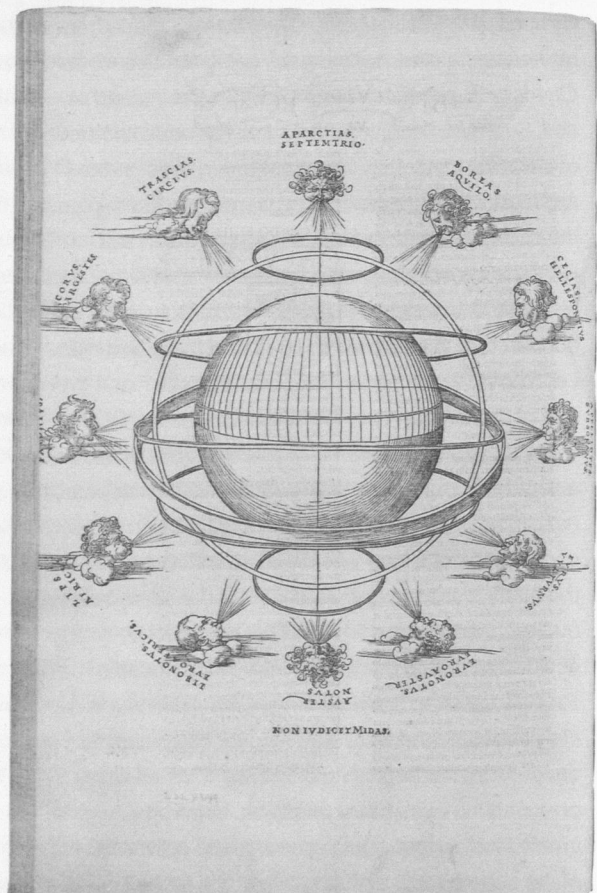


Fig. 6 *The Armillary Sphere*, woodcut (K.333), fol. M3v of Ptolemy's *Geography*, 1525.



Fig. 7 Albrecht Dürer, 'Philosophia', woodcut (B.130), fol. a6v of Conrad Celtis's *Quatuor Libri Amorum*, 2nd edn, 1502.

*Geography* contains some fifty large maps by an anonymous artist, and only one woodcut, that depicting the armillary sphere, has been attributed to Dürer (fig. 6).

We have already mentioned the miniatures that Dürer added to the printed texts in books purchased by Pirckheimer in Italy for his own library. A book in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria that reveals a close link with Pirckheimer is the *Modus epistolandi* ('On Letter-Writing') by Franciscus Niger, probably purchased in Venice (see NGV Book no. 1). This book on how to write an accomplished letter contains Pirckheimer's personalized bookplate (B.App.52), designed by Dürer around 1501. Pirckheimer's guidance is strongly felt in the bookplate's trilingual inscription, which repeats the following words in Hebrew, Greek and Latin: 'The beginning of knowledge is fear of God'. This motto is a clear indication that Pirckheimer saw learning and knowledge within the broader framework of Christianity.

A similar concept is expressed in Dürer's depiction of 'Philosophia' (B.130), which he designed for the *Quatuor Libri Amorum* (*Four Books of Love*) of 1502, by the scholar and writer Conrad Celtis (1459–1508) (see NGV Book no. 12). This image has been described by Wuttke as encapsulating the essence of German humanism (fig. 7).<sup>45</sup> The Greek inscription on the throne of Philosophy is again a comment on the priority of fear of God over all other concerns: 'In the first place you should honour God, all your other interests should attract an appropriate measure of your attention'. In this context the term *philosophy* encompasses all seven liberal arts: grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music. According to Celtis, these different areas of knowledge are tools used by philosophy as an aid to the exploration of theology.<sup>46</sup> In the four medallions on the wreath surrounding the figure of Philosophy we find portrayals of the geographer Ptolemy, the Greek philosopher Plato, the theologian and philosopher Albertus Magnus and a Roman poet representing Virgil as well as Cicero.<sup>47</sup> In the text accompanying this image references are made to the contributions of various learned men — Greek, Roman, Egyptian and German — to the advancement of philosophy.

We know that Celtis, who was given the title of poet laureate by Emperor Frederick III, provided Dürer with precise instructions for the design of this unusually

dense and particularly conceptual print.<sup>48</sup> Celtis admired Dürer's skills as an artist and in four epigrams compared him to the classical artists Phidias and Apelles and likened him to Albertus Magnus.<sup>49</sup>

In both the bookplate for Pirckheimer and the '*Philosophia*' designed for Celtis we can observe how close was the collaboration between Dürer and his humanist friends, especially when he produced illustrations for printed books. A different form of collaborative effort can be observed in the case of the *Life of the Virgin*, published by Dürer himself in 1511 (see NGV Book no. 21). When he decided to issue in book format a series of nineteen woodcuts depicting scenes from the life of Mary, he asked Benedictus Chelidonium to draft Latin poems to accompany his images, and thus to enhance their power. Chelidonium, who was later appointed abbot of the Schottenkloster in Vienna, proved to be a good choice, since he was particularly well read and thrived on the new ideas circulating in Nuremberg at the time.<sup>50</sup>

In the course of the detailed examination undertaken during the cataloguing for this publication of the single-sheet Barlow impressions from the *Life of the Virgin*, two of these impressions — the *Holy Family in Egypt* (B.90) and *Christ Taking Leave of His Mother* (B.92) — were found to carry very faint handwritten inscriptions on their versos. When the clarity of these texts was enhanced through UV photography, and after close comparison, the manuscript inscriptions turned out to be virtually identical with the printed version of Chelidonium's poems (figs 8 & 9).<sup>51</sup> The layout of the handwritten text, however, shows slight deviations from the typeset version: the line-breaks differ from those in the 1511 edition, in so far as the upper-case title is split into two instead of three lines, and the heading spreads well beyond the width of the main column of text. A palaeographic investigation of the inscriptions has revealed that the text dates from the first quarter of the sixteenth century and is a good example of the newly introduced *antiqua cursiva* favoured by humanist circles.<sup>52</sup> It is also important to note that both of the woodcuts carrying the handwritten text are proofs, that is prints taken from the woodblock at a very early stage of the printing process.

