

NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH PERSPECTIVES

ON EARLY GERMAN PAINTINGS:

THE CASE OF THE KRÜGER COLLECTION

AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY AND BEYOND

TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the British reception of early German painting in the nineteenth century through the case study of the Krüger acquisition for the National Gallery in 1854. It provides new information about why this collection of predominantly religious fifteenth- and sixteenth-century paintings from Cologne and Westphalia was acquired and how it was evaluated, displayed and distributed in British public and private collections, against a backdrop of midcentury developments in British public displays of art, art-historical literature, private collecting and the art market.

In light of long-held perceptions that the acquisition was a mistake and that the paintings were inferior to early works from Italy and the Netherlands, this study offers an alternative perspective that it was an enterprising attempt to implement new models of historical display in national collections, and to rationalise how supposedly inferior paintings could have value in public and private collections. By looking at the way these rediscovered German paintings were evaluated, this study advances understanding of how Romantic, scholarly and formal models for reexamining early paintings overlapped, conflicted and changed in the nineteenth century. The Krüger acquisition and distribution successfully established a place for early German painting in the core collections of the National Galleries in London, Dublin and Edinburgh at early stages in their development, but it did little to redress established prejudice against the school in Britain. Decisions taken about how these pictures were presented to the public shed new light on the significance of key individuals for shaping long-term perceptions of early German paintings in Britain. Beyond the question of German art, those decisions reveal how practical and tactical considerations could be just as important as art-historical ones in choosing what belonged in a national collection of paintings.

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I declare that all the research and writing of this thesis was carried out by me unless otherwise stated in the text. Appropriate acknowledgement has been made of any idea or finding that is not entirely my own. This work has not been submitted in whole or in part for any other degree or qualification, and has not been previously published elsewhere.

INTRODUCTION

At the start of the nineteenth century in Germany, against the backdrop of Napoleon's aggressions and German Romantic and philosophical movements, the rediscovery of early German painting was of great consequence.¹ Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder's (1773-98) fantasy of Dürer walking hand in hand with Raphael appealed to new German self-consciousness. The secularization of church property from 1803 that led to the sale or junking of works by unknown German painters long hidden in churches and monasteries spurred an enthusiasm for collecting and studying these paintings as never before. The collection formed by Sulpiz (1783-1851) and Melchior Boisserée (1786-1854) and their friend Johann Baptiste Bertram (1776-1841), alongside the aesthetic and Christian art writings of August (1767-1845) and Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829), evinced a new passion for thirteenth to sixteenth century paintings from Lower German and Netherlandish masters that coincided with the rediscovery of early Italian art there and in Italy, France and Britain. The Nazarenes, or Brotherhood of St. Luke, consciously set out to reinvigorate the modern German school by looking back to early paintings. German eyes turned afresh on the gentle beauty of Cologne paintings and the hard realism and fantastical inventiveness of Albrecht Dürer and his contemporaries as evidence of their national heritage and identity. The mania for collecting early German paintings helped establish a place for them in the new state museums of Munich, Berlin

¹ The term Germany is used here to denote German lands connected by common language, culture and political and trade alliances. Germany did not become a unified nation until 1871 and since then its borders have changed often. Mary Fulbrook, *German History Since 1800* (New York: Arnold, 1997), 13-14 and Part 1.

and elsewhere, and in the growing body of art-historical research, despite differing German perspectives on their value there.² The significant body of literature on this rediscovery does not need to be rehearsed here.

But what impact did this rediscovery of early German painting have in Britain? There is no doubt that the Nazarenes and contemporary German school had considerable impact, and that German philosophical, Romantic, art-historical and museological ideas penetrated and interacted with those in Britain to varying degrees through the century. However, one of the earliest retrospectives on nineteenth-century British attitudes to early German paintings suggests there was little interest in or appreciation for them. Writing on the occasion of the 1906 Burlington Fine Arts Club exhibition of Early German Art, Aymer Vallance complained of persistent ignorance of and prejudice against early German as opposed to Italian paintings and the need for a reappraisal.³ Early German painting certainly did undergo reappraisals later in the nineteenth century in association with German Expressionism, and yet

² Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder and Johann Ludwig Tieck, *Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder's Confessions and Fantasies, originally published in 1787 as Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders*, trans. Mary Hurst Schubert (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971); Hiltrud Kier and Frank Günter Zehnder, eds., *Lust und Verlust. Kölner Sammler zwischen Trikolore und Preussenadler*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Cologne: Wienand, 1995); Susan Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000); Enno Krüger, "Frühe Sammler 'altdeutscher' Tafelgemälde nach der Säkularisation von 1803." PhD diss., Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, 2009; Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert and Otto Pöggler, eds., *Kunst als Kulturgut. Die Bildersammlung der Brüder Boisserée – ein Schritt in der Begründung des Museums* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1995); Kieth Andrews, *The Nazarenes; A Brotherhood of German Painters in Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964); Cordula Grewe, *The Nazarenes: Romantic Avant-garde and the Art of the Concept* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015).

³ Aymer Vallance, "The Pre-Durerite Period," *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 9, no. 40 (1906); William Conway et al., *Burlington Fine Arts Club Exhibition of Early German Art, exh. cat.* (London: Chiswick Press, 1906).

Vallance's comments stayed true well into the twentieth century. A review of the next major British exhibition of German art in the Manchester City Art Gallery in 1961 called it "a remarkable and unfashionable achievement.... since the whole subject is frankly unfamiliar to most people"; and again at the National Gallery exhibition of Late Gothic Art from Cologne in 1977, another observed how "little appreciated" German art remained in Britain.⁴ In 1982 the popular *Apollo Magazine* devoted an edition to early German art which opened with Denys Sutton's editorial observing that very few knew much about it outside Germany.⁵ Yet the National Gallery in London has one of the largest collections of early Westphalian paintings outside Germany, which it acquired in the 1850s. This study is concerned with how those paintings got there, and how mid nineteenth-century British encounters with early German paintings reflected, challenged or shaped persistent tendencies to disregard or dislike them. My work is connected to the 2014 National Gallery exhibition *Strange Beauty: Masters of the German Renaissance* which cast a light on the origins of the Gallery's German paintings and invited visitors to reflect on concepts of art

⁴ Michael Levey and Christopher White, "German Exhibition at Manchester," *Burlington Magazine* 103, no. 705 (1961): 485; Peter Cannon-Brookes, "The Golden Age of Cologne," *Apollo* (1977): 292; Fritz Grossmann and Sydney Cleveland, *German Art, 1400-1800: from Collections in Great Britain, exh. cat.* (Manchester: Manchester City Art Gallery, 1961); Frank Günter Zehnder, *Late Gothic Art from Cologne: a Loan Exhibition, 5th April to 1st June 1977, exh. cat.* (London: National Gallery, 1977). On later re-evaluations, especially Grünewald, see Peter Selz, *German Expressionist Painting* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1957); Juliet Simpson, ed. *Primitive Renaissances: Northern European and Germanic Art at the fin de siècle to the 1930s* (New York: Ashgate, forthcoming); Francis Haskell, *History and its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 431-95.

⁵ Denys Sutton, "The Golden Age of German Painting," *Apollo: the International Magazine of the Arts* CXVI, no. 248 (1982).

and beauty that have for generations been linked to low appreciation of the school.⁶

Keith Moxey used the historiography of 1930-40s scholarship on the German Renaissance to demonstrate the way subjective lenses in the present could obfuscate, rather than shed light, on the past.⁷ In an attempt to force some historical distance between later attitudes to early German paintings and those of the 1850s and 60s, this study approaches that period as a potent time for their re-evaluation in Britain. Francis Haskell's seminal *Rediscoveries in Art* argued that the nineteenth century's new appreciation for paintings from before the High Renaissance was not so much a shift in taste, as a revolution – or series of revolutions – in the way paintings were being evaluated.⁸ Earlier paintings from North and South of the Alps, which would formerly have been dismissed for failing to satisfy later artistic conventions, were seen through new and shifting historical, ideological and aesthetic lenses.⁹ They were canonized

⁶ *Strange Beauty: Masters of the German Renaissance*, The National Gallery, London, February 19-May 11, 2014.

⁷ Keith Moxey, "Impossible Distance: Past and Present in the Study of Dürer and Grünewald," in *The Essential Dürer*, ed. Larry Silver and Jeffrey Chipps Smith (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

⁸ Francis Haskell, *Rediscoveries in Art: Some Aspects of Taste, Fashion and Collecting in England and France* (London: Phaidon Press, 1976), 6. Also *History and its Images*. The same point has often been made before and after Haskell, for example: John Steegman, *Consort of Taste 1830-1870* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1950), 4-6; Emma L. Winter, "The Transformation of Taste in Germany and England, 1797-1858." PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2005.

⁹ I use the terms "historical" "ideological" and "aesthetic" as shorthand for the inter-related and fluid approaches to art and its history developing in the mid-nineteenth century, including the empirical study of historical evidence (for example archival research and stylistic analysis); philosophical concepts of beauty and their relation to formal values; Romantic and philosophical approaches to defining value in art (for example the concept of Christian Art, and philosophies of progression), and the overall shift towards subjectivity and relativity in evaluating art. Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982); Udo Kultermann, *The History*

through the growing body of art-historical literature and the development of public art collections, especially at the National Gallery.¹⁰ This study examines why early German painting remained marginal and largely unknown in Britain by exploring different and conflicting perspectives on it at midcentury. It is a subject that has largely been overlooked in the vast literature on the history of taste, and of British museums and collections in the nineteenth century.

a. Defining the Topic of Study

Some of the terms used here require explanation. In the mid-nineteenth century, “Britain” included England, Scotland, Wales and the whole of Ireland. My use of “Britain” and “British” is not intended to imply there was a single culture within or across these places, and as I will show, the differences between them were pertinent to their reception of early German painting. The phrase “early German paintings” is used to denote those painted on panel in German speaking territories between the fifteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries.

of Art History (New York: Abaris Books, 1993); Stefan Muthesius, "Towards an 'exacte Kunstwissenschaft' (?). Part I: A Report on some Recent German Books on the Progress of Mid-19th Century Art History and Part II: The New German Art History in the 19th Century: a Summary of Some Problems," *Journal of Art Historiography* 9 (2013), <https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/muthesius-report-1.pdf>.

¹⁰ Charles Saumarez Smith, "The Institutionalisation of Art in Early Victorian England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 20 (2010); Christopher Whitehead, *The Public Art Museum in Nineteenth Century Britain: the Development of the National Gallery* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005); *Museums and the Construction of Disciplines: Art and Archaeology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Duckworth, 2009); Elizabeth Mansfield, *Art History and its Institutions: Foundations of a Discipline* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002); Colin Trodd, "The Paths to the National Gallery," in *Governing Cultures: Art Institutions in Victorian London*, ed. Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd (Aldershot and Burlington, VA: 2000).

It is deliberately left vague because it was, and remains, notoriously difficult to define. The problem will be a recurrent theme and in the broadest sense this study is concerned with how mid-nineteenth-century British audiences attempted to solve it.¹¹ The term "early German painting" was current in the nineteenth century, but often included what would now be described as Netherlandish or Flemish works, encompassed very different schools and styles that did not easily correlate with specific artistic eras, and was not neatly separated from other artistic media. Heavily laden terms like "Medieval," "Gothic," "Modern" and "Renaissance" were being forged as concepts at midcentury, and are purposefully avoided here except where mid-nineteenth-century writers adopted them.¹² The positive and negative baggage those terms accumulated as they were defined chiefly in relation to Italian art were important background to the reception of early German paintings. This study is about the reception of paintings rather than the paintings themselves. Information about individual works is therefore kept to a minimum in the text, but further details can be found in the Appendices.

Perhaps surprisingly, the central concern of this study is not those artists most closely linked with defining early German painting in the mid-nineteenth century, like Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), Hans Holbein the Younger (c.1497-

¹¹ An alternative might be "Altdeutsch". Krüger, "Frühe Sammler," 10-11; Hans Peter Landolt, *German Painting: The Late Middle Ages (1350-1500)* (Geneva: Skira, 1968), 11-12; Isolde Lübbeke and Margaret Thomas Will, *Early German Painting, 1350-1550*, The Thyssen Bornemisa Collection (London: Sotheby's Publications, 1991), 9.

¹² J. Barrie Bullen, *The Myth of the Renaissance in Nineteenth-Century Writing* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1994). See also Franz Bosbach et al., *Künstlerische Beziehungen zwischen England und Deutschland in der viktorianischen Epoche = Art in Britain and Germany in the Age of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert*, Prince Albert Studies (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1998).

1543) and Lucas Cranach the Elder (c.1472-1553). Instead, the focal question is how British museums, collectors, writers and critics responded when exposed to early German paintings that had virtually never been seen in Britain before, that had only recently been rediscovered, displayed and published in Germany, and about which very little was yet known. Dürer, Holbein and to a much lesser extent Cranach were relatively well known by the mid nineteenth-century.

Holbein's paintings (or ones attributed to him) had long featured in British collections, and Holbein was sometimes considered British.¹³ A few paintings attributed to Dürer, and to a handful of other German painters, were also known in Britain.¹⁴ But Holbein was chiefly associated with portraiture, and Dürer and

¹³ On Holbein in Britain and elsewhere: Susan Foister, *Holbein and England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 263-69; Oskar Bätschmann and Pascal Griener, *Hans Holbein* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 194-209; Pascal Griener, "Alfred Woltmann and the Holbein Dispute, 1863-1871," in *Hans Holbein: Paintings, Prints and Reception*, ed. Mark Roskill and John Hand (New Haven and London: National Gallery of Art, Washington, 2001); Till-Holger Borchert, "Hans Holbein and the Literary Art Criticism of the German Romantics," in *ibid.*

¹⁴ For a brief overview: Grossmann and Cleveland, *German Art, 1400-1800*, 4-7. On Dürer, whose changing reception is closely linked to the historiography of Northern Renaissance art history, but less directly to British responses to his paintings: Ulrich Finke, *Französische und englische Dürer-Rezeption im 19. Jahrhundert* (Nürnberg: Stadtgeschichtliche Museen, 1976); Jane Campbell Hutchison, *Albrecht Dürer: a Guide to Research* (New York: Garland, 2000), 1-17; Larry Silver, "Dürer: Man, Media, Myths," in *The Essential Dürer*, ed. Larry Silver and Jeffrey Chipps Smith (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Keith Moxey, "Impossible Distance: Past and Present in the Study of Dürer and Grünewald," in *ibid.* On Cranach: Jeanne Nuechterlein, "'The Picture Does Not Please Me': Cranach's Critical Fortunes in Britain," (paper presented at the conference, *Primitive Renaissances: Northern European and Germanic Art at the Fin de Siècle to the 1930s*, The National Gallery, London, April 11-12, 2014); Jeanne Nuechterlein, "German Renaissance Art Through the Eyes of the National Gallery," *Burlington Magazine* February, no. 1131 (2014); Jeremy Howard and Konrad Bernheimer, *Cranach*, exh. cat., (London: Colnaghi, 2009), http://www.colnaghi.co.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Cranach_Catalogue.pdf; Gunnar Heydenreich, *Lucas Cranach, the Elder: Painting Materials, Techniques and Workshop Practice* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press,

early German art in general with the graphic arts rather than painting. German prints and drawings were available to the public in the British Museum, in English publications and on the art market.¹⁵ The important work already done on the reception of Dürer and Holbein, and on British interest in German graphic arts and other media, is closely connected to the reception of other early German paintings. It gives a good sense of the presumptions already in place when examples of other early German paintings were first encountered in quantity. This previous work has also set out how their critical reception changed as the evaluative criteria shifted emphasis through the century.

However, this literature does not address the particular challenges associated with other newly discovered early painters from Germany. The overwhelming focus on Dürer and Holbein as German artists in the nineteenth century, and in scholarship on this period since, can complicate and obfuscate those challenges.

My focus on early German paintings not by those masters, and exclusively on paintings rather than other media, takes its lead from mid-nineteenth-century thinkers absorbed with questions of what belonged in a national collection of *paintings*, and the relationship such a collection should have with those of other artistic and historical objects. There had been a few

2007), 19-37; Bodo Brinkmann and Mark Evans, *Lucas Cranach, exh. cat.* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2007), 24-27.

¹⁵ For example Henry Cole, *Bible Events, First Series, Illustrated with Pictures Designed by Holbein*, Home Treasury (London: Cundall, 1843); *Bible Events: The Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Illustrated with Pictures Designed by Albert Durer*, Home Treasury (London: Cundall, 1844); Johann Nepomuk Strixner, *Albert Durers Designs of the Prayer Book* (London: R. Ackermann's Lithographic Press, 1817); Johann Adam von Bartsch, *Le Pientre-graveur*, 21 vols. (Vienna: J. V. Degen, 1803-21); *Anleitung zur Kupferstichkunde* (Vienna: J. B. Wallishausser, 1821). On German prints in the British Museum and on the art market: Giulia Bartrum et al., *Albrecht Dürer and his Legacy: the Graphic Work of a Renaissance Artist, exh. cat.* (London: British Museum Press, 2002); Giulia Bartrum, *German Renaissance Prints 1490-1550* (London: British Museum Press, 1995), 14-15.

early German paintings in British collections for some time, but these were collected according to personal tastes and had only limited public exposure. The situation changed midcentury when the possibility arose for the National Gallery to acquire early German paintings for the national public collection, igniting questions about their role and value there. Although efforts were made to purchase one or two paintings by Dürer, Holbein and Cranach for the National Gallery, by far the most numerous early German paintings available to, and acquired by, the Gallery around the mid-century were *not* by them, or even by artists associated with them. Rather they were chiefly by very recently rediscovered fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century painters from the Cologne and Westphalian regions, the majority of whom lacked even a name.¹⁶ They were of a very different character and quality from received wisdom of German painting derived from acquaintance with Dürer and Holbein. Most had religious subjects, and were fragments of altarpieces that had been dismantled before, or

¹⁶ On Cologne and Westphalian painting: Alfred Stange, *Deutsche gotische Malerei, 1300-1430* (Königstein im Taunus: Langewiesche, 1964); *Deutsche spätgotische Malerei, 1430-1500* (Königstein im Taunus: Langewiesche, 1965). More recent literature includes: Julien Chapuis, *Stefan Lochner: Image Making in Fifteenth-Century Cologne* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2004); Brigitte Corley, *Painting and Patronage in Cologne, 1300-1500* (Turnhout: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2000); Götz J. Pfeiffer, *Die Malerei am Niederrhein und in Westfalen um 1400: Der Meister des Berswordt-Retabels und der Stilwandel der Zeit* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof, 2009). Brief sketches in museum and exhibition catalogues include; Frank Günter Zehnder, *Katalog der Altkölner Malerei Wallraf-Richartz-Museum* (Cologne: Druck- & Verlagsanstalt Wienand, 1990); Paul Pieper, *Die deutschen, niederländischen und italienischen Tafelbilder bis um 1530*, Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Münster (Münster: Aschendorf, 1986); Till-Holger Borchert, ed. *Van Eyck to Dürer: Early Netherlandish Painting & Central Europe 1430 - 1530, exh. cat.* (Bruges, Groeningemuseum, Tiel: Lannoo, 2011), 220-75; Stephan Kemperdick, Beatrix Graf, and Regina Cermann, *Deutsche und Böhmische Gemälde: Kritischer Bestandskatalog* (Petersberg: Dr. M. Imhof, 2010); Stephan Kemperdick and Friso Lammertse, eds., *The Road to van Eyck, exh. cat.* (Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, 2012), 45-50.

as a result of, the secularization of church property in Cologne and Westphalia in the early 1800s.¹⁷ As Margareta Salinger put it in 1945, the "tenderly mystical and sunny phantasy that sparkles" in Cologne paintings is "completely opposed" to the "grim realism" of German religious painting in the south.¹⁸ Attempts were first being made in Britain to make sense of these contrasts through new encounters with Cologne and Westphalian art during the nineteenth century.

Early German paintings like these posed particular problems in Britain. Compared to early Italian paintings, little historical research had yet been done on them, and most of it was only available in German. Few paintings could be attributed to named artists and few artists had anything like a biography to rival those of early Italian painters, whose stories were retold in the limited English language texts on early painting, such as Anna Jameson's *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters*.¹⁹ Even the biographies of Dürer and Holbein were minimal at

¹⁷ Toni Diederich, "Sekularisation in Köln während der Franzosenzeit – Vorgeschichte, Durchführung und Folgen," in *Lust und Verlust*, ed. Hiltrud Kier and Frank Günter Zehnder (Cologne: Wienand, 1995); Helmut Müller, "Das Inventar der Benediktinerabtei Liesborn unter dem Hammer," in *Zur Säkularisation geistlicher Institutionen in 16. Und im 18. Und 19. Jahrhundert* ed. Irene Crusius *Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 124, Studien zur Germania Sacra* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996); *Das Kanonisenstift und Benediktinerkloster Liesborn*, ed. Irene Crusius, Herausgegeben vom Max-Planck-Institut für Geschichte (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1987).

¹⁸ Margareta Salinger, "A Westphalian Crucifixion," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 3, no. 6 (1945): at 139.

¹⁹ Vasari was not published in English until 1850-52 but biographies from his and other sources appeared earlier in English publications. Anna Jameson, *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters & of the Progress of Painting in Italy from Cimabue to Bassano* (London: C. Knight, 1845); Franz Kugler, *Handbook of the History of Painting, Part One, The Italian Schools*, trans. 'A Lady' edited and with notes by C. L. Eastlake. (London: John Murray, 1841). See Jenny Graham, *Afterlives: Giorgio Vasari and the Rise of Art History in the Nineteenth Century*, forthcoming. On the problem of namelessness and the reception of German art:

this time.²⁰ Moreover, the “rediscovery” of the early school in Germany had been closely linked to the German – or rather non-British – Catholic and nationalist ideologies of writers like the Schlegels and to the celebrated Boisserée collection, and to German individuals and Kunstvereine concerned with heritage preservation.²¹ Few examples were accessible outside Germany, and travel literature describing works in German collections underscored how alien German mania for them was to English taste.²²

Far better known were the contemporary German artists whose works William Vaughan has shown were positively reported in travel literature, adapted into English art practices and formed a major impetus and model for the Fine Arts Commission and redecoration of the Houses of Parliament.²³ But there was more skepticism of the modern German school by the late 1840s, and its waning reception was linked to fears about undue influence of German art on

Neil MacGregor, *A Victim of Anonymity: The Master of the Saint Bartholomew Altarpiece*, Walter Neurath Memorial Lecture 1993 (London: British Library, 1993).

²⁰ The first English language biographies of Dürer were not published until 1869/70, and an English scholarly account of Holbein’s biography was first published in Ralph Nicholson Wornum, *Some Account of the Life and Works of Hans Holbein, Painter, of Augsburg, with Numerous Illustrations* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1867), 19ff.

²¹ On German rediscovery and collection of Altdeutsch art: Eduard Firmenich Richartz, *Die Brüder Boisserée. Sulpiz und Melchior Boisserée als Kunstsammler: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Romantik* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1916); Gethmann-Siefert and Pöggler, *Kunst als Kulturgut*; Friedrich von Schlegel, *The Aesthetic and Miscellaneous Works of Friedrich von Schlegel*, trans. Ellen Millington (London: H. G. Bohn, 1849); Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness*; Krüger, "Frühe Sammler."; Kier and Zehnder, *Lust und Verlust. Kölner Sammler zwischen Trikolore und Preussenadler*.

²² Anna Jameson, *Visits and Sketches at Home and Abroad with Tales and Miscellanies now first collected, and a new edition of the 'Diary of an ennuyée'* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1834), 55-56 and 138-40.

²³ William Vaughan, "The German Manner in English Art 1815-61." PhD diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, 1977; *German Romanticism and English Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979); *German Romantic Painting*, 2nd ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994).

British painting.²⁴ In any case, these German revivalist painters seemed to favour the paintings and fresco techniques of early Italian rather than German schools. Against this background, it is hard to understand why British viewers should bother with early German art other than that of Dürer or Holbein at all.

In addition to Vaughan, Rosemary Ashton, John Davis, Matthew Potter and others have provided extensive insight into the reception, rejection or adaptation of German ideas, literature, art and art-historical and museological practices in Britain over the period of this study.²⁵ Their work makes it clear that German art incited emulation and controversy in Britain to a high degree in the mid-nineteenth century, but that it was German prints, contemporary rather than ancient paintings, and aesthetic and historical works that most captured British attention. These publications barely venture beyond Dürer and German prints to consider what this era meant for the reception of early German paintings.²⁶ This is surprising because key figures associated with introducing early German paintings to the National Gallery, such as William Dyce RA (1806-

²⁴ Emma L. Winter, "German Fresco Painting and the New Houses of Parliament at Westminster, 1834-1851," *The Historical Journal* 47, no. 2 (2004); Thomas Boase, "The Decoration of the New Palace of Westminster, 1841-1863," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17, no. 3/4 (1954).

²⁵ Vaughan addressed the first half of the century and Potter the second focusing on the broader dissemination of German philosophical idealism through the Pre-Raphaelite circle, and later British symbolist artists. Rosemary Ashton, *The German Idea: Four English Writers and the Reception of German Thought 1800-1860* (London: Libris, 1994); *Little Germany: Exile and Asylum in Victorian England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); John R. Davis, *The Victorians and Germany* (Bern, Switzerland and New York: P. Lang, 2007); Matthew Potter, *The Inspirational Genius of Germany: British Art and Germanism, 1850-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012). See also Bosbach et al., *Künstlerische Beziehungen*.

²⁶ Vaughan discusses early collecting in Britain and Charles Aders, and Potter briefly mentions paintings by Cranach. Dürer is the only earlier German artist mentioned in Davis' excellent survey of Early Victorian interest in German art, aesthetics and music. Davis, *Victorians and Germany*, 193-234.

64) and Sir Charles Eastlake PRA (1793-1865), were critical to the events Vaughan, Potter and others explore. Their work has helpfully exposed important concepts and contradictions that underlie and complicate British responses to early German painting. For instance: the problematic correlation between German and "Gothic" and whether this was a negative quality associated with hardness, deformity and primitiveness, or a positive one associated with Romantic imaginative freedom or Christian piety; and the perception that Germans understood art better intellectually than in practice, and the question of whether the idea or sentiment was more pertinent to evaluating art than its manner of execution. Vaughan and Potter have shown that these and other issues were not easy "either-or" evaluations, but sliding scales and slippery, often contradictory concepts that different individuals tried to interpret.

It is important to address the question of early German paintings properly because Victorians did bother with them to an unprecedented degree in the 1850s and 60s. The arrival into the Gallery of German paintings, or paintings thought then to be German, is set out chronologically in Appendix 1. Paintings are listed there according to their current attribution, with notes on attributions at the time of acquisition and through the nineteenth century, and their inventory number. It may be seen that before the 1850s, aside from two eighteenth-century works, the only earlier German painting on display was a portrait bought as a Holbein, but soon recognised not to have been by him (fig.1 Michiel Coxcie, *Man with a Skull*). A fifteenth-century *Crucifixion* by the Master of the Aachen Altarpiece was presented as possibly by Heinrich Aldegraver (1501-55) in 1847, but was kept from public display until around 1880 (fig. 2).

Between 1854 and 1863 one portrait each by "Dürer", Cranach, and "Sigmund Holbein," and two paintings by "Schongauer" were acquired, their names in inverted commas to denote attributions that have since changed (figs. 3-7).²⁷ In contrast, over sixty paintings by Cologne and Westphalian painters, most of them unnamed and most of religious subjects, were bought for or presented to the Gallery over the same period.²⁸ Many of these were rejected as unsuitable for display and dispensed with through sale or loan. The Gallery further declined other opportunities to add German works to the collection.²⁹ After 1863 no early German paintings were bought for the Gallery, until 1883 when a mid-sixteenth century German School *Entombment* was purchased as a Flemish work, and 1887 when a South German portrait was purchased as by Aldegraver.³⁰ Holbein's *Ambassadors* was acquired in 1890. These were very different in character from the mid-century acquisitions.³¹

The Gallery's midcentury purchases of early German paintings were therefore in marked contrast to what was acquired or displayed before and

²⁷ Now Hans Baldung Grien, *Portrait of a Man* NG 245; Cranach, *Portrait of a Woman* NG 291; Swabian School *Portrait of a Woman*, NG 722; After Hugo van der Goes, *Death of the Virgin* NG 658; and Style of Schongauer, *Virgin and Child in a Garden* NG 723).

²⁸ Figures are imprecise because of slippages in attributions between Netherlandish and German schools since the purchase.

²⁹ Nuechterlein, "German Renaissance Art."; Susan Foister, "Prince Albert's German Pictures," ed. Susanna Avery-Quash, *Victoria & Albert, Art & Love. Essays from a study day held at the National Gallery, London on June 5-6, 2010* (London: Royal Collections Trust, 2012), [http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/sites/default/files/V%20and%20A%20Art%20and%20Love%20\(Foister\).pdf](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/sites/default/files/V%20and%20A%20Art%20and%20Love%20(Foister).pdf).

³⁰ NG 1151 and 1232. The *Entombment* has until very recently been called in the style of Adrien Ysenbrant. Lorne Campbell, *The Sixteenth Century Netherlandish Paintings: with French Paintings Before 1600*, 2 vols. (London & New Haven: National Gallery Company & Yale University Press, 2014), 831.

³¹ Four religious paintings thought German but actually Netherlandish were acquired with the bequest of Mrs. Joseph Henry Green in 1880 (NG 946, 1080, 1085, 1087, 1088.1-5).

after that time. This departure, and the apparent about-turn on those pictures purchased but then rejected for display, shows this to have been a pivotal time for rediscovering and evaluating early German paintings in Britain and for institutionalizing decisions made about them. It deserves greater attention than it has so far received because it not only sheds light on shifting opinions of early German paintings, but also on the way new evaluative criteria were being applied and adapted. Furthermore, the display, description and rejection of these paintings in institutions like the National Gallery and in art-historical and critical literature taught the public how to view and value them which had long term implications for the reception of early German art.

b. The Krüger Collection as a Case Study

This study approaches the question of the reception of early German paintings in Britain through the mid-century acquisitions for the National Gallery, with a particular focus on the Krüger collection of paintings. As Appendix 1 shows, this was by far the largest collection of early German paintings acquired for the Gallery. Other than the significant group of five that Queen Victoria presented from her late husband's collection in 1863, only a small number of individual German paintings were otherwise purchased or given. The government bought sixty-four paintings from Carl Wilhelm August Krüger (1797-1869) of Minden, mostly by Westphalian and Cologne artists and a few other German and Netherlandish painters. Many were by the Master of Liesborn (active in Liesborn, c.1460s-80s) and his school; the Master of the Berswordt Altarpiece (active in Dortmund or Cologne, end fourteenth-early

fifteenth century); the Master of the Life of the Virgin (active c. 1460s-1490s) or his school; and Jan Baegert (c.1465-1535, also known as the Master of Cappenberg), although they were not all given to these artists at the time. Appendix 2 lists all the paintings bought from Krüger, the way they were described at the acquisition and their subsequent attributions and fates. Those whose whereabouts are still known are illustrated in Figures 8-61. This is the first time illustrations of all those purchased for the National Gallery have been brought together.³²

In style they ranged from the International Gothic with its gold grounds, stylized figures, rich brocades and soft blocks of flat colour in tempera, to the hard enamel-like detailed realism of Netherlandish-influenced oil paintings. Just two of these works of the same subject of *Christ Before Pilate* exemplify the 'completely opposing' styles of German painting that British viewers encountered through this collection.³³ The Master of the Berswordt Altarpiece's version conveys the pathos of this moment through economic poses, gestures, and details (fig. 15). Softly modelled figures in chalky tones of rose, brown and green are set against a gold ground and on a minimally rendered tipped-up tile floor and throne. They are mostly enveloped in broad swathes of drapery so that only their stylized high-foreheaded faces and spidery-fingered hands tell the story and engage the viewer in its meaning. For example, Christ's crossed hands prefigure his crucifixion. In contrast, Jan Baegert's version in oil rather

³² Plates of part of Krüger's collection were previously published in Wieland Koenig, *Studien zum Meister von Leisborn unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Entstehungsgeschichte des Liesborner Hochaltars und der Sammlung Krüger, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Kreises Beckum* (Beckum: B. Vogel, 1974).

³³ In reference to Salinger's point above.

than tempera dwells on the carefully rendered life-like textures of rich and diverse costumes, on the anatomy of complex and precise poses, and on the differentiated features of faces (fig. 44). Varied expressions are conveyed through carefully modelled musculature and attention is paid to representing the architectural setting perspectively. Both versions strive to engage the viewer in Christ's serene acceptance of his fate, but while the first is bathed in timeless other-worldliness, the second delights in the quotidian hardness of the real world. The Krüger collection therefore had the potential to illustrate the diversity and historical development of Westphalian painting.

Using the Krüger collection as a case study circumvents some of the difficulties of defining and limiting those diverse schools of early German art. It also eases the considerable problem of slippery attributions. It is not the purpose of this study, nor would it be possible, to correctly identify and attribute every painting that was, or was thought to be, early German at that time. The Krüger collection offers a discrete sample of works on which to test the more pertinent issue of Victorian perspectives on what they believed were early German paintings and, among other things, the impact of new attributions and understanding of the school on those perspectives. Inverted commas are usually used to denote mid-nineteenth-century attributions that have changed or cannot be verified.

But this case study is more than a matter of convenience: the Krüger pictures were of singular importance to the reception of early German painting in nineteenth-century Britain by virtue of having been bought, and because of what happened to them once they arrived in Britain. Since the 1850s these pictures have been among the few examples of original German paintings

available to the British public, and still comprise roughly one third of the German paintings in the National Gallery.³⁴ Most of Krüger's paintings were not considered worthy of display there. Initially seventeen were mounted on the walls, but by 1862 this had reduced to just four, two of them by Netherlandish rather than German artists. A new law had to be passed to enable the Gallery to sell thirty-seven of the Krüger paintings, and they were auctioned by Christie and Manson in 1857, where they were bought by dealers and collectors and found their way into a variety of British private collections.³⁵ Three later ended up in British churches. Twenty-three of the Krüger paintings were indefinitely loaned to the new National Galleries in Dublin and Edinburgh and the South Kensington Museum. The dispersal of the collection is summarised in Appendix 3.

The central importance of the Krüger pictures therefore relates to the way they functioned as an on-the-ground test bed for new theoretical approaches to evaluating early art, and to the way their acquisition and dispersal brought them into contact with a wide range of figures and institutions in the British art world. They were seen in public institutions, temporary loan exhibitions, on the art market, in private collections and in churches, and this visibility coincided with new art critical and historical literature in Britain. They intersected with the National Galleries in London, Dublin and Edinburgh, and the South Kensington Museum at key moments in these institutions' development when practical contingencies of funding, managerial oversight, building design and approaches to display were being

³⁴ There are now twenty-seven former Krüger paintings in the collection, five of them Netherlandish. Not all are on display.

³⁵ 19th and 20th Victoriae, Cap. 29, 23 June 1856.

formulated. It is therefore as important to establish the historical facts of what happened to these pictures in Britain as it is to understand the theoretical or ideological frameworks with which critics approached them. We cannot understand ideological responses to these paintings without taking into consideration the very practical circumstances in which decisions about them were made, and vice versa. At times it is impossible to distinguish practical from ideological decision-making.

Three different but interconnected narratives are therefore under scrutiny: the fate of the Krüger pictures themselves; their interaction with broadening public exposure to early German paintings through exhibitions and literature; and their interaction with the development of key public institutions in different parts of what was then Britain.

My research is based on a number of previously published and unpublished archives and letters from institutions and individuals, as well as a range of published nineteenth century sources. A recurrent problem is that there are very few direct source materials relating to the Krüger pictures in Britain, which in itself is revealing. In some cases, responses to the paintings have had to be gleaned from the way the paintings were displayed or hidden from view and passed over in source documents, and from indirect evidence about an individual's or institution's broader concerns.

My time frame principally coincides with the collection's acquisition and dispersal, roughly from 1853 to the mid 1860s, beginning earlier to establish context, and extending into later decades of the century to trace the reception of some of the paintings. By following these paintings as they intersected with the mid-century British art world it becomes clear that they offer a rich, yet so far

neglected opportunity for understanding the diverse, conflicting and rapidly changing frameworks for evaluating pictures at this time, and the very practical and idiosyncratic circumstances in which those evaluations had to be made. Decisions made about them had ramifications for the reception of the early German school well beyond the time frame under consideration here.

c. Previous Research

i. On The Krüger Collection

Krüger and his paintings have attracted the attention of mostly German scholars since the time he developed his collection, and my research is indebted to a vast body of subsequent literature. It is not my intention, nor is there space here, to address all the artists or paintings connected with the collection, their patrons and early contexts of production or reception, their rediscovery in Germany in the early nineteenth century and scholarship since then, which have been well-published elsewhere.³⁶ Likewise research has been done on Krüger as a collector, and the German context of early painting collecting.³⁷ A brief sketch of these findings will be enough to show that it has tended to focus on German

³⁶ Some relevant literature will be cited in the text, and Appendix 2 provides further references to sources with fuller bibliographies to which readers are directed. My thanks to the National Gallery for providing access to their dossiers on the pictures and especially to Susan Foister for sharing her research for the forthcoming catalogue "The German Paintings Before 1800."

³⁷ Götz J. Pfeiffer, "'Etwas vom Löwen... der Blut geleckt': Carl Wilhelm August Krüger (1797-1868) und seine Sammlung," *Mitteilungen des Mindener Geschichtsvereins* 76 (2005); Krüger, "Frühe Sammler," 280-93; Michael Levey, *National Gallery Catalogues: The German School* (London: National Gallery, 1959), 112-13; Andreas Priefer, "Anmerkungen zum Schicksal des Hochaltars und des Heilig-Kreuz-Altars der ehemaligen Klosterkirche Liesborn," *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 65 (2004).

rather than British responses to the paintings, and on identifying and tracing the paintings Krüger owned. This work has not only been essential for understanding what British audiences could have known of the Krüger paintings in the 1850s, but also for establishing where the pictures went in Britain. There have been some efforts in German literature to establish why Krüger wanted to sell his paintings to Britain, but to date there has been little account of why Britain would want to buy them, no account of why other museums, art dealers and private collectors might have been interested in acquiring those rejected for display by the National Gallery, and how they were presented, received and evaluated in different British contexts.³⁸ My research focuses on those questions. I am also able to clarify in more detail some of the facts about their distribution in Britain.

Previous studies have shown that Krüger was a Prussian government official who was one of a small number of amateur German collectors who collected, preserved and researched German artistic heritage in the first half of the nineteenth century.³⁹ Working for a variety of governmental departments, and moving between Münster, Frankfurt, Aachen, Oppeln and Minden, Krüger

³⁸ He had tried to sell his collection to Berlin in 1843. Krüger, "Frühe Sammler," 288, citing Carl Becker, "Nachträge zu Lübke's mittelalterlicher Kunst in Westphalen," *Kunstblatt* 16 (1855). Prieuer's suggestion that Joseph Archer Crowe had something to do with it will be addressed in Chapter Two. Prieuer, "Anmerkungen zum Schicksal," 310. Independently of my work, Dr. Gotz Pfeiffer has been preparing a paper on a previously unseen letter explaining Krüger's reasons for wanting to sell to London. I am very grateful to him for generously sharing with me this unpublished paper; "Meine Sammlung ist mire... so zur Last geworden' *Miszellen zum Mindener Sammler und Regierungsbeamten C W A Krüger (1797-1868)*," forthcoming in *Mitteilungen des Mindener Geschichtsvereins*, 2015. Gotz Pfeiffer to author, email messages March 20-25, 2015.

³⁹ For a lively account of the extraordinary lengths to which Krüger went to obtain paintings: Pfeiffer, "Etwas vom Löwen," esp. 125-28.

collected over eighty paintings as well as ivories, rare books and miniatures, which he displayed together in his home.⁴⁰ He was connected to the small circle of art and antiquary enthusiasts in Minden, including Nicolaus Meyer (1775-1855) and published an article on Westphalian paintings in the journal Meyer produced for the local society.⁴¹ Johann David Passavant (1787-1861) visited Krüger's collection in Aachen in 1831, and was the first to publish an account of it in 1833.⁴² A number of other leading German art historians and critics visited the collection or wrote about it from that date, including Carl Schnaase (1798-1875), Heinrich Gustav Hotho (1802-73), Wilhelm Lübke (1826-93), Athanasius Raczyński (1788-1874) and Ernst Förster (1800-85).⁴³ Some of their comments were reprinted at the front of Krüger's collection catalogue, published in 1848.⁴⁴

His collection was catalogued in three divisions, and only the first two are relevant to his study. Part I had fifty-two works by "Old Westphalian

⁴⁰ On the likely dates of Krüger's collecting being 1824 to early 1850s (rather than the 1820s, as Levey suggested) see *ibid.*, 120-21. The Minden house has since been destroyed, although there is some confusion about where it was (according to Pfeiffer, Priggenhagen 221; and Krüger, 55 *Domfreiheit*).

⁴¹ "Zur Kunstgeschichte Westphalens," *Westphälische Provinzial-Blätter* 4, 1847, I 145f. Meyer corresponded with Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749-1832) and followed Goethe's classicizing objective, rather than the Schlegels' Romantic, subjective reading of the importance of studying early German art. See Till-Holger Borchert, "A Moving Expression of Most Sincere Devotion and Piety: Aspects of Memling's Rediscovery in Early 19th Century Germany," in *Memling Studies: Proceedings of the International Colloquium (Bruges, 10-12 November 1994)*, ed. Helene Verougstraete (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1997), 144-45. See also Andreas Priefer, "Die Sammlung Haindorf und die "Liesborner Meister": zur Provenienz eines Spätmittelalterlichen Altarfragments im Museum Abteil Liesborn," *Münsterland-Jahrbuch des Krieses Warendorf* 54 (2005).

⁴² Johann David Passavant, "Einige Nachrichten über die niederdeutsche Malerschule in Westfalen, Teil 1 und Teil 2," *Kunst-Blatt* 12 und 13 (1833); *Kunstreise durch England und Belgien nebst einem Bericht über den Bau des Dorthurms zu Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt: Siegmund Schmerber, 1833), 399-402.

⁴³ This literature is exhaustively discussed by Pfeiffer and Krüger.

⁴⁴ Carl Krüger, *Verzeichnis der Gemälde-Sammlung des Geheimen Ragerungs-Rathes Krüger zu Minden* (Minden: J. C. C. Bruns, 1848).