Given the dating of the hand, the differences in the layout of the title, and the fact that the texts are written on proofs, it seems unlikely that they are later copies

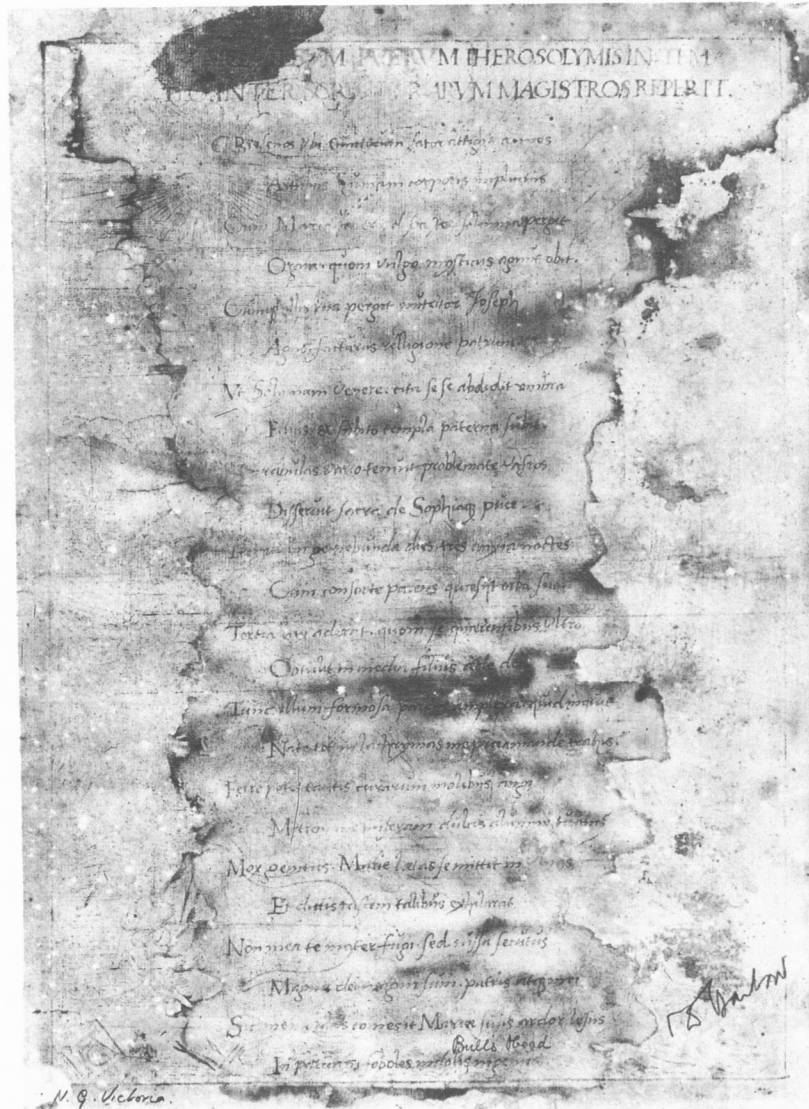


Fig. 8 Verso of *The Holy Family in Egypt* (B.90). UV fluorescence photograph.

based on the printed versions of Chelidonium's poems. All these observations support the hypothesis that these two sheets were actually used by Dürer in the process of preparing the *Life of the Virgin* for print. In other words, we may be looking at two of nineteen 'pattern sheets' with the original text by Chelidonium, which served as models for the preparation of the typeset version.<sup>53</sup> Who, then, wrote the text on the back of these two sheets? It may well be that we are dealing with an autograph manuscript written by the author himself. A close comparison with an autograph poem by Chelidonium addressed to Willibald Pirckheimer in 1501<sup>54</sup> reveals remarkable similarities between Chelidonium's handwriting and that on the Melbourne prints.<sup>55</sup> The

working relationship between Dürer and Chelidonium that has come to light in the material held by the National Gallery of Victoria proved to be a fruitful one. In the end, Chelidonium not only wrote the Latin poems for the *Life of the Virgin* but also composed the texts for the *Large Passion* and the *Small Passion*.<sup>56</sup>

As mentioned earlier, one of the characteristics of Nuremberg humanism was the emergence of a fledgling national feeling, which aimed at promoting the German nation. Conrad Celtis's *Quatuor Libri Amorum* was initially planned as a prologue to a more comprehensive (but never completed) book on Germany, the *Germania illustrata*, and was one of several contemporary printed books that provided detailed descriptions of German