Masters,” Part II twenty works by “Old German and Netherlandish Masters.” Most were religious panels and altarpiece fragments, with some portraits in Part II. Part III had later masters and copies of Italian works and was entirely excluded by Krüger when he sold his collection to Britain. He also excluded a few pictures from parts I and II.⁴⁵

Parts I and II have been of most interest to German researchers interested in building the identity, oeuvres and influences of key artists like the Master of Liesborn and his school, Jan Baegert and the Master of the Berswordt Altarpiece, and in reconstructing altarpieces by them. This work has depended on tracing the panels sold to Britain in 1854, and those re-sold and dispersed here in 1857. Research has often been hampered by the dispersal of the collection after its arrival in Britain, especially because a proper appreciation of the works depends on understanding how they looked and functioned as part of complete altarpieces, not as isolated pictorial fragments. Fritz and Michael Levey published details of the 1857 auction in the 1950s.⁴⁶ In the early 1970s Wieland Koenig used more extensive auction and exhibition catalogues to trace the sale, display and subsequent location of Krüger’s Westphalian paintings (Part I of the 1848 catalogue), and especially the Liesborn School works which he examined in depth.⁴⁷ Various attempts have been made to reconstruct

⁴⁵ The catalogue of pictures (without critical texts), and those portions sold by the National Gallery in 1857 were first published by Rolf Fritz, “Der Katalog der Gemäldesammlung Krüger zu Minden,” *Westfalen* 29 (1951).

⁴⁶ Ibid. Levey used the NG copy of the catalogue which has two sets of annotations, one made in pencil presumably at the time of the sale, the other in pen in the handwriting of Cecil Gould, who worked at the Gallery from 1946-1987. Levey, *German School*, 112-14.

⁴⁷ Koenig, *Meister von Leisborn*.

altarpieces associated with this master.⁴⁸ The latest attempt to reconstruct the Liesborn High Altar in conjunction with the National Gallery's 2014 exhibition *Strange Beauty* is illustrated in Figure 62 and briefly described in Appendix 4. Gundula Tschra von Oyen examined similar sources to trace the sold panels now attributed to Jan Baegert.⁴⁹ Attempts to trace the Bielefeld Altarpiece panels, reconstruct the altarpiece and understand the work of their painter, the Master of the Berswordt Altarpiece, began in the 1880s, intensified with Friedrich Jacob's 1983 monograph on him, and recently resulted in three major books.⁵⁰ Details about what happened to other paintings, and the works of their masters have emerged in various publications.⁵¹ Further details of this research are provided in Appendix 2.

⁴⁸ For example, Michael Levey, "Reconstruction of a Westphalian Altar-Piece: The Herzebrock Altar," *Burlington Magazine* 100, no. 666 (1958); Prieuer, "Anmerkungen zum Schicksal."; Petra Marx, "Das Kunstwerk des Monats: So genannter Meister von Liesborn, Werkstatt: Mitteltafel des Kreuzaltar-Retabels aus der Klosterkirche der Benediktinerabtei Liesborn, Münster oder Soest, um 1465/1490," *Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Westfälisches Landesmuseum, Münster* September (2012). Rainer Brandl, "The Liesborn Altarpiece, a New Reconstruction," *Burlington Magazine* 135, no. 1080 (1993).

⁴⁹ Gundula Tschra von Oyen, *Jan Baegert. Der Meister von Cappenberg. Ein Beitrag zur Malerei am Niederrhein zwischen Spätgotik und Renaissance, Gesamtdarstellung und kritischer Katalog* (Baden Baden: V. Koerner, 1972).

⁵⁰ Named after an altarpiece bearing the alms of the Berswordt Family in the church of St. Marien, Dortmund. Friedrich Jacobs, *Der Meister des Berswordt-Altars* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1983). Pfeiffer provides a full historiography and bibliography. Pfeiffer, *Malerei am Niederrhein und in Westfalen*; Alfred Menzel, ed. *Der Bielefelder Mareinaltar: Das Retabel in der Neustädter Marienkirche*, *Religion in der Geschichte: Kirche, Kultur und Gesellschaft*, (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2001); Andrea Zupancic and Thomas Schilp, *Der Berswordt-Meister und die Dortmunder Malerei um 1400: Stadtkultur im Spätmittelalter*, *Veröffentlichungen des Stadtarchivs Dortmund* 18 (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2002).

⁵¹ For example, Gert van Lon's *Madonna in the Rosary* (Krüger Cat. I.33) in Michael Wessing, *Gert van Lon: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der spätgotischen Malerei Westfalens* (Frankfurt am Main; New York: P. Lang, 1986); Jean Michel Massing, "Gert van Lon's *Madonna in the Rosary*," *The Hamilton Kerr Institute Bulletin* 1 (1988); Jean Michel Massing and Aurièle Petiot, "In the frame: Gert

c. **Previous Research**

ii. **On the Krüger Acquisition and Reception in Britain**

In British literature the facts about what the collection contained, how it arrived in Britain, and the how the pictures were dispersed through sale and loan have been published in studies on the history of the National Gallery, and on the German painting collection there, particularly through the work of Levey. Early accounts assumed Prince Albert had been responsible for the Krüger acquisition.⁵² Levey noted the role of William Dyce in recommending the collection to the Government, mentioned the loans of the paintings to other institutions and gave details of the 1857 sale. He also contributed to research on some of the masters whose works remained in the Gallery.⁵³ David Robertson gave a more detailed description of the acquisition, noting that William Ewart Gladstone (1809-98) was responsible for purchasing it, and Sir Charles Eastlake for selling and dispersing most of its pictures.⁵⁴ Neither gave reasons for the acquisition or dispersal. Until recently British literature on the reception of early German paintings has provided important yet only brief and “broad-brush” explanations for the surge in acquisitions of early Cologne and Westphalian paintings in the Gallery at midcentury. It has been briefly explained

van Lon, C. R. Ashbee and the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge," *Burlington Magazine* 154 (2012).

⁵² Salinger, "A Westphalian Crucifixion," 137.

⁵³ Appendix I and II of Levey, *German School*, 112-14. With regard to the Netherlandish paintings in Krüger's collection see Lorne Campbell, *The Fifteenth Century Netherlandish Schools*, National Gallery Catalogues (London: National Gallery Publications, 1998); *Sixteenth Century Netherlandish Paintings*, 27-40, esp 31.

⁵⁴ David Allan Robertson, *Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), 137-38 and 162-63.

in terms of the influence of the tail end of Romantic attitudes to art and its spiritual value, before the shift to more academic, scholarly, historical and aesthetic frameworks of evaluation around 1850, and to British trade links with northern Germany.⁵⁵ It is still not unusual for early German painting other than by leading masters to be entirely passed over in studies of this period, which are dominated by interest in new acquisitions by the Gallery of Italian and Netherlandish works.

More recently closer examination of the National Gallery's history and the role of key figures like Eastlake, who was appointed as its first Director after its reconstitution in 1855, have opened perspectives on the impact individuals and their personal interests had on decisions made there, and the complex political and practical circumstances in which they operated.⁵⁶ Of particular relevance to this study are Jeanne Nuechterlein's overview of the National Gallery's shifting relationship with German Renaissance art, where she outlined the influence of Eastlake's personal predilections on the Gallery's acquisitions of early German art, especially the Cranach paintings; Susan Foister's work on the German paintings in the National collection, especially those from Prince Albert's collection; Jonathan Conlin's comprehensive work on the history of the

⁵⁵ Alistair Smith, *Early Netherlandish and German Paintings* (London: National Gallery and William Collins, 1985), 9-15; Leopold Ettlinger, "Reflections on German Painting," *Burlington Magazine* 103 (1961); Grossmann and Cleveland, *German Art, 1400-1800*, 3-8; Charles Saumarez Smith, *The National Gallery: A Short History* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2009), 65-66.

⁵⁶ For example, Susanna Avery-Quash and Julie Sheldon, *Art for the Nation: the Eastlakes and the Victorian Art World* (London: National Gallery Company, 2011); Susanna Avery-Quash, "The Travel Notebooks of Sir Charles Eastlake," *Walpole Society* 73 vols. 1 and 2 (2011); Winter, "The Transformation of Taste."; Christopher Hodkinson, "In the National Interest: Sir Charles Eastlake and the National Gallery's Collection of Italian Renaissance Paintings." MA Diss., Lancaster University, 2004; Charlotte Klonk, "Mounting Vision: Charles Eastlake and the National Gallery of London," *Art Bulletin* 82, no. 2 (2000).

National Gallery, where he gave a more detailed account of the Krüger acquisition, positioning it within the mid-century political and cultural machinations of the institution in relation to German collections; and Conlin's examination of the influence of Gladstone's religious and political agenda on the National Gallery at this time.⁵⁷

Building on this background I offer the most comprehensive account to date of the collection's acquisition and dispersal in Britain, bringing new evidence to bear on the roles of Dyce and Gladstone, and introducing a far wider range of characters and institutions than previously considered whose opinions on the pictures shaped what happened to them. The intention is to test and explore the notion that these paintings were merely, as Leopold Ettlinger had it in 1961, a "sad medley" of lesser Cologne and Westphalian provincial artists with little aesthetic appeal that had been assembled under the influence of early nineteenth-century German Romantic and art-historical "patriotic propaganda."⁵⁸

Ettlinger was certainly not alone in having a low opinion of Krüger's paintings, and this perspective has continued to colour accounts of the Krüger acquisition. Robertson called it one of the Gallery's unluckiest purchases, and

⁵⁷ See Chapter Two. Nuechterlein, "German Renaissance Art."; Foister, "Prince Albert's German Pictures."; Jonathan Conlin, "The Origins and History of the National Gallery 1753-1860." PhD diss., Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge University, 2002; *The Nation's Mantelpiece: a History of the National Gallery* (London: Pallas Athene, 2006); "Gladstone and Christian Art, 1832-1854," *Historical Journal* 46, no. 2 (2003).

⁵⁸ Ettlinger, "Reflections on German Painting," 132-38, at 132 and 135. He preferred German graphic arts and sculpture. In painting he thought only the leading masters of the realist style deserved attention.

Saumarez-Smith used it to define a period of “absolute chaos” at the Gallery.⁵⁹ Likewise, Gerald Reitlinger’s seminal study of the British art market published in 1961 concluded the German school had until recently remained a “despised” one. The Krüger acquisition and sale was the only example Reitlinger gave for sales of early German paintings other than by Holbein, Dürer and Cranach before the 1880s in his analysis of sales, and his brief account of it stressed their low value at re-sale. He argued that German and other “Northern primitives” occupied a minor and subordinate position on the nineteenth-century art market, missing out on the price-hikes of Italian “Primitives” resulting from the desire for Christian sentiment in art, positive discourse in art literature and exposure through the influx of works onto the market. Reitlinger suggested Northern art suffered for being less abundant, more shrouded in ignorance, more appealing to “Gothic yearnings” than to Christian sentiment, and to German provincial rather than British taste.⁶⁰ As will become clear, these opinions echo some voiced in the mid-nineteenth century. But this was not the only perspective at that time. The very fact the collection was bought and that part of it was put on display raises the question of whether its acquisition should rather been seen as a highly enterprising move, undertaken during a potent time for re-evaluating early art in Britain. Furthermore, the fact that some of its paintings were sought as loans for other galleries, and did sell on an

⁵⁹ Smith, *National Gallery*, 66; Robertson, *Eastlake*, 137. Conlin sees this as overly harsh. Conlin, *Nation's Mantelpiece*, 304.

⁶⁰ He excludes some Netherlandish painters from this assessment. Gerald Reitlinger, *The Economics of Taste: the Rise and Fall of Picture Prices, 1760-1960*, 1 ed. (London: Barrie & Rockliff, 1961), 108-42, 303, 325-26, 342. For a critique of Reitlinger’s methodology, see Guido Guerzoni, "Reflections on Historical Series of Art Prices: Reitlinger's Data Revisited," *Journal of Cultural Economics* 19, no. 3 (1995).

already established market where they were dispersed to diverse collectors, calls for closer examination of attitudes at the time, and for a better understanding of how rather less positive perspectives on the school became dominant. How is it that enterprising attempts to bring early German paintings into the national collection in the 1850s ended up, as Conlin puts it, casting a “shadow” over the early German school?⁶¹

c. Previous Research

iii. On Long-term Implications: The Case of the Wings of the Bielefeld *Marienaltar*

This study focuses on decisions made midcentury, but it is indebted to previous work showing the long-term implications of those decisions. The case of the wings of the Bielefeld *Marienaltar* by the Master of the Berswordt Altarpiece is illustrative here. Six of the paintings bought from Krüger were fragments from the wings of this altarpiece, showing episodes from the Creation to the Last Judgment.⁶² Figure 63 shows a reconstruction of this altarpiece, and figure 64 illustrates how its wings were dismantled and cut into six horizontal strips with three episodes each. These wing fragments entered Krüger’s

⁶¹ Conlin, *Nation's Mantelpiece*, 307.

⁶² The production, iconography, dismantling and reconstruction of this altar are exhaustively discussed (with bibliographies) in Menzel, *Bielefelder Marienaltar*; Pfeiffer, *Malerei am Niederrhein und in Westfalen*; Zupancic and Schilp, *Der Berswordt-Meister*. See also Maryan Ainsworth and Joshua Waterman, *German Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1350-1600* (New York and New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2013), 193-97; Kemperdick, Graf, and Cermann, *Deutsche und Böhmische Gemälde*, 168-73. For an alternative perspective, Brigitte Corley, "Re-Inventing the Berswordt Master: Recent Books," *Kunstchronik* 57, no. 1 (2004).

collection around 1840. Two episodes from the upper register on the right wing were sold before the National Gallery acquired the six wing fragments from Krüger. After they were acquired for the National Gallery, none of them were thought worthy of display. The fact that no one at the Gallery recognized their importance made it more difficult for others to see their value. The National Gallery of Ireland refused them when offered them as loans and, following this double rejection, they made little money at the 1857 sale, where they were bought by a dealer. The paintings were subsequently fragmented and dispersed, shedding all information about their origins (fig. 65). This significantly hampered research on the altarpiece and its master.

No one at the Gallery then seemed aware that there had already been German scholarly interest in the altarpiece. Leopold von Ledebur (1799-1877) made notes on it in 1825 when the altarpiece was still complete and in situ in the Neustädter Marienkirche in Bielefeld with its original frame on which the date "1400" was visible. His notes were not published until much later, but Passavant, Förster, Gustav Waagen (1794-1868) and Lübke had all published comments on the altarpiece before 1854.⁶³ Part of the problem was that for some reason Krüger's catalogue mis-named the chapel from which these wings came.⁶⁴ The central part of the altarpiece remained in situ in Bielefeld, and German writers continued to comment on it. Waagen considered it the work of a weak local painter under the influence of Wilhem of Cologne, and by 1880

⁶³ This literature has been fully published in the sources already mentioned.

⁶⁴ They are listed as coming from a chapel in Schildesche. The change appears deliberate. It is possible Krüger had not acted entirely legitimately in acquiring them. Pfeiffer, "Etwas vom Löwen," 131-32.

Joseph Nordhoff (1838-1936) thought him a follower of Conrad von Soest.⁶⁵ It was when the fragments of the wings sold by Krüger to Britain began re-appearing in sales and in private collections at the start of the twentieth century that research on the altarpiece and its author could progress. The most recent burst of research since the rediscovery of the three latest fragments in the 1990s contributed to a major re-evaluation. The painter is now considered a leading figure in the dissemination of the French courtly style, and of new compositional, stylistic and iconographical devices in Westphalia, Cologne and North Germany from 1390-1430, pre-dating the Cologne painters and Conrad von Soest of whom he was previously thought a weak follower.⁶⁶ The Bielefeld *Marienretabel* was the largest known in Westphalia from that time, when open measuring about 6.5 metres wide and 2.25 metres high. Its size, intricately wrought theological programme and high artistic quality place it among the “jewels” of early Northern art.⁶⁷

Much of this re-evaluation depends on recent methods of technical analysis, and on a web of factors contributing to more recent shifts in perceptions of early German painting. Yet one can only wonder how different perceptions of the school, its history and its masters might have been if the wing fragments had not all been rejected by the National Gallery in the 1850s, and how different the collection would be today if they were still part of it.

⁶⁵ Gustav Friedrich Waagen, "Nachträge zur zweiten Ausgabe von Kuglers Handbuch der Geschichte der Malerei etc.," *Deutsches Kunstblatt* 1, no. 39 (1850): 308; Joseph Nordhoff, "Die Soester Malerei unter Meister Conrad, Parts 1 and 2," *Bonner Jahrbücher des Vereins von Altertumsfreunden im Rheinlande* 68 (1880): 86-87.

⁶⁶ Dendrochronological analysis of the panels seals the argument against him being a follower of Conrad von Soest. Pfeiffer, *Malerei am Niederrhein und in Westfalen*, 246.

⁶⁷ Zupancic and Schilp, *Der Berswordt-Meister*, Forword by Gerhard Langmeyer.

c. **Previous Research**

iv. On British Reception of Early Paintings, mid-Nineteenth Century.

The story of how the National Gallery's collection shifted from being akin to that of an aristocrat with a taste for Grand Style paintings from the later sixteenth century onwards, to a more professionalized, historical collection, has been well told. The tale usually focuses on the role early Italian paintings played in this transition, and the same is true for scholarly examinations of British interactions with the rediscovery of early paintings through the art market, art critical and historical literature, and artistic practice.⁶⁸ This mirrors the way

⁶⁸ For example, Hilary Fraser, *The Victorians and Renaissance Italy* (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1992); Robyn Cooper, "The Popularization of Renaissance Art in Victorian England," *Art History* 1, no. 3 (1978); John Hale, *England and the Italian Renaissance: the Growth of Interest in its History and Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954); John E. Law and Lene Østermark-Johansen, *Victorian and Edwardian Responses to the Italian Renaissance* (Aldershot, Hants and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005); Martin McLaughlin, ed. *Britain and Italy from Romanticism to Modernism: a Festschrift for Peter Brand* (Oxford: Legenda, 2000); Charles Brand, *Italy and the English Romantics: the Italianate Fashion in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957). On the National Gallery Susanna Avery-Quash, "The Growth of Interest in Early Italian Painting in Britain with Particular Reference to Pictures in the National Gallery," in *National Gallery Catalogues. The Fifteenth Century Italian Paintings*, ed. Dillian Gordon (London: National Gallery Co., 2003). On the art market, John Fleming, "Art Dealing and the Risorgimento I," *Burlington Magazine* 115, no. 838 (1973); "Art Dealing in the Risorgimento II," *Burlington Magazine* 121, no. 917 (1979); "Art Dealing in the Risorgimento III," *Burlington Magazine* 121, no. 918 (1979); Charlotte Gould, ed. *Marketing Art in the British Isles, 1700 to the Present: a Cultural History* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich, *The Rise of the Modern Art Market in London, 1850-1939* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press & Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). On private collectors, Susanna Avery-Quash, "Collector Connoisseurs or Spiritual Aesthetes? The Role of Anglican Clergy in the Growth of Interest in Collecting and Displaying Early Italian Art (1830s-1880s)," in *Sacred Texts – Sacred Space: Architectural, Spiritual and Literary Convergences in England and Wales*, ed. Joseph Sterret and Peter Thomas (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011); "'Incessant personal exertions and comprehensive artistic knowledge': Prince Albert's Interest in Early Italian Art," ed. Susanna Avery-

early Italian paintings dominated those spheres in the nineteenth century far more than German art. Perceptions of early German painting cannot be understood unless seen within this predominance of Italian art, and the overwhelming perception of its superiority. It is clear that there was a general perception in mid-nineteenth century in Britain that of all the earlier schools of painting, Italian ones from around the time of Raphael were the most valuable and interesting to study, collect and display.⁶⁹ Not all agreed however: there was dissent over why they were important and which of its schools and artists deserved greatest attention, particularly as emphasis shifted from Romantic frameworks and admiration for “Christian Art” up to the 1850s to more scholarly historical and aesthetic criteria.⁷⁰ Nevertheless their prominence was institutionalized in Britain in 1855 when, following a Select Committee that heard from key stakeholders in the increasingly professionalized British art world, the Treasury reconstituted the National Gallery with a specific recommendation to purchase more paintings from early Italian schools, and

Quash, *Victoria & Albert, Art & Love* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2012), [http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/sites/default/files/V%20and%20A%20Art%20and%20Love%20\(Avery-Quash\).pdf](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/sites/default/files/V%20and%20A%20Art%20and%20Love%20(Avery-Quash).pdf). On British art critical literature, Robyn Cooper, "The Growth of Interest in Early Italian Painting in Britain: George Darley and the 'Athenaeum' 1834-46," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 43 (1980).

⁶⁹ This point is made in Whitehead, *Public Art Museum*, 20.

⁷⁰ For example, contrast Lord Lindsay's preference for Raphael's early work within a framework that placed expression of a particular kind of Christian sentiment as the highest achievement in art, with Ralph Wornum's preference for Raphael's later works, according to a framework that privileged artistic skills and more generic moral sentiment. Alexander Crawford (Lord) Lindsay, *Sketches of the History of Christian Art* (London: John Murray, 1847), 238; Ralph Nicholson Wornum, *The Epochs of Painting Characterized: a Sketch of the History of Painting, Ancient and Modern, etc* (London: C. Cox, 1847).

funded systematic acquisitions of them over the next few years.⁷¹ Despite the relative scarcity and perceived inferiority of early German painting, the fact that so many were also acquired for the Gallery at this time, and featured in the art market, literature and private collections, and the differences of their fate and status in those contexts, deserve more time in the spotlight.

Literature on the reception of Netherlandish paintings is also highly significant for the present study because the Netherlandish and German schools were intricately linked from the earliest point of their rediscovery. This was due to a number of factors including their visual similarity and historical mutual influence, the deliberate co-opting of Netherlandish painting into the Romantic vision of the Germanic national and Catholic culture in the early decades of the century, and continued efforts to find formal progressive links between the schools with “scientific” art-historical approaches.⁷² At the same time, there were increasing efforts to identify, catalogue and rank the distinct artists, styles and qualities of paintings from these schools. As Haskell, Till-Holger Borchert, Pascal Griener and others have shown, the history of early “Flemish” and/or early German art was to a large degree worked out through the perceived relationships between van Eyck, Dürer and Holbein.⁷³ Among the numerous publications examining the re-evaluation of Jan van Eyck and other Netherlandish painters, Lorne Campbell sets out the National Gallery’s rare but

⁷¹ “Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery; together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index,” House of Commons Parliamentary Papers (hereafter PP) 1852-53 (867).

⁷² Jenny Graham, *Inventing van Eyck: the Remaking of an Artist for the Modern Age* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), esp. 11-17 and 59-62. See also Borchert, “Moving Expression.”; Lisa Deam, “Flemish versus Netherlandish: A Discourse of Nationalism,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (1998).

⁷³ Haskell, *History and its Images*, esp 431-61; Borchert, “Moving Expression.”; Griener, “Woltmann and the Holbein Dispute.”

important acquisitions of Netherlandish paintings, 1842-65, and Borchert and Jenny Graham have pinpointed specific individuals, events, and publications associated with shifting British opinions on Netherlandish works, such as Eastlake's role in the National Gallery's purchases, Joseph Crowe's and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle's book on Flemish painters, and the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857.⁷⁴ Borchert examined the rising market for early Netherlandish paintings.⁷⁵ Elizabeth Pergam's study of the Manchester Art Treasures exhibition observes the significant impact that methods of display had on the reception of northern paintings.⁷⁶

As with perceptions of early Italian paintings, this work shows that the fortunes of northern artists changed as paradigms for evaluation shifted from the Romantic and Christian to more secular scholarly, historical and aesthetic criteria; concomitantly the qualities most prized in northern paintings shifted from idealized sentiment to realism, and to original contributions to the progress of painting.

Nigel Glendinning and Hilary Macartney's book on the reception of Spanish art in Britain is a further good model for pinpointing the way scholarship, the art market, and collectors and institutions shaped responses to

⁷⁴ Campbell, *Fifteenth Century Netherlandish Paintings*, 16; *Sixteenth Century Netherlandish Paintings*, 27-40; Till-Holger Borchert, "Collecting Early Netherlandish Paintings in Europe and the United States," in *Early Netherlandish Paintings: Rediscovery, Reception, and Research*, ed. Bernhard Ridderbos, Anne van Buren, and Henk van Veen (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2005), 203-04; Graham, *Inventing van Eyck*; Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovanni Cavalcaselle, *The Early Flemish Painters: Notices of their Lives and Works*, 1 ed. (London: John Murray, 1857).

⁷⁵Borchert, "Collecting Early Netherlandish Paintings."

⁷⁶ Elizabeth Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857. Entrepreneurs, Connoisseurs and the Public* (Franham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011).

art that Britain was only just becoming acquainted with. Although the Spanish art they discuss was often from a later date than the Krüger paintings, the problems Spanish art presented to religious, historical and aesthetic criteria often overlap with the issues at hand here.⁷⁷ Their work casts into sharper relief the lack of anything similarly comprehensive dealing with early German art.

I have already mentioned previous literature concerning shifting British perspectives on Dürer and Holbein, adding here some of the key personalities and forces in that evolution which have relevance for the reception of the Krüger collection. Griener has illustrated the importance of the National Gallery's Secretary and Keeper, Ralph Wornum's (1812-77) research on Holbein and his role in the Meyer Madonna dispute.⁷⁸ Wornum was responsible for displaying and cataloguing at the National Gallery, raising questions about his role in the way the Krüger pictures were displayed and described to the public that have not previously been examined.

Matthew Potter is the latest in a number of scholars examining the impact of early German prints and to a lesser extent paintings on the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood and their critical reception in Britain.⁷⁹ Little notice has

⁷⁷ Nigel Glendinning and Hilary Macartney, eds., *Spanish Art in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1920: Studies in Reception in Memory of Enriqueta Harris Frankfort* (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester, NY: Tamesis, 2010).

⁷⁸ Griener, "Woltmann and the Holbein Dispute."; Ralph Nicholson Wornum, *Hans Holbein and the Meier Madonna* (London: The Arundel Society, 1871); *Life and Works of Holbein*.

⁷⁹ Potter, *Inspirational Genius*, 19-85; John Christian, "Early German Sources for Pre-Raphaelite Designs," *Art Quarterly* 36 (1973); Jane Langley, "Pre-Raphaelites or ante-Dürerites?," *Burlington Magazine* 137, no. 1109 (1995); Robyn Cooper, "The Relationship Between the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and Painters before Raphael in English Criticism of the Late 1840s and 1850s," *Victorian Studies* 24, no. 4 (1981); Jenny Graham, "Artistic Inspirations," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites*, ed. Elizabeth Prettejohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

yet been taken of the fact that figures associated with the movement were involved in the purchase of the Krüger collection or bought pieces the Gallery rejected from it.

Potter has also highlighted the role of William Bell Scott and Mary Heaton's English biographies of Dürer.⁸⁰ Several publications have touched on the way key critics like Anna Jameson (1794-1860), George Darley (1795-1846) and John Ruskin (1819-1900) evaluated and presented Dürer's and Holbein's paintings, prints and drawings, and perceptions of early German art seen in Germany.⁸¹ There has not been a coordinated attempt to analyze critical commentary or historical literature in Britain on early German artists other than Dürer and Holbein.

Some notice has been taken of the presence of early German paintings in specific British private collections, especially those of Carl Aders, William Roscoe and Prince Albert.⁸² Grossman's review of German art in British

⁸⁰ Potter, *Inspirational Genius*, 36-49. William Bell Scott, *Albert Durer: His Life and Works. Including Autobiographical Papers and Complete Catalogues* (London: Longmans, Green, 1869); Mary Heaton, *The Life of Albrecht Dürer of Nürnberg with a Translation of his Letters and Journal and an Account of his Works* (London: Seeley, Jackson and Halliday, 1870).

⁸¹ For example, Cooper, "George Darley and the Athenaeum," at 209; Potter, *Inspirational Genius*, 58-60.

⁸² Michael Joseph, "Charles Aders: A Biographical Note, Together with Some Unpublished Letters Addressed to Him by S. T. Coleridge and Others, and Now in the Grey Collection, Auckland City Library," *Auckland University College Bulletin* 43, no. English Series No. 6 (1953); Lionel Cust, "The Royal Collections. Article I—HRH Prince Albert as an Art Collector," *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 5, no. 13 (1904); Jonathan Marsden, *Victoria & Albert: Art & Love, exh. cat.* (London, Queen's Gallery: Royal Collection, 2010); Arline Wilson, *William Roscoe: Commerce and Culture* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008); Steegman, *Consort of Taste 1830-1870*; Winslow Ames, *Prince Albert and Victorian Taste* (New York: Viking Press, 1968). Further information about German paintings in British collections see Christa Grössinger, *North-European Panel Paintings: a Catalogue of Netherlandish & German Paintings Before 1600 in*

collections written for the 1961 Manchester City Art Gallery retrospective of the 1906 Burlington Fine Arts exhibition of early German Painting was impressively concise and accurate but nevertheless leaves room for a re-evaluation of the complex place early German paintings held in British collections. Better research tools, such as the Getty Provenance Index (GPI) databases, facilitate more detailed analysis of data on the British market for early German paintings than Reitlinger had access to through his reliance on George Redford's and Algernon Graves' accounts of key nineteenth-century sales.⁸³ Although it is not the intention to provide a comprehensive analysis of this market here, a better understanding of this data helps position the Krüger acquisition and resale in the mid-nineteenth century context.

My work is part of a broader move to re-examine German art, ideas and the historiography of German art history following what Potter has described as “the fundamental bias in twentieth-century historiography” and the “aversion” to “tracing historical links to Germany” following the two World Wars and Cold War period.⁸⁴ In 2014 alone there were six exhibitions in Britain dealing with German art and history. Significant among these were *Strange Beauty* at the

English Churches & Colleges (London & New York: Harvey Miller Publishers; Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁸³ For sales and inventories in Britain up to about 1840: “Getty Provenance Index Databases,” Getty Research Institute

<http://piprod.getty.edu/starweb/pi/servlet.starweb?path=pi/pi.web>.

George Redford, *Art Sales: a History of Sales of Pictures and Other Works of Art: with Notices of the Collections Sold, Names of Owners, Titles of Pictures, Prices and Purchasers Arranged Under the Artists of the Different Schools in Order of Date: Including the Purchases and Prices of Pictures for the National Gallery*, 2 vols. (London: Whitefriar's Press, 1888); Algernon Graves, *Art Sales, from Early in the 18th Century to Early in the 20th Century*, 3 vols. (London: Graves, 1918-21).

⁸⁴ Potter, *Inspirational Genius*, 1-2. On this and other factors hindering previous research on German ideas in Victorian Britain see also Davis, *Victorians and Germany*, 14-17.

National Gallery and the British Museum's *Germany, Memories of a Nation*. The book and series of radio programmes accompanying *Memories of a Nation* opened with a forthright acknowledgement of the enormity of the Nazi era, but attempting not to read that back into every aspect of Germany's long history.⁸⁵ In art-historical scholarship, early German schools are coming out from the side-wings of the "Northern Renaissance" and have been the subject of numerous recent exhibitions and publications.⁸⁶

Finally, my work is also indebted to the methodologies and attitudes of broader "new" and "post-new" art history and museological studies that seek to expose past subjectivities and challenge presuppositions and previously overlooked factors affecting notions of art and its value.⁸⁷ This extended case study of the British reception of the Krüger collection closely links practical

⁸⁵ *A Dialogue with Nature: Romantic Landscape in Britain and Germany, 1760-1840*, The Courtauld Gallery, London, January 30-April 27; *Germany: Memories of a Nation*, British Museum, London, October 16, 2014-January 25, 2015; *Gerhard Richter*, Marian Goodman Gallery, London, October 14-December 20, 2014; *Sigmar Polke: Alibis*, Tate Modern, London, October 9, 2014-February 20, 2015; *Georg Baselitz*, New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester, September 20, 2014 - January 18, 2015. Neil MacGregor, *Germany: Memories of a Nation* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), Introduction.

⁸⁶ For example Dagmar Täube and Miriam Verena Fleck, eds., *Glanz und Größ des Mittelalters: Kölner Meisterwerke aus dem großen Sammlungen der Welt, exh. cat.* (Cologne, Museum Schnütgen: Hirmer, 2001); Kemperdick and Lammertse, *The Road to van Eyck, exh. cat.*; Borchert, *Van Eyck to Dürer*; Katja von Baum and Iris Schaefer, eds., *Die Geheimnisse der Maler: Köln um Mittelalter* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2013); Jeffrey Chipps Smith, *Visual Acuity and the Arts of Communication in Early Modern Germany* (2014); Kate Heard, Lucy Whitaker, and Jennifer Scott, *The Northern Renaissance: Durer to Holbein, exh. cat.* (London, The Queen's Gallery: Royal Collection Publications, 2012).

⁸⁷ The extent to which Francis Haskell gave impetus to this approach was brought to the fore by leading curators, art and cultural historians in a recent two day conference, "A Revolution in Taste: Francis Haskell's Nineteenth Century," St John's College and the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, October 23-24, 2015. For a concise overview of scholarship on the role of museums in constructing knowledge and attitudes, Whitehead, *Museums*. See also Andrew McClellan, *Art and its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millennium* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2003).

circumstances with theoretical motivations to understand what those subjectivities and presuppositions were in the mid-nineteenth century in view of their potential to be persistent in their influence.

In Chapter One I sketch British encounters with early German paintings before the Krüger acquisition through collections here and abroad, and in literature. Chapter Two examines why the Krüger collection was acquired in the context of the restructuring of the National Gallery 1853-55, and immediate responses to its paintings in Britain. Chapter Three traces the display and reception of these paintings in the National Gallery from 1855 onwards against the background of the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, and of new art-critical and historical literature in Britain. Chapter Four examines how and why the Krüger paintings rejected by the Gallery in 1857 and 1862 were bought and dispersed at sale and requested by other public institutions as loans, and their differing reception in these various contexts. This thesis newly positions early German art at the heart of the mid-century re-evaluation of paintings and their display, and offers new perspectives on the complexity of practical and ideological factors involved in their reception that will also be pertinent to the reception of other kinds of paintings in Britain.

CHAPTER 1

“MUCH ESTEEMED IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY, BUT SELDOM ADMITTED INTO SELECT COLLECTIONS HERE”: BRITISH ENCOUNTERS WITH EARLY GERMAN PAINTING UP TO 1853

In 1828 the art dealer Thomas Winstanley opined that early German masters were “only subjects of curiosity... much esteemed in their own country, but seldom admitted into select Collections here”.⁸⁸ His professional perspective is authoritative, and yet nineteenth-century British audiences did have increasing access to early German paintings at home and abroad, although by the time of the Krüger acquisition those opportunities were still very limited. Most encounters were via published reports of collections in Britain and Germany, and through the growing body of art-historical literature. A small number of pictures were in private and public collections. To understand how unfamiliar the Krüger pictures would have been to British audiences in 1854, we need to know how those prior limited encounters might have shaped expectations. This chapter offers a sketch rather than a comprehensive review of the presence and function of early German paintings in Britain up to 1854. It introduces some previously unnoticed figures like Henry Clarke Barlow (1806-76) to the cast of already-familiar ones to enrich understanding of that context. The chapter moves roughly chronologically through the first half of the century, noting the presence of early German paintings in different kinds of British

⁸⁸ Thomas Winstanley, *Observations on the Arts, with Tables of the Principal Painters, of the Various Italian, Spanish, French, Flemish, Dutch, and German Schools, etc* (W. Wales & Co.: Liverpool, 1828), 91.

private and public collections and on the art market, in written accounts of those collections and of travel to see paintings in Germany, and through emerging art-historical surveys. It ends by briefly addressing how the Pre-Raphaelite movement was embroiled in negative perceptions of German art. The reception of early German paintings was not solely negative and by the 1850s knowledge and appreciation of them had considerably shifted. The Krüger acquisition was symptomatic of those changes, but was nevertheless extraordinary in its scale and vision.

1 a. Characteristic Masterpieces: Private and Public Education Collections

Early German paintings, typically attributed to Dürer and Holbein, although rarely by them, had an established place in the private collections of royal, aristocratic or wealthy owners long before the 1850s.⁸⁹ For example, a South German *Pietà* with a false Dürer signature and date was in the collection of the Earl of Pembroke at Wilton House by 1731 (fig. 66).⁹⁰ Seen by few, such elite collections associated these rarities and ‘masterpieces’ of German artists known through the biographical histories of Vasari, Karel van Mander and Joachim Sandrart, with courtly painting of the highest quality, with intelligent

⁸⁹ Foister, "Prince Albert's German Pictures," 2-3; Grossmann and Cleveland, *German Art, 1400-1800*.

⁹⁰ Cat. No. 194, Sidney Pembroke, *A Catalogue of the Paintings & Drawings in the Collection at Wilton House, Salisbury, Wiltshire* (London: Phaidon, 1968), 74, plate 36.

innovations in paint and print media, and with exclusive audiences.⁹¹ Embedded in those historical texts were the established notions of the inferiority of German to Italian art, of the extraordinariness of Dürer, Holbein and one or two others in a school otherwise devoid of notable talent, and disagreement over whether German non-idealism was its strength or failing.⁹² Collections of prints and drawings were collected alongside and in excess of paintings by these 'masters' underscoring their technical mastery and connoisseurial appeal, as for example in the seventeenth-century collection of the Earl of Arundel, and in the antiquarian and historical interests of William Young Ottley and Francis Douce. Even for those who did not appreciate the style of these 'masters,' their fame assured them recognition, often for exemplifying the contrast with superior Italian works.⁹³

Before the start of the nineteenth century a relatively small but significant number of early German paintings were imported to Britain as part of private aristocratic collections, or collections intended to instruct the public in the history of painting. Although Dürer was often the default attribution,

⁹¹ Bächtmann and Griener, *Hans Holbein*, 194-95; Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. Gaston Du C. De Vere, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co, 1912 edition); Carel van Mander, *The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*, trans. Hessel Miedema (Doornspijk: Davaco, 1999); Joachim von Sandrart, *Teutsche Academie der Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste: Nürnberg 1675-1680* (Nördlingen: Dr. Alfons Uhl, 1994).

⁹² Mark Evans, "Dürer and Italy Revisited: The German Connection" (paper presented at the Albrecht Dürer and his Legacy Conference, British Museum, London, 2004).

⁹³ Mary Hervey, *The Life, Correspondence & Collections of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), 49-55; James Stourton and Charles Sebag-Montefiore, *The British as Art Collectors: From the Tudors to the Present* (London: Scala Publishers, 2012); John Martin Robinson, *The Dukes of Norfolk* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1995); Vaughan, *German Romanticism and English Art*, 9 and 22.

these paintings brought British viewers into contact with the works of other masters. Another “Dürer” that was probably Derick Baegert’s *St. Luke Painting the Virgin* (1485-90) (fig. 67), or a copy of it, was in the Glasgow Academy, founded in 1753 by Robert and Andrew Foulis.⁹⁴ This collection was intended to teach academy students, and to help the public “form a true taste, ... to give ... a perfect idea of the use and perfection of the Fine Arts and the peculiar excellences that distinguish each school”.⁹⁵ The “Dürer” was praised for its “great labour”, learned perspective, high degree of finish and ability to deceive the eye.⁹⁶ It was seen to exemplify characteristic qualities of German painting with reference to established concepts of the qualities of Dürer’s art, transferred to artists not directly connected to him. Misattributions could thus undermine understanding of Dürer’s art and the diversity of early German schools.

Paintings by a broader range of named early German artists were imported in 1803 with the collection of Joseph Franz Anton Truchsess, Graf von Waldburg-Zeil-Wurzach (1784-1813). Count Truchsess tried to sell his collection to Britain as the foundation of a historical museum to rival the

⁹⁴ No. 65 in Robert Foulis, *A Catalogue of Pictures, Composed and Painted chiefly by the Most Admired Masters of the Roman, Florentine, Parman, Bolognese, Venetian, Flemish, and French Schools...Sold at the place of exhibition, and by T. Cadell and P. Elmsly in the Strand*, 3 vols. (London: T. Cadell and P. Elmsly, 1776), II: 26-28. Its size is given as 3ft 9 by 2 ft 8. Baegert’s painting, acquired by the Landesmuseum, Münster in 1904 (62 WKV) measured 113 x 82 cm. I have not been able to trace the Baegert panel after the Foulis sale. Pieper, *Tafelbilder bis um 1530*, 333-35. Foulis had another “Dürer”: *The Virgin Giving Suck to Our Saviour* (no. 64). On Foulis’ collection see David Irwin and Francina Irwin, *Scottish Painters at Home and Abroad, 1700-1900* (London: Faber, 1975), 85-90.

⁹⁵ *Glasgow Art Journal*, Autumn 1755, cited by David Murray, *Robert & Andrew Foulis and the Glasgow Press, with some account of the Glasgow Academy of the Fine Arts* (Glasgow: J. Maclehose and Sons, 1913), 66-68.

⁹⁶ Foulis, *Catalogue*, II:26.

Louvre.⁹⁷ The collection struggled to find buyers, but early German paintings entered British collections from it, significantly, the *Wurzach Altarpiece* wings by Hans Multscher.⁹⁸ When, in 1804, William Blake (1757-1827) saw in the Truchsessian Gallery the Northern 'Primitives,' and especially Dürer but also Michael Wohlgemuth, Schongauer, and Cranach, they affirmed his rejection of Venetian and Flemish sensual colourism in favour of form, correct drawing, and elevation of subject matter.⁹⁹

1 b. Buying early German Paintings for British collections

Individuals with personal or travel connections with Germany were one important source for introducing early German paintings to the British market. Auction records suggest they entered that market from the early 1800s, but not enough is yet known about how, or by whom, they were distributed. Reitlinger did not include many early German paintings (even by Dürer, Holbein or Cranach) in his analysis of the most popular painters sold in Britain before 1850, but a closer analysis of auction data from the GPI database, and samples of auction catalogues as summarized in Appendix 5a shows that paintings

⁹⁷ Morton D. Paley, "The Truchsessian Gallery Revisited," *Studies in Romanticism* 16, no. 2 (1977); Joseph Truchsess, *Proposals for the Establishment of a Public Gallery of Pictures in London* (London: W. Thorne, 1802); T. Jones, *Catalogue of the Truchsessian Picture Gallery: Now Exhibiting in the New Road, opposite Portland Place: To which are added, Biographical Notices, respecting the German, Dutch, and Flemish Masters* (London: T. Jones, 1803).