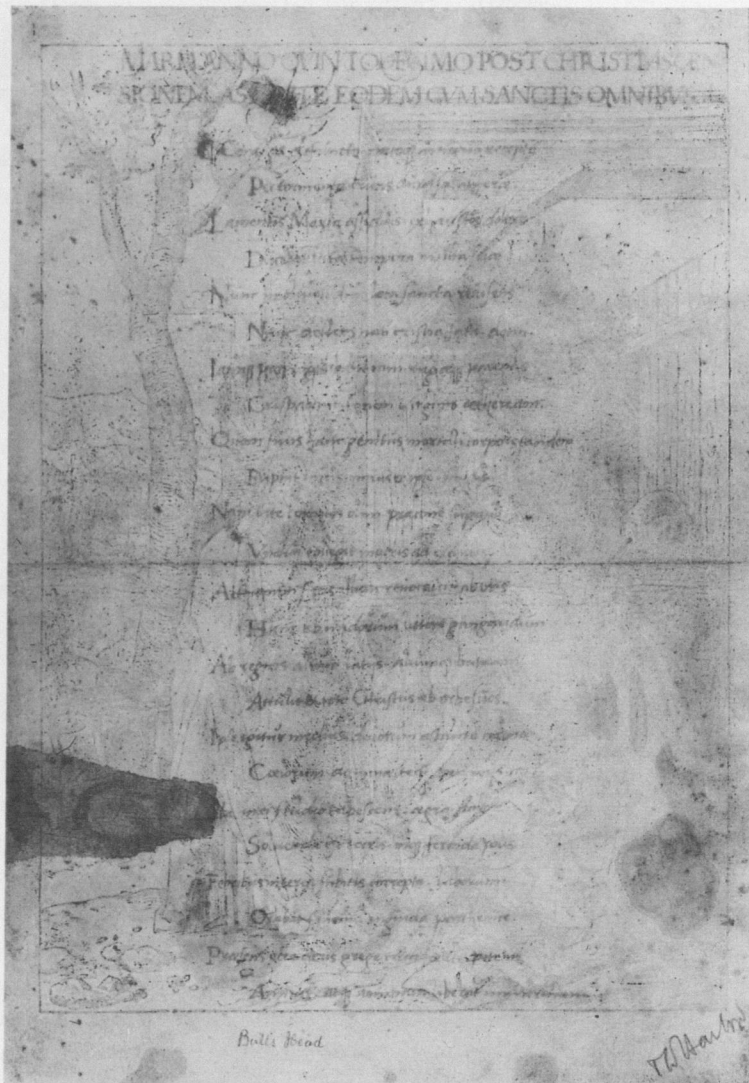


Fig. 9 Verso of *Christ Taking Leave of His Mother* (B.92). UV reflectance photograph.

towns and cities. Particular emphasis is given in the *Quatuor Libri Amorum* to the city of Nuremberg, a view of which appears on a double spread towards the end of the book. Dürer provided the designs for the two most important full-page illustrations in Celtis's book. The rest of the woodcuts were designed by Hans von Kulmbach (c.1480–1522), a painter who was an active member of Dürer's workshop from about 1500 onwards.<sup>57</sup>

A similar division of labour can be observed in another book, the *Opera Hrosvite*, a collection of texts written by Hroswitha of Gandersheim, 'the famous virgin and German nun' (see NGV Book no. 11).<sup>58</sup> This book was printed in 1501, not by a professional publisher such as Hieronymus Hölzel or Anton Koberger but

by the Sodalitas Celtica, a group of humanist friends that had formed around Conrad Celtis and was now experimenting with the printing of books. This group was also responsible for the publishing of the *Quatuor Libri Amorum* in 1502.<sup>59</sup> For the illustration of the *Opera Hrosvite*, Dürer again executed only two woodcuts, both of them dedication scenes, whereas Hans von Kulmbach provided the title pages introducing each of the six individual plays.

Winkler and Waetzoldt have pointed out that both books published by the Sodalitas Celtica are excellent examples of a new style of printed book.<sup>60</sup> The two books differ considerably from earlier religious publications such as the *Allerheilsamste Warnung vor*

*der falschenn Lieb diser Werlt or the Büchlein der Zuflucht zu Maria in alten Oding* ('A Little Book on the Sanctuary of the Virgin at Altötting') (see NGV Book no. 6), which appear to be less clearly structured and cling to the gothic script. The later publications make use of a different printing type, the *antiqua*, and employ a more generous arrangement of the text, with wider margins and more indentations. There is also a preference for a different kind of decoration and for full-page illustrations in simple frames. This change in style, which affected the layout as well as the overall appearance of the book, was mainly brought about by a change in taste dictated by humanist circles.

A less well known but equally important humanist publication is the *Oratio Cassandre*, published c.1489 by Peter Danhauser (see NGV Book no. 3). While most of the players on the humanist scene tended to be men, the Venetian Cassandra Fedele (c.1465–1558) was one of the few women who gained recognition in scholarly circles. She was considered by some to be the wisest and most knowledgeable woman living at the time, having at a very young age shown extraordinary talents in philosophy as well as in the mastery of language and speech.<sup>61</sup> Danhauser's edition of her oration is embellished by a single woodcut, a representation of the young Cassandra in her study that has occasionally been attributed to the young Dürer.<sup>62</sup> As an expression of Danhauser's admiration for Cassandra, the short text of her speech was accompanied by the ode *To Apollo*, written by none other than Conrad Celtis. Wuttke sees the publication of Fedele's speech, and also the edition of the recently discovered texts by Hroswitha of Gandersheim, as an expression of a more general trend towards venerating educated women, present and past. Wuttke's reading is further substantiated by the prominent role played in the humanist movement by Caritas Pirckheimer, abbess of the St Clare monastery, whose contribution to the culture of Nuremberg has been highlighted in a recent exhibition.<sup>63</sup>

As the various book projects described here indicate, Dürer was very much part of this culture. While Willibald Pirckheimer and Benedictus Chelidonius represented the literary side of the humanist movement, Dürer embodied the new spirit prevailing in the visual arts. In his prints and paintings he constantly explored new subject matters and modes of representation. From about 1500 onwards he embarked on his search for the lost

theory of art as told by ancient artists and writers such as Apelles and Phidias, Praxiteles and Parrhasios. Only in this context can we understand his decision to write his *Treatise on Painting* for the instruction of young artists and fellow painters and the *Treatise on Human Proportions*.

### Dürer as Teacher and as Author of Theoretical Treatises

Dürer was a dedicated teacher who felt a strong urge to pass on his knowledge in order to improve the standards of artistic practice among his fellow artists north of the Alps. Long before his writings were published towards the end of his life, his prints were already being used by other artists as models for their own designs. In setting down his ideas in print, one of Dürer's main aims was to publish books that would enable other artists to apply abstract theories to the practical tasks they were faced with every day. His books were addressed not just to painters, but also to artists from other guilds such as 'goldsmiths, sculptors, and cabinet makers and all those who use measurement'.<sup>64</sup>

Dürer had himself been interested in theoretical issues such as universally valid principles of ratio and proportion, and the theory of constructed perspective, from a very early time. He had first learnt about such ideas through his contact with Jacopo de' Barbari, an Italian artist who worked in Nuremberg for a short time around 1500.

Dürer's second source of inspiration was the published and unpublished theories of contemporary Italian architects, mathematicians and artists. Among the most influential were Leon Battista Alberti, Pomponius Gauricus, Piero della Francesca, and also Leonardo, whose unpublished ideas were transmitted through the writings of Fra Luca Pacioli (c.1450–1520). Dürer used Piero della Francesca's *De prospectiva pingendi*, for instance, as a source of his own chapters on 'Perspectiva naturalis' and 'Perspectiva artificialis' in the *Treatise on Measurement*. Several scholars have suggested that Pacioli might have been the theoretician whom Dürer met for further instruction on the science of perspective during his second trip to Italy in 1505–06. In Pacioli's writings, the relative proportions of the human body play a role equally important to that given to this subject in Dürer's *Treatise on Human Proportions*.

Dürer found answers to other questions in the writings of classical authors such as Vitruvius and

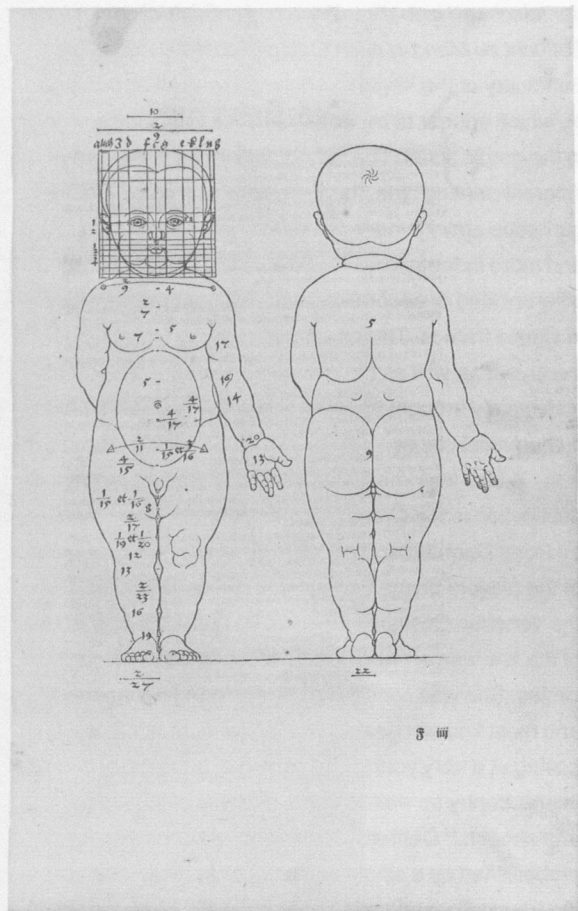
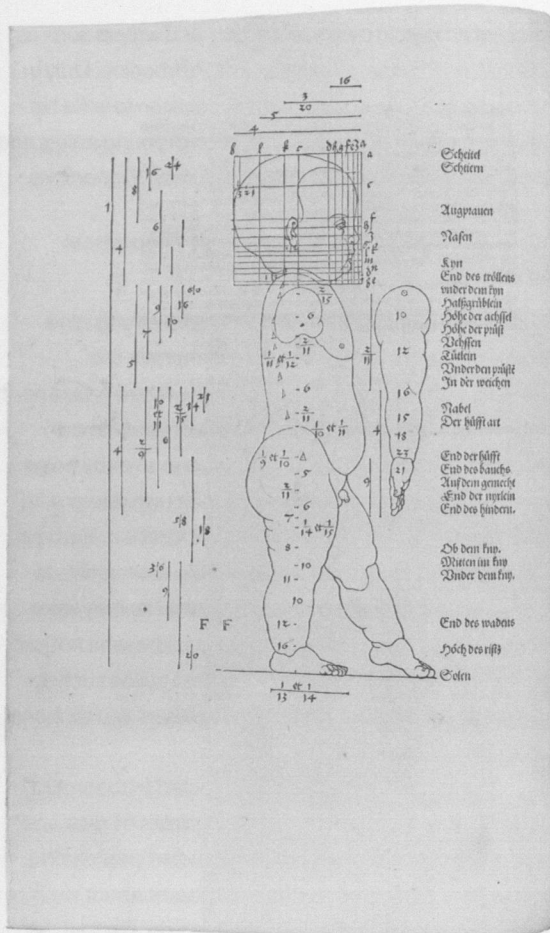


Fig. 10 Albrecht Dürer, *The Proportions of a Child*, woodcut, fol. F3v–F4r of the *Treatise on Human Proportions*, 1528.

Euclid.<sup>65</sup> Willibald Pirckheimer owned copies of their texts<sup>66</sup> and, since Dürer frequently discussed his ideas on art with his friend, it is most likely that Pirckheimer made these books available to him.