⁹⁸ Now in the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin. Also two saints by Hans and Ivo Strigel now in Stuttgart. *Truchsessian Gallery, 1803*; Skinner and Dyke, *First Part of that Magnificent and Truly Capital Collection of Pictures, well known as forming the Truchsessian Gallery* (London: Skinner and Dyke, 1806). Priced copies from GPI Sales Catalogue Database, (accessed January 12, 2015).

⁹⁹ Paley, "The Truchsessian Gallery Revisited," 169.

categorized as “early German” or given to German painters, especially to Dürer and Cranach, did have a small but steady representation at auction through the first half of the century.¹⁰⁰ The range of German painters and schools increased significantly in the 1850s. The numbers of paintings at auction must be treated very cautiously; firstly because data after about 1840 is drawn from a much smaller number of catalogues; and secondly because of the mostly inaccurate attributions given at the time of sale. Paintings attributed to Holbein were excluded altogether from consideration here because the numbers of paintings given to him were excessive, but this exclusion distorts downwards the actual number of paintings, especially portraits, thought German at the time. After Holbein, “Dürer’s” paintings were by far the most numerous, followed by “Cranach’s” and, trailing well behind, a handful of other named artists, including Martin Schongauer and Michael Wohlgemuth. These artists appeared much more frequently on the print market, and the rarity of their paintings was often noted as a selling point. Numbers appearing at auction are also distorted by repeat sales of single works, such as the successive attempts in the early 1800s to sell Count Truchsess’ German paintings.

Setting aside any hope for accurate numbers of paintings, the increased range of named and unnamed early German painters and schools especially after 1850 does indicate changes in the place of early German paintings at auctions in Britain. Unattributed early German paintings represented the third largest group after Dürer and Cranach, but they did not begin appearing until the 1820s, and became more numerous from the 1830s through the auction of a

¹⁰⁰ Reitlinger, *The Economics of Taste: the Rise and Fall of Picture Prices, 1760-1960*, Part II: 214-501, esp. 288-89, 303-04, 325-27 and 342-43.

select group of collections. For example, three came to auction with the 1842 sale of the former Walpole collection at Strawberry Hill, dubiously listed as of the “curious.... German school” and “the early German School ... probably by Van Eyck”.¹⁰¹ Alongside the National Gallery’s sale of unwanted early German pictures in 1857, a cluster of sales of collections in the 1850s brought a particularly large and varied set of early German paintings by named and anonymous painters to auction, including Westphalian and Cologne artists for the first time. Appendix 5b provides details of six sales that each brought five or more German paintings to auction. Although these sales occurred beyond the time limits of this chapter, they point to the limited, yet valued place of early German paintings in a small number of collections made earlier in the century, including those of John Rushout, Second Baron Northwick (1770-1859), E. Joly de Bammerville, Ralph Bernal (1783-1854) and James Dennistoun (1803-55), who sometimes bought German paintings from each other.¹⁰² The cluster of sales corroborates Haskell’s point that the 1850s were a turning point in the demise of old-style aristocratic collections, yet it is notable that German paintings were also collected by the untitled of modest wealth.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Day 22 lots 125, 128. George Robins, *Strawberry Hill, the Renowned Seat of Horace Walpole: Mr. George Robins is Honoured ... to Sell by Public Competition, the Valuable Contents...25th day of April, 1842, and 23 Following Days* (London: Smith and Robins, 1842).

¹⁰² See Appendix 5b for catalogue details. Christie’s earlier auctioned Lord Northwick’s “Wilhelm of Cologne” *Vision of St Gregory* in 1838 but it was bought in at 80 guineas. Christie and Manson, *A Catalogue of the Magnificent and Celebrated Gallery of Pictures, by the Great Italian, Spanish, Flemish, French, & Dutch masters, of the Right Hon. Lord Northwick...sold by auction, by Messrs. Christie and Manson ... 24th of May, 1838, and two following days, etc.* (London: Christie and Manson, 1838).

¹⁰³ Francis Haskell, "The Growth of British Art History and its Debts to Europe," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 74 (1988): 210-11.

Auctions accounted for only a tiny proportion of picture sales, and it is very difficult to know how early German paintings were exchanged on the private market.¹⁰⁴ Little is yet known about proactive individuals through whom German paintings were imported.¹⁰⁵ There are no equivalent figures to, for instance, William Buchanan, Giovanni Morelli and William Blundell Spence for Italian art, or the Niewenhuys for Netherlandish art.¹⁰⁶ Guido Guerzoni's current work on customs records suggests an average of just over 1,000 "German" works were imported in each of seven sample years between 1803-32, but the data does not specify even the dates of the paintings.¹⁰⁷ Nineteenth-century dealer records are notoriously scarce, but a few examples point to dealers importing early German paintings alongside other antiques, furniture and curiosities.¹⁰⁸ For example, John Coleman Isaac (1803-86) imported goods

¹⁰⁴ Benedictine Miyamoto's inventory of sales catalogues from 1767-1800 found less than 5% of pictures sold at auction. "British Buying Patterns at Auction Sales 1780-1800: Did the Influx of European Art have an Impact on the British Public's Preferences?" Paper given at National Gallery and Getty Institute Conference, *London and the Emergence of a European Art Market (c. 1780-1820)*, June 21-22, 2013.

¹⁰⁵ The British market is not addressed in Kier and Zehnder, *Lust und Verlust. Kölner Sammler zwischen Trikolore und Preussenadler*.

¹⁰⁶ See for example John Fleming's three articles "Art Dealing in the Risorgimento," in *Burlington Magazine*, 1973-79; Dries Lyna, "In Search of a British Connection: Flemish Dealers on the London Art Market and the Taste for Continental Painting (1750-1800)," in *Marketing Art in the British Isles, 1700 to the Present*, ed. Charlotte Gould and Sophie Mesplède (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Glendinning and Macartney, *Spanish Art in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1920: Studies in Reception in Memory of Enriqueta Harris Frankfurt*; Borchert, "Collecting Early Netherlandish Paintings," 198-204; William Buchanan, *William Buchanan and the 19th Century Art Trade: 100 Letters to his Agents in London and Italy* (Guildford: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1982).

¹⁰⁷ Guido Guerzoni, "The Export of Works of Art from Italy to the United Kingdom (1792-1820)," paper delivered at *London and the Emergence of a European Art Market (c. 1780-1820)*, National Gallery and Getty Research Institute, June 21-22, 2013.

¹⁰⁸ Thanks to Mark Westgarth for discussing this and other insights into the art market. Mark Westgarth, "'Florid-looking speculators in Art and Virtu': the

from German churches.¹⁰⁹ The bookseller and art collector Friedrich Campe (1777-1846) of Nuremberg is known to have sold German and other Northern paintings to British collectors.¹¹⁰ Kim Woods mentions German carved and painted works in her study of the nineteenth-century importation and circulation of carved Netherlandish altarpieces. Her example of how Edward and George Hull, curiosity and furniture dealers of Wardour Street, sold painted and carved altarpiece fragments to Charles Scarisbrick who used them to decorate Scarisbrick Hall, nicely illustrates the complex networks through which early German paintings would have been traded.¹¹¹ It also points to the varied role German paintings played in British collections.

Collectors could purchase works through their own travels abroad or through networks of different dealers or attending auctions in Britain, either themselves or by proxy, as Oliver Bradbury's and Nicholas Penny's study of Lord Northwick's collecting practices demonstrates.¹¹² Northwick was unusual

London Picture Trade c. 1850," in *The Rise of the Modern Art Market in London, 1850-1939*, ed. Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2011).

¹⁰⁹ Westgarth's forthcoming *'Waste-Book' of John Coleman Isaac (1803-1886), Curiosity Dealer* (in preparation) may shed more light on this dealer. See also Martin Levy and Elaine Moss, "John Coleman Isaac, 'Importer of Curiosities': An outline of his life, in the 1846 Continental Diary," *Journal of the History of Collections* 14, no. 1 (2002); Mark Westgarth and David Jones, *A Biographical Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Antique and Curiosity Dealers* (London: Regional Furniture Society, 2009), 1-32.

¹¹⁰ Krüger, "Frühe Sammler," 221-35; Susan Foister, "Lucas Cranach the Elder, Portrait of a Woman," *The German Paintings Before 1800, forthcoming* (London: National Gallery, 2015), www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/research/lucas-cranach-the-elder-portrait-of-a-woman. 2.

¹¹¹ Kim Woods, *Imported Images: Netherlandish Late Gothic Sculpture in England c1400-1550* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2007), 150-53.

¹¹² Oliver Bradbury and Nicholas Penny, "The Picture Collecting of Lord Northwick: Part I," *Burlington Magazine* 144, no. 1193 (2002); "The Picture Collecting of Lord Northwick: Part II," *Burlington Magazine* 144, no. 1195 (2002): esp. 606-09.

for his wealth (although he always sought bargains) and the galleries he purpose-built to display his collection of over 1,400 paintings and antiquities. He was also unusual for his interest in, and knowledge of, early Italian, Flemish and German paintings, which developed before much was known about them.¹¹³ By the 1850s much of his collection was judged misattributed, or of little significance.¹¹⁴ The early German paintings he bought and sold would have been part of his catholic taste, and likely appealed because they would have been relatively cheap.¹¹⁵

Horace Walpole, the 4th Earl of Orford (1717-1797) and Ralph Bernal were among those who collected early German paintings for their antiquarian interest, and to complement other medieval and renaissance decorative objects, armour, and architecture to create a visual cornucopia evocative of the Gothic era. As Wainwright showed, these Romantic interiors were especially popular between 1750 and 1850.¹¹⁶ For instance the “Holbein Chamber” in Walpole’s Gothic-inspired Strawberry Hill mansion displayed numerous Holbein portraits (originals and copies) and drawings, alongside the boxwood head carving and full-length terracotta of Henry VIII attributed to him, a “Dürer” stone relief,

¹¹³ Over 900 paintings were displayed in Thirlstone House, London, and over 500 at Northwick Park, Gloucestershire by 1858. Frank Herrmann, *The English as Collectors: A Documentary Source Book*, 2nd ed. (New Castle, Delaware and London: Oak Knoll Press & John Murray, 1999), 320-26. Christie and Manson, *Christie's and Manson 1838*; Phillips, *Catalogue of the Late Lord Northwick's Extensive and Magnificent Collection of Ancient and Modern Pictures etc. at Thirlestane house, Cheltenham....26th July, 1859, and 21 subsequent days* (London: J. Davy and Sons, 1859).

¹¹⁴ Gustav Friedrich Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain: Being an Account of the Chief Collections of Paintings, Drawings, Sculptures, Illuminated MSS etc* (London: John Murray, 1854), III:201.

¹¹⁵ For example, Bradbury and Penny, "Picture Collecting: Part 1," 494.

¹¹⁶ Clive Wainwright, *The Romantic Interior: the British Collector at Home, 1750-1850* (New Haven, Conn. and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1989).

sixteenth-century tables, chairs and fireplace, a neo-gothic chimney-piece, stained glass windows, ivory and tortoiseshell combs and Cardinal Wolsey's red hat in a glass case. Miniatures and drawings attributed to Holbein were also in his collection.¹¹⁷ Bernal had twelve early German paintings in his extensive collection (appendix 5b). He claimed to have selected his paintings not "for their value as paintings, but for their illustration of costume". They provided an evocative visual backdrop for his more treasured collection of antique armour, porcelain, glass and so on.¹¹⁸

1 c. Historical Examples: Roscoe and the Liverpool Royal Institution

The broadening range of early German painters represented in the Foulis, Truchsess and some private collections often functioned as examples of the 'best' masters, but those collected by William Roscoe (1753-1831) between 1804 and 1813 served almost the opposite purpose. Roscoe purchased "Primitives" with a view to educate the public in the history of art, rather than valuing them as beautiful or spiritually rich, unlike the contemporary Boisserée collection in Germany.¹¹⁹ He had acquired thirty-eight Northern paintings by 1814.¹²⁰ One of them was from Count Truchsess' collection.¹²¹ Much of Roscoe's

¹¹⁷ Robins, *Strawberry Hill*, xv-xvi.

¹¹⁸ Westgarth, "Florid Looking Speculators," 26-46, esp. 30.

¹¹⁹ Wilson, *William Roscoe: Commerce and Culture*, esp. 120-22; Michael Compton, "William Roscoe and Early Collectors of Italian Primitives," *Liverpool Libraries, Museums and Arts Committee Bulletin* 9 (1960).

¹²⁰ Xanthe Brooke "William Roscoe and his Collection of North European Renaissance Art in Liverpool," paper presented at *A Revolution in Taste*, St. John's College, Oxford 23, 2015.

¹²¹ *Lamentation over the Dead Christ*, Master of the Virgo inter Virgines, c. 1480-95, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (WAG 1014). It was bought as "Israel van

collection entered the Liverpool Royal Institution in 1819. He intended the public to observe German paintings for their character and faults within this triumvirate of Italian, Flemish and German schools. The Institution catalogue in 1819 described “Schoen” and Wohlgemuth as the “founders” of the German school and “much more hard, tasteless and gothic” than the Flemish painters, to whom they were “inferior in every point of view”. Their “barbarism” shackled even the “genius” of Dürer who might otherwise have done better.¹²² The negative association of German art and architecture with “Gothic” here positions it in opposition to Roscoe’s view of the positive flourishing of Italian culture under the Medicis set out in *Life of Lorenzo de Medici* (1795). In contrast, British enthusiasts for the Gothic appreciated it as an era of imagination, naturalism and rich spirituality. British interest in Romantic literature drew tourists to the Gothic castles and wild, fascinating landscapes of the Rhine and Alps from the 1790s, and again after 1815, and embedded the correlation between the Gothic spirit and German art, culture, character and geography.¹²³ Although there is little evidence these travellers were interested in early German painting then, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) did record his impressions of the “marvelously ugly, but lively and natural” Cranach altarpiece he saw on his tour in 1799.¹²⁴ Bullen’s analysis of the evolution and vicissitudes

Mecheln”, (sic) but catalogued as Jan van Eyck by Roscoe. Compton, “Roscoe and Early Collectors,” 44-45.

¹²² Liverpool Royal Institution, *Catalogue of a Series of Pictures, Illustrating the Rise and Early Progress of the Art of Painting in Italy, Germany, etc. Collected by William Roscoe Esq. and now Deposited in the Liverpool Royal Institution* (Liverpool: James and Jonathan Smith, 1819), 14.

¹²³ Davis, *Victorians and Germany*, 303-40.

¹²⁴ Seen in Goslar Cathedral. Morton D. Paley, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Fine Arts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 2. The appeal of the Gothic may underlie the Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry’s keenness for works by Dürer

of the myth of the Renaissance is useful background to understanding how German painting could be caught between the polarity of positive and negative associations of the “Gothic” and “Renaissance” in this era.¹²⁵

Liverpool became known as a cultural centre for seeing early art, and a draw for dealers in early Northern paintings.¹²⁶ There must already have been a small market for imported early German pictures, despite Winstanley’s view that few “select Collections” would admit them.¹²⁷ Roscoe bought many of his paintings from Winstanley and Thomas Vernon, another Liverpool dealer, but more research is needed to know where his German paintings came from.

Affordability was a factor for the Liverpool Royal Institution’s expansion of its early painting collection, but there remained a definite didactic purpose. Its loosely chronological arrangement of Italian paintings opposite the “German” (including Flemish) artists was designed to encourage viewers to compare and contrast. According to the 1844 guide, German painters lacked the “grace and dignity of the Italian school” yet their “powerful colouring and laborious finishing” were notable qualities.¹²⁸

and Wohlgemuth in his late eighteenth-century collection mentioned by Compton.

¹²⁵ Bullen, *Myth of the Renaissance*.

¹²⁶ Brooke, “Roscoe and his Collection.” Waagen mentions the early German paintings in the collection of Blundell Weld at Ince Hall: Waagen, *Treasures*, III:244.

¹²⁷ Winstanley, *Observations*, 91.

¹²⁸ Anon., *A Guide to the Permanent Gallery of Art, and to the Saloon of Casts, at the Royal Institution, Colquitt-Street, Liverpool* (Liverpool: Whitely, 1844), 3.

1 d. Christian Art in the Aders' and Other Collections

The collection of early Northern paintings belonging to Charles Aders (1780-1846) and his wife Eliza was alternatively influenced by German Romantic appreciation for the Christian and German sentiment of the early schools, and by a preference for Northern over Italian works. Aders, a German businessman living in London from the 1810s, displayed his collection in his home, which operated as a hub for the British Romantic artistic and literary circle until the late 1830s. His paintings were likely bought while he lived and conducted business in Germany, and were later sold on through British auctions and private sales in the 1830s.¹²⁹ His collection had more Netherlandish than German works, but included paintings attributed to Dürer, Wohlgemuth, Schongauer, Bartholomaeus Bruyn, Hans Schaufelein and Cranach.¹³⁰ The *Virgin and Child* by the Master of the Saint Bartholomew Altarpiece (fig. 68) purchased for the National Gallery in 1985 was among Aders' paintings. That this was thought to be by Rogier van der Weyden in 1839 illustrates how difficult it is to know precisely what Aders had from attributions given then.¹³¹

For a small group of admirers the collection raised consciousness of early German painting and gave direct access to examples of it, rather than poor reproductions, on which to exercise new ideas about aesthetics and Christian

¹²⁹ Auctioned on August 1, 1835 and April 26, May 4, May 28, 1839. Joseph, "Charles Aders," 5 and 30-31.

¹³⁰ *A Catalogue of the Very Rare Collection of Italian, Ancient German, Dutch, and Flemish Pictures, the Property of Charles Aders, Esq* (London: Foster and Son, 1835). GPI copy.

¹³¹ Foister, "Prince Albert's German Pictures," 9. Sometimes attributed to his workshop. Rainer Budde and Roland Krischel, *Genie ohne Namen: der Meister des Bartholomäus-Altars, exh. cat.* (Cologne, Wallraf Richartz Museum: DuMont, 2001), 496; Corley, *Painting and Patronage*, 230.

art coming from Germany.¹³² Among them Joseph Henry Green (1791-1863), a surgeon who had studied in Germany, was introduced to Aders by Coleridge and bought some of Aders' paintings for his own collection which was later bequeathed to the National Gallery.¹³³ The Boisserée paintings were also known in Britain through Strixner's good quality lithographs of them, of which Aders owned a copy. Charles Lamb's oft-cited poem written to promote the sale of Aders' pictures turned the hardness of German art, which had previously been used as a term of denigration, into something positive that conveyed deep feeling and sentiment. It included the lines:

...hard outline
And rigid form, by Dürer's hand subdued
To matchless grace, and sacro-sanctitude;
Dürer, who makes thy slighted Germany
Vie with praise of paint-proud Italy.¹³⁴

Aders' collection had limited impact, however, beyond this small group of admirers.

It is worth also mentioning here the English businessman Edward Solly (1776-1844) who amassed an enormous collection of German works among his

¹³² Joseph, "Charles Aders," 20-22; Paley, *Coleridge and the Fine Arts*, 83-202; Graham, *Inventing van Eyck*, 62-76; Vaughan, *German Romanticism and English Art*, 22-23.

¹³³ *German Romanticism and English Art*, 22; Campbell, *Fifteenth Century Netherlandish Painting*, 14-15. On Green as a collector, Pergam, *Art Treasures Exhibition*, 163.

¹³⁴ Charles Lamb to Charles Wentworth Dilke, March 5, 1832, including the poem, "To C. Aders, Esq. On his Collection of Paintings by the Old German Masters," in Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb, "The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb," ed. David Hill Radcliffe, *Lord Byron and His Times* (London: Methuen and Co, 1905), 884, online edition, <http://www.lordbyron.org/contents.php?doc=ChLamb.1905>.

early paintings while living in Germany.¹³⁵ It was German, rather than British enthusiasm for early painting he helped stimulate, and as Vaughan suggests, he was likely in Sulpiz Boisserée's mind when he complained of the otherwise unlikely problem of English collectors despoiling Germany of its early treasures.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, Solly's activities were known of in Britain.¹³⁷ The collection was sold to the Prussian state in 1821 and was displayed in the Könige Gallery, Berlin from 1830. Returning to England, Solly continued to collect early Italian, rather than German works, and as an authority on early works was called to give evidence to the 1835-36 Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures, where he recommended the acquisition of early Italian specimens for the National Gallery, without mentioning Northern schools.¹³⁸

On a smaller scale, other British collectors with an interest in Christian art owned some early German paintings. For example, John Talbot, the sixteenth Earl of Shrewsbury (1791-1852) was a Christian art enthusiast, Roman Catholic and ardent admirer of the Gothic. The German paintings in his collection at Alton Towers spanned both antiquarian and Christian spheres, featuring in the public gallery spaces and private rooms of its splendid Gothic setting alongside Flemish, Italian and Spanish religious subjects and portraiture, as well as

¹³⁵ Frank Herrmann, "Peel and Solly: Two Nineteenth-Century Art Collectors and the Sources of Supply," *Journal of the History of Collections* 3 (1991); *English as Collectors*, 202-08.

¹³⁶ Vaughan, *German Romanticism and English Art*, 22-23.

¹³⁷ James Dennistoun, "The National Gallery," *Edinburgh Review* 97 no. 198 (1853): 397.

¹³⁸ "Report from the Select Committee on Arts and Their Connexion with Manufactures," PP 1836 (568) paras. 1824-81.

medieval *objets d'art*. However, his Italian and Spanish, rather than German works hung in the chapel tower, its corridor or the chaplain's room.¹³⁹

The British Institution for Promoting the Fine Arts (founded 1805) provided opportunities to see privately owned paintings in British collections at their Summer loan exhibitions of Ancient Masters, held from 1813-59. Prince Albert loaned paintings by Cranach in 1841, and there were paintings by Cranach and Holbein at the 1848 exhibition, which for the first time devoted a room to "very early pictures" from North and South of the Alps, and again at the exhibition of 1853.¹⁴⁰ However, these exhibitions were only open to an exclusive body of wealthy and aristocratic members.

1 e. Written Accounts of German Art in British Collections

Through written accounts, those unable to access the British Institution exhibitions, Liverpool or private collections could learn about German paintings in British collections second hand.¹⁴¹ For example, Anna Jameson's accounts of London galleries mentioned some German school works, but more illuminating were Passavant's and Gustav Waagen's (1794-1868) accounts of their tours of British and continental collections in the 1830s (and again in the 1850s for

¹³⁹ Appendix 5b. The sale catalogue from 1857 listed pictures by room. Michael Fisher and Clive Wainwright, *Alton Towers: a Gothic Wonderland* (Stafford: M.J. Fisher, 1999).

¹⁴⁰ Thomas Smith, *Recollections of the British Institution for Promoting the Fine Arts in the United Kingdom; With Some Account of the Means Employed for that Purpose; and Biographical Notices of the Artists who have Received Premiums 1805 to 1859* (London: Simpkin & Marshall and Edward Stanford, 1860), 141 and 187-200.

¹⁴¹ On the difficulty of gaining access to private collections see Paley, *Coleridge and the Fine Arts*, 71-4.

Waagen), which were originally written for German audiences and partially translated into English in the 1830s and 50s.¹⁴² Both expressed surprise that there was any British interest in the German school. Passavant lamented that “relics of German art” were scattered and lost in England and would be better appreciated in Germany, and Waagen thought it rare to see admirers of the German school outside Germany.¹⁴³ They exposed the small and relatively new breed of titled and untitled private collectors whose interest in early German paintings had different motivations: for some, like the Earl of Shrewsbury, it was an appreciation for their Christian sentiment, and for others, like Lord Northwick, it was part of having an eclectic taste.¹⁴⁴ By the 1850s these texts had introduced a much broader range of early German paintings already in British collections to a wider public, yet underscored that taste for them was unusual.

¹⁴² Works by Dürer, Holbein and the German school are mentioned in Anna Jameson, *Companion to the Most Celebrated Private Galleries of Art in London: Containing Accurate Catalogues...with a Prefatory Essay on Art, Artists, Collectors, & Connoisseurs* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1844); Passavant, *Kunstreise*. Partially translated in *Tour of a German Artist in England: with Notices of Private Galleries and Remarks on the State of Art.*, trans. Elizabeth Rigby, 2 vols. (London: Sanders and Otley, 1836); Gustav Friedrich Waagen, *Kunstwerke und Künstler in England und Paris 1837-9*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Nicolaischen Buchhandlung, 1837). Partially translated as *Works of Art and Artists in England*, trans. H. E. Lloyd, vol. 1 and 2 (London: John Murray, 1838). Revised and translated in three volumes in 1854 as *Treasures*. He further published *Galleries and Cabinets of Arts in Great Britain: Being an Account of More than Forty Collections of Paintings, Drawings, Sculptures, MSS etc., Visited in 1854 and 1856 and Now for the First Time Described by Dr. Waagen* (London: John Murray, 1857).

¹⁴³ Passavant, *Tour of a German Artist*, I:252; Waagen, *Treasures*, I: 358. Waagen described Kauffman as German, although she was later categorized as British. Graham suggests that as Germans they were more vigilant of them in British collections. Graham, *Inventing van Eyck*, 70.

¹⁴⁴ For example, Waagen noted the *Crucifixion* by “Michael Wohlgemuth” in Rev. Fuller Russell’s almost chapel-like collection and the *Cupid Bewailing to Venus* in the aristocratic collection of Lord Northwick. Waagen, *Treasures*, I: 35, II: 462, III: 210.

1 f. Attempts to Introduce Early German Painting to the National Gallery

In the late 1830s and 1840s attempts were made to introduce early German paintings to the National Gallery in ways that resonate with the three paradigms for encountering it in British collections so far mentioned: as masterpieces, as historical samples, and as Christian art. None of them was particularly successful.

In 1845 Eastlake was responsible as then Keeper of the Gallery (from 1843-47) for purchasing a portrait thought to be by Holbein for £600 (fig. 1). Had it been genuine it would have been the first by this esteemed 'master' in the collection. It quickly became clear it was not by him, and the painting was displayed as by an anonymous contemporary of Holbein.¹⁴⁵ The incident caused great embarrassment for the perceived waste of public money, and the Keeper's and Trustees' susceptibility to being duped by unscrupulous dealers. The painting had a forged monogram. In the wake of the incident the Trustees were instructed to relieve the Keeper of all responsibility for purchasing pictures, and to obtain two independent professional appraisals before making recommendations of paintings for purchase to the Treasury.¹⁴⁶ This was an unfortunate precedent for the Krüger collection acquisition.

In 1847 Edward Shipperdson presented *The Crucifixion* he thought by Aldegraver to "supply a deficiency" in the Gallery's historical collection (fig. 2).

¹⁴⁵ Now attributed to Coxcie, NG 195.

¹⁴⁶ Evidence given by Eastlake, "Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery; together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index, PP 1852-3 (867) paras. 6172-88 (hereafter cited as SC 1853.)

According to Shipperdson it was imported from Flanders by a Manchester dealer “at the start of the French Revolution” and went on to a Newcastle merchant, from whose stock he bought it.¹⁴⁷ The acquisition was approved by Eastlake as Keeper. It was not known then that the panel was the centre of an altarpiece by the Master of the Aachen Altarpiece, nor that its wings had been acquired by the Liverpool Royal Institution in the late 1830s-early 40s and were displayed there as by Cranach (fig. 69).¹⁴⁸ The painting’s crowded, historiated Calvary scene with distorted and contorted figures was typical of Westphalian and Netherlandish painting from the time, and was similar to the *Crucifixion Triptych* then in the collection of Lord Northwick, at the time attributed to Martin Schoen and now to the Master of Delft (fig. 70).¹⁴⁹ The Trustees accepted Shipperdson’s gift on the condition they were not obliged to display it, and might send it to other galleries.¹⁵⁰ Shipperdson reluctantly agreed, but was dismayed when two years later the painting had not been exhibited anywhere, even though space had been found for subsequent acquisitions.¹⁵¹ It did not go on public display until about 1880. Instead, the painting hung in the Board Room along with other presented works, many with questionable

¹⁴⁷ NG 1049. It had Dürer’s monogram but he thought the attribution unlikely. Shipperdson to Trustees, January 27, 1847, and Shipperdson to Thwaites, March 5, 1847. Copies in National Gallery Archives (hereafter NG) Dossier for NG 1049.

¹⁴⁸ *Pilate Washing his Hands* and *The Descent from the Cross* given to Cranach, nos. 62 and 64 in Anon., *Guide to the Permanent Gallery*. Susan Foister, unpublished notes for “The German Paintings Before 1800.”

¹⁴⁹ In his collection by 1846, and sold as lot 83 in 1859. Campbell, *Fifteenth Century Netherlandish*, 322. Appendix 5b.

¹⁵⁰ Citing the Minute of April 7, 1845 authorizing this condition.

¹⁵¹ Mr. Oriel to Trustees, October 29, 1849. Copy in Dossier.

attributions.¹⁵² It would have become vary familiar to the Trustees, and later to Wornum who used this room as his office.¹⁵³

Aders failed to interest the National Gallery in buying his collection in the 1830s.¹⁵⁴ In 1844 Prince Ludwig von Oettingen-Wallerstein, a relative of Prince Albert, unsuccessfully offered to sell his private collection of early paintings to the National Gallery via the Prussian Ambassador to Britain, Christian Karl von Bunsen (1791-1860). Among them were around twenty early German paintings from the schools of Cologne, Swabia, Franconia and Saxony, including a painting by Stephan Lochner that offered a very different perspective of early German painting from hard Dureresque realism.¹⁵⁵ The Trustees refused to buy it on the grounds they did not recommend the purchase of entire collections.¹⁵⁶ Prince Albert was instrumental in bringing the entire collection to Britain to find a buyer in 1848, and it went on display in Kensington Palace with a brief catalogue. Visitors were restricted, since access was by invitation only, but reviews in the art press were detailed. The *Art-Union* extolled it as an exciting rare opportunity to closely examine early paintings, comparable only to the Boisserée collection, and praised many of the early German pictures for their

¹⁵² Gallery Papers from Wornum's Diary 1855-77, NG NGA2/3/2/14/33. See also, Return to an Order of the House of Lords dated May 30th 1856...of Pictures Bequeathed or Given to or for the Benefit of the Nation, Which Are Not Now Exhibited in the National Galley, NG NGA02/3/2/4.

¹⁵³ On the use of the Board Room, Wornum to William Boxall, March 19, 1870, citing Treasury Minute, March 27, 1855, NG NG6/3/581.

¹⁵⁴ Joseph, "Charles Aders," 29-30; Conlin, *Nation's Mantelpiece*, 303.

¹⁵⁵ 219 early German paintings from this collection were sold to King Ludwig of Bavaria in 1828. [Ludwig Grüner], *Descriptive Catalogue of the Collection of Ancient Greek, Italian, German, Flemish and Dutch Pictures now at Kensington Palace* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1848); Campbell, *Fifteenth Century Netherlandish Painting*, 14; Martin Schawe, *Alte Pinakothek: Altdeutsche und altniederländische Malerei* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2006), 41-44.

¹⁵⁶ Bunsen made the suggestion in a letter to Eastlake. Thwaites to Bunsen, February 6, 1844, NG NG6/1/325, 188.

detail, colour and interest, noting how “curious” some were. It regretted the National Gallery’s refusal to buy the collection, and later unsuccessfully called for Prince Albert to display it in Marlborough House.¹⁵⁷ The *Athenaeum* evinced the confusing conflict between positive and negative qualities in the early German paintings: they were at once remarkable for sincere feeling, powerful expression, and attention to detail, yet inadequate in the form, symmetry and idealization found in contemporary Italian paintings.¹⁵⁸ This review found it suspect that the Prussians and Bavarians had not wanted the collection. The collection failed to find a buyer, and further unsuccessful attempts were made to sell it to the National Gallery in 1851 and 1853.¹⁵⁹ Prince Albert acquired it by accident when Prince Wallerstein defaulted on a loan that Albert had guaranteed. They swelled Prince Albert’s collection of early German paintings, arising from his own knowledge and interest, especially in the works of Cranach.¹⁶⁰

Prince Albert is a good example of the importance of personal connections to, and contacts in, Germany for bringing early German paintings to Britain outside the auction market. He depended on his German advisor Ludwig Grüner (1801-82) to help him find and buy German works, and he also acquired

¹⁵⁷ “Prince Wallerstein’s Collection,” *Art-Union*, August 1, 251-52; September 1, 278; October 1, 1848, 297; and “Minor Topics of the Month,” *Art-Journal*, June 1, 1850, 201.

¹⁵⁸ “The Collection of Pictures Belonging to H.S.H. Prince Ottingen Wallerstein,” *Athenaeum*, July 22, 1848, 729-732.

¹⁵⁹ No reason is recorded. Correspondence between Henry Mogford and National Gallery, August 8, 1851; 31 March, 1852; April 6, 1852, NG NG5/88/3; NG5/89/9; NG6/2/56. NG Minutes of the Board of Trustees, April 5, 1852, NG1/2.

¹⁶⁰ On Prince Albert’s German pictures see Foister, “Prince Albert’s German Pictures.”; Avery-Quash, “‘Incessant personal exertions and comprehensive artistic knowledge’: Prince Albert’s Interest in Early Italian Art.”

German paintings from the English seller “Mr. Nichols,” from Friedrich Campe, and from British auctions and private sales.¹⁶¹ Attempts to sell the Oettingen-Wallerstein collection coincided with broader criticisms of Prince Albert as a German interfering in British artistic affairs (especially his early operations in the Fine Arts Commission). It probably also brought to the fore the British art-world’s profound lack of confidence in buying works from so unfamiliar a school.

These three attempts to introduce early German paintings to the National Gallery illustrate how insecure British expertise on German painting was seen to be before the Krüger acquisition, how there was interest and enthusiasm to learn more, but an uneasiness about how such paintings would fit into the National Gallery, especially when they came as part of large private collections.

1 g. Literary Accounts of German Paintings in German Lands

Few British travellers appear to have encountered early German paintings in German collections by midcentury. Travel literature suggests

¹⁶¹ Lionel Cust and E. von Dobschütz, "Notes on Pictures in the Royal Collections. Article III-The Likeness of Christ," *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 5, no. 18 (1904); Klaus Weschenfelder, "Prince Albert: Early Encounters with Art and Collecting," ed. Susanna Avery-Quash, *Victoria & Albert: Art & Love. Essays from a Study Day Held at the National Gallery, London, June 5-6, 2010* (London: Royal Collections Turst, 2012), [https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/sites/default/files/V%20and%20A%20Art%20and%20Love%20\(Weschenfelder\)_0.pdf](https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/sites/default/files/V%20and%20A%20Art%20and%20Love%20(Weschenfelder)_0.pdf); Jonathan Marsden, "Mr Green and Mr Brown: Ludwig Grüner and Emil Braun in the Service of Prince Albert," *ibid.* (Royal Collection Trust), [https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/sites/default/files/V%20and%20A%20Art%20and%20Love%20\(Marsden\).pdf](https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/sites/default/files/V%20and%20A%20Art%20and%20Love%20(Marsden).pdf).

British tourists were more interested in German culture and contemporary German painting, and in Germany's early Italian rather than early German paintings. Jameson's, Wornum's and Eastlake's observations of German paintings they saw in churches and collections there from the 1820s and 30s show engagement with early German paintings within the whole cultural and geographical experience of Germany, and in concert with German scholarship on art. As Davis has shown, travel literature tended to confirm deeply rooted stereotypes of the character of German people as both rough and barbaric, and highly intellectualizing and idealist.¹⁶² These concepts were bound up with perceptions of its paintings. Jameson's *Visits and Sketches* gave British readers a virtual tour of the Boisserée collection.¹⁶³ Her description emphasized its otherness to British taste: she gave unflinching accounts of the paintings' faults, noted the German "mania" for them, and confessed her own ignorance of the school. Nevertheless, here and in her other literature Jameson introduced British audiences to a broader range of early German painting beyond Dürer within the context of Christian art, appreciating it for its simplicity and integrity of feeling, and elaborate execution. She habitually included Netherlandish works in the same "German" group and contrasted Northern painters who carried their "intense impression of earthly and individual life into the region of Heaven" with Italians who "through a purer inspiration... brought all Paradise down before us on earth".¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Davis, *Victorians and Germany*, 303-40.

¹⁶³ Jameson, *Visits and Sketches*, 139-40.

¹⁶⁴ For example, she mentions works by Michael Schoen, Wilhelm of Cologne, Hans Beham and Dürer in *Sacred and Legendary Art*, 5 vols., vol. 2 (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1848). Citation from I: xxvi, note 1.

Wornum's and Eastlake's early observations also evoke the alienness of early German paintings, and their failure to impress when evaluated by formal criteria. On Wornum's first encounter with the Wallraf Museum in 1830s Cologne he described it as:

the most amusing... collection of objects I have ever seen... the most arrant trash you can imagine – all scripture pieces, yet they kept us in constant laughter, no very scriptural results.... I will leave them to the antiquarians.¹⁶⁵

Once he had stopped laughing, Wornum's direct observations and study of literature on early German painting helped him become something of an authority on German art in Britain from the 1840s. He sketched its place in his survey of the progress of art from Egypt to Sir Joshua Reynolds in *Epochs of Painting* (1847), wrote entries on some German painters for the Penny Cyclopaedia, and was charged with writing the German section of a "Plan for a Collection of Paintings, illustrative of the History of Art" for Prince Albert in 1853. He later wrote his monograph on Holbein and became an authority in the Meyer Madonna dispute.¹⁶⁶

Eastlake also found his first encounters with early German paintings on the continent difficult. His wife, Elizabeth Rigby's (1809-93, Lady Eastlake from 1849) account of his tour in 1828 likened his request to open the altar by

¹⁶⁵ Wornum to his Father, April 29, 1834, Letters From Abroad Vol. 1 (Munich and Dresden), 1840, NG NGA2/1/10, 10.

¹⁶⁶ Entries on Masters Wilhelm and Stephan of Cologne and Israel von Meckenen (then thought to be a celebrated painter and engraver) in the 1847 Supplement of the Penny Cyclopaedia of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, (London: Charles Knight, 1828-43). "Copy of a Letter from Colonel Grey to the Chairman, with Plan for a Collection of Paintings, illustrative of the History of Art." Appendix XVII, SC 1853: 792-828, the German schools at 807-811. Wornum, *Life and Works of Holbein; Hans Holbein and the Meier Madonna*.

“Stephan of Cologne” in the cathedral to Dürer’s three hundred years earlier, but showed Eastlake did not rate the work highly. Its colour was not good, and it lacked the realism he had admired in the van Eyck and Memling paintings seen in Bruges. Eastlake accepted one figure had a fine expression, but overall thought it most useful as a study in costume. He found the early German paintings in Frankfurt “remarkable” but there is scant other record of his opinions there or in Berlin.¹⁶⁷ On subsequent tours in the 1850s and 60s Eastlake concentrated his observations on identifying characteristics of different German schools and painters, distinguishing the characteristic “doll like,” “exaggerated & monotonously (sic) white” heads of figures in the Dombild in Cologne, from the distinctive heads, hands, draperies and colours of the Master of the Saint Bartholomew Altarpiece’s *Crucifixion Altarpiece*.¹⁶⁸ Eastlake evinces a commitment to take these paintings seriously in art-historical and critical terms, notwithstanding his observations of bad drawing, violent caricature, coarse painting, imperfect form, even the “monstrosities” of “wild & capricious” Hans Baldung Grien and Matthias Grünewald’s *Crucifixion* that was to him, “so repulsive as to deserve no other epithet than disgusting”.¹⁶⁹

Much travel literature dwells on the difficulties of touring Germany. The Dante scholar and amateur art critic Henry Clark Barlow went to Germany several times between the late 1830s and 1853, visiting museums and

¹⁶⁷ Account of Eastlake’s Journey to the Netherlands and Germany in 1828, from Lady Eastlake’s Memoir in Avery-Quash, “Travel Notebooks,” II: 87-98.

¹⁶⁸ Notes from August 1862 and 1863, Eastlake’s Notebooks, August-October 1862, NG NG22/30 and 31 cited in *ibid.*, 591, 621.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, II: 621-25. For further discussion see Nuechterlein, “German Renaissance Art.”

collections in places such as Berlin, Cologne, Dresden, Prague and Munich.¹⁷⁰ His unpublished travel journals and *Remarks on Early German and Flemish Art* mention a wide variety of German painters, many of whose works were not represented in Britain. He demonstrates the degree of perseverance and tenacity needed to find them, and the frustration felt when so few could be attributed with any certainty. Barlow contrasted the way the progression of art through its epochs in Italy could be “read at a glance” in the paintings of one city, with Germany, where paintings were “scattered all over”.¹⁷¹ Very little of his knowledge reached the general public, except for his attitudes to early Westphalian art and the Krüger collection, which will be examined in the next chapter. Behind the scenes his rare direct experience and assortment of catalogues from continental collections allowed him to act as consultant to the National Gallery, Liverpool Royal Institution and a range of other leading figures in the British art world in the 1850s and 60s.¹⁷² By 1853 Wornum and Margaret

¹⁷⁰ Barlow continued to travel for his Dante studies until his death in Salzburg. For Barlow on Dante, Eric Vincent, "Barlow, Henry Clark," in *Enciclopedia Dantesca* (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1970); John Lindon, "Dante 'intra Tamisi ed Arno' (and Halle-am-Salle): the letters of Seymour Kirkup to H.C. Barlow" in *Britain and Italy from Romanticism to Modernism: a Festschrift for Peter Brand*, ed. Martin McLaughlin (Oxford: Legenda, 2000). He left his library of Dante editions and other texts, and his extensive notes and unpublished translations of Dante and other subjects to University College, London as the Barlow Papers (hereafter BARLOW), and an endowment for the Barlow lectures on Dante. R. W. Chambers, *Catalogue of the Dante collection in the library of University College London with a note on the correspondence of Henry Clark Barlow* (Oxford: Horace Hart, for University College, London, 1910). A list of Barlow's "Literary Productions... not Connected with the Works of Dante" is included in Henry Clark Barlow, *A Brief Memoir of Henry Clark Barlow M.D, F.G.S.* (London: Privately printed, 1868).

¹⁷¹ "Remarks on Early German and Flemish Art," 3 and 8, BARLOW/109; "Travel Notes" BARLOW/116; and "Travel Journals," BARLOW/150.

¹⁷² Barlow to Wornum, February 20 and 23, 1858, Wornum's Personal Correspondence, NG NGA2/4/2/16/1-2. Correspondence between Barlow and Theodore Woolman Rathbone (1798-1863), Chairman of the Art Gallery at the

Hutton had played a much larger role in bringing German art-historical scholarship to British audiences.

1 h. Early German paintings in British Art-Historical Literature

In 1828 Winstanley had remarked that there was no need for the British to learn about German painters.¹⁷³ This attitude, whether representing lassitude or deliberate rejection, may account for the slow and shallow penetration of emerging German scholarship on early German schools in Britain. German literature on early German paintings from the 1830s was available: it became increasingly fashionable to learn German, and reviews of books and articles appeared in British magazines.¹⁷⁴ Early Northern art was increasingly discussed alongside Italian, for example, in George Darley's articles for the *Athenaeum*. Darley tried to convince the National Gallery to buy Aders' collection.¹⁷⁵ In 1844 the *Art-Union* printed what appears to be the first brief account in Britain of the "anonymous work of great excellence" by the "Liesborn Master" in the Krüger

Liverpool Royal Institution, September 30, October 3 and 12, 1859, Liverpool Royal Institution Archives, Files Relating to Pictures, LRI 4/2 63.25. Rathbone sent Barlow a manuscript of Cavalcaselle's notes on the collection and a copy of the gallery's catalogue, asking for Barlow's opinions. Barlow returned the catalogue annotated, and mentioned his correspondence with Redgrave, Keeper of Pictures at Hampton Court. Thanks to Jeanne Nuechterlein for these Liverpool references. There are no records of letters from Barlow to the South Kensington Museum (email communication from V&A archivist). Barlow communicated with Eastlake about Dante, and had a print of Eastlake's portrait and his *Christ and the Woman at the Well*; Eastlake to Barlow 14 November, 1856, BARLOW/190; BARLOW/270.

¹⁷³ Winstanley, *Observations*, 91.

¹⁷⁴ On learning German: Brand, *Italy and the English Romantics: the Italianate Fashion in Early Nineteenth-Century England*, 40.

¹⁷⁵ For example, "Van Eyck's Picture in the National Gallery," *Illustrated London News*, April 15, 1843, also referenced in Langley, "Pre-Raphaelites or ante-Dürerites?," 257. See Cooper, "George Darley and the Athenaeum."

collection. It signals how novel this research, and art history without biographies was perceived to be:

Much attention, we observe, is at this moment directed in Germany to all remains of the earliest periods of oil painting: and, strange to say, there exist many pictures of high merit for their respective periods, whose authors are entirely unknown....¹⁷⁶

Notably, the schools of Cologne and Westphalia, and Krüger's collection itself would already have been familiar had the whole of Passavant's *Kunstreise* (1833) been translated into English in 1836. It was certainly available to readers of German.¹⁷⁷ Perhaps this led Joseph Archer Crowe to visit Krüger's collection in Minden on his way to Berlin in 1847, but he did not write of it until the 1850s.¹⁷⁸

The later 1840s and early 50s saw a string of English publications that directly or indirectly addressed the question of early German painting for British readers within the realms of historical scholarship, Christian art, and aesthetics.¹⁷⁹ What was not written about them was as instructive as the positive and negative assessments offered. The drastic shift in available information in Britain can be seen through comparison of Rev. John Thomas James' *Flemish, Dutch and German Schools of Painting* (1822) and Margaret Hutton's translation of the second volume of Kugler's *Handbook of The History of*

¹⁷⁶ "Anonymous Works of Early Art," *Art-Union*, February 1, 1844, 45.

¹⁷⁷ Passavant, *Kunstreise*, 399-424.

¹⁷⁸ Prieuer, "Anmerkungen zum Schicksal," 310 and note 86.

¹⁷⁹ For instance, early German and Flemish oil painting techniques, methods and pigments are discussed in Charles Lock Eastlake, *Materials for a History of Oil Painting*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1847).

Painting (1846).¹⁸⁰ James treated German art history in a Vasarian/Sandart like way, jumping from thirteenth- to fourteenth-century Prague directly to late fifteenth-century Nuremberg. He listed a handful of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century painters associated with Nuremberg, Augsburg, Munich, and Frankfurt, focusing most on Dürer's and Holbein's biographies, then moved on to later improvements to the school through Italian and Netherlandish influence. Painting from Lower German schools did not figure, despite the growing fame of the Boisserée collection. There was no German "school" just individual artists accidentally "scattered" who shared a tendency to literal transcript of nature, individuality rather than idealization, and an ability to touch the emotions.¹⁸¹

By contrast, Kugler relied on observation rather than biographical legend, identified different regional German schools and masters from ninth-century Charlemagne to the seventeenth century and examined the relationships between different German and Flemish painters. He presented the German school as a progressive entity expressed through different localities. Like James, Kugler rooted the character of German art in the character of its people and land. Dürer and his circle were now just one amongst many notable German schools.

¹⁸⁰ Franz Kugler, *Handbuch der Geschichte der Malerei seit Constantin dem Grossen bis auf die neuere Zeit*, Vol. 2 (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1837); *Handbook of the History of Painting by Dr. Franz Kugler. Part II: The German, Flemish and Dutch Schools of Painting*, trans. 'A Lady', Edited and with Notes by Sir Edmund Head., trans. Margaret Hutton (London: Murray, 1846). Hutton is identified as translator in Bayard Quincy Morgan, *A Bibliography of German Literature in English Translation* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1922), 293.

¹⁸¹ John Thomas James, *The Flemish, Dutch and German Schools of Painting* (London: John Murray, 1822), 299-343.

Perhaps the biggest shift from James' account was that for Kugler, the highest point of German art was the perfect blending of "the ideal conception with truthful imitation of nature" in the late fourteenth-century Cologne Masters Wilhelm and Stephan, and their followers.¹⁸² Westphalian painters around the turn of the fifteenth century were counted among them. Not having seen the Krüger collection himself at this point, Kugler relied on Passavant's account, citing his praise for the Liesborn Altarpiece's "peculiar excellence" as the best example of the school. He noted the heavenly expression of St Bernard, the great care with which all the panels were executed, the imitation but not illusion of nature and "the feeling of the ideal, and a peculiar depth of piety", reminiscent of the quattrocento Italian artists whose works were being hailed then as the apotheosis of Christian art. Yet, the "wholly German" Liesborn Master surpassed Cologne's "Master Stephan" in drawing, and neared "Master Wilhelm" in flesh tones.¹⁸³ Kugler cited further Krüger's paintings and those in other collections to illustrate the school at its height, its absorption of Flemish realism, and its decline into exaggeration, over-crowded compositions, caricature and "the Fantastic". Had he known of it, the *Crucifixion* panel of the Master of Aachen donated by Shipperdson to the National Gallery would likely have been positioned in this period of decline. Kugler re-iterated the perception that in the sixteenth century, Italian art under the influence of antiquity was re-born to ideal beauty which was the highest aim of art, while the German tendency to fantastic imagination (deeply rooted in its very geography)

¹⁸² Kugler, *Handbook; German, Flemish and Dutch Schools*, trans, 41-46.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

retarded its progress of art there.¹⁸⁴ The best masters of Cologne and Westphalia held that tendency at bay, but even Dürer, who was one of the “greatest artists the world has ever seen”, was unable to suppress it. For Kugler, Dürer was the pinnacle and end of German painting, unique in his independent inventiveness, laborious skill and ability to express, and impress, deep thoughts and feelings. After him German art fell into superficialities and imitation of Netherlandish and Italian art, though he delineates the technical merit of many named masters.¹⁸⁵

Sir Edmund Head’s preface to this translation of Kugler signals the novelty of this scholarship for British readers. He noted prejudicial and exaggerated contempt and praise for Northern paintings already in Britain: “despised by some as deficient in that much misunderstood quality, the *Ideal*, they have been lauded by others as the only genuine imitators of nature.”¹⁸⁶ Head tried to educate British audiences in new ways of evaluating the “Ideal” in preparation for Kugler’s text. Rejecting the idea that all art should be judged by a single set of formal qualities, and especially not Ideal beauty in the sense of classical formal properties, Head suggested a single criterion for evaluating art: does it provide pleasure? Such pleasure might be from form, treatment of colour, light and shade, or the moral feelings and mental associations awakened by a painting. The best art would have all three in balance.

Kugler was a useful resource to British critics: for example, the *Athenaeum* review of the Oettingen-Wallerstein collection depended on him. Oddly, British publications citing Passavant and Kugler as sources omitted all

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 113-16.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 117.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., vii.

mention of the Liesborn Master or the Krüger collection. Wornum's coverage of the German school in *Epochs of Painting* (1847) is brief. In a short chapter on "The Early Transalpine Schools" he touches on the Charlemagne period, the Cologne Masters William and Stephan and Israel von Meckenen (sic) before moving on to the van Eycks, omitting much of the account in his cited source, Passavant's *Kunstreise*. He described Dürer and his near contemporaries in a later chapter.¹⁸⁷ Wornum traces the progress of art through the rise, pinnacle and decline of stylistic and formal properties within and across schools using supporting archival evidence. For him, "the perfect development of painting in its essential properties" is reached in the unity of sentiment and form of Italian cinquecento artists. The worth of a painter is primarily drawn from archival witness to a master's existence and value, his relationship with other known schools, and an identifiable school or oeuvre.¹⁸⁸ Perhaps this was why he gave so little attention to the Cologne and Westphalian works, whose strengths in colour, detail and impasto he only briefly notes alongside their weakness in design and overly complex compositions. When Wornum wrote the German and other schools for the "Plan" for Prince Albert in 1853 (with Eastlake writing those of Italy) he greatly expanded the number of named German masters in *Epochs* to around eighty from thirteenth to mid-fifteenth-century local schools. But still, of the Cologne and Westphalian school he mentioned only Masters Wilhelm, Stephan, Christoph, Israel van Meckenen (sic), Zuan Alemanno and

¹⁸⁷ Wornum, *Epochs*, 314-20 and 341-52.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 215.

Jarenius of Soest (sic).¹⁸⁹ This is all the more surprising because Wornum wrote this list well after the publication of Kugler, and Waagen had advised using Kugler as the source for writing a British catalogue of German painters in 1853.¹⁹⁰ Wornum must therefore have consciously decided to exclude the Westphalian painters from Krüger's collection in this *Plan*. This point will be taken up again in the next chapter.

English literature on Christian art up to 1853 often paid little attention to early German painting. In Germany, the writings of the Schlegel brothers had been pivotal for establishing the notion of German "Christian Art" and its quintessentially spiritual or ideal character.¹⁹¹ Friedrich Schlegel's writings on Christian art had argued that early German painters were superior to Italian art for their pervading spirituality, and encouraged contemporary artists to take them as their models. He wrote that the early German style was "not only more accurate, and skillful in mechanism than the Italian in general, but it also adhered longer and more faithfully to that wonderful and profoundly true Catholic-Christian symbolism."¹⁹² For him, the German school declined as it lost its national identity and fell into imitating Italian paintings. As Ashton and Vaughan have shown, German aesthetic philosophy such as that of August Schlegel had limited appeal in Britain even by the mid-century. It was poorly translated or summarized, and was often criticized for being impenetrable, and

¹⁸⁹ "Copy of a Letter from Colonel Grey to the Chairman, with Plan for a Collection of Paintings, illustrative of the History of Art," Appendix XVII, SC 1853: 792-828, the German schools at 807-811.

¹⁹⁰ Gustav Friedrich Waagen, "Thoughts on the New Building to be Erected for the National Gallery of England and on the Arrangement, Preservation and Enlargement of the Collection II," *Art-Journal*, May 1, 1853, 124.

¹⁹¹ Vaughan, *German Romantic Painting*, 163-90.

¹⁹² Schlegel, *Aesthetic and Miscellaneous Works*, 148.

for leading modern German painters towards the *idea* underlying a painting instead of perfecting its expression through mastery of artistic skills.¹⁹³ Friedrich Schlegel's writings on Christian Art were not translated until 1849, although they had penetrated before this, for example via the Aders circle and Jameson's books, and through British interest in the Nazarenes. Jameson's *Visits and Sketches* called Schlegel a "sublime and eloquent critic" and reiterated his praise for Albrecht Altdorfer's *Battle of Issus* in Munich.¹⁹⁴ However, she also warned against the German national enthusiasm that was misdirecting its contemporary painters to emulate the physical, rather than spiritual properties of the old paintings, and she was forthright about the faults of those early German works.

Early German painting was not a principal concern for other British literature on Christian art. For example, Alexis François Rio (1797-1874) cursorily discusses the "ultramontaine" painters only in their relation to his main interest in Italian schools.¹⁹⁵ Rio was not translated until 1854, but his and others' ideas were interpreted and disseminated through, for example, Jameson's publications, Alexander William Crawford Lindsay's (1812-1880) *Progression by Antagonism* (1846) and *Sketches of the History of Christian Art* (1847), Ruskin's second volume of *Modern Painters* (1846), George Darley's articles and letters, and James Dennistoun's (1803-55) *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino* (1851).

¹⁹³ Ashton, *The German Idea: Four English Writers and the Reception of German Thought 1800-1860*; Vaughan, *German Romanticism and English Art*, esp. 73-97.

¹⁹⁴ Jameson, *Visits and Sketches*, 35 and 139-40. Schlegel, *Aesthetic and Miscellaneous Works*, 114.

¹⁹⁵ Alexis François Rio, *The Poetry of Christian Art. Translated from the French. Originally published as De la poésie chrétienne dans son principe dans sa matière et dans ses formes* (Paris, 1836). trans. Mrs West (London: T. Bosworth, 1854).

By stressing the spiritual and moral rather than material qualities of painting, the Christian art movement opened the possibility of new appreciation for the presumed technically inferior early German schools, especially in light of the perceived expressive and emotional power of German art and its religious subject matter. For example, the *Art-Union* review of Lindsay's books believed they would enable the tourist to comprehend early art "particularly at Berlin and Munich, which are for the most part otherwise mute signs."¹⁹⁶ However, the reliance on biographies of artists to demonstrate the piety and virtue expressed in their works continued to favour well-known Italian masters.¹⁹⁷ The relationship between beauty in art, and beauty in nature as a reflection of divine truth posed problems for early German painters. The earliest schools could be accused of failing to observe nature by sticking to traditional figure types, and the later schools of slavishly imitating, rather than ideally selecting from, nature; and worse, of delighting in its deformities.

Ruskin barely mentioned Northern art in the 1846 volume of *Modern Painters*. In the *Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) and *Stones of Venice* (1851) he shifted emphasis in discussion of Gothic architecture away from its traditional association with Northern lands to Venice. Ruskin later praised Dürer, and especially his prints, for his qualities as a draughtsman and

¹⁹⁶ "Christian Art," *Art-Union*, February 1, 1847, 48. Lindsay, *Sketches; Progression by Antagonism: a Theory, Involving Considerations Touching the Present Position, Duties, and Destiny of Great Britain* (London: John Murray, 1846).

¹⁹⁷ For example, Jameson, *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters & of the Progress of Painting in Italy from Cimabue to Bassano*; Lindsay, *Sketches*, 280; John Ruskin, "Modern Painters vol. 2 (1846)," ed. Edward Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols., vol. 4, *The Works of John Ruskin* (London: George Allan, 1903-12, online edition)

<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/depts/ruskinlib/Modern%20Painters>, 177. All future references to Ruskin's works taken from this edition.

transcriber of nature in Volume III of *Modern Painters* (1859), but by 1854 had written little if anything on early German painting.¹⁹⁸

Lindsay devoted a large section of *Sketches of the History of Christian Art* to Northern or “Teutonic” sculpture and painting, believing it equally as important as Italian art because it illustrated his main thesis that art progressed by a process of antagonism between sense, mind, and spirit.¹⁹⁹ For Lindsay, art reached perfection with the harmonization of all three, seen in the Ideal of quattrocento Italian painters, whereas German and Netherlandish painting illustrated art out of balance. He saw Northern painters as ciphers for the Teutonic mind or character, for example, its intellectualism, domesticity, and fascination with exactness and deformity. He did not approve of Northern masters’ failure to idealise. However, Lindsay alerted British readers to the special qualities of early Cologne painting within a Protestant vision of Christian art before Schlegel’s works were translated and avoiding Schlegel’s Roman Catholic and patriotic overtones that could be less palatable to British readers. Lindsay presented the information on German schools as if hot-off-the-press from very new German research, and as himself engaging in that scholarship. For example, he re-assigned Israel von Meckenen to the school of van Eyck. Yet the only painters he mentioned specifically were the Masters Wilhelm and Stephan and a few others, and Dürer and his contemporaries. It is difficult to understand why he, like Wornum, did not include information on the Liesborn Master from Kugler.

¹⁹⁸ “Modern Painters vol. 2 (1846).”; *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Cook and Wedderburn ed., vol. 8 (London, 1849); *The Stones of Venice*, Cook and Wedderburn ed., vol. 9 (London, 1851); *Modern Painters vol. 3*, Cook and Wedderburn ed., vol. 5 (London, 1859), at 137, 151, 167 and 189.

¹⁹⁹ Lindsay, *Sketches*, 276-412.

One critic, Edward Cheyne, summed up British skepticism of new ideas from Germany about the importance of their early art. Accusing some British writers of “rashly” admitting the “pretention” espoused by Germans who had “attempted to establish for their country a sort of rivalry with Italy” he dismissed the claims of any originality or invention in early German art: “If any influence can be traced to Germany at all, it was of a sinister character.”²⁰⁰

1 i. Early German Paintings and Revivalist Movements

The way Early German prints and paintings were caught at the centre of the well-published critical storm around the Pre-Raphaelite movement at the turn of the 1850s has already been well published, but is worth mentioning here as immediate background to the Krüger acquisition. The Pre-Raphaelites raised serious concerns about artists looking for inspiration in earlier art. For example when John Everett Millais exhibited *Christ in the House of His Parents* at the Royal Academy in 1850, he was accused of emulating all the faults of early painting, and was seen as threatening to derail, rather than improve the British school of painting.²⁰¹ Members of the Pre-Raphaelite group studied German prints in the British Museum and in William Bell Scott’s own collection, and Northern paintings including Jan van Eyck’s *Arnolfini Double Portrait* in the National Gallery. Some travelled to Nuremberg and Basel and the group were

²⁰⁰ Edward Cheyne, "ART. IV.--Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino; Illustrating the Arms, Arts, and Literature of Italy from 1440 to 1630," *Quarterly Review* 89, no. 177 (1851): 132.

²⁰¹ Potter, *Inspirational Genius*, 19-85; Christian, "Early German Sources for Pre-Raphaelite Designs"; Langley, "Pre-Raphaelites or ante-Dürerites?"; Cooper, "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and English Criticism"; Graham, "Artistic Inspirations."

acquainted with the Nazarene movement. The Nazarenes influenced their fundamental aims, their self-designation as a Brotherhood, the tendency to transcribe minute details, the narrative quality of Pre-Raphaelite works, and specific motifs. Observers at the time recognised and disapproved of these influences as well as the apparent disparity between their name and the Northern art to which they were perceived to be closer. For example, John Rogers Herbert (1810-90) was singled out as a prototype early Northerner, Millais was accused of reproducing the “grotesqueness” of the early German school, and by 1857 one British critic offered the title “Ante-Durerites or Memlingers” rather than Pre-Raphaelites.²⁰² In 1853 Dennistoun used the Pre-Raphaelite controversy as further reason why the National Gallery ought to have examples of early paintings to allow viewers to make informed comparisons between the ancient and revivalist schools.²⁰³

1 j. Conclusions

By 1853 British audiences had encountered early German paintings as “Masterpieces”, and “curiosities”; as the best of art, but more usually as the worst; as examples of “Christian art” and as samples of historical painting.

²⁰² Citations are taken from “A Gossip About the Royal Academy Exhibition,” *Illustrated London News*, May 9, 1846, 311; “The Architectural Room of the Royal Academy,” *Ecclesiologist*, June, 1850, 46; “Art-Treasures at Manchester,” *Athenaeum*, May 2, 1857, 566 all cited in Langley, “Pre-Raphaelites or ante-Dürerites?,” 505-06. See also Michaela Giebelhausen, *Painting the Bible: Representation and Belief in Mid-Victorian Britain* (Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 99ff.

²⁰³ Dennistoun, “The National Gallery,” 407. The same point was made by Joseph Beavington Atkinson in 1859. See Cooper, “Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and English Criticism,” 311.

Knowledge of German schools and masters had greatly increased, but was still very new. “German” often encapsulated all Northern painters, and there were efforts both to differentiate the qualities and genealogies of each school, and also to unite them within a Teutonic character. It was now recognized that “German” could include both the hardness and realism of Dürer and Holbein and the soft, sweet style of fifteenth-century Cologne. Early German paintings were accepted within new paradigms of evaluating art in relation to its own time, rather than only by standards of representation achieved later and then applied universally. However, whether evaluated in terms of historical, aesthetic or ideological criteria, early German paintings remained an uneasy fit. Too little was known of them, or known with any degree of certainty, and they fell short of the well-established “ideals” of contemporary Italian paintings, whether evaluated as “Christian art” or as an example of the rebirth of painting at the end of the middle ages. Information on the Westphalian school was very recent, and it seems it had made little impact on some of the most engaged critics of the time, like Wornum. Given the critical reception of the school, and the failed attempts to introduce early German paintings to the National Gallery, the Krüger acquisition stands out as remarkable. The rationale for it will be addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THE ACQUISITION OF THE KRÜGER COLLECTION

2 a. The Krüger Acquisition Unexplained

“Whoever was responsible for that purchase, was responsible for one of the worst ever made for the National Gallery.”²⁰⁴ Thus declared the MP for Brighton, William Coningham (1815-84), of the Krüger collection purchase during the 1857 House of Commons debate over the annual budget for the National Gallery.²⁰⁵ His comments came some months after more than half of the pictures had been sold at auction for what were thought disappointing returns.²⁰⁶ The statement was disingenuous because it was well known that Gladstone, who was not present, had acquired what Coningham called “villainous” German pictures on behalf of the nation in 1854, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Gladstone had already been called to answer for his actions in the House, and had revealed back in 1854 that William Dyce, who was never employed at the Gallery, was the “professional” on whose advice he made the purchase.²⁰⁷ The Gallery had also been ordered to return a copy of the Board of Trustee Minutes covering the period of the acquisition, and Coningham

²⁰⁴ Hansard, House of Commons Debates, Third Series, (hereafter HC Deb), July 2, 1857, vol. 146, col. 769.

²⁰⁵ On Coningham’s artistic views: Francis Haskell, “William Coningham and His Collection of Old Masters,” *Burlington Magazine* 133, no. 1063 (1991).

²⁰⁶ They were purchased for £2,800. The unwanted ones sold for £249.8s. Return Ordered by the House of Commons, dated February 24, 1857 for a Return of the Total Expenditure Incurred in the Purchase and Transmission to this Country of the Krüger Pictures, with the Amount of the Sale of a Portion of the Collection Not Required for the National Gallery, NG NG5/219/2.

²⁰⁷ For Dyce’s role see: HC Deb., August 1, 1854, vol. 135, col. 1094-5.

himself had already discussed Dyce's involvement in the press.²⁰⁸ However, the perception that Gladstone never provided an adequate rationale for the acquisition was fair, and it has persisted; so also has the perception that it was a mistake.

Coningham was not really concerned with explanations in 1857, nor with blaming Gladstone or Dyce. He was attempting to pin responsibility for the acquisition on Eastlake (who had been Director of the National Gallery since 1855, but was Trustee in 1854, an appointment since 1850) and to use it as another reason to cut the Gallery's annual budget. Coningham was not the first to use the Krüger collection as ammunition in the relentless and often vicious criticisms in Parliament and the press of the National Gallery's expenditure of public money, display, care and treatment of the collection, and decisions about acquisitions.²⁰⁹ British responses to the Krüger acquisition are intricately bound to these wider criticisms before and after the Gallery was reconstituted in 1855, and the reasons for the acquisition itself were intricately bound to the special circumstances of the Gallery before that reconstitution.

The sense that the acquisition was a mistake is compounded by Gladstone's failure to provide any direct explanation for it in his Diaries and published memoirs, and only the briefest mention of the matter is in Dyce's papers which his son, James Stirling Dyce, collated with the intention of

²⁰⁸ 1854-55 (468) National Gallery. Copy of the Minutes of the Trustees of the National Gallery since May 1853, Down to the Present Time, with the Names of the Trustees who were Present at Each Meeting." Coningham, "The National Gallery - Sir Charles Eastlake's Purchases," *Morning Chronicle*, March 31, 1856, 3.

²⁰⁹ For example Morris Moore, "The National Gallery," *Literary Gazette*, May 12, 1855, 298; Anon., "Minor Topics of the Month," *Art-Journal*, December 1, 1854, 375.

justifying and vindicating his father to a public he thought underestimated and misunderstood him.²¹⁰ Efforts to play down their involvement in the purchase would not be surprising given the widespread disapproval of the Krüger collection acquisition, but it is clear that at the time it was purchased both Dyce and Gladstone believed there was good reason to buy it. This is surprising given British encounters with early German paintings up to the acquisition, and the earlier failed attempts to introduce German paintings to the Gallery. Their motivations must be pieced together from letters and papers dealing with the procedure of the acquisition, from the broader contexts of the men's views on art, from the National Gallery's development as an institution, and from contemporary British attitudes to early German paintings.²¹¹

Some of this has already been attempted. Conlin's is the fullest and most enlightening account to date.²¹² He explains the Krüger acquisition as Gladstone's attempt to provide the National Gallery with an equivalent to the

²¹⁰ Michael Foot and Henry Matthew, eds., *The Gladstone Diaries, with Cabinet Minutes and Prime-Ministerial Correspondence*, 14 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968). Hereafter *Diaries*. Archives consulted: the Gladstone Papers, London, British Library (hereafter BL); Gladstone-Glynn MSS, Flintshire Record Office, Hawarden, Wales, (hereafter GG); "Life, Correspondence and Writing of William Dyce, R.A. 1806-64. Painter, Musician and Scholar, by his Son James Stirling Dyce," in William Dyce Papers, Aberdeen, Aberdeen Art Gallery Archives (hereafter DP). James Stirling Dyce explains his reasons for compiling the papers in his Preface. The DP are not referenced consistently: some documents are loose within a file, others numbered within that file. The only reference in them to the Krüger purchase is a copy of Gladstone's letter sent to Dyce approving his proposal to investigate the Minden pictures, DP XXXIII: 53. On Dyce's life and James Dyce's lack of subjectivity in editing these papers: Marcia Pointon, *William Dyce, 1806-1864: a Critical Biography* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 15.

²¹¹ The most extensive correspondence on the Krüger acquisition is in the National Gallery Archives, and "The 'Krüger' Pictures," Treasury Archives at the National Archives, Kew (hereafter TA) file T1/58881A.

²¹² The Krüger acquisition was not the principal focus of any of his publications. Conlin, "Origins and History," 150-66, 251-53; "Gladstone and Christian Art.," *Nation's Mantelpiece*, esp 76-78 and 298-307.

Boisserée collection of early German art in Munich, motivated by strong adherence to the ideas of the educating and improving role of Christian art on viewers and artists, and on the role of the National Gallery as a State institution to promote Christian faith. Conlin addresses the Krüger collection acquisition within his broader analysis of the mid-century conflict of views regarding the role and purpose of the Gallery: on the one hand, the way it was managed as an institution; and on the other, its purpose to teach the history of art, rather than provide merely beautiful pictures, and the divergent approaches to the relative value of Christian, historical and aesthetic properties in paintings.

Conlin correctly positions the Krüger pictures as an attempt by Gladstone to introduce 'Christian Art', but the acquisition of the Krüger pictures in this context requires further unpacking. Aside from comparing them to the Boisserée pictures, Conlin does not explain why these German paintings in particular were chosen, and leaves unanswered questions about how their assumed Christian, historical and aesthetic properties factored into their evaluation. He also casts Dyce in a secondary position, somewhat hesitantly following up on Gladstone's "idea" of inspecting the collection, operating according to a "Gladstonian vision of art history" and chiefly motivated by the desire to further his own career.²¹³ A re-examination of the sources, along with my rediscovery of Dyce's *Report to Gladstone* after seeing the collection in

²¹³ *Nation's Mantelpiece*, 299 and 303; "Gladstone and Christian Art," 368. He does describe Dyce's own position on art history, but overall places him in subordination to Gladstone. Whitehead follows Conlin in suggesting the "project" was Gladstone's from November 1853, and implying Dyce only evaluated the paintings after they had been bought. Whitehead, *Public Art Museum*, 141.

Minden, establishes Dyce as the chief architect of the acquisition, and that he was motivated by far more than personal ambition.²¹⁴

In order to understand how and why the acquisition unfolded, and why it was later seen in conflict with the best interests of the Gallery, we need to examine the relationship between Gladstone and Dyce at the time it occurred, Dyce's role in instigating and rationalizing the acquisition, and the clash between his and others' visions for the future of the National Gallery and the role these pictures could play between 1853 and 1855.

2 b. Gladstone and Dyce: Friendship, Faith, Art and Early German Paintings

Gladstone and Dyce had become friends in 1828.²¹⁵ Each held the other in high esteem professionally and personally, even though Gladstone's status, position and financial standing made him the superior. They had worked together when Dyce was Head of the School of Design (1837-44) and Gladstone President of the Board of Trade (with oversight of the School), and through their friendship Dyce had privately turned to Gladstone for help with difficulties at the School.²¹⁶ As a mark of their closeness Dyce named his son after Gladstone in 1852, and at the Royal Academy dinner following Dyce's death in

²¹⁴ Dyce to Gladstone, "Report" dated January 27, 1854, enclosed in a letter dated January 28, 1854, TA 1/5881A/17113/6013. Robertson acknowledged that it was Dyce's proposal. Robertson, *Eastlake*, 137.

²¹⁵ DP I; Pointon, *William Dyce*, 57.

²¹⁶ Correspondence between Dyce and Gladstone, September–November 1841, DP VII: 255-70. Gladstone lent Dyce money in 1845, DP XI: 398ff.

1864, Gladstone paid to him “the tribute of sincere and sorrowing friendship”.²¹⁷

The two shared a High Church Anglican faith, which permeated all aspects of their lives, and this was an important backdrop to their working together on the Krüger acquisition. Their common beliefs gave rise to already well-noted collaborative projects in church and arts matters. As Conlin has shown, the Krüger acquisition should be seen as another of these collaborations, but it is worth re-sketching some details to stress the independent contribution Dyce brought, and the confidence Gladstone placed in him. Each had considered taking orders in their twenties and maintained life-long involvement in the challenges affecting the Church through the tumultuous decades of the nineteenth century.²¹⁸ Both attended the Tractarian church of All Saints,

²¹⁷ “Anniversary Banquet at the Royal Academy,” *Times*, 2 May 1864, 8. See also Gladstone to J. Brand, February 22, 1864, DP XXXIV. On the naming of his son, Jennifer Melville, “Faith, Fact, Family and Friends in the Art of William Dyce,” in *William Dyce and the Pre-Raphaelite Vision, exh. cat.*, ed. Jennifer Melville (Aberdeen: Aberdeen Art Gallery, 2006), 42.

²¹⁸ Dyce was raised Episcopalian and Gladstone a Low Church Evangelical, but he shifted towards the High Church after studying doctrine and through his anti-liberal Tory politics in the 1830s. Gladstone maintained a more ecumenical outlook than Dyce. Dyce wanted to study theology in Oxford in 1823, and Gladstone between 1828-30. On Dyce’s faith and its interaction with his art: DP I:4; Olga Ferguson, “Introduction,” in *William Dyce and the Pre-Raphaelite Vision, Exh. Cat.*, ed. Jennifer Melville (Aberdeen: Aberdeen Art Gallery, 2006), 9-10; Melville, “Faith, Fact, Family,” 38-46; Peter Cunningham, “William Dyce and the High Church Movement: A Study of the Manner in Which the Artistic Activity of William Dyce was Related to his Religious Beliefs and Affiliations,” MA diss., Univ. of East Anglia, 1972, Introduction and 1-5; Lindsay Errington, “Ascetics and Sensualists, William Dyce’s Views on Christian Art,” *Burlington Magazine* 134, no. 1073 (1992): 491-97. On Gladstone’s faith (in addition to Conlin): Perry Butler, *Gladstone: Church, State and Tractarianism: a Study of His Religious Ideals and Attitudes, 1809-1859* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 1-75, esp 30-32 and 54-9; David Bebbington, *William Ewart Gladstone: Faith and Politics in Victorian Britain* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1993), 224-45. There has been on-going debate about whether Gladstone separated his religious from his political life from the 1840s, but I would agree with Hilton that “politics remained

Margaret Street and were part of the lay implementation of Tractarian ideals of spiritual development and affective piety.²¹⁹ Gladstone noted praying for Dyce in his Diary, and Dyce sought Gladstone's opinion before publishing his refutation of Ruskin's *Notes on the Construction of Sheepfolds* (1851), which had challenged ecclesiastical authority.²²⁰ The two shared a love of early Church music. Gladstone was a founding member of the Motett Society established by Dyce in 1841 to support the performance and appreciation of sacred early music.²²¹ Both were involved with the Cambridge Camden Society (later Ecclesiological Society), which strove to rejuvenate the Anglican Church by restoring architecture, ornament, ritual and liturgy according to the rubrics of the early church and Book of Common Prayer.²²² Dyce was a leader in the

subordinate to his duties as a Christian." Boyd Hilton, "Gladstone's Theological Politics," in *High and Low Politics in Modern Britain*, ed. Michael Bentley and John Stevenson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 30. See also Daniel Lathbury, ed. *W. E. Gladstone: Correspondence on Church and Religion* (London: John Murray, 1910); Peter Erb, "Gladstone and German Liberal Catholicism," *Recusant History* 23 (1997).

²¹⁹ Gladstone belonged to Arthur and Thomas Dyke Acland's lay confraternity known as "The Engagement," and Dyce corresponded with Acland. John Acland, *A Layman's Life in the Days of the Tractarian Movement* (Oxford: James Parker & Co., 1904); Roy Strong, *All Saints, Margaret Street*, Pitkin Guides (Andover: Pitkin Pictorials, 1990), 43-178.

²²⁰ The prayers were part of Gladstone's commitment to the *Engagement*. Gladstone April 13, 1848, *Diaries*, IV:25. Dyce and Gladstone correspondence, May 1851, DP XXIX. Ruskin promoted state control of the church and argued for a broad church inclusive of High and Low members. Dyce's argument was for one visible, apostolic church identical with the High Church. William Dyce, *Notes on Shepherds and Sheep: A letter to John Ruskin* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1851).

²²¹ Gladstone to Dyce, September 16, 1841, DP VII: 258; Dyce and Gladstone correspondence, May 1843, DP X: 327, and July 1851, DP XXIX. The Motett Society later merged with the Ecclesiological Society. Paul Hillier, "William Dyce and Ancient Church Music," in *William Dyce and the Pre Raphaelite Vision, exh. cat.*, ed. Jennifer Melville (Aberdeen: Aberdeen Art Gallery, 2006), 60-66.

²²² Est. 1836, renamed 1845. On the Ecclesiological Society: Christopher Webster and John Elliott, eds., *A Church as it Should Be: the Cambridge Camden Society and its Influence* (Stamford: Shaun Tyas, 2000).

Ecclesiological movement in his own right. He wrote on Anglican liturgy, architecture, furnishings, music and art.²²³ Gladstone consulted him on the designs for Trinity College, Glenalmond, and probably recommended him to Alexander Beresford-Hope, who was patron of the re-building of All Saints church, Margaret Street.²²⁴ Dyce was painting the fresco reredos and ceiling there around the time of the Krüger acquisition. They had further collaborated on an illustrated life of Christ for religious instruction for the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) between 1841 and 43.²²⁵

Gladstone and Dyce strove to commit their work – one as a politician, the other as an artist, and both as arts administrators - to the service of the Church, advocating a revival of Christian art in Britain. They worked toward this goal independently and collaboratively. Dyce identified himself as a Christian artist from the 1820s, when, according to his son, he “began... to regard Art exclusively in its most moral and religious aspect, and as a consequence to perceive the great charms of the works of the devout masters of the fifteenth

²²³ DP XIII: 412ff. James Dyce lists fourteen publications including William Dyce, "Church Music I," "Church Music II," and "Church Music III," *Christian Remembrancer*, January-June (1841); *William Dyce, The Order of Daily Service, the Litany, and Order for the Administration of the Holy Communion: with Plain-Tune, according to the Use of the United Church of England and Ireland, 2 vols.* (London: J. Burns, 1843); "On Ecclesiastical Architecture: A Defense of Anglican Usage," (1841) DP XIII: 499-528; "Notes on the Altar," (1844) DP XIX; "Form and Manner of Laying the Foundation Stone of a Church or Chapel," (1843), DP XVI.

²²⁴ Gladstone, *Diaries*, January 22, 1843, III: 254; DP XV: 635ff. He later misremembered that Dyce had drawn up the designs for Trinity College. Gladstone to Miss Hope-Scott, September 13, 1873, cited in Robert Ornsby, *The Memoirs of James Robert Hope-Scott* (London: John Murray, 1884), 280.

²²⁵ Gladstone and Dyce correspondence, June 1841, DP VII: 246-253; and December 1843, DP XII: 352-3; Gladstone, *Diaries*: March 11 and 13, 1841, III:89-90; June 10 and 20, 1841, III:116, 118; August 23, 1841, III: 132; November 27, 1843, III: 329, January 31, 1844 III: 344. See also Emily Hope Thompson, "The Religious Landscapes of William Dyce," in *William Dyce and the Pre-Raphaelite Vision, Exh. Cat.*, ed. Jennifer Melville (Aberdeen: Aberdeen Art Gallery, 2006), 49; Pointon, *William Dyce*, 62-63.

century".²²⁶ Dyce's early work clearly and often heavily references the *quattro-* and *cinquecento* Italian painters he saw then in Rome. He adopted the same hard-edged linearity, intense colours, bold draperies and still atmospheres of Raphael, Perugino and Bellini, and his canvases were dominated by figures redolent with moral and spiritual intensity, for example in his *Madonna and Child*, 1827-30 in the Tate Gallery (fig. 71).²²⁷ However, in the long term Dyce intended to imitate their purpose and purity of sentiment rather than their *style*. He wanted to make Christian art appropriate to his own age in Britain, and eschewed imitation of either early or modern "Christian art," despite often being accused of it.²²⁸ When he visited Germany to study the revival of fresco technique there he wrote to Eastlake: "I kept on purpose out of the way of the more powerful works at Munich, that I might not be diverted from the path which I had chalked out for myself, which is not that of the Germans."²²⁹ His series of religious landscapes in the 1850s to 60s show the mature development of his ideas, following his interaction with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and Ruskin. For example, *Man of Sorrows* c.1860 places Christ in a contemporary Scottish wilderness (fig. 72). Dyce's careful study of nature and painstaking

²²⁶ DP I: 18.

²²⁷ One of several versions. Caroline Babington, "Neptune Resigning the Empire of the Seas to Britannia," in *William Dyce and the Pre Raphaelite Vision, exh. cat.*, ed. Jennifer Melville (Aberdeen: Aberdeen Art Gallery, 2006), 55; Marcia Pointon, "William Dyce as a Painter of Biblical Subjects," *Art Bulletin* 58, no. 2 (1976). See also Tim Barringer, ed. *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde. exh. cat. Tate Gallery* (London and New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press, 2012).

²²⁸ For example, Ruskin criticised Dyce's *Christabel* (1855) for imitating Botticelli too slavishly. John Ruskin, "Academy Notes (1855)," ed. Edward Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols., vol. 14, *The Works of John Ruskin* (London: George Allen, 1903-12), 19.

²²⁹ Dyce to Eastlake, March 23, 1846, DP XXII: 849-50. On Dyce and the revival of fresco in Britain see Boase, "Decoration of the New Palace of Westminster."; Winter, "German Fresco Painting."

work astonishes the viewer, but there is no mistaking that in itself that was not his intent. He uses realism to suggest a higher, spiritual idea that Christ is as present in the nineteenth century as he was in first-century Palestine, and to invite the viewer to an affective response through the rugged, brutal landscape and sparest of facial expressions barely turned to the viewer.²³⁰

Gladstone owned, and later commissioned, paintings by Dyce in his earlier style, and greatly valued his opinion as an artist.²³¹ He said Dyce “perceived the true idea of beauty, and sought to clothe it in visible form, and founded the whole practice of his profession on those principles which have in all time led to the highest excellence.”²³² Gladstone had sketched proposals for a British Institute of Christian Art to “promote the application of the powers of Art” to the service of the Church, and he supported Dyce and other contemporary artists who drew inspiration from early Renaissance paintings in striving to rejuvenate Christian sentiment or poetry in their works, including the Nazarenes and Pre-Raphaelites.²³³

²³⁰ Cunningham, “Dyce and the High Church Movement,” 13; Pointon, *William Dyce*, 161; Hope Thompson, “Religious Landscapes,” 52; Barringer, *Pre-Raphaelites*, 147; Giebelhausen, *Painting the Bible: Representation and Belief in Mid-Victorian Britain*, 177-80.

²³¹ *Jessica* in 1843, and *Beatrice* commissioned in 1859 (*Lady with Coronet of Jasmines* in Gladstone’s 1876 inventory). Gladstone “Notes on My Pictures,” no. 6, GG 1473; Gladstone Diaries, August 6, 1859, V: 415-16; Gladstone-Dyce correspondence, May, 1843, DP VII: 327-8; and August 1859, DP XXXIX. On *Beatrice* Conlin, “Gladstone and Christian Art,” 369-71; Pointon, *William Dyce*, 166.

²³² “Anniversary Banquet at the Royal Academy,” *Times*, May 2, 1864, 8.

²³³ Notes from 1842 briefly address aims for the Institute, but focus on its financial arrangements. It was never realized. BL Add. MS 44730 fol. 198. On his support for the Nazarenes: Gladstone to his wife, October 5, 1845, GG 770: 130; his visit to see Overbeck in Rome, *Gladstone Diaries*, December 8, 1866, VI: 485. On supporting Joseph Severn and Alexander Munro, Marcia Pointon, “W. E. Gladstone as an Art Patron and Collector,” *Victorian Studies* 19, no. 1 (1975): 93.