Dürer was the author of two art theoretical books, and the manuscripts for both were completed during his lifetime. The *Treatise on Measurement* was first issued in 1525 (see NGV Book no. 23),<sup>67</sup> the *Treatise on Human Proportions* was published in October 1528, shortly after the artist's death (NGV Book no. 27).<sup>68</sup> The *Treatise on Measurement*, one of the earliest books of its kind written in German, can be described as a handbook of geometry. It explains such basic geometric concepts as point, line, plane and solid bodies and teaches the construction of three-dimensional shapes, in particular regular polygons. The book finishes with a discussion of the principles of perspective. While the *Treatise on Measurement* was published three years before the *Treatise on Human Proportions*, its text in fact

postdated that of Dürer's manual for young painters. Only after he had finished most of his text for the book on human proportions did Dürer realize that this treatise, which had turned out to be a fairly theoretical text, would be accessible only to artists with a good grounding in geometry. He therefore himself provided a simpler introductory text, the *Treatise on Measurement*, for use by the artistic community in Nuremberg and by similar communities in other parts of Germany — German artists not having been exposed to much theoretical writing so far, especially not in their own language.

The *Treatise on Human Proportions* formed part of a larger project, a more comprehensive painter's manual, which Dürer had been working on since the early 1500s. The material that was finally published comprised his findings on the human body. Dürer's ideas were founded not just on the study of ancient and contemporary treatises, but also on empirical research undertaken by the artist himself.<sup>69</sup> He arrived at a



standard of ten body types (five each for both men and women) and manipulated the proportions of these types through the use of specific tools (fig. 10). Of more general interest is the aesthetic discourse that he inserted into the text at the end of the third book. This discourse gives us some insight into his attitudes towards ideas of beauty.

As we have seen, the text and illustrations in Dürer's religious books co-existed on an equal footing, and the woodcuts themselves were also sold and collected as independent prints. However, in the artist's theoretical treatises the nature of the images and the relationship between illustration and text are of a very different order. In the *Treatise on Measurement*, the *Treatise on Fortification* of 1527<sup>70</sup> and the *Treatise on Human Proportions*, most of the woodcuts were mathematical or technical diagrams rather than naturalistic illustrations of the kind discussed earlier. Given the didactic nature of Dürer's writings, the function of the accompanying illustrations is necessarily different, since their purpose is to clarify the instructions given in the text (figs 11 & 12). Cross-hatching, a device otherwise used extensively by Dürer in order to create the effect of depth and three-dimensionality, is here used infrequently: in the vast majority of the illustrations, he refrains from modelling the figures in his usual way. In the case of the *Treatise on Fortification*, his linear representations help to explain his plans for improving the protection and military security of the citizens of the Holy Roman Empire (see NGV Book no. 25).

There are, however, a few exceptions to this approach and these deserve to be looked at more closely. The book on fortifications, for instance, has a delicately decorated frontispiece (in the Melbourne copy of the 1527 edition it has been carefully coloured), which presents the title of the text and displays the coat of arms of Ferdinand, King of Hungary and Bohemia and brother of Emperor Charles V (plate 6). Dürer dedicated this book to Ferdinand in response to the imminent danger of an attack by Suleiman the Magnificent. The treatise's introductory letter to the king, which had been composed by Willibald Pirckheimer, recommends the fortification of important sites along the border to the Turkish Empire.

An even more elaborate woodcut than the coat of arms can be found at the end of the same book. Here, a panoramic print depicting the siege of a fortress has

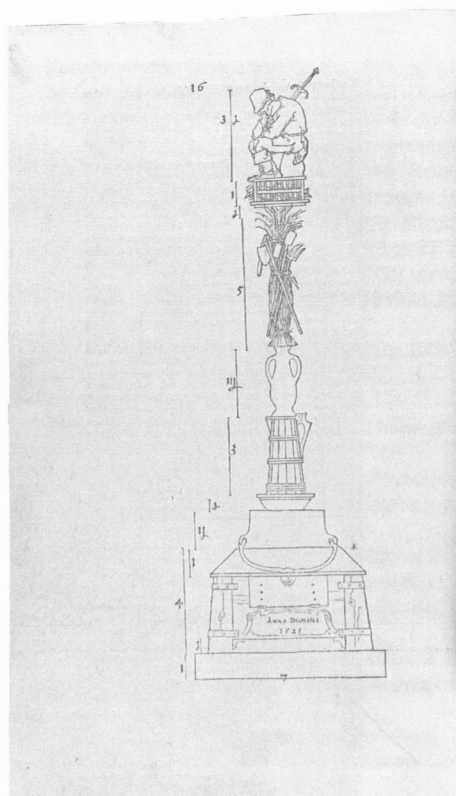
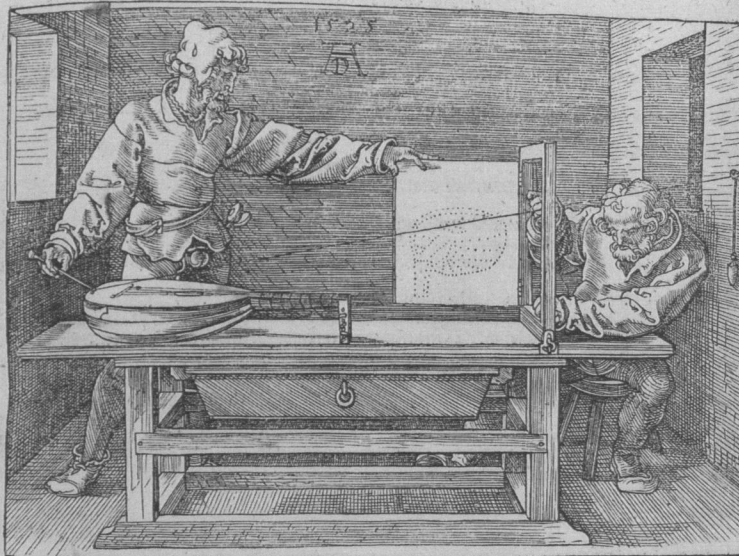