Gladstone and Dyce independently developed an appreciation for Christian art in the era before Raphael in terms close to those of Rio's *Poetry of Christian Art*, but distinct from him. In published and private notes they sketched their own histories of art that placed "Christian art" at the pinnacle of artistic achievement before its decline into sensualism or empty imitation of nature. Gladstone noted:

Older Christian art aimed honestly and singly at representing this Idea of Beauty, which depends chiefly on the affections. No one can mistake its purpose: there is an actual deposit of sanctity under its various forms, which speaks for itself.²³⁴

And Dyce called religion the "predisposing and ruling cause of the special development of the arts". Christian art brought about a revolution that:

introduced a new standard of perfection in art; - made the standard spiritual rather than physical; and taught artists to aspire after a kind of excellence, which...would have been looked upon by the Greeks as foolishness.²³⁵

He read Ruskin's works, for example, *Diaries*, February 15, 1849, IV: 185; July 29, 1851, IV: 348; June 9-10, 1854, IV: 625-6; March 20, 1856, V: 116.

²³⁴ Notes made 1838 in preparation for writing *The State in its Relations with the Church*, BL Add. MS 44728 fol. 168. Conlin traces Gladstone's development through these notes from "unreconstructed connoisseur" in 1832, to one who believed religion was the "soul" of art by 1838 via his rediscovery of Dante in 1833 and encounter with Rio. Conlin, "Gladstone and Christian Art," 355-57. See also Pointon, "Gladstone as Collector," 73-98. On the parallels between Gladstone's appreciation of early art and Dante's poetry as conveying spiritual truth: Owen Chadwick, "Young Gladstone in Italy," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 30, no. 2 (1979): 243-59.

²³⁵ "Theory of Fine Arts," Inaugural Lecture, Kings College, May 24, 1844, DP XI: 360-84, at 365 and 367. His views on Christian Art are also set out in his four essays on Church Music for the *Christian Remembrancer* in 1841, and in William

He argued that the “safe rule of judgment” was not in artistic excellence, or physical beauty, but in asking: “How is my heart affected by this subject and its treatment? Does the artist instruct me, or move me to deeper faith and love?”²³⁶ Similarly, as Marcia Pointon has shown, Gladstone regarded the early and later paintings in his own collection subjectively, in relation to Christian sentiment. In this way he went beyond Rio who argued Christian sentiment was lost in later, more naturalistic works.²³⁷

Dyce’s and Gladstone’s views on Christian art were not entirely aligned. For example, their collaboration on the SPCK Illustrated Life of Christ project ultimately foundered because Gladstone was content to use copies of old master works when Dyce wanted original designs. Dyce told Gladstone that asking artists to make copies was to misunderstand their vocation and art itself because art and artist must belong to their own age. He wrote, “it seems to me as unwise to reproduce... the models of Art of the 15th and 16th centuries, with the view to their popular instruction as it would be to preach the sermons of

Dyce, "Review of Lyndsey's Sketches of Christian Art (3 vols., 1847) and Progression by Antagonism – a Theory Involving Considerations Touching the Present Condition, Duties and Destinies of the Artists of Great Britain (London, 1846)," *Christian Remembrancer*, October (1848). Dyce's allusion here to 1 Corinthians I:12 underscores his point that the Christian revolution in art was "precisely analogous to that which it brought about in the social and moral world." DP XI: 367. Pointon, *William Dyce*, esp. 72-77; Cunningham, "Dyce and the High Church Movement."; Errington, "Ascetics and Sensualists."

²³⁶ Dyce, "Lyndsey's Sketches," 262, 265.

²³⁷ Gladstone, "Notes on my Pictures," made 1843-1857, GG 473; and "Catalogue of Pictures, 1874-75," GG 1478. By 1874 Gladstone had over 100 paintings at 11 Carlton House Terrace, most of them sixteenth- to seventeenth-century masters, contemporary British artists and family portraits. Among them were a Byzantine *Virgin and Child*, Bellini's *Portrait of a Man with a Pair of Dividers* (NG 1213), Joachim Patinir's *Virgin and Child in a Landscape* and some early German works which will be referred to again shortly. Pointon, "Gladstone as Collector," 82-84.

those ages in modern pulpits".²³⁸ This difference in approach to the use of early art was to affect their positions on the reasons for the Krüger acquisition. While Dyce saw it from the perspective of a practicing painter intent on building a new school of British Christian art through learning from art of the past, Gladstone's perspective was that of viewer seeking moral and spiritual guidance through ancient and new art. He did not consider himself an expert on art *per se*.

By the time the acquisition took place Dyce and Gladstone had an established track record of working together on projects associated with art and with their shared faith and deep understanding of the special importance of early paintings as Christian art. It is little wonder they did not need to enumerate at length to each other their reasons for acquiring the collection.

But what of their attitudes to early German painting in this context? Early Italian rather than German paintings were the chief interest for both, but they had independently encountered early German works a little more than was typical of the time. Gladstone's father, Sir John Gladstone (1764-1851) worked with Roscoe to establish the Liverpool Royal Institution, and was its first Vice President. As an eight-year-old Gladstone had listened to Roscoe's address at its formal opening.²³⁹ His father bequeathed him Cranach's *Entombment* of which Gladstone wrote:

There is great purity and intense sorrow in some of the countenances: their type is generally good. The woman kissing his hand...is probably a

²³⁸ Dyce to Gladstone, December 6, 1843, DP XII: 353.

²³⁹ Wilson, *William Roscoe: Commerce and Culture*, 92, 95.

portrait introduced for some reason at variance with the spirit of the picture. Her depiction [?] does not at all accord with her action.²⁴⁰

His confusion over the added patron suggests Gladstone was not very familiar with conventions in Northern European art.²⁴¹ However, it does reveal his way of looking at art principally for its communication of spiritual truths regardless of its school or era.²⁴² He bought another German painting described as a “Rhenish Crucifixion” (probably the “Christof Amberger” he bought in March 1856).²⁴³ There is some inconsistency in the records but it appears he also had a further “early German” triptych of the Adoration of the Magi.²⁴⁴ Gladstone saw the Boisserée pictures in Munich in 1845. Frustratingly, he made no comment on them other than noting his special interest in the “old pictures both of Italy and Germany” and his perception that the old Italian works were especially “delightful”.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁰ No. 9 in his collection. Now at Hawarden Castle. Gladstone, “Notes on My Pictures,” 1843, GG 1473; Pointon, “Gladstone as Collector,” 78. Waagen commented on the “great truth of feeling” in this painting, which was one of five worthy of note for their sentiment in Gladstone’s Carlton House collection, the other four being the Patinir, a Spanish saint with two monks, a Richard Wilson landscape, and Dyce’s *Jessica*. Waagen, *Galleries and Cabinets*, 152-53.

²⁴¹ Pointon, “Gladstone as Collector,” 80.

²⁴² Chadwick argues that he read Dante in the same way, perceiving its immediate relevance to the political and religious circumstances of nineteenth-century Italy. Chadwick, “Young Gladstone,” 248.

²⁴³ Described “a triptych, with the crucifixion in the centre, and Christ in the garden and the Resurrection” in the Christie’s sales catalogue, March 15, 1856. Gladstone paid 18 gn 5s. Gladstone, “Notes on Sales Catalogues, 1852-71,” GG 1472. According to Pointon it was the Georg Lemberger in the Leger Gallery, May 1975. Pointon, “Gladstone as Collector,” 80.

²⁴⁴ Christie’s, May 6, 1863, GG 1478. Gladstone’s inventory, notes and picture hang diagrams (GG 1474) list vague titles like “Old Franks Virgin and Child” and “Holy Family,” and do not match his sales catalogues in 1863 or June 23, 1875 (GG 1477), nor the annotated catalogues of his purchases, GG 1472.

²⁴⁵ He singled out only Raphael, Francia, Perugino and Fra Bartolommeo in a letter to his wife, October 2 1845, GG 77: 127; and noted his preference for Italian works in *Diaries*, October 1, 1845, III:485.

Dyce would have encountered early German paintings through his contact with the Nazarenes in 1820s Rome. Dyce first developed his interest in early Italian art independently of the Nazarenes but his interaction with them, and close friendship with Johann Friedrich Overbeck (1789-1869), must have impressed upon him the importance of German art from the same era.²⁴⁶ Dyce credited Overbeck with the revival of Christian Art in Germany, and himself with its revival in England.²⁴⁷ Dyce's *Francesca da Rimini* of 1837, borrows from Overbeck's *Italia and Germania* (completed 1828), which directly references the meeting of the two traditions, and there was a recognized influence on later works by Dyce (figs. 73 and 74).²⁴⁸ The aims, lifestyle and artistic styles of the Nazarenes must have increased Dyce's awareness of Dürer, and acquainted him with the ideas of Wackenroder, Tieck, Schlegel and Passavant, and the interest they generated in less well-known fifteenth and sixteenth-century works in Germany. Nevertheless he, like they, developed a style closer to that of early Italian painters, and in his close study of nature, that of Dürer and Holbein.

Dyce visited Germany twice in 1837 and 1845 on research trips before the Krüger acquisition, researching German schools of design and fresco techniques, although there are no records of him seeing galleries and collections

²⁴⁶ According to his son, Joseph Severn introduced him to the Nazarenes and they "crowded in" to see his *Madonna*. DP, I: 18. See also James Dafforne, "British Artists: Their Style And Character, No. LI. William Dyce, R.A," *Art-Journal*, October 1, 1860, 293-94. For opposing views on the validity of his son's account see Pointon, *William Dyce*, 8, 12-15, 34; Ann Steed, "William Dyce: The Training and Formation of his Style," in *William Dyce and the Pre-Raphaelite Vision, exh. cat.*, ed. Jennifer Melville (Aberdeen: Aberdeen Art Gallery, 2006), 19-20. On Dyce and Overbeck's friendship and shared love of early church music: Nicholas Wiseman to Dyce, September 1, 1834, DP II:105; Andrews, *The Nazarenes; A Brotherhood of German Painters in Rome*, 82.

²⁴⁷ Dyce, "Lyndsey's Sketches," 310.

²⁴⁸ According to Steed, Dyce also knew preparatory drawings by the Nazarenes.

there.²⁴⁹ In Britain Dyce would have seen early German works in Prince Albert's collection while painting frescoes for him in Buckingham Palace and Osborne House. He certainly conversed with Prince Albert about contemporary German painting.²⁵⁰ Dyce was connected to the Aders circle through two sources. One of his patrons was Joseph Henry Green, the friend of Aders who had bought several of Aders' paintings in 1835 and 1839, and whose wife later bequeathed twelve Netherlandish pictures to the National Gallery.²⁵¹ Green had studied in Germany himself and as a collector he was known for his interest in Northern paintings.²⁵² He also owned a version of Dyce's *Madonna and Child*. Dyce was also connected to Aders indirectly through his cousin, the literary scholar Reverend Alexander Dyce (1798-1869). Alexander Dyce was in Samuel Rogers' circle, and Rogers knew Aders.²⁵³ Dyce was also on friendly terms with Alexander Callcott (1779-1844) at the time he returned from his honeymoon tour of Germany with his wife Maria (1774-1848), and it is possible they discussed German art the Callcotts had seen there.²⁵⁴ Dyce was also acquainted

²⁴⁹ "Schools of Design: Copy of Any or Reports Made by Mr. Dyce, Consequent to his Journey on an Inquiry into the State of the Schools of Design in Prussia, Bavaria, and France: ordered, by the House of Commons, to be printed, 3 March 1840" PP 1840 (98); "Observations on Fresco Painting by Mr. Dyce" in Sixth Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts," PP 1846 (749). Dyce to Eastlake March 23, 1846, DP XXII.

²⁵⁰ Winter, "German Fresco Painting," 319.

²⁵¹ NG 1078-89. On Green see Chapter 1 d.

²⁵² Waagen, *Treasures*, I: 36, II:458ff.

²⁵³ James Dyce makes a point of mentioning this relationship, DP I: 7. Although Alexander's interests were literary rather than artistic these fields certainly converged among others in the groups. There is no extant correspondence between William and Alexander but it is hard to believe they did not interact.

²⁵⁴ Dyce to Callcott, May 26, 1832, DP II. The Callcotts had a sustained interest in early German as well as Italian art. Christopher Lloyd, "Lady Callcott' Honeymoon, 1827-8: Art Historical Reflections in Germany and Italy," in *Britannia, Italia, Germania. Taste and Travel in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Carol Richardson and Graham Smith, (Edinburgh: Verie, 2001), 44-58.

with the German and Netherlandish paintings in the collection of James Stirling of Glentyan, Renfrewshire (1782-1872), a Captain in the Royal Navy and an amateur collector of early Italian and Northern pictures. According to Waagen, Stirling was a "connoisseur of very catholic taste." As well as paintings by "Fra Filippo Lippi," "Sandro Botticelli" and "Domenico Ghirlandajo" he had paintings by "Hugo van der Goes," "Patenier"(sic) and from the German school, "Theodorich of Prague (?)" and a *Crucifixion* by "Bartholomew de Bruyn." It is not clear where he purchased these paintings but according to Waagen, Dyce advised him on his Italian acquisitions and so Dyce must have known Stirling's collection well.²⁵⁵

Dyce's interaction with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and William Bell Scott would undoubtedly have meant Dyce engaged with German prints and paintings alongside them, although I have found no direct source evidence for Dyce's studying older German prints. Dyce could not read German, but considered himself conversant enough with German aesthetical theories to propose lectures on them to King's College.²⁵⁶ He also apparently respected German critics and their opinions on early German art as Christian art. In his review of Lindsay's *Sketches* Dyce criticized Lindsay for his ignorance and inadequate treatment of the German school. While conceding the supremacy of Fra Angelico, Dyce argued he was not the only Christian Artist, and suggested a relatively unknown German artist, the "Blessed James of Ulm in stained glass" as

²⁵⁵ Stirling also had advisors in Rome. Waagen, *Treasures*, III:312-14. See also Robert Wenley, "The Lothian Picture Collection: History and Context." M. Litt., University of St. Andrews, 1990, 129. This was not the Stirling after whom Dyce named his son James. Melville, "Faith, Fact, Family," 43.

²⁵⁶ He decided against doing the lectures because of perceived British reluctance to engage with the ideas. "Theory of Fine Arts," 1844, DP XI: 360. On reading German: Dyce to Cole, February 28, 1853, DP XXX.

another example.²⁵⁷ As we shall see, his *Report* to Gladstone on the Krüger collection indicates he knew the translation of Kugler's *Handbook* on the German school, and took particular note of the section on the Westphalian painters in Krüger's collection.

Dyce's knowledge of early German paintings cannot have been extensive at the time he inspected the Krüger collection. He mentioned no names of ancient German masters or schools in his theoretical writings, in contrast to those of Italy, which were admittedly themselves rare.²⁵⁸ Nor did early German painting have a palpable influence on his work. For example, Dyce did not follow the "Northern" narrative or archaic styles as Herbert or Millais did. Instead, as Pointon puts it, his works had an "all pervasive stillness" that concentrated "the viewer's attention on the mental condition of the protagonists".²⁵⁹ Dyce's early-developed theories of the universe as metaphysical, and his interactions with Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites explains his close attention to nature in his later paintings.²⁶⁰ Dyce saw the transcription of nature in general as a mere "stepping stone" to the real purpose of art to represent human moral, sentimental and subjective interaction with nature. He compared his notion of "nature *transubstantiated*" through pious sentiment and emotion to that of the Nazarenes, showing his closer dependence on modern rather than early German

²⁵⁷ Dyce, "Lyndsey's Sketches," 310.

²⁵⁸ For example, he cites Perugino in "Church Music II," 288.

²⁵⁹ Pointon, "Dyce as Painter of Biblical Subjects," 265-66.

²⁶⁰ Dyce set out his systematic view of nature that was both mechanical and metaphysical, and expressed faith in the natural, created order of things in his 1830 essay, "On the Relations Between the Phenomena of Electricity and Magnetism and the Consequences Deducible from these Relations," DP I: 20.

painting or prints.²⁶¹ This contrasts with Ruskin's later discussion of nature, truth and beauty, especially in the third volume of *Modern Painters* (1856) which referenced Dürer as a model for studying nature.²⁶² Dyce's theoretical writings point to his generic notion of Northern being different from, and somewhat inferior to Italian art, but these differences were not his concern. He does not dwell on them nor insist on the crudeness or barbarity of the early German school as some other writers at the time did.

By the time of the Krüger acquisition early German paintings were something of which both Dyce and Gladstone were conscious, and recognized within the context of Christian art. It was against this background of their shared beliefs about art and faith, and their professional and social relationship that Dyce approached Gladstone with the idea of considering the Krüger collection for the National Gallery.

2 c. The Krüger Acquisition

i. William Dyce as Instigator

In the Autumn of 1853 Dyce's friend Stirling informed him that Krüger's collection was to be sold.²⁶³ Stirling had met Waagen in Berlin sometime before the publication of *Art Treasures* and Waagen credited him with information about Scottish collections he had not been able to visit during his tour that he

²⁶¹ Italics original. "Theory of Fine Arts," 1844, DP XI: 379-80; "Church Music II," 289.

²⁶² For example, John Ruskin, *Modern Painters vol. 3*, Cook and Weddurburn ed. (London, 1859), V: 151 and 167.

²⁶³ Dyce calls him "Captain Stirling, RN" in his "Report" dated January 27, 1854, enclosed in a letter from Dyce to Gladstone, January 28, 1854, TA 1/5881A/17113/6013.

included in Volume III of the book.²⁶⁴ It may have been on the same trip to Germany that Stirling saw Krüger's collection in Minden, around the time Krüger's daughter was "about to be married".²⁶⁵ Stirling informed Dyce that Krüger had told him he was prepared to sell his collection for the reduced price of £2,000, or even less because he needed money on account of his daughter's wedding. Dyce would have trusted his collector friend's intelligence. It is likely Gladstone also knew of him if only as a respected naval captain because of Gladstone's involvement in changes to Navigation laws in the late 1840s: Stirling had been discussed in parliament more than once in relation to the matter.²⁶⁶ In November 1853 Dyce wrote to Gladstone enclosing a copy of the note Stirling had sent to him. Dyce's letter has not survived, but Gladstone's reply shows it was Dyce's initiative to inspect the collection with a view to buying it for the nation. Gladstone replied:

I have no hesitation in accepting the proposal you have made that you and Mr Richmond (whose consent I leave it to you to obtain) should visit Hr. Krüger's Gallery, report upon its merits and ascertain at what price it may be had. On the part of the Treasury I shall of course hold myself responsible for the reasonable charges of the expedition: and I tender you my best acknowledgements for the suggestion.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ Waagen, *Treasures*, III:312.

²⁶⁵ On the date of Krüger's daughter's marriage to Karl Friedrich Ferdinand Alexander von Frankenberg-Proschlitz (1820-95), Pfeiffer, "Etwas vom Löwen," 120.

²⁶⁶ For example, HC Deb on the Navigation Bill, June 1, 1848 vol. 99 col. 177-234 and March 12, 1849, vol. 103 col. 579. John Morely, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone* 2vols., vol. 1 (London: Macmillan & Co, 1908), 353.

²⁶⁷ Gladstone to Dyce, November 21, 1853, DP: XXXIII, 53; BL Add. MS 44529 fol. 4.

The letter is cited here in full to demonstrate the typical brevity and practical focus of their extant correspondence on the matter between November 1853 and March 1854.²⁶⁸

There is no evidence that Dyce and Gladstone had previously discussed the Krüger collection. It is possible one or both of them had already been approached regarding its sale. Krüger had unsuccessfully attempted to sell it to Berlin in 1843, and the catalogue produced in 1848 was a further attempt to market it.²⁶⁹ Pfeiffer recently discovered that in 1851 Krüger contacted his friend Heinrich Kruse in London to ask Bunsen, the Prussian Ambassador to London, if he might recommend his collection to the National Gallery or a wealthy collector.²⁷⁰ It remains unclear whether Bunsen did so. Such a thing was not out of the question: Bunsen had unsuccessfully proposed the purchase of the Oettingen-Wallerstein collection in 1844, and in 1854 some of his own collection was purchased by the British Museum. Bunsen was well known to Dyce, Gladstone and Eastlake, who was then a Trustee at the National Gallery and British Museum, as well as President of the Royal Academy.²⁷¹ Dyce and

²⁶⁸ Gladstone to Dyce, November 25, 1853; December 26 and 28, 1853; February 14, 1854, March 14 and 15, 1854, BL Add. MS 44529 fols. 4, 6, 20, 21, 52, 65.

²⁶⁹ Krüger, "Frühe Sammler," 288-89; Fritz, "Der Katalog," 94.

²⁷⁰ Thanks to Gotz Pfeiffer for informing me of this letter, dated March 1851, which referred to Krüger sending his catalogue to Bunsen and asking Kruse to follow up on it. (See Introduction part c i.)

²⁷¹ Eastlake and Dyce had each met Bunsen in Rome (in 1816 and 1825 respectively) when Bunsen was in the Prussian Legation to the Holy See (1818-1830), and they associated with him after he became Prussian Ambassador in London. Avery-Quash and Sheldon, *Art for the Nation* 12-13 and 125; Pointon, *William Dyce*, 8. Gladstone knew him from 1838 and they corresponded over church and state matters into the 1850s. Bunsen held him in high esteem. BL Add MS 44111 1839-89 ff. 156-324. On Gladstone's more ambivalent opinions of Bunsen see, Gladstone *Diaries*, III: 147, 424, 484, IV:100. Frances Waddington Bunsen and Christian Bunsen, *A Memoir of Baron Bunsen ... Drawn Chiefly from*

Bunsen became very close through their mutual interest in early Church music and theology.²⁷² Bunsen was also known to Green, the collector of Northern paintings, and patron of Dyce.²⁷³ However, Bunsen had been told in 1844 that the National Gallery did not buy collections, and this might have put him off asking about the Krüger collection. By 1853, the idea of buying whole collections was still contentious. Whether or not Bunsen approached Dyce or Gladstone, Dyce clearly knew enough of the Krüger collection by 1853 to shift into action on Stirling's report of the low price for which it was now offered, and trusted Stirling as an experienced collector of early German paintings.²⁷⁴ The catalyst for buying the collection therefore came from British encounters with it in Minden.

When Dyce was unable to get "Mr Richmond" to agree to give a second opinion on the Krüger collection Gladstone wrote:

Were I acting on my own behalf only I should feel little difficulty in asking for your sole opinion of the Krüger pictures: but the subject is one on which at the present moment it is requisite to act with peculiar circumspection, & on this account while I think you are quite right in looking to a second opinion, I am disposed to think it would not be

Family Papers by his Widow, Frances, Baroness Bunsen. (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1868), I:481-526 and 626-29.

²⁷² Dyce received the Gold Medal of Science and Art from Friedrich William IV of Prussia for his work setting the Book of Common Prayer to ancient plain song, around the time Bunsen was working with Neukomm on a German version for Prussia. DP XV: 339, 648 and XIII, 412-18. Dafforne, "William Dyce, R.A," 294; Dyce, *Order of Daily Service*. Hillier, "Ancient Church Music."

²⁷³ Waagen, *Treasures*, II: 458.

²⁷⁴ I have not been able to find any evidence to support Prieuer's suggestion that Joseph Crowe was involved in the acquisition. Prieuer, "Anmerkungen zum Schicksal," 310.

desirable to ask Sir Charles Eastlake's aid, as he is a Trustee, at this early stage.²⁷⁵

He went on to suggest Herbert (the painter) as an alternative, lamenting that the late Mr. Manson (Christie's former partner) was not an option.²⁷⁶ Gladstone clearly intended to make an executive decision on this collection without involving the other Trustees (instructing Dyce to act "in confidence"). However, his words to Dyce were that he understood "the possibility that the Trustees may say 'such & such of these pictures we should like to have, but others we do not think suitable,' in which case we should have to sell".²⁷⁷ Dyce also understood this, but both knew the usual protocol was for the Trustees to inspect paintings before they could be acquired.²⁷⁸

The transition in Gallery management that created the "present moment" calling for circumspection will be discussed shortly. Here it should be noted that their actions were highly unusual: the Trustees usually inspected potential acquisitions and recommended purchases to the Treasury backed up by two professional opinions. Moreover the Gallery did not purchase whole collections and there was no legal mechanism in place for selling unwanted paintings from its collection.

²⁷⁵ Gladstone to Dyce, November 25, 1853, BL Add. MS 44529 fol. 6.

²⁷⁶ William Manson (died 1852). Gladstone valued the opinions of Herbert on several paintings in his own collection in notes made between 1843 and 1857, with Herbert in notes made in 1857. Gladstone, "Notes on my Pictures," GG 1473.

²⁷⁷ Gladstone to Dyce, November 25, 1853, BL Add. MS 44529 fol. 6.

²⁷⁸ Dyce, "Report".

2 c. The Krüger Acquisition

ii. Gladstone Expands the Project

Inspecting the Krüger collection was Dyce's idea, but it was Gladstone who suggested he also inspect the Gherardini collection during the same trip. This collection of Italian Renaissance wax and terracotta models had only recently come to light, and was then believed to contain original works by Michaelangelo and Raphael. It had unsuccessfully been touted to the French and Tuscan governments and was on display in Paris.²⁷⁹ The collection likely came to Gladstone's attention via Antonio Panizzi (1797-1879), then Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum, who had been contacted by agents acting on Madame Gherardini's behalf.²⁸⁰ Panizzi approached Eastlake as President of the Royal Academy, and Henry Cole (1808-82) who was then head of the School of Practical Art at Marlborough House, both of whom were enthusiastic about having the models for their institutions. It must have been when Cole applied to the Government for funds that Gladstone approached Dyce.²⁸¹ He wrote to him in December 1853:

²⁷⁹ *Catalogue of a Collection of Models in Wax and Terra Cotta by Various Ancient Italian Masters known as the Gherardini Collection, now being Exhibited at Marlborough House, March 1854* (London: Eyre and Spottiswode, 1854). On the Gherardini collection, the fullest archives are at the V&A, "Precis of Minutes of the Department of Science and Art, vol. 1, 1852-64; and Henry Cole Diaries, Typed Manuscripts, 1822-1882 (hereafter Cole "Diaries"), and at the National Archives, TA. T1/5881A. See also John Pope-Hennessy, "The Gherardini Collection of Italian Sculpture," *Victoria and Albert Museum Yearbook* 2 (1970); Helen Davies, "John Charles Robinson's Work at the South Kensington Museum, Part 1," *Journal of the History of Collections* 10, no. 2 (1998): 174.

²⁸⁰ Keeper from 1837-56, and Principal Librarian 1856-66.

²⁸¹ Panizzi to Gladstone, February 6, 1854, TA. T 1/5881A, 8248. According to Cole, Panizzi suggested the "purchase of M. Angelo models," Cole "Diaries," December 5, 1853. During a discussion at Gore House it was concluded the

I think it far from improbable that you may at this moment be abroad on the Krüger errand, and if you are, or if you have not yet started, I cannot wish any thing better than that you should kindly include in your mission an inspection of and report upon the models, to which the enclosures refer. You will perceive that the question is a rather pressing one in point of time. If for any cause it is out of your power to undertake it please to let me have the paper back forthwith. (The report on these models would have reference to the National Gallery).²⁸²

As will become clear, it was important to Dyce that Gladstone was thinking of this collection for the National Gallery. Later Dyce told him that, had he realised they were being considered for Marlborough House (where they were later deposited), he would never have agreed to inspect them.²⁸³

The pressure of time and need for discretion were clearly understood by Dyce, who must have replied immediately (in a lost letter) that he had enlisted Herbert, who was based in Paris, to give a second opinion on both collections. He suggested a further leg of the reconnaissance tour for a potential opportunity to purchase something in Rome. Gladstone was tempted by the Rome excursion but declined it, partly on the grounds that Dyce's tip-off was not trustworthy enough.²⁸⁴

collection was nothing to do with Marlborough House, "Diaries," December 10, 1853. Eastlake, Panizzi and Cole collaborated on a number of acquisitions. Avery-Quash and Sheldon, *Art for the Nation* 124-27.

²⁸² Gladstone to Dyce, December 26, 1853, BL Add. MS 44529 fol. 20v. Pressure of time and the Trustees' impotency led Gladstone later to ask Lansdowne, rather than the Board, to review Dyce's report on the Gherardini collection. Gladstone to Lansdowne January 13, 1854, BL Add. MS 44529 fol. 33.

²⁸³ Dyce to Gladstone, March 24, 1854, TA. T 1/5881A, 8248

²⁸⁴ Gladstone to Dyce, December 28, 1853, BL Add. MS 44529 fol. 21.

2 c. The Krüger Acquisition

iii. Dyce's Report of the Inspection in Minden

In the end Dyce went to Minden alone after he and Herbert had inspected the Gherardini collection and submitted their report to Gladstone. Herbert set off with Dyce to Minden, but was “compelled by pressing professional engagements” to pull out en route.²⁸⁵ Before Dyce went to Minden he wrote to Waagen to ask his opinion of the pictures. Waagen counselled against buying the whole collection, for which he understood Krüger was asking £4,200. Dyce forwarded Waagen's (now lost) comments to Gladstone with his report but warned that it was “not advisable to ask the aid” of Waagen, who was then Director of the Berlin Gallery, because the Prussian Government had made an offer for four of Krüger's pictures.²⁸⁶ It appears Waagen was right about the asking price because this was quoted by Krüger when Dyce first got to Minden the following January. But Dyce understood Krüger's situation had changed, bringing it more in line with Stirling's intelligence. Dyce reported:

The remark he made was this: that he is extremely anxious to resign a government appointment ... and to retire to the country to live with his daughter, and the immediate possession of a smaller sum than £3,500 would secure that object.

²⁸⁵ Dyce reported Herbert's prevarication, and enclosed a note from Herbert (lost) explaining his withdrawal. Dyce to Gladstone, January 28, 1854, TA T 1/5881A, 6013. Herbert's comment to Dyce that he would be “pleased to see the Minden pictures” when he next came to London suggests he was not put off by the nature of the pictures. Herbert to Dyce, March 19, 1854, TA T1/5881A, 8248.

²⁸⁶ Letter accompanying Dyce's “Report”, Dyce to Gladstone, January 28, 1854.

Dyce believed he would take £3,000. The urgency was palpable. Krüger had informed him one “Herr Zahn” of Berlin was acting on behalf of a Prince (whose name he did not recall) with an interest in buying some of the pictures.²⁸⁷

Dyce was the sole authority behind the recommendation to buy the Krüger collection. His Report gave a detailed point-by-point rationale for this recommendation. He claimed the case for it was so convincing it did not matter that Herbert was not there, and shipping the collection to London for inspection would be inconsequential because the Trustees would only be deciding the merit of paintings in the collection that had no bearing on its price.

Dyce’s case for buying the entire collection rested on the unassailable “merits” of the high altarpiece by the Meister von Liesborn, on which Dyce thought it “quite unnecessary ... to offer a single word”. The celebrity of this altarpiece had already been established by “well known and esteemed critics” whose opinions were cited in Krüger’s catalogue, a copy of which he enclosed for Gladstone. In that catalogue (and partly already published in English in Kugler’s *Handbook*) Passavant had associated the anonymous artist with the “most beautiful” newly discovered Westphalian school of art. He described the school as an offshoot of that of Master Wilhelm of Cologne, then considered to be a well-documented figure. Stylistically Passavant compared the careful work to the realism of Jan van Eyck, yet in its piety, intimacy, sincerity and affection he found it closer to the work of Fra Angelico, and in its “charming forms” to that of Gentile da Fabriano. This was high praise indeed for an anonymous German artist. Passavant valued the visual properties of the paintings: their “beauty and charm”, “simple and large drapery”, “clear and delicate colour”,

²⁸⁷ Dyce, “Report.”

“good proportions”, “noble drawing”, and tempera-tones. *Cosmas and Damian* were noted for their “extraordinary beauty” (fig. 27). For Passavant these qualities derived not only from the handling of paint, but more importantly from their ability to express religious sentiment: something that would have resonated with Dyce’s and Gladstone’s perceptions of Christian art. Passavant singled out the figure of St. Bernard for his soft, heavenly expression, which he found difficult to describe (fig. 26). Despite locating the paintings’ value in relation to Italian works, Passavant pointed out that the Liesborn painter was “wholly German”. He likened his flesh tones to the “Wallraf Madonna” and the *Veronica* in the Boisserée collection, both of which he ascribed to Master Wilhelm. He compared the Liesborn Master’s drawing to that of the “Dombild Master”.²⁸⁸

Krüger’s catalogue also cited Kugler’s, Hotho’s, Merz’s and Förster’s corroborations of Passavant’s view, noting the sweet attractiveness, delicate gracefulness, soft colouring and powerful drawing of the Liesborn Master and positioning his works as leading examples of the Westphalian school in the mid-fifteenth century. Förster described a chain of influence leading from the Cologne and Flemish schools to the Master of Liesborn in Westphalia and onwards, hinting at a developmental rise, climax and fall of art from its pinnacle of achievement. By pointing to the ugly, harsh realism of later works, Förster indicated that what was most valued in the Liesborn panels was their ability to convey pure spiritual truths. He also praised the indescribably luminous clarity

²⁸⁸ “welche zum Theil von der grössten Schönheit, alle aber von hohem Interesse für die Kunstgeschichte Deutschlands sind...” and “von ausserordentlicher Schönheit... der Ausdruck einer sanften, himmlischen Begeisterung ist bei dem letzten wahrhaft überirdisch zu nennen.” Krüger, *Gemälde-Sammlung*, 4, citing Passavant, *Kunstreise*, 399.

of his colour.²⁸⁹ The catalogue included archival research from the Liesborn monastery's chronicles by Dr. Tross which not only identified the artist with the commission of altarpieces by Abbot Heinrich in 1465, but also demonstrated the high esteem in which he was held in his own time.²⁹⁰ Carl Schnaase described the Liesborn Master as the height of German art in the era before Holbein and Dürer.²⁹¹

To this established reputation based on artistic merit, Christian sentiment, archival research and progression of German art, all Dyce needed to add in his Report was the "extremely good condition" the paintings were in. Restorations were confined to backgrounds leaving the heads and most hands "quite perfect and untouched". He thought three other panels possibly by the same hand were inferior but well preserved (KC I:8, 9 and 52, figs. 24-25).²⁹²

After these he ranked the four "Master of Werden" paintings, again in "good

²⁸⁹ "Die Anschauungsweise dieser alten Schule ist das Ideale, wobei der Leisborner Meister von eimen feinen und hohen Schönheitssinne unterstütz war. Ausser diesem, das ihn unter die ersten Meister jener beglückten Zeit stellt, zeichnet ihn eine gross Zartheit der Empfindung aus, die ihn im Ausdruck der Seligkeit hebt und in dem des Schmerzes mässigt, eine Grossheit der Styls und eine unbeschreibliche leuchtende Klarheit des Colorits, namentlich in der Carnation." Krüger's catalogue cites Kugler, *Handbuch*, 40. Heinrich Gustav Hotho, *Geschichte der deutschen und neiderlandischen Malerei* (Berlin: M. Simion, 1843), 36 and 174ff; H. Merz, "Die Entwicklung der christlichen Kunst in Deutschland und Frankreich " *Deutsche Vierteljahrs-Schrift* 1, no. 2 (1843): 279-80; Ernst Förster, *Handbuch für Reisende in Deutschland* (Munich: Cotta, 1847), 112. He also mentions, without quoting from articles by Förster and Hotho in *Kunstblatt*. Krüger, *Gemälde-Sammlung*, 6-10.

²⁹⁰ According to Tross (whose source is not cited, but whom Krüger thanks) Heinrich consecrated a choir, high altar and four other altars, and adorned them with "costly art, painted with gold and brilliant colours," and the Liesborn Master was compared to the greatest Greek artists. *Gemälde-Sammlung*, 6.

²⁹¹ Carl Schnaase, "Der Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte von Dr. F Kugler," *Kunstblatt* 30 (1842): 118. Cited in Krüger, *Gemälde-Sammlung*, 1-2.

²⁹² Now NG 254-55, ascribed to the circle of the Master of Liesborn. KC I:52 was sold in 1857. Dyce noted Waagen's opinion that they were earlier productions of the Master himself. For details of these and all paintings in the collection, see Appendix 2.

preservation” and with “considerable excellence” (KC I:26-29, figs. 37-40).²⁹³ Together these fifteen pictures were “the very best” and “most characteristic specimens” in the collection and of the Westphalian school. Since Krüger was asking £3,000 for these best pictures, and only £500 more for the rest in sections I and II (excepting a few exclusions) Dyce believed it mattered “very little... whether the collection is weeded before it is purchased or afterwards”. Krüger was unwilling to divide his collection because he knew that without these pictures the rest were worth so little.²⁹⁴

Dyce esteemed several of the other pictures also worthy of the National Gallery, not for their artistic merit but rather for their unique illustration of the progress of the school. Four were important as rare examples ascribed to named Westphalian painters: three by “Jarenius, the Master von Soest” (this was how Krüger described them to Dyce, but they were catalogued as by the “Meister von Soest”) and the *Madonna and Child* by “Ludger zum Ring” which, “but for an unhappy attempt” at the child’s face, “would have been a beautiful work” (fig. 43).²⁹⁵ The eight paintings of the Passion, Last Judgment and Coronation of the Virgin from the sixteenth century were also rated worthy.²⁹⁶ Of “considerable merit” in themselves (especially the *Coronation*), they displayed characteristics of the later school when it merged with the taste for

²⁹³ Now NG 250-53, Workshop and Master of the Master of the Life of the Virgin.

²⁹⁴ Among the exclusions, KC I:13 and 17 “being very imperfect and with little importance, Herr Krüger wishes to reserve them for himself as souvenirs of his collection...”

²⁹⁵ It is not clear which three of the four attributed to “Meister von Soest” were called Jarenius by Krüger (KC I: 33-36). Dyce doubted any were good enough to be attributed to him. Jarenius van Soest is discussed further in Chapter Three. Ludger zum Ring, I:37 (now NG 265).

²⁹⁶ Krüger disagreed with Passavant dating them closer to the start of the sixteenth century.

the “fantastic”.²⁹⁷ This choice of word follows Kugler’s description in his *Handbook*, and more broadly Kugler’s and Tross’s comments cited in Krüger’s catalogue, which described them as beautiful, but not as much as the others, and lacking their charm and profound character.²⁹⁸ Finally Dyce noted the six “very early” tempera panels with sixteen subjects from “Schildesche”, calling them “rude and barbarous” early efforts of the school.²⁹⁹ Dyce believed all these paintings exhibited the way the Westphalian school did not progress and then decline like other schools, but made “little or no progress” after its highest manifestation in the Master of Liesborn, whose excellence was weakly imitated and then obliterated “by the fantastic taste which overran the whole field of German art” from the early 1500s. He was not convinced they were worth having for the Gallery without the Liesborn master paintings, but with them they had double value: they were genuine and characteristic examples that illustrated the history of the school, and the rare certainty of their genuineness as Westphalian paintings made them invaluable tools for further research and classification, with a view to weeding or adding to the collection as other paintings became available. Dyce believed there could not be “a moment’s hesitation about the propriety of securing for our National Gallery, the works of the Liesborn master and those other pictures”.

In addition, Dyce esteemed worthy the paintings then ascribed to Lambert Lombard, and Gerard van der Meeren from Section II of the catalogue. Passavant and Kugler had recognized the former as the “best picture of the

²⁹⁷ KC I: 38-46, now Jan Baegert. KC I: 38, 40-45 sold (all except 38 now in Münster). KC I:39 and 46 now NG 2154 and NG 263.

²⁹⁸ Kugler, *Handbook*, 113.

²⁹⁹ KC I:2-7, now from Bielefeld, the Master of the Berswordt Altarpiece, all sold.

master to be had” and the latter for its “marvelous minuteness and precision” akin to the works of Jan van Eyck, though he doubted its authenticity. Dyce directly cited Kugler’s English translation.³⁰⁰ If not for these two, Dyce would have “begged” Krüger to exclude Section II from the estimate. But he had not done so because he did not want to alert Krüger to their distinguished value in case it inflated the overall price.

Of the rest in Sections I and II Dyce wrote:

though not good enough for the National Gallery, many of them are not devoid of merit; and if sold within this country at a public sale would, at least, realize enough to cover the expense of bringing the collection to England.

He calculated that around thirty of the paintings “deserved a place on the walls of the National Gallery” and if the collection was bought for £3,000, that made a “modest” £100 a piece. He concluded, “for so small a sum, I sincerely hope that the opportunity may not be allowed to pass”.

2 c. The Krüger Acquisition

iv. Involving the Trustees

There is no evidence Gladstone ever shared this Report with the other Trustees, and he did not forward them a copy of Krüger’s catalogue until much later. There is no mention or copy of the Report in the Gallery archives and

³⁰⁰ KC II:12 and 11, now Workshop of the Master of the Prodigal Son NG 266, and Netherlandish, NG 264. Dyce wrote, “Kugler, English Ed. p 214 footnote.”

minutes.³⁰¹ Moreover, none of Dyce's arguments for buying the collection were made public in catalogues or reviews. This was in contrast to Dyce and Herbert's report on the Gherardini collection, which Gladstone shared with his friend and fellow Trustee, Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, 3rd Marquess of Lansdowne (1780-1863), and from which large extracts were published in the catalogue printed to accompany the exhibition of the Gherardini collection in London, March to April 1854. That exhibition was intended to offer the British public a chance to opine on its value before it was purchased.³⁰²

After receiving Dyce's Report, Gladstone asked Lansdowne to inform the other Trustees at the next Board meeting a few days later that he had "entered into" negotiations to buy the Krüger collection. Eastlake was one of the six Trustees present, who resolved that they felt "much satisfaction" in Gladstone's taking charge of negotiations, and that they would be glad to receive further information when they were concluded.³⁰³ Although Gladstone had taken Lansdowne into his confidence about the Gherardini collection there is no evidence he shared Dyce's Report on the Krüger collection with him. Indeed, when Gladstone later explained his activities to the Prime Minister, Lord Aberdeen, he specified that Lansdowne had been party to the whole Gherardini affair, but did not mention him in relation to the Krüger pictures.³⁰⁴ Early in February Gladstone received some confidential intelligence about the Krüger

³⁰¹ The only copy of it I found was in the Treasury Archives, where there was also a copy of Krüger's catalogue.

³⁰² Gladstone to Lansdowne January 13, 1854, BL Add. MS 44529 fol. 33. Robinson, *Gherardini Collection*.

³⁰³ NG Minutes, February 6, 1854 (468): 9.

³⁰⁴ Gladstone to Aberdeen, April 17, 1854, BL Add. MS 44529 fol. 83.

collection that gave him pause, and he contacted Dyce about it.³⁰⁵ This was possibly a letter about the purchase to or from Bunsen on February 9th that is unfortunately indecipherable.³⁰⁶

One painting from the Krüger collection was sent ahead to England. In March, *Saints Cosmas, Damian and the Virgin* from the Liesborn Altarpiece was seen in Gladstone's office by Cole and Eastlake, among others (fig. 27).³⁰⁷ This cannot have been for the Trustees to inspect because it arrived when negotiations were more or less complete.