Fig. 11 Albrecht Dürer, *Monument to the Peasant Rebellion*, woodcut (K.336), fol. 11v of the *Treatise on Measurement*, 1525 (3662/4).

been inserted.<sup>71</sup> It consists of two folio pages, which can be folded out to form one large picture (plate 5). The effects of war on an unidentified town and on the surrounding countryside are rendered in a most dramatic fashion in this print. Like the title page with coat of arms, this woodcut has been embellished by contemporary applications of watercolour, body colour and gold highlights and is the only known coloured version of this print. The fact that it appears to occur only in a few select copies of the treatise on fortifications has led a number of scholars to question whether it was ever part of the initial cycle of illustrations.<sup>72</sup> This woodcut is indeed the only print in the Melbourne copy that bears Dürer's initial, and it stands apart from all other fold-outs by reason of its virtuosity and size. Given the subject matter of this print and its date of 1527, which coincides with the publication date of the book, one is led to consider that the image was conceived in conjunction with the treatise. It may well be that this woodcut was reserved for a luxury edition such as a dedication copy, possibly even one intended as a gift for Ferdinand himself. It is quite possible that Dürer designed the print

mit einem anderen puncten aber also piß das du die ganken lauten gar an die tafelt punctirß / dann  
 zueh all puncten die auf der tafelt von der lauten worden sind mit linien züsamm so sichts du was dar  
 auß wirt / also magst du ander ding auch abzeychnen. Dife meynung hab ich hernach außgeriffen.



Und damit gütziger lieber. Herz will ich meinem schreibern end geben / vnd so mit Got genad ver  
 leyhe die bücher so ich von menschlicher proportioen vñ anderen darzū gehörend geschriben hab mit  
 der zeyt in druck pringen vnd darpey meniglich gewarnet haben / ob sich yem and vnder  
 steen wurd mir diß außgangen büchlein wider nach zū drucken / das ich das  
 selb auch wider drucken will / vñ auß lassen geen mit meren vnd  
 grösseren züsatz dar in beschehen ist / darnach mag  
 sich ein yettlicher richter / Got dem Herren  
 sey lob vnd eer ewiglich.

¶ iii

Gedruckt zu Nürnberg.  
 Im. 1525. Jar.

Fig. 12 Albrecht Dürer, *Draughtsman Drawing a Lute*, woodcut (B.147), fol. Q3r of the *Treatise on Measurement*, 1525 (3662/4).

as an autonomous woodcut, and that it was later inserted in a book that would otherwise have been a rather technical piece of writing. While printed books from this period carry some features of the mass-produced book of today, in Dürer's time there was nevertheless much more scope for individual adjustments, as has already been observed in the case of the *Salus Animae*.

The focused selection of illustrated incunabula and early printed books at the National Gallery of

Victoria provides a detailed picture of Albrecht Dürer's involvement in the printing business. The collection reflects his manifold contributions to the field of book illustration, his numerous activities as a publisher, and his achievements as an author of theoretical texts. Mende has rightfully called the artist's treatises 'scientific best-sellers',<sup>73</sup> and, as far as aesthetic appeal is concerned, the woodcuts in Dürer's illustrated books have lost very little of their original fascination.