The Trustees' ignorance of the contents and rationale for buying the Krüger collection is apparent from their correspondence with the Treasury over the ensuing months. From February Gladstone negotiated with Krüger to buy the collection for £2,800, and the contract was signed on March 15.³⁰⁸ The Treasury informed the Trustees they had appointed Messrs J. and R. M. McCracken to take charge of the packing and transport, and that McCracken planned to send someone qualified to oversee the packing directly from their

³⁰⁵ Gladstone to Dyce, February 14, 1854, BL Add. MS 44529 fol. 52.

³⁰⁶ It mentions the figure £2,000 and numbers 10-15 (corresponding to most of the Liesborn Altarpiece fragments), TA T1/5881A, 6013.

³⁰⁷ Treasury to Gallery Trustees, May 17, 1854, NG NG5/106/1854 mentions "No. 11" had been sent ahead. Cole, "Diaries," March 23, 1854. Gladstone to Aberdeen, April 17, 1854, B.L Add 44529 fol. 83. Wilson, MP reported Eastlake saw it there (without specifying a date). HC deb. July 6, 1857 vol. 146 col. 968. The painting was not the *Head of Christ* as previously suggested. Conlin, *Nation's Mantelpiece*, 299.

³⁰⁸ Krüger's signed offer to sell his collection (comprising Part I excluding 13 and 17, and part II excluding 7, 8, 9 and 17 (in addition to 14 and 15 already sold) for £3,500 is dated February 19, 1854. He visited Gladstone in London on March 14 to negotiate the price. Gladstone to Krüger, March 13, 1854, BL Add MS 44529 fol.65. Krüger's declaration that these works be given up to the British Government was dated March 15 along with a catalogue of his collection noting the exclusions, and the Agreement of Sale for £2,800, with £500 up-front and the rest on the arrival of the pictures, all signed by Gladstone and Krüger. Funds from the Treasury to cover the first £500 from the Civil Contingencies budget were applied for on March 17, TA T1/5881A, 6013.

Hamburg agents, Messrs Schaar and Claus.³⁰⁹ The Treasury told the Trustees to instruct McCracken directly on the safe delivery of the collection, but by May the Trustees still did not even know what pictures had been bought for the Gallery. They asked for a copy of the delivery order from Gladstone, and “a list of the pictures which are to be delivered”.³¹⁰ The list they received is dated May 8th and was in German, following the description of the pictures in Krüger’s catalogue.³¹¹ A series of letters were exchanged between the Treasury, the Trustees and McCracken during May and June regarding the insurance, packing, and transport of the pictures, including disputes about whether or not Part III and the frames had been included in the price, delays in packers arriving, and the special care required for these ancient and delicate paintings.³¹² At all times the Trustees acted in response to Treasury requests, rather than on their own initiative.

The pictures were transported in twelve cases by steamer ship and arrived in the Gallery by June 16th, where Dyce inspected them in accordance

³⁰⁹ Treasury Memo, April 25, and Col. Thwaites (Secretary to Trustees) to Treasury, April 26, 1854. Extract of Letter from McCracken to Treasury, April 19, 1854, NG NG5/104/6.

³¹⁰ NG Minutes, May 1, 1854. Thwaites to Treasury, May 1, 1854, TA T1/5881A, 9504.

³¹¹ NG NG5/105/2. See Appendix 2.

³¹² NG NG5/104/7 and 10, NG5/105/1, 5, NG5/106/1, 2, 5, 6. See also TA T1/5881A 9504. Part III had been on the list sent to the Trustees but was not included in the sale. Krüger claimed the frames were never part of the deal, but was over-ruled by the Treasury who, on Schaar’s and Claus’ advice, argued they could not be removed without damaging the pictures. Dyce had mentioned the frames as part of the attraction of the collection in his “Report.” Krüger attempted to obtain £200 extra compensation from the Treasury to cover the cost of the frames, as well as the extra cost he incurred from the delay in packing up the pictures, which resulted in a disadvantageous change in the exchange rate. The Treasury refused. Krüger to Treasury, May 12 and June 2, 1854; Treasury Note June 9, 1854, TA T1/5881A, 10328 and 10943.

with Gladstone's instructions.³¹³ Once the pictures had been deposited in the Gallery the Trustees continued to rely on Dyce and on the Treasury for guidance on what to do with them. As already mentioned, Lansdowne asked Dyce to classify and select those worthy of display.³¹⁴ For reasons that will later become clear, Dyce did not do so then. Had they had his Report, or understood the rationale for buying the collection, this should have been something the Trustees could have undertaken. By late June the Trustees were asking the Treasury "as to the disposal of the collection, there being no means within their knowledge of bringing these pictures, or any considerable portion of them, before the public, on the walls of the Gallery".³¹⁵ They asked again in late July.³¹⁶ In August the Treasury instructed the Trustees to determine as soon as possible which of the Krüger pictures were fit to exhibit as part of the National Collection, advising them that, "room should be made to exhibit either the whole or as much as they may admit" and that wall space should be found for at least "a few pictures of moderate size".³¹⁷ Dyce, rather than the Trustees, eventually made this selection. Appendix 6 shows the list of seventeen pictures selected by him that went on display in the Gallery that October.³¹⁸

The Trustees had played no part in recommending the inspection, purchase or selection of the Krüger pictures. As far as we can tell, Dyce was the

³¹³ He checked them against the purchase list, but had also kept his own annotated copy of the catalogue. Dyce to Gladstone, March 15 and June 16, 1854, TA T1/5881A, 6190, and 13598. The Treasury arranged for a customs officer to inspect them in the Gallery. Treasury to Trustees, May 19 read at Board Meeting 5 June, 1854.

³¹⁴ Dyce to Gladstone, June 22, 1854, BL Add. MS 44381 fol. 173.

³¹⁵ Thwaites to Treasury, June 22, 1854, TA T1/5881A, 13598.

³¹⁶ NG Minutes, July 31, 1854.

³¹⁷ Treasury to Trustees, August 19, 1854, NG NG5/109/7.

³¹⁸ Report by Thomas Uwins, December 18, 1854, NG NG5/110/5; Return on the Krüger Pictures, February 24 1857, NG NG5/219/2.

only authority behind Gladstone's purchase of this collection for the nation. Gladstone did not act entirely without the Trustees' knowledge or support, but they were only informed of his activities after he had decided to purchase the collection on the basis of Dyce's Report. The acquisition was effectively imposed upon the Trustees.

This series of events presents a number of anomalies from the usual way pictures were purchased for the nation. In order to understand how it was that Dyce and Gladstone had the authority to act as they did, what motivated them to choose the Krüger pictures then, and why the Trustees took such a deferential – even deliberately removed – role, failing to engage at any point in assessing the worthiness and qualities of these pictures, we need to see Gladstone's and Dyce's actions in light of the special circumstances of the National Gallery at midcentury.

2 d. The National Gallery 1853-55

i. The Gallery in Transition

When Dyce and Gladstone set about the Krüger acquisition it was clear that the principles on which the National Gallery had been founded in 1824, its management and its site were inadequate. As previous studies have shown, the Gallery had long been in a process of transition from being akin to a private gentleman connoisseur's collection displayed in its first location on Pall Mall, with a pleasing display of paintings in keeping with the Grand Tour taste, to being a professionally-run institution in a dedicated building with a comprehensive historical collection intended to educate and improve the public,

like those on the continent, and in keeping with British national self-consciousness.³¹⁹

There had been what Whitehead calls an “astonishing” degree of public debate about the gallery in parliament and the press. His analysis of the variety of arguments not merely being newly expressed, but “hotly contested” illustrates on the one hand how important questions about the public display of art were perceived to be, and on the other, how nebulous and conflicting were even the most fundamental ideas about why public display mattered, what art was worth displaying and the best way of caring for and displaying it. The cleaning scandals of 1847 and 1852 were especially vitriolic, with Morris Moore (a.k.a Verax) leading a sustained campaign against what he and others, including Coningham, saw as vandalism of the nation’s treasures by incompetents.³²⁰ The building that had been opened on Trafalgar Square in 1838 was already overcrowded and it was feared the pollution at this central location was damaging the pictures. The fact it was shared with the Royal Academy prompted further controversies, partly because it was a private institution taking up space in a public building, and partly because it was seen as imposing outdated aristocratic taste. For example, Barlow published over

³¹⁹ For example, Conlin and Trodd examine this development within the socio-political British environment, the Reform Movement and the renewed sense of the Gallery’s purpose as a political and moral educator, while Whitehead focuses on the way these decisions interacted with questions about the physical space and site of the National Gallery. Conlin, *Nation's Mantelpiece*, 3-45, 63-71; Trodd, "The Paths to the National Gallery"; Whitehead, *Public Art Museum*, esp. 3-27.

³²⁰ Jaynie Anderson, "The First Cleaning Scandal at the National Gallery 1846-1853," in *Appearance, Opinion, Change: Evaluating the Look of Paintings. Papers Given at a Conference held Jointly by the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation and the Association of Art Historians*, ed. Peter Booth and Victoria Todd (London: UK Inst. for Conservation, 1990).

thirty letters criticising the National Gallery in *The Morning Post* between 1849 and 1854, and regularly attacked the Academy for its pomposity and exclusivity.³²¹

A string of parliamentary committees over the previous twenty years had examined the National Gallery within the larger context of British art, design, manufacturing, education and public instruction.³²² The immediate context of the Krüger acquisition was the Select Committee of 1853, which was appointed to consider the:

Management of the National Gallery; also, ... in what mode the collective Monuments of Antiquity and Fine Art possessed by the Nation may be most securely preserved, judiciously augmented, and advantageously exhibited to the Public.³²³

Dyce, Moore and Coningham were among over forty witnesses giving evidence between April and July, alongside Gallery Trustees and employees, artists, and those with practical and professional experience cleaning, restoring, displaying, collecting or dealing in paintings. The focus was both practical and ideological. Much of the time was spent on the vexed topic of picture cleaning and preservation, but more relevant for the Krüger acquisition were questions about the purpose of the collection, and the Gallery's management. Many of its findings echoed earlier criticisms and arguments. Dyce had been among those

³²¹ Often signed "X.Y.Z". He continued to publish letters at a slower rate until 1867. For example, December 27, 1849, January 11, 19 and 29, March 12, 28, April 2, 1850, and April 13, 1854.

³²² Conlin and Whitehead provide a bibliography of these reviews and discuss their various findings.

³²³ SC 1853, ii.

who published critiques of the Gallery before the committee began.³²⁴ His pamphlet, *The National Gallery: Its Formation and Management*, was published early in 1853, after Prince Albert, to whom it was addressed as an open letter, had approved it.³²⁵ This pamphlet enumerated problems arising from the Gallery's lack of purpose and management since its foundation and drew on ideas aired in previous Select Committees to set out Dyce's own vision for its future. Dyce was called to give evidence in 1853 partly on the strength of this pamphlet.³²⁶ Not everyone had liked it, but it had received qualified approval in *The Edinburgh Review* and *Art-Journal*, and from Gladstone, Cole and Thomas Uwins (1782-1857), Keeper at the National Gallery (1847-55).³²⁷ Dyce's opinion clearly had weight, although it is not clear that his pamphlet's call for a Select Committee to deal with the National Gallery was its principal cause.³²⁸ The level of serious debate about the need for professional oversight and a firmer sense of purpose set the 1853 Committee apart from earlier ones, as did the way its recommendations later effected significant change with the Gallery's reconstitution in 1855.

The Krüger acquisition and its earliest reception took place between the end of the Committee and the Gallery's reconstitution, when it was still

³²⁴ See also Dennistoun, "The National Gallery." Dyce's pamphlet appeared while this was being written.

³²⁵ Dyce described his frustration at getting it printed quickly enough after Prince Albert had seen it. Dyce to Cole, January 14, February 17 and 28, 1853, DP XXX.

³²⁶ Dyce's other cited "qualifications" were that he was a Royal Academician and former Head of the School of Design. SC 1853: 3733-35.

³²⁷ Dennistoun, "The National Gallery"; Anon., "Book Review," *Art-Journal*, March 1, 1853, 99-100. Dyce mentions *The Morning Post* critic "firing" at him with "great rage," and remarks in the *Spectator*, *Builder*, *Illustrated News* and *Observer*, Dyce to Cole, March 9, 1853, DP XXX.

³²⁸ Colonel William Mure proposed the Committee, HC Deb, March 8, 1853, vol. 124 col. 1307-08.

uncertain that change would take place. Dyce's and Gladstone's rationale for buying it was inextricably tied to these circumstances, and to Dyce's ambition to see his specific vision for the purpose and management of the Gallery implemented. In order to understand how the Krüger acquisition and reception fitted into this context it is important to be clear about the detail of what the Select Committee found, and about Dyce's vision.

On the question of Gallery oversight, the Select Committee of 1853 found that the loose system established in the 1820s was no longer sufficient. A salaried Keeper had initially been appointed with direct responsibility to the Treasury to manage the collection and to "value and negotiate" the purchase of pictures. This Keeper soon came under the dual superintendence of the Treasury and an unsalaried Committee (later the Board of Trustees) who were mostly amateur connoisseurs. The Trustees had increasingly adopted responsibility for the collection, and recommended acquisitions to the Treasury, who sometimes agreed to fund them out of the Civil Contingencies budget. The Trustees met only during the Parliamentary season, leaving the Keeper without instruction for six months at a time. In 1845, in the wake of the "bad Holbein" purchase the Treasury relieved the Keeper of all responsibility for purchasing pictures, and instructed the Trustees to obtain the opinion of two independent professionals before recommending acquisitions to the Treasury. To complicate things further, in 1846 the First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer had been made *ex officio* Trustees, and were therefore able to sanction acquisitions, having the direct authority of the Treasury. This effectively meant that ultimate authority lay with senior government officials who were only involved with the Gallery by virtue of their office, not their

qualifications or expertise, relying on recommendations made by outsiders, who were often dealers.³²⁹

Witnesses at the Select Committee revealed how this confused and difficult relationship between Keeper, Trustees and the Treasury had detrimental impact on decisions about adding pictures to the collection. In a rapidly changing and delicate art market, speed and discretion were as essential as knowledge, but it was clear that expertise was lacking, and decisions were hindered by an unclear and inefficient decision-tree. Keepers or Trustees had selected works according to personal predilections, bought poor quality, overpriced and misattributed paintings, and missed opportunities to add important ones to the collection. Witnesses cited irregular and poorly attended Board meetings and inadequate documentation of the Gallery's affairs.³³⁰ Eastlake illustrated the impact of these problems by commenting on the current example of a picture desired for the Gallery from the sale of the Samuel Woodburn collection. He explained how difficult it was to call the Trustees to meet, to obtain professional opinions, and gain approval of funds from the Treasury in time to make an offer.³³¹ The "bad Holbein" purchase of 1845 was a prominent example of mismanagement. In his evidence to the Committee Eastlake admitted his culpability due to negligence and ignorance of German painters, but also cited cumbersome processes and frustration with ill-informed

³²⁹ Preface and Eastlake's evidence, SC 1853, iii-vi, and paras. 6172-6188. Having funded the purchase of the Angerstein Collection the Treasury was *de facto* the government body responsible for the National Gallery.

³³⁰ For example, the Earl of Aberdeen, SC 1853: 5266-5344.

³³¹ SC 1853: 6307. The Woodburn picture was thought to be a Giorgione but turned out to be by Vincenzo Catena, *A Warrior Adoring the Infant Christ and Virgin* NG 234. On this incident see Robertson, *Eastlake*, 132.

Trustees as contributing factors.³³² As one of the most respected figures in the British art world, Eastlake's admitting that he had little knowledge of the German school, and his susceptibility to being duped by unscrupulous dealers selling German works, were unfortunate precedents for the Krüger collection acquisition.

In light of all the evidence the Committee recommended appointing a single salaried Director ultimately responsible for all aspects of the Gallery and accountable to Parliament under a code of regulations; continuing the Board of Trustees in some form, but with restricted numbers and no *ex officio* members; and awarding an annual budget for the purchase of pictures.³³³ Although it was not in the recommendations, the committee had found support among witnesses including Eastlake for purchasing whole collections for the nation where it was economically expedient to do so, with the view to selling off unwanted portions or loaning them to provincial museums.³³⁴

On the question of the purpose of the Gallery two distinct but connected issues were under scrutiny at the 1853 Committee: the purpose of a collection of paintings, and the nature and purpose of it in relation to the national collections of sculpture, drawings, decorative arts and so on in the British Museum and Marlborough House. As Whitehead has shown, this Select Committee offered one of the first attempts to clarify the purposes and boundaries of the ill-defined disciplines of archaeology and art history, and the

³³² SC 1853: 6172-6188. On criticism of Eastlake: Avery-Quash and Sheldon, *Art for the Nation* 45-47; Robertson, *Eastlake*, 85. On the bad Holbein purchase: Campbell, *Sixteenth Century Netherlandish Paintings*, 27.

³³³ SC 1853, xvi.

³³⁴ Evidence from Christie, Dennistoun and Eastlake. SC 1853: 5739-45, 5817-20, 6070-71 and 6090-6195.

difference between “antiquities” and “Fine Arts” and the intellectual pursuits associated with them.³³⁵ It was also a time for clarifying the differences between Fine arts, such as those taught at the Royal Academy in the same building as the National Gallery, and the useful or Applied arts used for the education of artisans and designers, under the Department of Practical Arts at the Board of Trade.³³⁶

For practical reasons, the Committee recommended moving both the National Gallery and British Museum to a new out-of-town site, away from damaging pollution and over-crowding, but the more ideological questions of whether and how to combine the collections were left for a future Royal Commission.³³⁷ The radically different opinions aired at that Royal Commission on the Site for the National Gallery of 1857 evinced continuing lack of clarity or agreement.³³⁸

On the purpose of the collection of paintings itself, witnesses showed that despite increasing pressure to make the collection historically illustrative in line with continental museums, paintings had always been added unsystematically through donation or occasional purchase, according to the pleasure and personal taste of the Trustees.³³⁹ For instance, Eastlake testified that Sir Robert Peel (Trustee 1827-50) had specifically opposed the purchase of

³³⁵ Whitehead, *Museums*, 77-100.

³³⁶ David Irwin, "Art versus Design: The Debate 1760-1860," *Journal of Design History* 4, no. 4 (1991).

³³⁷ SC 1853, xvii.

³³⁸ "Report of the National Gallery Site Commission, Together with the Minutes, Evidence, Appendix and Index, 1857," PP 1857 (2261).

³³⁹ SC 1853, i-vi. For example, the candid testimony of Lord Aberdeen, Trustee from 1824, SC 1853: 5299, 5307.

early Italian masters, saying; “I think we should not collect curiosities” and that he rather wanted “the finest works of art without reference to history”.³⁴⁰

The Committee concluded there was sufficient agreement that the Gallery ought to state its purpose. The “intelligent public” now recognized that “in order to understand or profit by the great masters” it needed to see art “in its rise and progress, as well as in its perfection”. Thus the collection ought to be expanded purposefully “with a view not merely of exhibiting to the public beautiful works of art, but of instructing the people in the history of art” and the age in which it was produced.³⁴¹ Such a history should show the rise, progress and perfection of art. The text of the recommendations only mentioned early Italian painters. Comparing the Gallery to a library that needed the works of Chaucer and Spenser in order to fully appreciate Shakespeare and Milton, it cited the need to see “Giotto and Masaccio” in order to understand the great works of the Florentine school.³⁴² However, it was clear that the position of early German paintings had to be considered within such a comprehensive historical collection. Appended to the Committee’s report was a letter written on behalf of Prince Albert, and the *Plan for a Collection of Paintings* he had asked Eastlake and Wornum to compile as a guide or shopping list of desirable masters.³⁴³ Prince Albert advocated for an historically educative collection that, unlike private collections, would not only have pictures by “good masters” but comprehensively include “specimens” from all schools and eras so that art could

³⁴⁰ SC 1853: 6023, 6028.

³⁴¹ SC 1853, xvi.

³⁴² SC 1853, xl.

³⁴³ “Copy of a Letter from Colonel Grey to the Chairman, with Plan for a Collection of Paintings, illustrative of the History of Art.” SC 1853, Appendix XVII.

be studied “scientifically in its history and progress”.³⁴⁴ Albert believed the National Gallery ought to have early German paintings, as seen in his attempts to encourage the purchase of the Oettingen-Wallerstein collection, and his wish that its pictures be offered to the National Gallery after his death in 1861. The list of early German painters compiled by Wornum for the Plan included over eighty early masters yet unrepresented in the Gallery, but as mentioned in the previous chapter, was curiously thin on Westphalian painters, and specifically excluded those from Krüger’s collection described in Kugler’s *Handbook*.

Even after the Committee found the balance of opinion favoured an historical collection, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* ran an article that illustrated how contentious the matter still was. It decried the “knowledge-age” which wanted to teach the public the history of art, rather than art itself. The purpose of the Gallery, it argued, ought to be to “gather together the finest works of the best painters”, not to stuff visitors’ heads so full of history that it left “no room for a thought of its excellence, or a sentiment to be derived from it” but rather left them “disgusted with its deformities”.³⁴⁵ The 1853 Select Committee had indeed pressed witnesses to clarify the criteria for including paintings in the collection that seemed most in conflict with the notion that the Gallery’s purpose was to display only the best works to elevate public taste, especially the problematic inclusion of “inferior” works of the “severe and early”

³⁴⁴ SC 1853, Appendix XVII:791. Eastlake also makes this point in “Suggestions respecting the Future Management of the National Gallery,” Appendix XVI: 788.

³⁴⁵ John Eagles, “Chronological Curoisities: What Shall We Collect?,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 75, no. 462 (1854): 426-27. See also Conlin, “Origins and History,” 252 note 967; Anon., [Morris Moore et al.] *Protest and Counter-Statement against the Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery, ordered ... to be printed, 4th of August, 1853* (London: John Russell Smith, 1855); Whitehead, *Museums*, esp. 77-132.

schools.³⁴⁶ Early German paintings were sometimes cited among examples of inferior schools including early Italian, Flemish, French and particularly Spanish works, but they were a minor concern cited more frequently by witnesses rather than examiners.³⁴⁷ (Notably, “German” painting is not in the report’s index.) Should paintings without artistic merit be valued for their pious sentiment, for historical record, or for teaching artists what to avoid?

Some of the most vociferous advocates of early art demonstrated the ambiguities of valuing art at once for educating taste, instructing artists and teaching history especially where it was inherently Christian in motive and subject. For example, the early art collector and author of *Memoirs of The Dukes of Urbino* (1851), James Dennistoun, argued that the Gallery had two aims: one to elevate public taste through exhibiting “the highest works of the best masters” and the other to represent the progress of art in all schools.³⁴⁸ In his publications, Dennistoun had cogently argued that earlier paintings and those from a wide range of schools, even those “of little intrinsic beauty or merit” were of value to artists and the public alike. He adhered to the notion that Christian art served the highest purposes of art to induce piety, and he rejected

³⁴⁶ These terms were used repeatedly, for example SC 1853: 5837. Whitehead correctly points out that early painting was not the only type of art thought controversial: *The Adoration of the Shepherds* then supposed to be by Velazques created controversy for its perceived indecorous treatment of a sacred topic. *Public Art Museum*, 4-5.

³⁴⁷ For example, in Dennistoun’s and Eastlake’s evidence, SC 1853: 5828-55 and 6466-84. Lord Aberdeen and Lord Overstone commented generally on “inferior paintings” but did not specifically mention German schools: 5335-42 and 5395-5409).

³⁴⁸ SC 1853: 5828-40. On Dennistoun see Hugh Brigstocke, “James Dennistoun’s Second European Tour,” *Connoisseur* 184 (1973); “James Dennistoun as a Collector and Traveller,” *Connoisseur* 184, no. 90-97 (1973); “Lord Lindsay and James Dennistoun: Two Scottish Art Historians and Collectors of Early Italian Art.” PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 1976.

English connoisseurship that “too long consisted in mere appreciation of its technical difficulties”.³⁴⁹ To the Committee he specified that works from “the Flemish and German and Upper Rhine school, which are completely unknown here” would be of very great value. Yet he also acknowledged that only those with great intelligence, who had studied art in the “proper spirit” would gain advantage from seeing “inferior” early works.³⁵⁰

Dennistoun’s difficulties reflected the conflicts at play between historical, connoisseurial and ideological or Christian art models for evaluating early art that, as shown in the previous chapter, were especially problematic for early German paintings. These evaluative models were not distinct entities, but rather different emphases that had the potential to undermine one another. A connoisseurial model, which judged a painting by its mastery of visual properties that created effect and affect, could make a chronological and comprehensive historical collection irrelevant, except insofar as it instructed art students what to avoid. The historic and ideological models could challenge the foundation of the aesthetic model: the historic by threatening to elevate the importance of “scientific” knowledge about links in a chain of stylistic development above questions of quality, or by demoting art to archaeology; the ideological by uncoupling the association between beauty and form, as in Christian art literature that celebrated technically void but spiritually rich works leading up to Raphael.³⁵¹ Precisely what “history” was being illustrated,

³⁴⁹ Dennistoun, "The National Gallery," at 407; *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino, Illustrating the Arms, Arts, and Literature of Italy, from 1440 to 1630* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1851), I: 320-23, II: 149-67 at 165.

³⁵⁰ SC 1853: 5832 and 5839.

³⁵¹ Haskell frames this problem as pitting the connoisseurial approach that subdued questions of spiritual value in art adopted by, for example, Waagen and

and for what purposes, depended on which of those models dominated, and also on the imagined audience, whether student-artists, the general public in need of spiritual or moral improvement, or those who needed their taste educated so they could understand what made “great” art great, and become intelligent manufacturers and consumers of British products. Again, these audiences were not really distinct entities. These problems pertained to all early paintings, but lack of historical information and visual exposure to early German paintings, along with its idiosyncratic approach to painting that did not easily align with Italian models made it difficult to justify in connoisseurial, historic or Christian art terms. As we shall see, Wornum’s decision to exclude the Krüger paintings from Prince Albert’s Plan stood in diametric opposition to Dyce’s recommendation that they should be purchased for the National Gallery because each emphasised different models for evaluating these paintings. The Committee therefore reflected consensus about the need for an historical collection, and for including early German paintings within it despite their acknowledged inferiority, but exposed lack of consensus about the reasons why they should be in the collection.

The Select Committee’s recommendations were published in August 1853 with the full Report appearing in December. Things did not change immediately. The Trustees and Keeper continued to meet and manage the Gallery’s affairs. In the summer of 1854 they responded to the recommendations and proposed new regulations for the Trustees, and that

Eastlake, against disciples of Rio who believed “a true understanding of art began where connoisseurship ended.” Haskell, “Growth of British Art History,” at 213.

acquisitions be made with reference to the “ultimate formation of an historical series illustrative of the progress of art through all its ages”.³⁵²

Attempts were made to rearrange the picture hang by school.³⁵³ Eastlake (who had resigned as Trustee in April 1854) encouraged the Trustees to purchase five early paintings from the Bammeville sale in June. A portrait then thought to be by Dürer (now Hans Baldung) was among them (fig. 3).³⁵⁴ The Treasury suggested amendments to the Trustees’ proposals in December but by the following March the Trustees were pressing the Treasury for a resolution to the administration of the Gallery. Later that month the Treasury produced a Minute reconstituting the Gallery. Eastlake was appointed first salaried Director, Wornum Keeper and Secretary, and Otto Mündler (1811-70) Travelling Agent to assist with purchases. The Board of Trustees was to continue for their “council and experience” but was now governed by regulations and bound to Eastlake’s ultimate authority. The Minute codified duties and regulations of all personnel, set out an annual budget for acquisitions and required the Gallery to maintain careful records of each picture, and to write fully researched and referenced catalogues for each school.³⁵⁵

Dyce approached Gladstone about the Krüger collection before the full Select Committee report was published, but when its overall findings had

³⁵² Report of the Committee of Trustees on the Select Committee, NG Minutes, April 3, 1854.

³⁵³ “Minor Topics of the Month,” *Art-Journal*, December 1, 1853, 322.

³⁵⁴ NG 245. The other four were attributed to Pachhioretti (now possibly Sodoma, NG 246), Nicolo Alunno (now Matteo di Giovanni, NG 247), Lorenzo di San Severino (NG 249) and Masaccio (now Fra Filippo Lippi, NG 248). NG Minutes, 5, 8 and 21 June. Eastlake’s resignation: Eastlake to Trustees, April 17, 1854, NG5 104/4; NG Minutes, May 8, 1854. On German paintings in the Bammeville sale see Appendix 5b.

³⁵⁵ National Gallery: Copy of a Treasury Minute, dated 27 March 1855, Reconstituting the Establishment of the National Gallery, PP 1854-55 (433).

created hope – although no guarantee – of change. Previous Select Committee recommendations had been ignored. Dyce’s and Gladstone’s collaboration on the Krüger acquisition was an attempt to effect change in both the way the Gallery was managed and its purpose as a painting collection. Although the choice of early German paintings was highly relevant to Dyce’s ideas about the Gallery’s purpose, it was marginal to his vision for its management.

Nevertheless, the purchase would have been neither possible, nor desirable, outside the crisis in its management.

2 d. The National Gallery 1853-55

ii. Dyce’s Vision for the National Gallery.

Shortly after writing his pamphlet, Dyce wrote to Cole:

I have received a note from Mr Gladstone in which he says that he adopts my view of the principle on which the National Gallery should be formed and that he is prepared to act on it. On the management he is not able as yet to express an opinion, though he recognizes the existing evils and admits the force of my remarks on them.³⁵⁶

The Krüger acquisition appears to have been Dyce’s attempt to implement his vision for the Gallery as set forth in the pamphlet, and he took Gladstone’s confidence in his idea as evidence that he was then ready to “act on” it. Dyce’s vision had three key elements: the Gallery ought to have a complete and comprehensive historical collection; it ought to combine all arts, not just

³⁵⁶ Dyce to Cole, 22 February 1853, DP XXX.

painting; and it should be managed by one leader, not a committee of Trustees. He readily acknowledged earlier exponents of these opinions.

To the first point Dyce argued the Gallery should define and state its purpose to exhibit the complete history of art both in general terms and within each school. In contrast to a private collection, he stressed its need to be “extensive and complete” and arranged to allow students to “trace its monumental history, through successive and contemporaneous national and individual schools”.³⁵⁷ He recommended drawing up a detailed scheme of contents in the form of a catalogue of schools and artists leading up to and following on from Raphael to help meet that goal, and this may have had some influence on Albert’s commissioning of the Plan for a collection from Wornum and Eastlake later in 1853.³⁵⁸ Dyce identified the Gallery’s need for fifteenth-century German works four times in his pamphlet, and acknowledged it as one of the areas about which few in Britain had expertise.³⁵⁹ When citing Solly’s evidence to the 1835-36 Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures on the need to collect early Italian art, Dyce added his own parenthesis and italics; “there are a great many painters of the Italian (he might have added of the German and Netherlandish) schools *who are totally unknown in this country* but whose works would do honour to any gallery”.³⁶⁰ Dyce used the Berlin, Dresden and Munich collections as leading examples of comprehensive collections of art and included Baron von Klenze’s mention of the “great room for the ancient

³⁵⁷ William Dyce, *The National Gallery. Its Formation and Management* (London Chapman and Hall, 1853), 9-10, 50-51.

³⁵⁸ Whitehead alternatively suggests the Plan was Eastlake’s idea and that he co-opted Prince Albert to present it to give it weight. Whitehead, *Museums*, 101-02.

³⁵⁹ It is mentioned often alongside early Italian and Flemish schools. Dyce, *National Gallery*, 8, 17, 18, 48.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 8. “Report,” PP 1836 (568) parag. 1841.

German school” in the Pinakothek when citing his evidence from the same Select Committee.³⁶¹

Given the challenges of obtaining the best samples of each school, in the first instance the aim should be to collect works that were genuine. He wrote: “*The mere genuineness of works... though not of the highest order, yet, being genuine, are, as such, sufficient to represent the class to which they belong, until better specimens can be procured.*”³⁶²

Dyce’s rationale was rooted in his belief that early art was especially important because of its Christian sentiment, but it is notable that he avoided expressing this too obviously in his pamphlet. He wrote that art had not “sprung up, at one leap, from infancy to manhood” but had an adolescence with characteristics of particular value for the student of art:

If the maturity of judgment and technical skill of later times were wanting in its *adolescent* state, they were more than compensated for by a freshness of thought and intention, a vivacity, a gaiety, a vividness of impression, an innocence, simplicity, truthfulness... which technical imperfection tended even to develop in greater force... there is... a *suggestiveness* about the works of earlier masters which gives them a peculiar value and interest, especially to the practical student of art. They ever seem to be straining after, something higher than they have realized - a character which came to be reversed in the productions of later times.³⁶³

The word “suggestiveness” here hints at ideas about Christian art that Dyce had previously written about more overtly. In the 1840s he wrote that art of the

³⁶¹ Ibid., parag 2282. Dyce, *National Gallery*, 17.

³⁶² Dyce, *National Gallery*, 19.

³⁶³ Ibid., 12.

Middle Ages had “at its very essence” been devoted to Christianity, and could therefore raise the viewer by being itself of a higher elevation, enabling him or her “to apprehend some idea of the infinite attributes of goodness and beauty residing in the Godhead”. It left behind “the most deep and forcible yearning after the true and beautiful”. Judged on these terms, he wrote, “any devout Byzantine daub” should be admired in preference to a Venus of Titian.³⁶⁴ Dyce made no such direct argument in his 1853 pamphlet but rather quoted calls from the 1835 Select Committee on Arts and Manufacture for artists to return to the “purer style” and “chaster works” of the Italian fifteenth century in order to counteract weaknesses permeating current British design, composition and colour.³⁶⁵ Dyce would have been aware of critics of the idea of Christian art and its revival following the controversial Fine Arts Commission fresco project at Westminster and the exhibition of some Pre-Raphaelite art. He may have toned down his rhetoric for a broader audience.³⁶⁶ Citing so fully from earlier Select Committees was calculated to add authority to his own proposals.

Dyce’s proposal for an historical collection was therefore justified in terms of building dependable and comprehensive knowledge (his focus on finding “genuine” specimens from each school was key), of improving painting techniques and of championing Christian sentiment above formal or technical excellence. He did not fail to value later masterpieces, but was arguing the case for extending the collection beyond them. The ultimate aim was to have the “best” examples of the “very best masters” who had brought art “to the greatest

³⁶⁴ "Church Music II," 287; "Lyndsey's Sketches," at 268, 263, 269 and 266.

³⁶⁵ *National Gallery*, 16. Citing James Leigh's evidence "Report," PP 1836 (568): 1915.

³⁶⁶ See Chapter 1 i. Wornum's criticism of the idea of Christian art and of its revival by reference to ancient art, published in 1850, are discussed below.

state of perfection".³⁶⁷ Yet in other writings he had been clearer about dislocating 'greatness' from the development of mere artistic skill, giving it instead to those exercising their "gifts and faculties for the greater glory of God through the instruction of man".³⁶⁸ It was important to make progress in what he had called the "science" of art in order to reveal divine truths in a more "life-like and impressive" way. His own research into fresco painting, and his ambition not to imitate the style of old paintings as the Nazarenes had, demonstrated Dyce's own devotion to perfecting the techniques and skills of the painter. But he believed the drive towards perfection contained within it the seeds of its own destruction. The very moment an artist becomes conscious he is progressing towards artistic excellence is the moment he departs from it, and works for his own gratification. Fifteenth-century art rooted beauty in sentiment and morality rather than mere imitation of nature. That era ended when sentiment was first replaced by pagan forms, and then by "the sensual" in which artists returned to imitating nature but this time in a "comparatively vulgar and unspiritual" way.³⁶⁹

As Errington explained, Dyce saw an historical collection with ancient Christian art as an educative tool to teach the artist "first principles" of their true purpose in order to progress to make art appropriate to their own age using lessons drawn from the right study of nature.³⁷⁰ That meant understanding the distinction between naturalism in its physical form, which led to the debasement of art, and "nature *transubstantiated* (if we may be

³⁶⁷ Dyce, *National Gallery*, 16.

³⁶⁸ These and the following quotes from "Lyndsey's Sketches," 263-64.

³⁶⁹ "King's College Lecture," 1848, DP XI: 365-371.

³⁷⁰ Errington, "Ascetics and Sensualists," 492.

pardoned the use of the word) by the spirit of Christianity” as Dyce put it in 1841.³⁷¹ Dyce believed such a collection would educate viewers’ taste but not in the traditional sense. Appreciating early art was not cultivating taste, but subduing it “by the power of religion” to one that was “in its origin ethical rather than physical”. The viewer could only appreciate this art if they had undergone the “purifying and transforming discipline” of Christianity itself, as those artists had.³⁷² Dyce principally argued the value of this comprehensive historical collection from an artist’s perspective, as a schoolroom for students to trace and independently follow the path to truly great art, avoiding the pitfalls exemplified in the past. This was why he argued that the Director of the Gallery must be an artist and that the collection should be accessible to students and serious viewers, not “idlers”.³⁷³ Errington describes this as an ethical history of art. Dyce was striving to put history into “reverse” by re-investing it with the right Christian principles.³⁷⁴ In view of Dyce’s rejection of imitation, it might be more helpful to think of rebooting rather than reversing history by reinvesting art with ancient Christian principles.

Dyce’s view of an ethical history of art illustrated through the National Gallery was close to the way Conlin has described Gladstone’s, and explains why Gladstone so readily approved of his vision for its purpose. Gladstone saw Christian art as “the golden link” uniting heaven to earth.³⁷⁵ Viewing it was not a matter of enjoyment, or antiquarianism, but of moral instruction:

³⁷¹ Dyce, "Church Music II," 289. His italics.

³⁷² Ibid., 288-89.

³⁷³ For example, SC 1853: 7504-09, 7583, 7607, 7623.

³⁷⁴ Errington, "Ascetics and Sensualists," 492.

³⁷⁵ BL Add. MS 44728 fol. 169.

the admonition and instruction which the true artist gives, reproving us by his chastity and our own indifference when we first approach his works, asserting more effectually at each repeated view his claims on our admiration; and tending all along not only to tell us but to make us what we should be, addressing himself to our present perceptions just so far as is needful for him to gain access in order to improve them.³⁷⁶

At a macro-historical level, the collection could display art's progress through rise and decline, while on a micro-historical level it displayed the viewer's "own internal, individual struggle between acceptance and denial of the artist's improving Christian message".³⁷⁷ By reflecting on the chronological history of art, viewers could reflect on their own moral progress. History was not about nostalgia, but about contemporary moral struggle. While Gladstone and Dyce shared a vision for Christian art within the National Gallery, Gladstone's focus was on the public viewer, while Dyce's was on the student artist. Like Dyce, Gladstone does not appear to have articulated his personal beliefs about Christian art in his professional role as a politician and statesman or as a Trustee.

As well as proposing that the National Gallery define itself as a comprehensive historical collection, Dyce's pamphlet of 1853 called for it to be combined with sculpture, architecture and the decorative arts as a National Museum of Arts.³⁷⁸ Dyce had partly written the pamphlet because he had been asked to by a friend "much interested in another section of the proposed Institution", presumably Cole who, like Prince Albert, was advocating for a

³⁷⁶ Conlin, "Gladstone and Christian Art," 247. Conlin gives the reference for this quote as BL Add. MS 44728 fol. 27 but I was unable to find it in that folio.

³⁷⁷ "Origins and History," 158.

³⁷⁸ Dyce, *National Gallery*, 58.

combined site in South Kensington.³⁷⁹ But Dyce had been developing this idea independently for over a decade, as seen in his plans for an “Archaeology of Arts of Great Britain” written when he was at the School of Design in 1841.³⁸⁰ It is not clear if Gladstone’s approval of Dyce’s pamphlet extended to this proposal: he opposed the idea of combining all collections on one site.³⁸¹ Dyce’s idea in 1841 had been to provide a practical aid for students, but he had realized its potential to be “important, valuable and interesting” for “advancing arts in all their relations”.³⁸² He believed such a museum could benefit contemporary art and design by offering practitioners a visual display of the history and progress of art in Britain, through which they could discern the “feelings and sentiments in art characteristic, not only of the various Epochs of English history but generally of the English nation”.³⁸³ Dyce saw contemporary German art and design as a useful model for the British school because of its positive and strongly marked character. While no one wanted British artists to copy it, one could find in it:

something which is, be it good or bad, so peculiarly and fully expressive of German habits of thought and consistent with their traditional character, that independently of its general merits, and even in spite of the comparatively little sympathy which Englishmen have with the

³⁷⁹ Dyce to Gladstone February 17, 1853, DP XXX. Dyce’s correspondence with Cole supports this. Dyce to Cole, January 14, 1853, February 22, 1853, March 9, 1853, DP, XXX.

³⁸⁰ James Dyce makes a point of saying he pre-dated the South Kensington museum by twenty years. It is not clear if this proposal, framed as a letter, was ever made public. DP X: 331-343.

³⁸¹ Ames, *Prince Albert and Victorian Taste*, 121; Julius Bryant, “Albertopolis: German Sources of the Victoria and Albert Museum,” in *Art and Design for All: The Victoria and Albert Museum*, ed. Julius Bryant (London: V&A, 2011).

³⁸² DP X: 332.

³⁸³ DP X: 441.

German ideal of art, leads them to acknowledge its power and to propose for imitation that which in reality they would not wish to see imitated.³⁸⁴

German art exemplified Germanness. For Dyce the illustration of historical development of German art would be an especially useful model for how British artists should learn from their own heritage the quintessential characteristics and sentiments of their nation. Dyce's High Church beliefs gave him to believe that Christianity was part of that quintessential British character. He had previously argued "our nationality.... remains... not only catholic, but Anglo-Catholic."³⁸⁵

The idea of a combined National Museum of Arts underscores Dyce's perception of the "intimate links" between the branches of art that displayed the history of a nation or school's character and temperament. Although he had argued for a genealogy of schools made up of authenticated named painters, in this framework names and biographies of artists were less significant than the way they expressed their national or school's character. Dyce was therefore open to the value of having works by unknown artists, to the special capacity for German art to illustrate its national character, and to the imperative to improve British understanding by extending knowledge of art in previously unfamiliar arenas.

The third part of Dyce's proposal for the National Gallery in 1853 concerned its management. Dyce recommended the abolition of the Trustees and placing the Gallery's management in the charge of a paid officer under the

³⁸⁴ DP X: 331-343, at 339.

³⁸⁵ "On Ecclesiastical Architecture," 1841, DP XIII: 574.

direct control of the Treasury.³⁸⁶ To the Committee of 1853 Dyce described this director as the “organ of the Treasury” acting “*in locum tenens*” yet responsible to it.³⁸⁷ His pamphlet enumerated his unhappy experiences at the School of Design, as well as evidence of the state of affairs at the Gallery, to argue that a committee of amateur connoisseurs, no matter how well intentioned, could never be expected to make astute and purposeful acquisitions for the gallery, and the confusion over their responsibilities undermined their ability to make decisions altogether. Rather than wait for the approval of a committee sitting in London, a single officer ought to be able to decide on purchases, choose a professional adviser where necessary and be able himself, or employ others, to travel overseas to report on possible additions to the collection.

2 d. The National Gallery 1853-55

iii. The Krüger Acquisition Actualises Dyce’s Vision

Dyce’s acquisition can almost be read as his following the recipe of his pamphlet. First, he had found examples of a German school otherwise unrepresented in the Gallery, and therefore an important ingredient for building the comprehensive collection. The reputation of the Liesborn Master was well established, and even in this very recently rediscovered school a few other identifiable hands in the collection provided specimens to complete the genealogy of painting.

³⁸⁶ Dyce, *National Gallery*, 47.

³⁸⁷ SC 1853: 7441-42

Second, he had found verifiably *genuine* paintings with known provenances. Moreover, as a collection they offered a spread of genuine Westphalian works over time, enabling better understanding of the school through the way different hands absorbed and adapted influences. These pictures therefore addressed the specific lacuna in British knowledge of the German schools that Dyce had lamented.

Third, as a collection they met his desire to illustrate the progress of art within a school. Dyce recognized that the Westphalian school did not “progress” in line with the general progress of art, but rather fell into decline almost as soon as it had reached excellence with the Liesborn Master. However, this did not undermine its value for the Gallery. On the contrary, it displayed at once the characteristic Germanness of the tendency to the “fantastic” (in itself a fourth reason for buying the works) and also illustrated the pitfalls painters could fall into in not following their proper Christian purpose (a fifth reason). Passavant’s identification of the Liesborn Master as “wholly German” in character was important because it showed how German art could traverse the Ideal as well as the quotidian and fantastic, as exemplified in the disparities between the soft early Cologne and hard, detailed fifteenth-century Nuremberg schools. The fifth ingredient, that the Liesborn Master’s work exemplified the pinnacle of the Westphalian school as Christian art, was for Dyce the primary one. Although he wrote of Christian art obliquely in his pamphlet, never actually using the term, it is clear from his rhetoric about returning to “purer” art, and “straining after something higher” that those qualities made the Liesborn Master’s works attractive for the Gallery. On the one hand his concept of Christian art was so fundamental to, and intricately united with, his concept of art and its history

that it went without saying. On the other, Dyce's ubiquitous quotes in his pamphlet from British and German champions for an historical (rather than merely beautiful) collection of paintings demonstrate his awareness that the most credible and convincing arguments for it toned down personal beliefs about Christian art, and emphasized the scholarly, practical and generically moral or spiritual benefits instead.

Dyce had valued Jan Baegert's *Coronation* (then by an anonymous hand) because it showed traces of the earlier style, yet demonstrated what had been lost (fig. 51). Dyce likely found Baegert's other panels with their twisted and caricatured figures, sensuously appealing closely studied textures and balletic poses, and technically impressive display of realism an adequate illustration of the development of art for its own purposes, to the neglect of its moral and spiritual ones, for example in *Christ Before Pilate*, fig. 44. Despite lacking artistic merit, and with Dyce doubting many were even "works of art", he was certain of their value to the Gallery as historically genuine specimens.

In addition to the excellent artistic qualities of the Liesborn and Werden Masters' works, their good condition and the attractive price for the whole collection made a compelling case for buying it, especially because there was never any intention to keep all of the pictures, and every hope of selling some to recoup costs. For these reasons, the Krüger collection had an assured place in Dyce's vision of the National Gallery precisely because they were by little known, often anonymous early German painters, and were not the "best" masters, but illustrated where art had lost its way in sensualism, imitation and the fantastic. It signalled Dyce's belief that a comprehensive historical collection of paintings was not valuable merely as the intellectual pursuit of scientifically

gathering or classifying information, nor the connoisseurial pursuit of tracing technical and stylistic development through and between recognisable masters. Rather, via the historical and connoisseurial approaches it was valuable as a demonstration of the ideology that the expression and engendering of Christian sentiment was the highest pursuit of art.

Regardless of their being German paintings, the Krüger acquisition further fulfilled Dyce's vision for the management of the Gallery. In approaching Gladstone and inspecting the collection, Dyce took upon himself the mantle of "organ of the Treasury", acting as if he were the single officer under the direct governance of the Chancellor, entirely bypassing the Trustees. Gladstone invested him with that authority.³⁸⁸ Dyce did not consider himself an expert on early German art, but following the advice of his pamphlet, reiterated at the Select Committee, he went overseas to gather information and relied on the "expert" opinion of German art critics and historians. Furthermore, Gladstone's suggestion that he also inspect the Gherardini collection of models followed Dyce's proposal for an all-encompassing National Museum of Arts.

Dyce admitted that part of his motivation for writing the pamphlet, and for getting involved with the Krüger and Gherardini acquisitions, had been to demonstrate his ability to lead that Museum. He told Cole he believed Gladstone's approval of the pamphlet was tacit acknowledgement of his candidacy, telling Cole Gladstone's note was "not marked private" but that they had "best be discreet".³⁸⁹ His personal ambitions were obvious to reviewers of his pamphlet. Barlow teasingly asked: "Why not say at once, 'I am the man on

³⁸⁸ Gladstone to Dyce, November 25, 1853, BL Add. MS 44529 fol. 6.

³⁸⁹ Dyce to Cole, February 22, 1853, DP XXX.

whom all eyes are turned... I am the destined inheritor of the DICTATORSHIP in art..."³⁹⁰ When it later transpired he was *not* the leading candidate Dyce complained to Gladstone that he had been passed over when "public opinion" had appointed the office to him, "not only on the ground of supposed fitness for it, but from the fact of my having been concerned with these recent purchases".³⁹¹

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iv. Alternative Perspectives on the Purpose of the Collection

The mismatch between Dyce's and others' views on the purpose of the National Gallery, the role of the Krüger pictures within it, and the way the institution ought to be managed all had deep implications for the reception of the Krüger collection in Britain. Reviews of Dyce's pamphlet in 1853 criticized Dyce for making the chief criteria for selecting paintings for the National Gallery "genuineness" and "extensiveness" rather than aiming for the "best" examples.³⁹² The *Art-Journal* admitted it was worth buying inferior examples to start moving the collection in the right direction, with the hope they could later be replaced by better examples, but did not agree with Dyce's notions of the special qualities of early painting and their beneficial effects on the British school of painting.³⁹³ Others concerned with the Gallery around 1853 did not support Dyce's privileging of the Christian art model for evaluating paintings,

³⁹⁰ Barlow, "The National Gallery," *Morning Post*, April 7, 1853, 6.

³⁹¹ Dyce to Gladstone, June 22, 1854, BL Add MS 44381 fol. 173.

³⁹² Barlow, "The National Gallery," *Moring Post*, April 7, 1854, 6.

³⁹³ "Book Review," March 1, 1853, 99-100.

nor his particular interest in the Westphalian school. Waagen's contributions to the *Art-Journal* around the time of the Select Committee agreed that the National Gallery needed early German paintings in order to make it properly comprehensive, but acknowledged early German and other schools were "regarded as generally unintelligible and distasteful". Like Dyce, he argued that such schools should not be admired because they lacked artistic excellence, but rather because they richly compensated for those faults by fulfilling the "highest aim of Art". That is, they were "inspired with a noble enthusiasm, and absorbed in the spiritual feeling" of their religious subject, and thus "belong to the highest sphere of contemplation and feeling to which the mind can rise". Nevertheless it was artistic treatment, rather than subject, that was the principal value of art in a Gallery, so he recommended focusing on the best Italian masters from 1500-1550, with only a small representation of earlier and other schools "for the sake of continuity". Waagen called for schools to be displayed separately and chronologically, but he did not think it necessary to divide the German school into epochs unless the collection became especially rich in them. As we have seen, he did not recommend purchasing the whole Krüger collection, but was interested in a small number of works from it. Unfortunately his letter to Dyce citing his reasons is lost.³⁹⁴

Eastlake did not agree that early art was superior because it was spiritual. As Keeper and Trustee at the Gallery he had already been instrumental in acquiring earlier paintings for the collection, and at the Select Committee he

³⁹⁴ Gustav Friedrich Waagen, "Thoughts on the New Building to be Erected for the National Gallery of England and on the Arrangement, Preservation and Enlargement of the Collection I," *Art-Journal*, April 1, 1853, 101-03; "Thoughts on the New Building to be Erected for the National Gallery of England and on the Arrangement, Preservation and Enlargement of the Collection II," 121-25

advocated developing an eclectic collection, but made it clear his personal preference was for early Italian and Flemish, rather than German painting.³⁹⁵ He saw value in displaying works to illustrate the “peculiar” qualities of each school, specifying German among them, even though they were perceived as inferior to the highest achievements of Italian art. However, he believed early art in general ought to be acquired with discretion, distrusting the “fashion” for admiring it, and describing much of it as “full of affectations and grimace”. Those who praised it were “insensible to the essential elements of painting, such as beauty of arrangement, harmony of colour and natural action and expression”.³⁹⁶ For Eastlake, who was also President of the Royal Academy and concerned with upholding artistic standards, the masters and schools deserving of a place in the collection were those that “had the greatest influence on the progress and ultimate excellence of the art of painting”, namely the schools of Tuscany, Venice and the “early Flemish School”.³⁹⁷ He would collect as many examples as he could of these, but only limited samples of lesser schools, presumably including those of Germany.

Although Eastlake openly admitted his own predilections for early Italian, Venetian, and Flemish pictures he was advocating a scholarly set of criteria for evaluating paintings that were ostensibly based on objective, historically verifiable evidence.³⁹⁸ His proposed format for a published catalogue of the paintings in the collection included only facts about the subject, size and medium, its history as an object and influence as seen in reproductions

³⁹⁵ Appendix XVI, SC 1853, 787-88.

³⁹⁶ SC 1853: 6466, 6472-74.

³⁹⁷ Appendix XVI, SC 1853, 788.

³⁹⁸ SC 1853: 6476.

and copies.³⁹⁹ There was no room for appreciating the poetry or sentiment of the work. This scholarly approach followed a history of art based on the idea of innovative and influential named individuals passing on advancements in painting, rather than art as a production of the spirit of a time or nation. It was, as Whitehead puts it, about form rather than content, authorship rather than social context, and the history of production rather than use. Thus while Eastlake accepted the value of housing the nation's collection of prints and drawings with or near the paintings he did not support the idea of combining the arts, and increasingly supported strict boundaries between the Gallery and the British and South Kensington Museums.⁴⁰⁰

In an article written for the *Art-Journal* in 1850, Wornum had elegantly refuted all of the principles underlying Gladstone's and Dyce's perspectives on the value of historical Christian Art. He rejected the idea that Gothic architecture (and by analogy fourteenth and fifteenth-century painting) was especially "Christian" when Christians had used other styles far longer. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were not a period of unity and devout piety but rather "the good old time' of the Avignon popes", of religious intolerance, war, schism and tyranny.⁴⁰¹ Artists had not sacrificed their work to God, but worked equally for secular and ecclesiastical patrons, and for the sake of art itself. Historical misunderstanding erroneously led modern painters to believe that art for its own sake lacked value, that sensuousness and technical merit were bad, or that spirit and matter were incompatible. For Wornum, "the most beautiful soul

³⁹⁹ SC 1853, 788-89.

⁴⁰⁰ Whitehead, *Museums*, 101-04; Haskell, "Growth of British Art History," 213.

⁴⁰¹ This and the following quotes from Ralph Nicholson Wornum, "Modern Moves in Art," *Art-Journal*, September 1, 1850, 269-71.

must have the most beautiful body". Art from before the time of Raphael was principally valuable as a display of the way painting progressed to overcome technical difficulties. Wornum reversed the idea that earlier art was especially good at displaying sentiment. He described it as "shell painting" because it only represented the external figure (often badly), onto which it projected hackneyed emotion. By contrast emotion arose naturally from figures in later paintings. Finally, Wornum condemned the kind of art being produced by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood because it was taking a retrograde step back to "shell" art.

Wornum was using Christian principles to reject Christian Art. In a separate article he did not dispute that art could "excite reflections and resolutions in the spirit of the great truths and doctrines of Christianity," and called on Protestant artists to try to overcome their fear of using beautiful art to embody beautiful truths.⁴⁰² But in the Gallery he was interested in the history of art as a means of understanding the past that had *passed*, unlike Dyce and Gladstone's drive to reboot history by reference to the past.

Wornum rejected the idea that any picture was absolutely good or bad. Even old and poor works could be valuable or interesting for a variety of reasons: "Subject, treatment, sentiment, composition, expression, costume, colour, form, chiaroscuro, imitation, materials, hand, touch, time, place, – all have their special interest..." The National Gallery's collection ought to have something for everyone and admit admiration of pictures for various reasons.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰² "Romanism and Protestantism in their Relation to Painting," *Art-Journal*, May 1, 1850, 133-36 at 134.

⁴⁰³ "The National Gallery. The Select Committee: The Trustees Predilections," *Art-Journal*, February 1, 1851, 39.

Yet Wornum's connoisseurial criteria for assessing the historical worth of paintings were apparent in the linear historical model of artistic progression in his *Epochs of Painting*. Given the novelty of information on the Liesborn Master and other Westphalian painters in 1847 it is understandable that he missed them from his list of early German painters in *Epochs*, but Wornum's conscious exclusion of them from Prince Albert's Plan in 1853 is more representative of his evaluation of their worth – or lack of it. The Krüger paintings were mostly nameless and had very little (and only recent) research to verify their importance. Wornum's was a list of significant painters, not paintings. His continued stress on biography and personal influence was different to Dyce's idea of art in all its branches reflecting the spirit or character of its age.

Dyce's aspiration to build a comprehensive gallery of "genuine" specimens from all schools fell short of what was emerging as the more likely model along the lines recommended by Eastlake: a comprehensive historical collection that gave primacy to the "best" and most influential schools of Italian art, and valued early paintings that were not "insensible to the essential elements of painting, such as beauty of arrangement, harmony of colouring, and natural action and expression".⁴⁰⁴ It was Eastlake's and Wornum's historical and connoisseurial vision for the Gallery that was implemented with the Reconstitution of 1855. The Treasury gave Eastlake "discretion" to select paintings to build the collection, but recommended acquiring "fine works" from abroad, especially "good specimens" of Italian schools, including those of earlier schools.⁴⁰⁵ Eastlake went on to purchase significant numbers of early Italian

⁴⁰⁴ SC 1853: 6472.

⁴⁰⁵ Treasury Minute Reconstituting the National Gallery, PP 1854-55 (433).

paintings for the National Gallery.⁴⁰⁶ By comparison, during the same period he oversaw the acquisition of only two early German paintings in 1857 and 1862, and the donation of five more from Albert's collection in 1863.⁴⁰⁷ He also arranged for the vast majority of Krüger's paintings to be removed from the Gallery by sale or loan to other institutions. If early German paintings were to have a place in the gallery they would have to meet the criteria of value established by Eastlake and Wornum. Their interactions with the Krüger and other early German paintings in the collection will be examined in the next chapter, but it is worth noting here how they presented the Krüger pictures in the catalogues soon after the Gallery's reconstitution. The 1855 catalogue gives dates and locations for the production of the paintings, a rough idea of their original look before fragmentation, and, where possible, their masters' names, brief biographies and influences.⁴⁰⁸ By 1856 the historical, technical and biographical information had been expanded, accompanied by references to German scholarship. Unlike other entries, some of the Krüger paintings are described as being purchased by the Government, which may have been a tactic to distance Wornum, Eastlake and the Trustees from responsibility for those pictures that were not well received.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁶ Conlin, *Nation's Mantelpiece*, 307-12; Avery-Quash and Sheldon, *Art for the Nation* 134-81.

⁴⁰⁷ Cranach's *Portrait of a Woman* (NG 291) and The Master of the Saint Veronica's *Veronica with the Sudarium* (NG 687). He was also responsible for the purchase of Nicolas de Neufchâtel's *Portrait of a Young Lady* (NG 184).

⁴⁰⁸ Ralph Nicholson Wornum, *Abridged Catalogue of the Pictures on the National Gallery with Short Biographical Notices of the Painters arranged Alphabetically* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1855).

⁴⁰⁹ Wornum cites the Krüger catalogue, Förster and Passavant. The introduction states that around 100 paintings had been purchased by the government and the rest given or bequeathed, but the phrase "purchased by the government" only appears on the individual catalogue entries for some of the Krüger pictures.

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v. Implications for the Immediate Reception of the Krüger Pictures

Wornum's decision not to include the Liesborn and Werden masters in the Plan for Prince Albert meant the Krüger acquisition would not appear to be addressing the Gallery's need to develop a collection of specimens by canonical artists. Reviews were quick to condemn it once the seventeen pictures Dyce selected went on display in Autumn 1854. The *Art-Journal* articulated how far the pictures fell short of the hopes for a new "grand scale" gallery following the Select Committee:

It is not merely the sum of money granted by the treasury which is ill spent, but it is the absolute absence of the commonest artistic judgment and its consequent discredit... there is not a single example of any of the leading masters of these early schools; they are worthless in the execution of details for any purpose of Art manufacture, and several of the heads appear to have been recently repainted... ⁴¹⁰

They were said to compare badly with good examples of German schools already well represented in Antwerp, Munich and Berlin. By February, when a little more was known of them, the *Art-Journal* changed its tune. It acknowledged the artistic relationships between the Masters of Werden, Liesborn and Jan van Eyck, picked out works by named artists, mentioned comparable examples in Berlin, and praised their condition, noting: "We have

Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of the Pictures in the National Gallery with Biographical Notices of the Painters: Foreign Schools (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1856).

⁴¹⁰ "Minor Topics of the Month", *Art-Journal*, December 1, 1854, 375.

never seen pictures of a period so early in such excellent condition.” The life-like realism of the “van der Meeren” (sic) was cited to “put to shame” the efforts of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. This demonstrates how important scholarship was to evaluating a painting, but in aesthetic terms the *Art-Journal’s* overall low estimation remained unchanged. It found the German works similar to early Italian painters in some aspects, but attributed their “purity and preservation” to the oil and pigment used: there was no mention of Christian sentiment. Overall their value was limited to historical demonstration:

They are full of the errors of their period, but show at the same time the laborious exactitude of the early German schools.... These pictures are only valuable as historical examples; there is little a progressive school can gather from them.⁴¹¹

The *Illustrated London News* review of the Gallery’s new acquisitions in December 1854 echoed Head’s preface to Kugler’s *Handbook* when it acknowledged British prejudice against previously unknown schools such as those of Germany and Spain. It published engravings of two works of “indisputable merit and decided interest”, (fig. 75). One was *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, then thought by Velazquez, rejecting claims that its sensual handling of a sacred subject was inappropriate, and praising instead its naturalism.⁴¹² The other was Baegert’s *Coronation of the Virgin*, then given to an unknown artist. The choice of this rather than any of the Liesborn paintings, by far the most important of the collection for German critics and Dyce, is

⁴¹¹ “Minor Topics of the Month,” *Art-Journal*, February 1, 1855, 66.

⁴¹² NG 232, now thought probably Neapolitan.

somewhat ironic. While they had valued *The Coronation* for preserving the earlier purity of the Westphalian school, mingled with signals of its decline, the reviewer used it to reaffirm long-held notions of the inferiority of German to Italian art because it failed to progress under the guidance of classical art and nature. The reviewer pointed out *The Coronation* (dated 1550 in the 1856 catalogue) was “nearly half a century after the magnificent days of Raphael” and revealed Germany’s profound ignorance of that revival and its adherence to “the same weak and debased models, modified by a rude Gothicism of character and detail”. He describes its style as “eminently Byzantine, with an admixture of Gothic naturalism”. Instead of having grace, the Virgin looked “coquettish” and God the Father and Son were “utterly void of Divine character”.⁴¹³

The “fantastic” tendency of the German school and its fundamental inferiority to Italian art was integral to Dyce’s view, but he was trying to make a more subtle argument to show a high point of German painting with this collection. Negative reviews that did not pick up on the Liesborn Master’s excellence (as Dyce saw it) realized his fears that the British public were not yet ready to understand how to appreciate early art like this. When Gladstone and Lansdowne asked Dyce to go further than simply to verify the arrival of the paintings in Britain in June 1854, and to make a selection that could be put on immediate display, he had warned them the British public would not appreciate their value, especially when space at the Gallery was at a premium, writing: “the stock of works by early masters ought to be very considerably increased before the public Exhibition of any works which are chiefly valuable in relation to the

⁴¹³ “The National Gallery. New Pictures,” *Illustrated London News*, December 23, 1854, 643.

history of art is regarded".⁴¹⁴ However, practical circumstances forced Dyce's hand. By August 1854 Parliament wanted to know what the Gallery intended to do with the pictures. Gladstone told the House they were being stored in the Gallery basement while questions of the Gallery's management and site were unresolved, and that Dyce was in the process of making a report on the matter for the Trustees.⁴¹⁵ Dyce wrote an acerbic letter to Uwins saying he had been "doing nothing of the sort" but would make a selection of pictures for immediate display "in case you wish to hang any of them".⁴¹⁶

Dyce's wording here signals his realization by this point that his vision for these pictures and for the Gallery was not going to be implemented, and that he was unable to present them to the public without it. Dyce discovered he was not the leading candidate for Director the very day Lansdowne asked him to make a selection from the pictures, when the other Trustees told him Gladstone had appointed Dennistoun.⁴¹⁷ Dennistoun turned the position down.⁴¹⁸ The seventeen pictures Dyce selected for display did not align entirely with those he had highlighted as worthy in his Report, indicating he chose those he thought had most appeal to the models for evaluation already in place at the Gallery (Appendix 6). His Report had identified as most valuable those pictures that displayed the rise and fall of the Westphalian school, whereas those he chose for immediate display illustrated the school's "excellence", or were by named artists, including the two Netherlandish paintings from Part II of the collection.

⁴¹⁴ Dyce to Gladstone, June 22, 1854, BL Add. MS 44381 fol. 173. Gladstone to Dyce, June 23, 1854, BL Add MS 44529 fol. 111. Dyce also explained this to the Trustees: Dyce to Uwins, August 5, 1854, NG NG5/109/2.

⁴¹⁵ HC Deb. August 1, 1854, vol. 135, 1094-5.

⁴¹⁶ August 5, 1854, NG NG5/109/2.

⁴¹⁷ Dyce to Gladstone, June 22, 1854, BL Add. MS 44381 fol. 173.

⁴¹⁸ Conlin, "Origins and History," 250.

He excluded other panels from the *Coronation* group that he had recognized in his Report as “genuine” illustrations of school’s decline into the “fantastic” as well as the “rude and barbarous” early panels from “Schildesche” (Bielefeld) that he had thought showed the “earliest efforts” of the school. This means that Dyce paradoxically excluded the most characteristically “German” works in his attempt to display the “German” school. As already noted, Dyce accepted the soft idealized style of the Liesborn Master as “wholly German” too. He was caught in the widespread tug of aesthetic preference for Italian idealization of nature as the most harmonious balance between sentiment and its representation in paint. The ‘best’ German works were therefore always compared to a standard set in Italy, not Germany, despite the recognition that historical paintings ought to be evaluated according to their time and place, not to universal standards. Dyce recommended buying the collection based on this preference for Italian models of Christian art, yet his Report set out an instructive role for those paintings that fell far short of it, on the basis they were from a verifiable local German school. In excluding those “inferior” German works in his selection of the seventeen Dyce signalled his understanding that others were not ready to go even as far as he was to appreciate paintings on their own terms.

His fears were realized in negative reviews like that of Morris Moore in the *Literary Gazette*, which used the Krüger pictures to complain that the Gallery’s purpose ought to be to establish taste alongside religious, moral, historic and artistic information, not to provide a tedious chronology of art history (the role of a museum of antiquities) with objects “injurious to the taste of the country”:

The frightful and needlessly multiplied medieval paintings of the Meister von Liesborn ... are obvious evidences of false taste, and give encouragement to a school of art which all but Mr. Ruskin and a few crazy disciples unite in condemning.⁴¹⁹

In fact, the Pre-Raphaelite painter, Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893), whom others in the Brotherhood criticized for being too attached to German influence, thought the Krüger pictures “absurd” when he saw them in the Gallery. At the same time, he admired the “Dürer” acquired from the Bammerville sale.⁴²⁰ In a letter to the *Morning Chronicle* Coningham cast doubt even on the historical validity of these works as set out in the Gallery’s 1855 catalogue, which he called an “eclectic knot” and a “perfect masterpiece of German catalogue writing”. The documentary evidence for them was thought thin and the stylistic comments misguided and false. Coningham was once again more concerned with criticizing Eastlake than the pictures, but they provided the perfect vehicle for his task. He lampooned the idea of a genealogy of unknown Westphalian disciples of unknown Westphalian masters, and of Eastlake positioning himself as expert on this unknown school.⁴²¹

The seventeen Krüger pictures failed to impress historically or aesthetically, and there is no hint in these reviews of the special value with which Dyce or Gladstone might have invested these paintings with as Christian

⁴¹⁹ “The National Gallery,” *Literary Gazette*, May 12, 1855: 298.

⁴²⁰ William Michael Rossetti, *Præraphaelite Diaries and Letters* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1900), 148; Potter, *Inspirational Genius*, 25-30.

⁴²¹ Coningham, “The National Gallery - Sir Charles Eastlake’s Purchases,” *Morning Chronicle*, March 31, 1856, 3.

art. On the contrary, they were thought detrimental to the British school of painting.

Gladstone's failure to understand Dyce's reluctance to select pictures from the Krüger collection for immediate display in June 1854 resonates with their earlier misalignment over the SPCK illustrated Life of Christ project. Gladstone had been happy then to use early Christian art to illustrate Christ's life, whereas Dyce believed contemporary interpretations of it were more appropriate to contemporary readers. Conlin suggests that Gladstone bought the Krüger collection on behalf of the state to "unleash the power of 'Christian art' to improve the viewer".⁴²² If so, he would have been anxious to get the pictures on display as soon as possible to begin working on viewers. This would have been quite different from Dyce's rather longer-term view that the pictures would be part of a large museum of Art illustrating its history for aspiring British Christian artists to learn from. We might imagine that Dyce thought it would be contemporary rather than early Christian art in the Gallery that would have the most compelling effect on improving the piety of viewers. It is odd that Gladstone made no comment in his diary on the Krüger pictures when he saw them in the Gallery with his wife in June 1854, although he did not make notes on other pictures in the Gallery either.⁴²³ Had he been looking at them in the subjective way he had previously written about art he might have agreed with Dyce's special appreciation for the Liesborn altarpiece fragments in his Report and the selection of those for immediate display. Gladstone had observed in 1838 that "the noblest productions of Christian art have been devoted to gentle

⁴²² Conlin, 2002: 157.

⁴²³ He mentions seeing "the Krüger & other pictures." Gladstone Diaries, June 20, 1854, IV: 628.

subjects: the Virgin Mother, the Infant Saviour, the Suffering Saviour.... Mild and peaceful glories, unappalling to the heart or eye."⁴²⁴ The twisted and caricatured and sensual appeal of Jan Baegert's panels would not equate to such gentle piety. Gladstone had entirely relied on Dyce's professional judgment, and may not have understood Dyce's vision for how the Krüger pictures would function.

On the other hand, Gladstone's responsibility for spending public funds on the Krüger pictures was ample reason for wanting them on display as soon as possible. His failure to record his impressions of the pictures may have been down to political expediency even before they were condemned in the press. In a letter to Lord Aberdeen in April, before the pictures arrived, Gladstone divested himself of all involvement in the Krüger and Gherardini purchases, recognizing that his function as an *ex officio* Trustee had been terminated, or "at any rate suspended".⁴²⁵ He also told Aberdeen the plan was to sell those Krüger pictures the Gallery did not want, or perhaps to lend them to the new Galleries in Dublin and Edinburgh. He had never considered himself the expert on art, and these two acquisitions revealed the disadvantage of his meddling in it, to the extent that he later declared he would rather negotiate a loan for ten million pounds than undertake to purchase another picture.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁴ BL Add. MS 44728 fol. 168.

⁴²⁵ Gladstone to Aberdeen, April 17, 1854, BL Add. MS 44529, fol. 83. This letter was sent after both purchases were complete.

⁴²⁶ HC Deb., July 2, 1857 vol. 146 col. 841-843, cited in Joseph Beavington Atkinson, "The National Gallery – Its Purpose and Management," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 86, no. 530 (1859): 712.

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vi. Alternative Perspectives on the Management of the Gallery and Implications for the Krüger Pictures

Without the crisis in the National Gallery's management the Krüger acquisition would never have taken place. Dyce approached Gladstone in 1853 as the Treasury's *ex officio* Trustee and Gladstone was only authorized to unilaterally fund the inspection and purchase of the collection because he occupied that role. While the old system made the acquisition possible, the promise of change made it expedient, and Dyce's unsuccessful candidacy for Director, and his alternative views on who should run it, impacted its reception. It is not necessarily the case that public opinion of these pictures would have been different had they been acquired under different circumstances, but rather that the peculiar circumstances prejudiced their reception, and emboldened and underscored negative attitudes to them.

Dyce initially believed his pamphlet had "done for" the Trustees, and then that the Krüger acquisition demonstrated Gladstone's confidence in him for the new Gallery Director. He also believed that Gladstone was responsible for making that appointment.⁴²⁷ His perspective can only have been enhanced by the exclusion of the Trustees and the addition of the Gherardini inspection. Negotiations for the Gherardini purchase back in England proved to be very difficult and Dyce invested much time and effort behind the scenes through the Spring of 1854 smoothing Madame Gherardini's tempestuous misunderstandings, and saving Gladstone (and himself) from a potentially

⁴²⁷ Dyce to Gladstone, June 22, 1854, BL Add. MS 44381 fol. 173.

embarrassing blunder over the price.⁴²⁸ His personal aspirations explain why Dyce enthusiastically undertook the “errand” when he was overworked on fresco projects at the time.⁴²⁹

The reasons why Gladstone excluded the Trustees in 1853 are not straightforward. Dyce and Gladstone knew the Trustees were not yet redundant and would have the final say on which pictures were displayed. On the one hand it made sense to exclude them given the perceived urgency of the acquisitions, the difficulties of getting the Trustees to meet in time, and insecurity of their position after the Select Committee. Gladstone told Lansdowne: “It is vain I fear to think of assembling any number of Trustees of the Gallery, and at any rate they are as it were in a state of suspended animation: which time rather presses.”⁴³⁰ Gladstone was well aware that the Trustees were continuing to manage the Gallery’s affairs. While corresponding with Dyce about the inspection he was involved in extraordinary Trustee meetings during the usual vacation to respond to urgent matters, which too few members attended to make a quorum.⁴³¹ Gladstone probably told Dyce not to involve Eastlake in the inspection because as a Trustee, Eastlake’s opinion would not count as one of

⁴²⁸ Dyce and Herbert realized they had overpriced the collection at £1800-1900, but Gladstone inadvertently led Madam Gherardini to believe he was offering £3,000 for it. It was purchased for £2,000. Dyce and Gladstone correspondence, February-April 1854, TA T1/5881A.

⁴²⁹ Among other things he was painting frescoes for the Queen’s Robing Room, and making designs for All Saints’ St. Margaret Street, and for the east window of St. Paul’s Church, Alnwick. He frequently complained of being overstretched. Dyce to Cole January 14, 1853 and March 9, 1853, DP XXX.

⁴³⁰ January 13, 1854. BL Add. MS 44529 fol. 33.

⁴³¹ The Treasury requested the National Gallery vacate the rooms they occupied in Marlborough House to hang the Gallery’s British paintings in order to accommodate the University of London, which was itself being evicted from Somerset House. Gladstone attended the meeting on January 7, NG Minutes, December 12, 1853, January 2 and 7, 1854. Copies of Letters between the Treasury and Trustees, TA T 1/5891 A.

the two independent opinions needed before a recommendation to the Treasury could be made.⁴³² He might also have known Eastlake would not approve the purchase because he did not evaluate art as he and Dyce did. On the other hand, while Gladstone had agreed funds for Gallery purchases without a formal recommendation from the Trustees in the past, he had insisted on adhering to the formal protocol of going through the Trustees as recently as June 1853, while the Select Committee was in session.⁴³³ In this context his decision to purchase the Krüger collection without the Trustees inspecting them, and on the sole authority of Dyce rather than two external professionals, and to value Dyce's opinion above that of the highly respected Waagen, is extraordinary.

Gladstone evidently trusted Dyce, but made it clear in his rebuttal of Dyce's suggestion of inspecting a further collection in Rome that he was not implementing Dyce's plan for changing the Gallery's management just yet: "In the present suspended state of the question as to the Gallery, including Rome in your commission would I think give too much of an air of system on the part of the Executive Government."⁴³⁴ One cannot help feeling sorry for Dyce when he discovered he had been "passed over" for the Director role. Given their friendship and history of private dealings from the School of Design days, Dyce had good reason to assume they had an understanding. Gladstone often went out of his way to support Dyce and show him kindness, but reading between the

⁴³² Gladstone to Dyce, November 25, 1853. BL Add. MS 44529 fol. 6.

⁴³³ Gladstone had approved Eastlake's autonomous request for funds to purchase a Velazquez painting from the Frank Hall Standish Collection, but for far less than the work sold for. Eastlake to Gladstone, May 30, 1853, BL Add. MS 44375 f 113. Robertson, *Eastlake*, 132. See also his strict governance of acquisitions for the South Kensington Museum, Timothy Wilson, "The Origins of the Maiolica Collections of the British Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum 1851-55," *Faenza* 71 (1985): 74.

⁴³⁴ Gladstone to Dyce, December 28, 1853. BL Add. MS 44529 fol. 21.

lines he sometimes also gave Dyce vague encouragement without making any specific promises.⁴³⁵ When Dyce asked Gladstone about the Directorship Gladstone assured him he was not responsible for making the appointment, although this may not have been entirely honest: he later told Aberdeen he thought Eastlake should be appointed.⁴³⁶ Dyce had however been among the candidates for Director.⁴³⁷ He must have suffered “sour grapes” but it is unfair to suggest this was why he took a long time to select the seventeen pictures from the Krüger collection for display in the National Gallery, or that he had a change of heart about them.⁴³⁸ Dyce having been sidelined, his rationale for buying the Krüger pictures was never articulated or implemented. Rather than changing his own mind about them, Dyce purposefully selected those he knew would be more palatable for immediate display. Without Dyce to contextualize the pictures within his 1853 vision it was difficult for others to understand the reasons for the acquisition, or why even these seventeen pictures should take up space on the Gallery walls. As already mentioned, the Trustees appear never to have seen his Report. After the Reconstitution Dyce explicitly refused Eastlake and the Trustees his advice on the Krüger pictures, telling them he had only selected those now on display at Gladstone and Lansdowne’s request, that his selection was meant to be temporary and provisional and it was not his

⁴³⁵ For example Gladstone to Dyce, November 12, 1841, DP VII: 270.

⁴³⁶ Gladstone to Dyce, June 23, 1854, BL Add. MS 44529 fol. 111. Dyce to Gladstone, June 24, 1854, BL Add. MS 44381 fol. 194-7. Gladstone to Aberdeen, September 4, 1854, BL Add. MS 44529 fol. 141.

⁴³⁷ Conlin, *Nation's Mantelpiece*, 73.

⁴³⁸ "Origins and History," 252, note 967.

place to give any further opinion.⁴³⁹ Perhaps even he could not rationalize them within Eastlake's vision for the Gallery.

Like Gladstone's, Dyce's reputation was damaged rather than enhanced by the Krüger and Gherardini acquisitions and vice versa. Dyce was accused of being credulous about the value and authenticity of the Gherardini collection.⁴⁴⁰ At the Select Committee Dyce had been criticized for not being able to answer questions about the impact of cleaning on paintings at the National Gallery. Coningham later cited this as a reason why Gladstone should not have trusted Dyce on the Krüger collection.⁴⁴¹ The Committee had accused Dyce of failing to examine the paintings properly, but Dyce's answers reveal that he was in the habit of viewing them *differently*. He had "admired" rather than studied the pictures, and noted their "general effect" rather than the minutiae of their condition.⁴⁴² In other words, he looked in the subjective, emotional manner discussed earlier, and in which he principally examined the Krüger pictures. This fell short of the ideal expected in a Director of the Gallery. With the perception that Dyce was inept, criticism for the Krüger acquisition was turned on Gladstone, the Trustees and later on Eastlake. In its first review of the displayed Krüger paintings the *Art-Journal* accused the Trustees of having randomly clutched at buying the collection to demonstrate their effectiveness in light of their recent condemnation, of being swayed by the opinion of one man,

⁴³⁹ Dyce to National Gallery, August 24, 1855, NG NG5/115/6.

⁴⁴⁰ For example, Barlow/X.Y.Z., "The National Gallery," *Morning Post*, May 26, 31.

⁴⁴¹ Dyce was ill-prepared for questions on the impact of varnishing and cleaning on Titian's *Holy Family* and Claude's *Queen of Sheba* and *St. Ursula*, and was recalled to give evidence once he had properly examined them. SC 1853: 3733-3846, 4237-4284. Coningham, "The National Gallery - Sir Charles Eastlake's Purchases," *Morning Chronicle*, March 31, 1856.

⁴⁴² SC 1853: 3789-3817.

and of buying works without any regard to whether they were good or not. Instead of redeeming them, the Krüger acquisition had emphasized their ineptitude.⁴⁴³ These criticisms were resurrected after the disappointing sale of the unwanted Krüger pictures in 1857.⁴⁴⁴ By then, the fact the Gallery's management had been in transition at the time allowed the Trustees to escape blame for it. The MP Wilson reassured the House: "The purchase had not been made with the advice or even the cognizance of the Trustees... but under the immediate advice of... Mr Dyce....Eastlake was in no way responsible".⁴⁴⁵ But as we have already seen, Coningham and others continued to use the Krüger acquisition against Eastlake.

The messy "transition" in the management 1853-54 prejudiced attitudes against the Krüger pictures even before they arrived in Britain. Between May and July 1854 Barlow wrote a series of letters to the *Morning Post* chastising Gladstone for "setting himself up as a fountain of fine art."⁴⁴⁶ How was it, he asked, that Gladstone had for some time been "discharging that most important office" of Gallery Director, spending nearly £5000 on "bad specimens" and sending "James Dennistoun" on an expedition in the Autumn of 1853 to buy "old rubbish in Belgium"?⁴⁴⁷ Barlow's flawed intelligence here came from his friend, Moore. He was inadvertently referring to Dyce's trip to Minden and did so again in a subsequent letter upbraiding Gladstone for meddling without the requisite knowledge or qualified advisors. He wrote:

⁴⁴³ "Minor Topics of the Month," *Art-Journal*, December 1, 1854, 375.

⁴⁴⁴ For example, Moore, "The National Gallery Debate," *Athenaeum*, August 22, 1857, 1060-61.

⁴⁴⁵ HC Deb., July 6, 1857, vol. 146 col. 968.

⁴⁴⁶ Barlow/X.Y.Z, "The National Gallery," *The Morning Post*, May 8, 24, 26, 31 and July 13. Citation from May 24, 6.

⁴⁴⁷ May 8, 1854, 3.

Mr. Gladstone has fallen into the most grievous errors.... German gleanings (if I have been correctly informed....) have passed muster before him, with queer odds and ends, raked together in Belgium...by Dennistoun....⁴⁴⁸

Barlow accused Gladstone of scattering £3,000 to the winds for “a collection of these things, so bad that they are currently reported to be about to visit Christie’s sale rooms”. Although Barlow was misinformed about the details, his comments promulgated negative opinion of the Gallery’s new acquisitions before anyone in Britain had seen them. Looking at it another way, in the absence of evidence for the Trustees’ opinions of the Krüger pictures at that time, gossip offers a good hint that intelligence was minimal and expectations were low. Critics at the time pointed out the Trustees had “felt much satisfaction” when they heard Gladstone was buying the collection, and did nothing to stop him, notwithstanding his high office. In reality, given his office, they had little choice.

2 d. The National Gallery 1853-55

vii. One Further Alternative Perspective: Barlow

Barlow’s criticisms were especially ironic because in the same letter berating Gladstone for buying “German gleanings” he praised the Krüger collection, without realizing they were one and the same thing. Barlow was one of the few British critics to have first hand experience of seeing early Westphalian paintings. During the summer of 1853 he had visited private

⁴⁴⁸ This and the following citation from May 24, 1854, 6.

collections in in Minden, Soest and Münster, and adopted the mantle of an authority on the school.⁴⁴⁹ He wrote:

For the benefit of those distinguished amateurs who have a passion for the Westphalian school, I would here state the result of an investigation made by myself last summer Many of the works by this early German school are exceedingly interesting, and more or less valuable in reference to the history of art in that country. This is their chief merit; but they are, or a few of them, not without artistic merit, though of a kind which *we* are not likely in this country either to appreciate or profit by, and most assuredly would not tend to the advancement of art among us. The best and most complete collection in Westphalia is that of... Krüger.⁴⁵⁰

It was unfortunate that in writing this letter Barlow exposed his dependence on Moore's gossip mongering, which undermined his credibility as a critic. A few weeks later he admitted his mistake, distanced himself from Moore and tried to set the record straight through a series of letters.⁴⁵¹ The last of these letters returned to the Krüger collection, which Barlow tried to use to re-establish his credibility as a critic.⁴⁵² He contrasted his authoritative knowledge, gained from direct observation and close study of Krüger's pictures and catalogue, with Gladstone's self-proclaimed ignorance of it before the House

⁴⁴⁹ He mentions also Dr Haindorff's and Dr Mühlen's collections. "Travel Journals Germany, Berlin, Dresden, Prague, 1849," BARLOW/150/1; "Belgium, Prussia, Berlin, Dresden 1853," BARLOW/150/3; and "Notes on Galleries," BARLOW/116/1 (Cologne Gallery), 116/3 and 116/7 (Berlin).