## Notes

- 1 Albrecht Dürer 1471–1971 (exh. cat.), Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, 1971, p. 41, cat. no. 41.
- 2 M. Mende, *Albrecht Dürer: Zum Leben, zum Holzschnittwerk*, Munich, 1976, p. 6.
- 3 *Albrecht Dürer 1471–1971*, p. 43, cat. no. 55.
- 4 H. Kunze, *Geschichte der Buchillustration in Deutschland: Das 15. Jahrhundert*, vol. 1, Leipzig, 1975, p. 152; K. Haebler, *The Study of Incunabula*, trans. L. E. Osborne, New York, 1933; L. Febvre & H.-J. Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450–1800*, ed. G. Nowell-Smith & D. Wootton, trans. D. Gerard, London, 1976.
- 5 Kunze, vol. 1, p. 152. These cities were responsible for 66 per cent of Germany's overall production of books.
- 6 *ibid.*, p. 154.
- 7 *Blockbücher des Mittelalters: Bilderfolgen als Lektüre* (exh. cat.), Gutenberg-Museum, Mainz, 1991, p. 13. Block books are printed solely from woodcuts and do not contain text printed by means of movable type.
- 8 E. Rosenthal, 'Dürers Buchmalereien für Pirckheimers Bibliothek', *Beihft zum Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, vol. 49, 1928, pp. 1–54.
- 9 Kunze, vol. 1, p. 178.
- 10 Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, CP 1.E.33 (see J. Meder, *Dürer-Katalog: Ein Handbuch über Albrecht Dürers Stiche, Radierungen, Holzschnitte, deren Zustände, Ausgaben und Wasserzeichen*, Vienna, 1932, p. 39; K. H. Jürgens, 'Zu einigen Holzschnitten im "Salus Animae" von 1503', *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums*, 1969, pp. 67–74).
- 11 Library of Congress, Washington DC, Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, BX 2095.S3 (see C. W. Talbot (ed.), *Dürer in America: His Graphic Work* (exh. cat.), National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 1971, p. 352, cat. no. 213). The other two extant copies of the *Salus Animae* are held at the Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin-Dahlem, and at the Kunstsammlungen zu Weimar.
- 12 *Heiltumsbuch* is used as a generic term for a book listing all those objects which promised salvation to visitors to a cathedral or church. These objects were mostly relics and reliquaries, but also included pictures and sculptures to which certain indulgences were attached.
- 13 H. Reber, *Albrecht von Brandenburg: Kurfürst, Erzkanzler, Kardinal 1490–1545* (exh. cat.), Landesmuseum Mainz, 1990, pp. 152–4, cat. no. 57.
- 14 *Meister um Albrecht Dürer* (exh. cat.), Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, 1961, pp. 219–20, cat. no. 393.
- 15 Reber, pp. 83–7.
- 16 R. Hirsch, *The Printed Word: Its Impact and Diffusion*, London, 1978, ch. XVII.
- 17 *Meister um Albrecht Dürer*, pp. 222–4.
- 18 Kunze, vol. 1, pp. 285–6; vol. 2, figs 203–6.
- 19 The attribution to Dürer is still controversial, a collaboration between the master and one of his workshop assistants seeming likely (see Mende, p. 47; *Meister um Albrecht Dürer*, pp. 222–4). See also W. L. Strauss (ed.), *Albrecht Dürer: Woodcuts and Woodblocks*, New York, 1980, p. 221, no. 62.
- 20 Mende, pp. 25–6.
- 21 E. Panofsky, *Albrecht Dürer*, vol. 1, Princeton, New Jersey, 1943, pp. 29–30.
- 22 F. Winkler, *Dürer und die Illustrationen zum Narrenschiff: Die Baseler und Strassburger Arbeiten des Künstlers und der altdeutsche Holzschnitt*, Berlin, 1951, pp. 11–45. See also H. Joachim [review of F. Winkler, *Dürer und die Illustrationen zum Narrenschiff*], in *The Art Bulletin*, vol. XXXV, 1953, p. 66; U. Gaier, *Studien zu Sebastian Brants Narrenschiff*, Tübingen, 1966; D. Wuttke, 'Sebastian Brants Verhältnis zu Wunderdeutung und Astrologie', in *Studien zur deutschen Literatur und Sprache des Mittelalters: Festschrift für Hugo Moser*, Berlin, 1974, p. 272ff.
- 23 R. Kautzsch, *Die Holzschnitte zum Ritter vom Turn* (Basel 1493), Strassburg, 1903, pp. 3–24; Strauss, pp. 50–63, no. 12.
- 24 Strauss, p. 50, no. 12. See also Talbot, p. 349, cat. no. 209.
- 25 Mende, p. 11.
- 26 *ibid.* See also Dürer's letter to Jacob Heller, 20 August 1509, quoted by Strauss, p. 342, no. 106.
- 27 C. Schneider, 'Die Apokalypse-Illustrationen des frühen Buchdrucks', in *Blockbücher des Mittelalters*, p. 131.
- 28 *ibid.*, p. 119.
- 29 *ibid.*, p. 131. The text for the Latin edition of the *Apocalypse* was based on the Vulgate (see H. Appuhn (ed.), *Albrecht Dürer: Die drei großen Bücher*, Dortmund, 1979, p. 111).
- 30 Schneider, p. 133; Kunze, vol. 1, pp. 409–29. These circumstances remind us to a certain degree of the case of the *Revelations of St Birgitta*.
- 31 Kunze, vol. 1, p. 367. See also M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, Cambridge, 1990, ch. 7.
- 32 *Albrecht Dürer 1471–1971*, pp. 194–5, cat. no. 374.
- 33 *ibid.*, pp. 195–6, cat. no. 376. See also D. Wuttke, 'Humanismus in Nürnberg um 1500', in L. Kurras & F. Machilek, *Caritas Pirckheimer 1467–1532* (exh. cat.), Kaiserburg, Nuremberg, 1982, p. 140, cat. no. 143.
- 34 See *Blockbücher des Mittelalters*.
- 35 G. Pfeiffer (ed.), *Nürnberg: Geschichte einer europäischen Stadt*, Munich, 1971, pp. 137–46.
- 36 *ibid.*; B. Deneke, 'Umwelt: Spätmittelalterliche Frömmigkeit', in *Albrecht Dürer 1471–1971*, pp. 179–98.
- 37 H. Rupprich, 'Celtis', in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 3, Berlin, 1957, pp. 181–3.
- 38 F. Schnelbögl, 'Das Nürnberg Albrecht Dürers', in *Albrecht Dürers Umwelt: Festschrift zum 500. Geburtstag Albrecht Dürers am 21. Mai 1971*, Nuremberg, 1971, pp. 56–77.
- 39 Pfeiffer, p. 129.
- 40 Wuttke, 'Humanismus in Nürnberg', p. 130.
- 41 H. Rupprich, 'Dürer und Pirckheimer: Geschichte einer Freundschaft', in *Albrecht Dürers Umwelt*, pp. 78–100.
- 42 Pfeiffer, pp. 132–3.
- 43 G. Kauffmann, 'Umwelt: Der Humanismus', in *Albrecht Dürer 1471–1971*, pp. 152–4.
- 44 Wuttke, 'Humanismus in Nürnberg', pp. 128–42.
- 45 *ibid.*, pp. 128–9.
- 46 *ibid.*, p. 128. See also D. Wuttke, 'Dürer und Celtis: Von der Bedeutung des Jahres 1500 für den deutschen Humanismus: Jahrhundertfeier als symbolische Form', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, vol. X, 1980, p. 73ff.
- 47 J. C. Smith, *Nuremberg: A Renaissance City, 1500–1618* (exh. cat.), Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery, University of Texas at Austin, p. 103, cat. no. 10.
- 48 *Albrecht Dürer 1471–1971*, p. 39, cat. no. 34; p. 164.
- 49 *ibid.*, p. 39, cat. no. 34; D. Wuttke, 'Unbekannte Celtis-Epigramme zum Lobe Dürers', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, vol. XXX, 1967, p. 321ff.

- 50 H. Appuhn (ed.), *Albrecht Dürer: Die drei großen Bücher*, Dortmund, 1979, p. 111; P. Volk, 'Chelidonius', in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 3, pp. 195–6.
- 51 These observations were made by Catherine Leahy and Lyndsay Knowles of the National Gallery of Victoria. See also the entries for both woodcuts in the present catalogue.
- 52 H. Sturm, *Unsere Schrift: Einführung in die Entwicklung ihrer Stilform*, Neustadt, 1961, p. 69. See also J. Aurenth, *Renaissance und Humanistenhandschriften*, Munich, 1988.
- 53 Dr Hermann Hauke, Head of the Department of Manuscripts at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, with whom I discussed this question on 12 November 1993, agrees with my reading of the evidence.
- 54 Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg, PP 387, 1. I would like to thank Ms Elisabeth Baere for her continued support during my time in Nuremberg.
- 55 Dr Matthias Mende of the Stadtgeschichtliche Museen Nürnberg kindly investigated a black and white photograph of the Melbourne text (28 December 1993). He too is convinced that the handwritten text is by Chelidonius himself. A more detailed note on this matter is in preparation.
- 56 B. G. Winkler, *Die Sonette des B. Chelidonius zu A. Dürers Marienleben und ihr Verhältnis zum Marienleben des Kartäusers Philipp*, PhD Diss., Universität Wien, 1960; M. Kisser, *Die Gedichte des Benedictus Chelidonius zu Dürers Kleiner Holzschnittpassion: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte spätmittelalterlicher Passionsliteratur*, PhD Diss., Universität Wien, 1964.
- 57 *Meister um Albrecht Dürer*, pp. 132–4.
- 58 *ibid.*, pp. 131–2.
- 59 Wuttke, 'Humanismus in Nürnberg', p. 135.
- 60 *Meister um Albrecht Dürer*, p. 132.
- 61 Wuttke, 'Humanismus in Nürnberg', p. 134, cat. no. 135.
- 62 *ibid.*
- 63 See Kurras & Machilek. See also E. Iserloh & G. Krabbel, introduction to *Caritas Pirkheimer: Ein Lebensbild aus der Zeit der Reformation*, Münster, 1982; F. Machilek, 'Klosterhumanismus in Nürnberg um 1500', *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg*, vol. 64, 1977, pp. 10–45.
- 64 P. Strieder, *Albrecht Dürer: Paintings — Prints — Drawings*, trans. N. M. Gordon & W. L. Strauss, New York, 1981, p. 40.
- 65 *ibid.*, p. 34.
- 66 Rupprich, 'Dürer und Pirkheimer', p. 85; Strieder, p. 40.
- 67 C. Papesch & A. Jaeggli, *Albrecht Dürer: Unterweisung der Messung mit dem Zirkel und Richtscheit*, Zurich, 1966, pp. 201–17; W. Strauss, *Albrecht Dürer: The Painter's Manual (1525)*, New York, 1977; P. A. Kirchvogel & W. Schadendorf, 'Das Werk: Die Unterweisung der Messung', in *Albrecht Dürer 1471–1971*, pp. 341–2; Smith, p. 126, cat. no. 31; E. Schröder, *Dürer, Kunst und Geometrie: Dürers künstlerisches Schaffen aus der Sicht seiner 'Unterweysung'*, Berlin, 1980.
- 68 H. Rupprich (ed.), *Dürer: Schriftlicher Nachlass*, vol. 3, Berlin, 1969, pp. 17–305; W. L. Strauss (ed.), *The Human Figure: The Complete 'Dresden Sketchbook'*, New York, 1972; Smith, p. 129, cat. no. 34. In the postscriptum to the edition of 31 October 1528, Pirkheimer states that Dürer had conceived the text of all four books, but that he had only edited and proofread one of them before he died (see Rupprich, 'Dürer und Pirkheimer', p. 98).
- 69 By 1512 Dürer had studied approximately two to three hundred men and women, whom he measured in order to see whether the proportions of their bodies adhered to a specific pattern (see Strieder, p. 35).
- 70 A. von Reitzenstein, 'Etlliche Vnderricht/ zu Befestigung der Stett/ Schlos/ vnd Flecken: Albrecht Dürers Befestigungslehre', in *Albrecht Dürers Umwelt*, pp. 178–96; A. Jaeggli, *Commentary to the Facsimile Edition and Translation into Modern German of 'Etlliche Vnderricht zu Befestigung der Stett, Schlosz und Flecken'*, Zurich, 1971, pp. 109–45; A. von Reitzenstein, 'Das Werk: Die Befestigungslehre — das Festbuch', in *Albrecht Dürer 1471–1971*, pp. 355–6.
- 71 The landscape is reminiscent of that in Dürer's *Siege of Hohenasperg* (W.626), which depicts a siege that the artist himself witnessed and drew in 1519 (Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin).
- 72 *Catalogue VIII: German and Netherlandish Woodcuts of the 15th & 16th Centuries* (sale cat.), N. G. Stogdon, Somerset, 1991, n.p., cat. no. 53; Talbot, pp. 195–6, cat. no. 207.
- 73 Mende, p. 22. According to Mende, the *Treatise on Measurement* had been reprinted ten times by 1606 (five re-editions of the Latin version and five re-editions of the German version); the German edition of the *Treatise on Fortification* was reissued five times (the Latin edition twice); and the *Treatise on Human Proportions* was used for centuries as a textbook at European academies.