⁴⁵⁰ "The National Gallery," *Morning Post*, May 24, 1854, 6.

⁴⁵¹ "The National Gallery," July 13, 14, 22, 24 and August 10, 1854. Moore blamed Barlow for passing on unsubstantiated rumour, thereby confirming himself as the source. He also reiterated Dennistoun's responsibility for the German pictures, which Moore still had not seen. Moore, "The Purchases at the National Gallery," *Morning Post*, July 18, 1854, 6.

⁴⁵² "The National Gallery," August 10, 1854, 3.

of Commons. Where Gladstone had not even been able to say how many pictures had been bought, Barlow could explain the differences between Parts I-III of Krüger's collection, and believed seventy two had been purchased (he was unaware of the exclusions). This attempt to limit the damage to his reputation cannot have worked because Barlow's letters to the paper dwindled significantly after this point and he never achieved the same status as an art critic as he did a Dante scholar.⁴⁵³

Contrary to his earlier condemnation of Gladstone's purchases, in this last letter Barlow defended the acquisition, and even claimed to have recommended its purchase to Prince Albert in Spring 1854.⁴⁵⁴ This recommendation must have been made around the time Gladstone was concluding negotiations with Krüger, and is therefore unlikely to have been the cause. Barlow admitted the Prince had not responded, and that he had only later heard the collection had been bought. There is no evidence he passed the recommendation to Dyce or Gladstone with whom he seems not to have been acquainted.⁴⁵⁵ It does raise the tantalizing possibility that Prince Albert was somehow involved. What is striking is that Barlow later imagined himself somehow responsible for the Krüger acquisition, and that it was something for which he could take credit. His *Memoirs* written long after the collection had

⁴⁵³ Barlow reviewed the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, September 24, 1857, and penned a handful of letters on the Royal Academy in the 1860s. He was knighted in Italy for his services to Dante scholarship in 1865 and corresponded with leading Dante scholars and enthusiasts from Europe and the US, BARLOW/, 165-264.

⁴⁵⁴ He had told Krüger he would recommend its purchase on his return to England, and did so through a letter to Prince Albert's private secretary, Hon. Col. Grey. There is no trace of his letter in the Barlow Papers or Royal Archives. Friendly communication from Miss Pamela Clark, Senior Archivist at the Royal Archives, October 28, 2014.

⁴⁵⁵ No references BARLOW/, DP or Gladstone's *Diaries*.

been negatively received, and ignominiously dispersed through sale and loan, recited his recommendation to Prince Albert and altered the timing to imply the acquisition followed his intervention.⁴⁵⁶ Barlow's positive opinion of the collection was therefore maintained against public opinion and in spite of his low opinion of Gladstone and Dyce on art matters, and persisted even when Dyce and Gladstone fell silent on the matter.⁴⁵⁷

Barlow believed the principal value of Krüger's pictures was their historical importance as a whole collection, rather than isolated specimens from it. He described for readers how the group of Westphalian paintings in Section I of Krüger's collection was:

unique, and though of very second-rate artistic importance - in many cases no artistic importance at all - yet historically it was of great interest...We have here an epoch of art... more completely represented by this collection, and which makes its chief value, than... elsewhere in any part of Europe; it is history in itself. Select a page or two from this history, and disperse the rest, the whole thing becomes valueless; you have culled one or two beauties, but the memorial of art is gone.⁴⁵⁸

Gladstone could do what he pleased with paintings from Section II of Krüger's collection, but Barlow insisted it was his "*positive duty*" to keep the Westphalian pictures together. Since Gladstone had not bought the collection to please public

⁴⁵⁶ Barlow claims the acquisition occurred the year following his letter. Barlow, *Memoir*, 10.

⁴⁵⁷ His low opinion on Gladstone and Dyce was expressed before the acquisition in "The National Gallery and Morris Moore," *The Morning Post*, April 7, 1853, 6, and "Notes on the Exhibition in London," 1850, BARLOW/150/1.

⁴⁵⁸ "The National Gallery," *Morning Post*, August 10, 1854, 3.

taste, he argued there was no justification for deciding now which were “fit” for the Gallery.

This position sits uneasily with Barlow’s previous statements in *The Morning Post* that one did not want “*curiosities* in our gallery, but *works of art*”.⁴⁵⁹ He had argued the Gallery ought to contain the historical progress of painting towards its perfection, but the examples should be “model works”. He had earlier ridiculed Dyce’s argument for mere genuineness and extensiveness.⁴⁶⁰ Yet his position that this was a uniquely important historical collection that showed the development of one school over 200 years through artists who, though anonymous, could be traced by location, was remarkably close to Dyce in his Report. Barlow had observed envy among German professors of Krüger’s collection, and fully supported Krüger’s determination only to sell the collection as a whole, rather than letting the King of Prussia cream off those he wanted. He understood their historical importance was most pertinent to Germans, and that the collection “ought never to have left” there, but since the Prussian government had refused to buy it whole, England, as Germany’s “nearest kin” had a better right to the collection than southern nations.⁴⁶¹ In this Barlow exposed another belief shared with Dyce, that art manifested national character. His unfinished and unpublished *Remarks on Early German and Flemish Art* praised German artists for retaining their independent character despite Byzantine, Flemish and Italian influences, and their “taste and feeling for nature” as well as their energy. They were leaders in

⁴⁵⁹ May 24, 1854, 6 (Barlow’s italics).

⁴⁶⁰ “The National Gallery,” *Morning Post*, April 7, 1853, 6.

⁴⁶¹ “Travel Journal, for Belgium, Prussia, Berlin and Dresden, 1853,” BARLOW/150/3; and *Morning Post*, August 10, 1854, 3.

the use of colour.⁴⁶² Elsewhere he noted that German painting also had a tendency towards the fantastical, and figures that were stern, vulgar, ill-proportioned and unpleasant.⁴⁶³ Like Dyce, then, he appreciated German art for its ability to demonstrate national character and to show its historical development, while paradoxically admiring those pictures in Krüger's collection that did not exhibit the unpleasant side of German characteristics.

Like Dyce, Barlow prized the Christian sentiment of the Krüger paintings. He reassured readers of the *Morning Post* that some of the yet publically unseen Krüger pictures possessed "a certain value *per se*", identifying for them five fragments from the Liesborn Altarpiece (including an Angel with Chalice which he had not realized was excluded from the acquisition). Despite "lamentable" drawing Barlow praised them as "exquisite productions of great feeling and sentiment" with "serious beauty" that had "never been surpassed, and rarely equalled".⁴⁶⁴ His unpublished notes made during the Westphalian tour described pictures from Liesborn Abbey seen in Herr Mühlen's collection, including panels from the *Finding of the True Cross* (now in the Landesmuseum, Münster). Barlow wrote:

There is a pleasing expression and mildness in the figures and a clearness and [?] in the colouring that contrasts remarkably with the low and vulgar figures of other German schools – there is a feeling for the sentimental something like that which animated Gentile da Fabriano –

⁴⁶² BARLOW/109.

⁴⁶³ "Gallery Notes" and "Travel Journal, Belgium, Prussia, Berlin, Dresden 1853," BARLOW/150/3.

⁴⁶⁴ He cites KC I:10, 11, 13, 14 and 15. *Morning Post*, August 10, 1854, 3.

but the Liesborn Master, whoever he was, had evidently not had the advantage of Fra Angelico to guide him...⁴⁶⁵

In Dr Haindorff's collection of early Westphalian works he noted that the school's characteristically

pious sentiment and religious feeling for the beautiful and good animated the minds of these painters and led them to produce works of art which had they known better the art of painting, designing & colouring, might have compared with the most tender and pious of the Italians.... There is less mannerism in the Westphalian than in the early Cologne school – the figures are better proportioned and there is perhaps a nearer approach to the Italian.

Barlow balances the seeming contradiction between appreciating the Minden pictures because they express German national character well, with appreciating German painters who seem to emulate Italian works by arguing that it is not the Italian element *per se* that he is admiring, but rather the same pious spirit animating both schools. Barlow was Christian but not High Church, and had rather an anti-dogmatic, proto-relativistic position on religious truth.⁴⁶⁶ He believed that the same sentiment and expression of divine truth celebrated in fifteenth-century Italian art could be found in art from all times, all lands, and all religions throughout human history. It was after recognizing the pious sentiment in Westphalian and other German collections in 1853 that Barlow

⁴⁶⁵ This and the following quote from, "The Westphalian School," (unpublished notes) BARLOW/150/3.

⁴⁶⁶ He declared himself a member of the Anglican communion but thought his fortunate decision not to enter the clergy gave him the "freedom" to work out the universal principles of humanity. Barlow, *Memoir*, 22.

started working out his own global history of art that traced the progress of symbolic representation of universal principles through local manifestations.⁴⁶⁷ Like Dyce and Gladstone, he saw the most complete fulfilment of this divine truth in Renaissance Italian painters, yet the Krüger collection had unique historical value for demonstrating the way a particular nation (Germany), with all its characteristics and qualities, apprehended and represented those universal truths.⁴⁶⁸

e. **Conclusions**

Barlow's, Dyce's and Gladstone's attitudes to early German paintings were out of step with the emerging dominant opinion that favoured historical and connoisseurial models for evaluating art, but were expressed at a time when those opinions were only just beginning to be institutionalized. Their interaction with the Krüger pictures undermined, rather than enhanced their reputations in the art world. Dyce's and Barlow's opinions particularly throw light on the way those with special exposure to early German paintings developed alternative ways to evaluate it. They show how difficult it was to apply (and articulate to others) new historical criteria for assessing early German painting as a product of its own context, at the same time as upholding Italian Renaissance art as the universal standard of art, and how overlaying principles of Christian art further complicated matters. Despite claiming Christian art had introduced a new standard that was not limited to aesthetic

⁴⁶⁷ "Symbolism in Reference to Art," *Essays on Symbolism* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1866), 3.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

properties, those properties were still inherent in the best Christian art. Thus, ironically, the most valued early German Christian paintings were those that ostensibly evoked the German character while visually staying furthest away from the characteristic German love of the wild and detailed, and adhered closest to Italian and classical idioms.

The peculiar circumstances of the Gallery in 1853-54, and Dyce's relationship with Gladstone, meant he was single-handedly able to recommend the Krüger acquisition and to shape British encounters with it. Although he was unable to implement his own vision for the pictures in the Gallery, which detrimentally affected their reception here, Dyce succeeded in introducing early German painting to the National Gallery as never before or since. This was a remarkable and forward-looking transformation of the collection. It introduced a previously unrepresented school and a new type of art in unprecedented quantity, and also broke new ground in the Gallery's acquisitions of collections, opening up new possibilities of selling and loaning unwanted paintings to other Galleries. Through its acquisition and earliest display, the Krüger collection created a public space for testing new ideas about the role of the Gallery, and the place of early German paintings within it. In the next chapter I examine the evolving reception of the Krüger paintings through Eastlake's and Wornum's dealings with them at the National Gallery, and through their dispersal to other British museums against a context of new exhibition practices and art-historical literature in the later 1850s and 60s.

CHAPTER 3

“PERHAPS THE SCHOOL IS NOT LIKELY TO BECOME POPULAR WITH US”:

INTEGRATING EARLY GERMAN PAINTING INTO THE ‘CANON,’ c. 1854-63

By 1861 only four of the seventeen paintings selected by Dyce from the Krüger collection remained on display in the National Gallery. Two were Netherlandish and two were fragments from the Liesborn Altarpiece, *Saints John, Scholastica and Benedict*, and *Saints Cosmas, Damian and the Virgin* (figs. 26, 27, 55, 56).⁴⁶⁹ The rest had either been sold or loaned in 1857, or were in storage in the Gallery, labelled as superfluous. In the previous chapter I showed that Dyce had initially thought about thirty of Krüger’s pictures were worthy of a place on the Gallery’s walls, and that initial negative reception of the Krüger acquisition was linked to the way it was undertaken, to general ignorance about the school, and to initial impressions of the seventeen Krüger paintings that went on display. Those paintings, which were mostly associated with the school of Liesborn or Cologne, were thought to have fallen short aesthetically and historically of what was expected of paintings in the national collection, or at best to illustrate the inferiority of German painting. Yet for the time that they were all on display, efforts were made to integrate them with the National Gallery collection, which had broader implications for their place within the perceived ‘canon’ of art and its history that was being actively formed at this time.

⁴⁶⁹ NG 260, 261, 264, 266. See Appendix 6.

This chapter first explores how Eastlake and Wornum displayed and described the Krüger pictures to shape viewers' interactions with them. The pictures proved difficult to integrate with the rest of the collection as it was being purposefully expanded to illustrate the history of art in an increasingly inadequate building under Eastlake's Directorship. The chapter therefore then turns to how the unwanted paintings were disposed of through sale and loan in 1857 and 1861-62. The reasons why other Galleries would want the rejected Krüger pictures and the fate of the pictures after their sale or loan will mostly be reserved for Chapter Four. The focus here is instead on how Eastlake and Wornum decided which early German paintings were, or were not, worth displaying in London, the way those offered for sale were marketed, how buyers evaluated their worth, and the perceived impact of the sale on the value of the works. Eastlake's purposeful acquisitions of other early German paintings in the 1850s and early 60s are then introduced to contrast with the handling of the Krüger pictures, and these decisions are examined against the backdrop of the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857 and the new art historical and critical literature published in Britain in the 1850s and 60s. The handling of the Krüger pictures raises questions about the close reciprocity between picture display and art historical and critical texts at the heart of the British art world at this time, and the long term implications both for shaping the perceived canon, and for instructing the public in how to look at early German paintings. It also raises questions about the rift between the reception of early German paintings in public and private collections which will be addressed in more detail in Chapter Four.

3 a. Integrating Seventeen Krüger Paintings into the National Gallery 1850-60

From 1854 to 1857 Wornum displayed the seventeen Krüger paintings together with early Flemish and Italian works in the small room at the south east end of the Gallery.⁴⁷⁰ No precise plans of hangs exist so their position must be gleaned from Wornum's reports to the Trustees, which often reveal him to be juggling with ever decreasing space in William Wilkins' 1838 building, and from visitors' observations.⁴⁷¹ The lack of space and the incomplete nature of the collection prevented Wornum from displaying the collection strictly according to schools or chronology, but the Krüger pictures were presumably with the other early German and Flemish works already in the collection: the so-called "bad Holbein" portrait (fig. 1), the "Dürer" *Portrait of A Man* (fig. 3) and Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* and *Portrait of a Man* purchased in 1842 and 1851 (figs. 76 and 77). We know the Flemish works were in the same room because Wornum mentions moving them out in the 1859 rehang.⁴⁷² It is not clear if the later German works were in the same room.⁴⁷³ The Master of the Aachen Altarpiece *Crucifixion* (then thought by Aldegraver) was still not on public display (fig. 2). As Campbell points out, the Gallery's nineteenth-century

⁴⁷⁰ NG Minutes, December 18, 1854.

⁴⁷¹ On the building's plans and the problem of space: Geoffrey Tyack, "'A Gallery Worthy of the British People': James Pennethorne's Designs for the National Gallery, 1845-1867," *Architectural History* 33 (1990): 23-24; Conlin, *Nation's Mantelpiece*, 365-400, and 467-69.

⁴⁷² NG 195, 245. NG Minutes, November 20, 1859. On the Netherlandish pictures, Campbell, *Fifteenth Century Netherlandish Painting*, 176-78, 212.

⁴⁷³ The sixteenth-century portrait Eastlake purchased in 1858 as by Anthony Moro (NG 184 now Nicolas de Neufchâtel, who was born and trained in Mons but was active in Nuremberg) was placed in the South Room. For the German pictures in the collection, see Appendix 1.

attributions of Flemish or Netherlandish paintings bear little relation to those today.⁴⁷⁴ The German ones have also changed. The re-assignment of the *Virgin and Child* from “Ludger zum Ring” to a Netherlandish artist by 1889 (now the Workshop of Jean Bellegambe, fig. 43) is a reminder of the difficulties then caused by the very close relationship between German and Netherlandish schools, by limited access to illustrative examples, and by the habit of defining a painting’s worth through reference to its nation of origin.⁴⁷⁵

Wornum’s 1855 abridged catalogue of the collection offered viewers a concise scholarly historical and physical explanation of the German Krüger paintings as fragments from altarpieces. Its alphabetical arrangement foregrounded biographical details of the named artists. This emphasized the anonymity of those from Liesborn and Werden, whose masters were “unknown”.⁴⁷⁶ The fuller 1856 catalogue further highlighted the importance of artists’ names, but now authenticated the nameless Meister von Liesborn and his followers, the Meister von Werden and Ludger zum Ring as part of the canonical list of important painters. The catalogue was prefaced with a “Tabular View of the Schools of Painting” that was visually similar to the 1853 “Plan for a Collection of Paintings” drawn up for Prince Albert, which had not included those names (figs. 78 and 79).⁴⁷⁷ Their paintings were further authenticated through more detailed individual catalogue entries that briefly described their history from production to Gallery wall. The entries drew on Krüger’s catalogue

⁴⁷⁴ Campbell, *Sixteenth Century Netherlandish Paintings*, 27.

⁴⁷⁵ NG 265, *ibid.*, 78-83.

⁴⁷⁶ Wornum, *Abridged Catalogue, 1855*, 27 and 48.

⁴⁷⁷ *Catalogue, 1856*, 12-17. At 1 shilling these would only have been accessible to wealthier and more literate visitors. A digest of this for 4d, and list of pictures for 1d would not have had this level of detail. “Report on the Select Committee on Public Institutions,” PP 1860 (181), 25.

and scholarly research on the paintings, and listed their notable artistic features. For example, Wornum's entry on the "Meister von Werden" familiarized viewers with different opinions about his identity in relation to the Master of the Lyversberg Passion, Cologne, named after a series of panels formerly in the collection of Jakob Lyversberg, and Israel von Meckenen, then thought to be a prolific painter (fig. 80, Master of the Lyversberg Passion, *Wings of Passion Altar*). It encouraged visual comparisons between German paintings, instructing readers that the Werden master lacked the "softness and richness of colour" of the Meister von Liesborn.⁴⁷⁸ The entry on the Liesborn altarpiece used dramatic vocabulary to personify the fragments and give agency to them. The altarpiece was "sold and cut in pieces in 1807". Parts of it were lost but others "found a place in this gallery".⁴⁷⁹ The text gives a sense that Britain had played some part in rescuing fragments of this once great altarpiece. Wornum invited readers to examine the paintings closely and to appreciate their technical merit and visual interest. He pointed out tiny details like the heraldry in the window of *The Annunciation* (fig. 29), the brocade of costumes, and the "little Westphalian town" in *The Crucifixion with Saints* (fig. 36). Viewers were instructed to evaluate these paintings empirically, using the criteria of close observation and source-based evidence, rather than admiring Christian sentiment as in the undercurrents of Passavant's German Romantic scholarship. They functioned as specimen paintings in a gallery intended to educate in the history of art, in a building shared with the Royal Academy whose purpose was to train painters. Any philosophical or ideological evaluative framework, such as

⁴⁷⁸ NG 250-253. Wornum, *Catalogue, 1856*, 201-02.

⁴⁷⁹ NG 254-262. *Ibid.*, 99-101.

seeing these as Christian art, as quintessentially German or as occupying a particular place in the progress or decline of German or of European painting, would have to be inferred from the picture hang or be part of a viewer's predetermined perspective and wider reading.

It is clear from the reviews that critics did bring overarching perspectives of the character and inferiority of German paintings when viewing the new pictures. As we have already seen they were unconvinced by their historical or aesthetic worth, and at best saw them as genuine examples of a bad school.⁴⁸⁰ However, a series of articles in the *Illustrated London News* in 1856 found Wornum's attempts at a historical arrangement, despite limited space, conferred positive historical value on the German works. The author congratulated the Government for purchasing the German paintings and for displaying them next to Italian ones to promote comparison of the schools, and thus the "science of race... the great science of this epoch". Just as Dyce had hoped, he sees German pictures as illustrations of German character:

in a picture gallery we see at once the contrast between the genius of the North and the genius of the South. When we look into the works of the early German artists, with their erudition, their ingenuity, their persevering observation of Nature, their literal manner of translating her, and their Shakespearean juxtaposition of the sublime and vulgar, and compare them with the earlier and middle Italians, we see that they differ not only in degree but in the nature of their genius.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁸⁰ "Minor Topics of the Month," *Art-Journal*, December 1, 1854, 375.

⁴⁸¹ "Art Reform III: The National Gallery. Its Desiderata and Deficiencies," *Illustrated London News*, March 22, 1856, 306. There were five articles in the series and others on new Gallery acquisitions on February 16, March 8, November 1 and 15 and December 8 1856, and May 10, 1856.

He contrasts the “high sense of the beautiful” in the “synthetic ideal” of the South, with the “patient observation of nature and great mastery in the technical qualities” of the “analytic realist North”.⁴⁸² The articles do not specifically mention the Krüger pictures. At times the author treats all Northern art as “German” and at others distinguishes schools and masters. Some of the Liesborn altarpiece and other fragments were not an easy fit for the close realism or vulgarity expected of van Eyck or Dürer, and were instead rather closer to Italian idealism.

Wornum’s decision to rehang the “early German school” in the corridor and vestibules outside the room in the summer of 1857 may indicate his difficulties integrating them with the collection. The rehang was necessary to accommodate Eastlake’s new acquisitions on the already overcrowded walls.⁴⁸³ Wornum decided to devote the room to works of the fifteenth century, chiefly from Italy, to give it “a distinct character”. Yet he added two new Northern acquisitions to the room: another *Portrait of a Man* by Jan van Eyck (NG 290) purchased in 1857, and Cranach’s *Portrait of a Woman*, purchased at the Alton Towers sale in July 1857 (figs. 81 and 4).⁴⁸⁴ Nuechterlein has shown that this

⁴⁸² “Art Reform V: Flemish and Dutch Schools,” May 10, 1856, 515.

⁴⁸³ Excluding gifts and bequests, twenty Italian paintings were purchased in 1855 (ten with the Galvagna collection); seven Italian and two Dutch in 1856-57; thirty-four Italian (most with the Lombardi collection), one German and two Flemish in 1857; nine Italian in 1858; and twenty-four Flemish and Dutch, one German and twenty-eight Italian paintings in 1859/60 (forty-six with the Beau cousin collection, eleven of which were not required for the gallery). Figures from Annual Reports, found in: National Gallery. Copy of the Treasury Minute, dated 27 March 1855, Re-Constituting the Establishment of the National Gallery; and of the Annual Reports of the Director to the Lords of the Treasury, from the above Date to 1864 Inclusive, PP 1867 (176). Hereafter Reports will be referred to by year only.

⁴⁸⁴ NG Minutes, November 16, 1857.

Cranach purchase illustrated Eastlake's preference for German portraiture over other genres, and his appreciation for well-executed and technically masterful works by known masters. There were no other Cranachs in the collection and Eastlake had not recommended any of the Cranachs offered at the Bammerville sale in 1854.⁴⁸⁵ However, he actively sought early German religious paintings for the collection in the early 1860s, which suggests his decision was less to do with preference for portraiture than for exemplary genuine works by known masters. The removal of the Krüger paintings into the corridors hints they were considered peripheral to the Gallery's collection of fifteenth-century paintings, and should be moved aside to make room for more important acquisitions. Visitors recognized the semiotic function of picture hangs. One review of the new arrangements hinted how difficult it would be to linger before some of the early Italian paintings in the "narrow closets" where they were deliberately hung so that visitors would see them *on the way* to the dazzling sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italian works in the larger rooms.⁴⁸⁶ The corridor was literally and conceptually part of the progress through art's history. There were of course no comparatively 'dazzling' large-scale German paintings. Their corridor location likely underscored the presumed primitiveness of these particular paintings, as well as the failure of the German school as a whole to progress.

⁴⁸⁵ Appendix 5b. Nuechterlein, "German Renaissance Art," 92-93.

⁴⁸⁶ "The National Gallery," *Illustrated London News*, August 14, 1858, 149.

3 b. Disposing of Unwanted Krüger Paintings, 1857

Meanwhile Eastlake and Wornum had rid the Gallery of the other forty-seven Krüger paintings that had not been displayed at all. Unlike Barlow or Dyce they did not think it worth keeping the collection together, or displaying more of them to illustrate the peculiar rise and decline of the Westphalian school. Eastlake was skeptical about introducing paintings from the decline of schools however historically inclusive they were. His primary concern was to collect early Italian paintings, and only the best or most important specimens of any master.⁴⁸⁷ Soon after his appointment as Director, Eastlake set about disposing of the remainder of the Krüger pictures by sale and loan, which only became possible after he pressed for a change in the law.⁴⁸⁸ The National Gallery Act in 1856 allowed the sale of paintings that had not been donated or bequeathed.⁴⁸⁹ Eastlake drew up a list of forty-seven unwanted paintings from the Krüger collection and eight from the Galvagna collection bought in Venice in 1855 (Appendix 7). No-one seems to have opposed the sale. Not even Gladstone recorded his thoughts when he inspected the pictures before sale.⁴⁹⁰ As Robertson suggested, it was accepted that a competent gardener removes

⁴⁸⁷ Eastlake to Trustees, March 3, 1856 and Director's Report, 1856, Appendix 9, 31. See also Eastlake's correspondence with Wornum over the purchase of Gerard ter Borch's *Portrait of a Young Man* (NG 1399) for the Gallery at the Northwick sale in 1859, which he decided at the time was not important enough and kept it for his own collection. It entered the collection later. NG 32/71, 61 and 62, cited in Bradbury and Penny, "The Picture Collecting of Lord Northwick: Part II," 616.

⁴⁸⁸ Director's Report 1856, 13-14.

⁴⁸⁹ National Gallery. A Bill... Intituled an Act to Extend the Powers of the Trustees and Director of the National Gallery, and to Authorize the Sale of Works of Art Belonging to the Public, PP 1856 (175). Copy also in Director's Report, 1857, Appendix 2, 45-46.

⁴⁹⁰ Noted in Wornum's Diary, February 7, 1857, NG NGA2/3/13.

weeds.⁴⁹¹ Following a request from the Board of the Governors and Guardians of the National Gallery of Ireland (then in preparation and opened in 1864), which will be discussed in Chapter Four, it was agreed they could take on loan any of those the Gallery had prepared for sale.⁴⁹² Early in 1857 George Mulvany, then on the Irish Board and the Gallery's first Director from 1862-69, inspected the unwanted pictures and took ten from the Krüger collection, six of the Italian paintings and one other offered by Eastlake (Appendix 7 and 8).⁴⁹³ Mulvany reported to the Board in Ireland that Eastlake was minded to keep four of the Krüger pictures, but generously allowed Ireland to take two of them. The other two must have been sold. The four paintings in question are not identified, but Mulvany's comment shows Eastlake did reflect on the potential value of the undisplayed pictures for the collection, and ultimately failed to find enough to warrant keeping them.

The remaining thirty-seven Krüger and two Italian works not taken by Ireland were sold at Christie's and Manson's on February 14. Together, the two Italian paintings fetched £130.9s.6d after costs, but all thirty-seven Krüger paintings raised just £230.13s.6d.⁴⁹⁴ Details of the prices paid for each Krüger

⁴⁹¹ Robertson, *Eastlake*, 163.

⁴⁹² NG Minutes, December 15, 1856.

⁴⁹³ Correspondence between the National Gallery and the Board of the National Gallery Ireland, December 9, 1856, NG NG5/98/3 January 6, NG5/212/4 and January 22, 1857, NG5/215/3; Eastlake to Wornum January 8, 1857 NG5/135/1; Wornum's Diary, January 9 and 12, 1857, NG NGA2/3/2/13; and National Gallery of Ireland Archives (hereafter NGI) Minute Book 1, January 21, 1857.

⁴⁹⁴ "Tintoretto," *The Triumph of David, a sketch* for £36 to Delissons (?); and Jacopo Bassano, *The Prodigal Son*, for £105 to Miller. The total price paid for Krüger pictures was £249.8.0. 7.5% commission was paid on both sales. Christie and Manson, *Catalogue of Pictures Not Required for the National Gallery Consisting Chiefly of a Portion of the Krüger Collection of Early German Pictures Formerly at Minden* (London: Christie and Manson, 1857).

painting are set out in Appendices 2 and 9. The most expensive was £22 and the lowest just twelve shillings. Press reports on the sale were curt and to the point: this had been a sale of miserable productions that raised little money to compensate for the cost of those barely better German paintings remaining in the Gallery. It was calculated that the seventeen still in the collection had effectively cost the nation £2,500.⁴⁹⁵ The Trustees were ordered to submit a return of the costs to Parliament, and the sums raised by the pictures were derided.⁴⁹⁶ Eastlake and the Trustees had predicted the negative impact on the market value of paintings known to have been rejected by the Gallery. Eastlake later claimed the sale “may be considered to have sufficiently proved that the public is not likely to entertain a favourable opinion of apparently discarded specimens”.⁴⁹⁷ Some in the press and in Parliament interpreted the low prices as indicative of the Krüger paintings’ inherent worthlessness: Gladstone had obviously overpaid for them in the first place.⁴⁹⁸ The 1857 sale and loan further ignited criticism of the Krüger acquisition and encouraged veteran critics of the Gallery to pursue their campaign against its perceived misuse of public funds and failure to promote British taste. For example, Francis Wymiss-Charteris,

⁴⁹⁵ In addition to the purchase price, £116.19.8 had been incurred as expenses. “Sale of National Pictures,” *Morning Chronicle*, February 17, 1857, 4; “Minor Topics of the Month,” *Art-Journal*, April 1, 1857, 131; “Fine Art Gossip,” *Athenaeum*, February 21, 1857, 251.

⁴⁹⁶ “Parliamentary Notices,” *Times*, February 19, 1857, 7; “Report on the House of Commons,” *Times*, July 3, 1857, 7; Return ordered February 25, 1857 and printed March 3, 1857, NG NG5/219/1-2 and NG5/220/2; Director’s Report, 1857, 35-37; National Gallery: Consecutive Return of the Total Expenditure Incurred in the Purchase and Transmission to this Country of the Krüger Collection of early German Pictures, Purchased for the National Gallery, PP 1857 (78), 2.

⁴⁹⁷ Eastlake to Treasury, May 21, 1860, NG NG5/313/2.

⁴⁹⁸ NG Minutes Nov 10, 1856; “The National Gallery,” *Art-Journal*, August 1, 1860, 231.

Lord Elcho (1818-1914) raised the Gallery's sale of "very bad" pictures in a parliamentary debate on the Gallery's budget, and questioned the wisdom of sending unwanted paintings from the collection on loan.⁴⁹⁹ He asked the Members for Ireland if they minded their National Gallery being the refuge for rejected pictures from London, and Coningham opined that the Krüger pictures had been sent over to corrupt the taste of the Irish nation.⁵⁰⁰ The reception of the paintings in Dublin will be addressed in Chapter Four.

A comparison with contemporary sales suggests perceptions that the auction was a failure were not altogether fair. The average cost of £11 paid for the unwanted Krüger pictures was in line with prices typically paid at auction for early German, Flemish and Italian paintings. Occasionally a painting in any of these schools could fetch hundreds of pounds but only if it was plausibly attributed to a renowned painter, was a *chef d'oeuvre*, had belonged to a respected collector, and was sold at an auction attended by high-end dealers and personnel from public galleries. For example, the Bammerville sale in 1854 attracted the attention of the National Gallery and dealers like Nieuwenhuys and Farrer. Works by "Duccio da Buoninsegna," "Masaccio," and "Fra Giovanni Beato Angelico" sold for between £278 and £630, and paintings by Cranach and "Dürer" fetched lower but still impressive prices of £158, and £147.⁵⁰¹ More usually even those attributed to leading masters in early German, Flemish and Italian schools fetched under £50, and those by lesser known schools or anonymous painters, often under £20. Appendix 5b shows that most of the

⁴⁹⁹ He went by Lord Elcho from 1855-1888, when he became 10th Earl of Wemyss (1888-1914).

⁵⁰⁰ HC Deb, July 2 1857, vol. 146 col. 822 and 827-831.

⁵⁰¹ Lots 54, 53, 57, 32 and 35. For details of the Bammerville sale see Appendix 5b.

German pictures at the cluster of sales with five or more German paintings in the 1850s fetched these lower prices. These were similar to those paid for early Flemish or Italian works at the same sales. Even the “Dürer” *Adoration of the Name of Jesus* which the Bernal sale catalogue described with unusual detail and the remark; “a most elaborate work” raised only £21.⁵⁰² These were not the only examples. Just an hour before the National Gallery sale at Christie’s and Manson’s, an auction of fifteenth- to seventeenth-century Italian, Flemish and French works fetched an average of only £6, and a “Dürer” *Adam and Eve in Paradise* failed to sell at all.⁵⁰³ It is true that although the average paid for the unwanted Krüger pictures was £11, the median was just £4; and none of the pictures fetched a particularly high price. This suggests buyers were particularly unimpressed with the Krüger pictures. And yet they all sold.

Knowledge that the paintings in the Gallery’s sale were “rejected” could have depressed their prices. Not only was it decided to state that these were unwanted pictures in the title of the catalogue, but also buyers would have been familiar with luke-warm praise for those portions of the collection displayed in the Gallery, and to rumours in the press about the dreadful quality of the rejected paintings now on offer.⁵⁰⁴ Perhaps this was why the sale failed to attract any titled buyers, members of Parliament or many high-end dealers like Colnaghi, in contrast to the Bernal, Northwick and Bammerville collection sales. However, those who argued at the time that the Krüger paintings had sold for

⁵⁰² Lot 934.

⁵⁰³ Lot 94, Christie and Manson, *A Catalogue of Gallery Pictures by Italian, German, Flemish and French Masters... February 14th, 1857* (London, 1857).

⁵⁰⁴ As discussed in Chapter Two.

“very deprecated value” were misguided.⁵⁰⁵ They were never likely to have fetched more. For a start none were by well known named artists or even by well-known schools. Even those lots associated with the Master of Liesborn, who was then represented in the National Gallery, were not his *chefs d’oeuvre*. The name Krüger was not well-known as a collector in Britain and, unusually, the sales catalogue did not introduce him.⁵⁰⁶ Instead the rare decision was taken to explain the pictures for viewers in a prefatory notice apparently intended to reassure buyers who would presumably otherwise have been unable to evaluate them. Catalogues seldom explained, as this one did, the historical background to the paintings and their anonymous masters, how their school related to more familiar ones, or that similar paintings could be found in German museums. This preface is comparable to the prefatory notice explaining the particularly poor state of paintings in a collection sold in 1850.⁵⁰⁷ As well as the unwanted Krüger pictures being from an unfamiliar school with no *chefs d’oeuvre*, the sale of so many early German paintings at once flooded whatever niche market there was for them. The Gallery’s 1857 sale was by far the biggest single influx of early German paintings to the auction market that decade. The fact all of them sold, and some for prices in line with those paid for “Dürers” and

⁵⁰⁵ For example, writing anonymously, Henry Cole, *The National Gallery Difficulties Solved, At a Cost of Eighty Thousand Instead of a Million Pounds*, Tracts upon National Promotion of Art and Science No. 1 (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans and Roberts, 1857).

⁵⁰⁶ Compare the Bernal and Northwick catalogues. Steven Adams, “‘Noising Things Abroad’: Sales Catalogues and the Construction of Value in the Early 19th-century Art Market,” paper presented at *London and The Emergence of a European Art Market (c. 1780-1820)*, National Gallery, London and Getty Research Institute Conference June 21-22, 2013.

⁵⁰⁷ Christie and Manson, *Catalogue of the Entire and Valuable Collection of Italian, Flemish, Dutch, and French Pictures, the Property of the Earl of Ashburnham: which will be sold... on July 20, 1850* (London: Christie and Manson, 1850).

“Cranachs” from reputable collections, therefore suggests the sale was surprisingly successful.

But what about the charge that Gladstone had overpaid for the Krüger collection in the first place? My brief analysis of the market for early German paintings shows the critics were right. Their calculation that the seventeen paintings left in the Gallery effectively cost the nation £2,500 would have meant the seventeen displayed in London would each have cost £147: equivalent to the price Eastlake had paid for the monogrammed “Dürer” *Portrait of a Senator* from the de Bammerville sale.⁵⁰⁸ If every lot had sold for £20, the Treasury would still only have made back just over a quarter of its initial investment in the Krüger collection. In fact, this was entirely in line with Dyce’s evaluation of the unwanted portions’ value. When Dyce recommended the collection he assumed the vast majority of its price was for the Liesborn Altarpiece and a few other fragments, and the rest were thrown into the bargain. He had over-estimated the value of those key pieces if sold individually on the British market, but had not over-estimated the remainder. He was clear with Gladstone that they would raise little at sale, but hoped they would “at least, realize enough to cover the expense of bringing the collection to England”.⁵⁰⁹ They more or less did. For Dyce, the collective value of these historical pictures was much higher than their individual value. No one at the Gallery or at the 1857 sale evaluated them on those historically illustrative terms.

⁵⁰⁸ “Sale of National Pictures,” *Morning Chronicle*, February 17, 1857, 4. Even if the ten pictures taken by Ireland are included in the calculation the retained Krüger pictures would have cost £90 each on average.

⁵⁰⁹ Dyce, “Report.”

To whom, then, were the Gallery's unwanted pictures successfully marketed? Apart from one collector who bought six lots, the purchasers were probably all dealers who would have acquired the paintings as commodities with a reasonable chance of making a profit at resale. Appendix 9 groups the lots according to their buyers' names. Those names have long been known, but new evidence of their identities set out in Appendix 10 shows some of them were already experienced dealers in German and other early paintings. The names Hermann, Anthony, Watson and Rigge appear regularly at contemporary auctions buying modestly or low priced paintings from a variety of schools, likely for eclectic dealerships. For example, Anthony, Watson and Hermann purchased some of the German paintings at the cluster of sales identified in Appendix 5b. Hermann's seemingly indiscriminate purchases for £60 of fourteen Krüger pictures by a variety of painters contrasts with Watson's purchase of five (including three of the most expensive) for £84.10s. When the private collections into which these paintings passed are discussed in Chapter Four, it will become clear that Watson likely had specific clients or contacts in mind, whereas Hermann was buying more prospectively.

Graves also appears frequently at sales. Henry and Francis Graves of Graves and Co. were experienced dealers acting on behalf of collectors at the higher end of the market. For example, Graves purchased Cranach's *Christ Blessing the Little Children* at the Bammerville sale that Eastlake had decided not to recommend to the Trustees of the National Gallery. As Nuechterlein has pointed out, the painting soon passed into the collection of one of the Trustees, Thomas Baring, who would have known Eastlake thought it a genuine and well-

executed work, though not one that “pleased” him.⁵¹⁰ Graves may have been a “go-to” dealer for collectors like Baring, Bammerville and Northwick with an interest in German paintings or prints, in which they also had expertise. It is therefore significant that Graves attended the National Gallery sale, and that he or they only bought one painting there, because it suggests a very restricted resale market. It is tempting to think Graves purchased the *Virgin and Child in Glory* by the “Meister von Soest” (fig. 42) because of its similarity to the many prints of this subject, like that of Israel von Meckenem’s *Madonna on the Crescent with Angels* (fig. 82).⁵¹¹ Alternatively, they may have known there was already a similar painting to this in Lord Elcho’s collection at Gosford House (fig. 83 Cologne painter, *Virgin and Child in Glory*).⁵¹² This makes Elcho’s criticism of the unwanted “very bad” Krüger pictures difficult to defend. It suggests he had either not seen them, or thought them relatively poor quality.

All these dealers would have been knowledgeable about market values from priced catalogues and from attending contemporary sales.⁵¹³ A number of factors impacted the relative value buyers put on the paintings, as seen in the four charts of Appendix 11. Although there is no visual record of some of the pictures we know their sizes from Krüger’s catalogue. Larger paintings typically fetched more at auctions, and this was generally true for the National Gallery

⁵¹⁰ Nuechterlein, “German Renaissance Art,” 83.

⁵¹¹ Several different versions of this composition are in *The Illustrated Bartsch*.

⁵¹² Acquired by the 7th Earl (1723-1808). No. 23, called “Soest” in Colin Thompson, *Pictures from Gosford House lent by the Earl of Wemyss and March: 10th August to 15th September 1957, exh. cat.* (Edinburgh: National Gallery of Scotland: Arts Council Scottish Committee, 1957). No. 3, Grossmann and Cleveland, *German Art, 1400-1800*. Waagen did not mention it in Waagen, *Galleries and Cabinets*, 437-41.

⁵¹³ Use of published priced catalogues by dealers is highlighted in Westgarth, “Florid Looking Speculators,” 39.

sale, as Chart (i) shows. However, there were some unconventionally shaped lots at the sale: the Bielefeld wing fragments were wide but not tall and would have been difficult to display in dealer shops or private collections. Charts (ii) and (iii) show that conventionally shaped lots fetched the higher prices. Miyamoto's study of the way earlier auctioneers choreographed the order of lots at sales to signal and create crescendos of value is apparent in the National Gallery sale.⁵¹⁴ Christie and Manson made only minor changes to the order of lots from Krüger's catalogue, putting paintings from the same chapel into their correct narrative sequence. However, they moved the largest picture (*The Crucifixion with Six Saints Below* by the "Meister von Corvey") from the middle of the original order to the very end, as if a crescendo of the sale.⁵¹⁵ Chart (iv) indicates buyers partially responded to these sequencing signals, with earliest lots realizing low prices (£8 or much less), rising in peaks through the middle, then dropping before a final rise in price for the last lot.

The decision to explain the history and nameless attributions of the paintings in the catalogue does not appear to have had more than a subtle impact on valuation by dealer buyers. Paintings associated with Liesborn did tend to do better, but the three most expensive lots were by different artists and of different styles (figs. 41, 32 and 48).⁵¹⁶ What they had in common was their complex multi-figured compositions of narrative events with skilled handling of varied poses, gestures and draperies and, as far as can be seen, careful finish.

⁵¹⁴ Bénédicte Miyamoto, "Making Pictures Marketable: Expertise and the Georgian Art Market," in *Marketing Art in the British Isles, 1700 to the Present*, ed. Charlotte Gould and Sophie Mesplède (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 127.

⁵¹⁵ Lots 4-9, and lots 22-27 were re-arranged into narrative sequence. Lot 39 had been in Part I of Krüger's collection but was placed after all of Part II.

⁵¹⁶ Lots 10, 15 and 22: 15 now only known through a black and white photograph.

Contemporary catalogues pointed out the value of these features to buyers; for example at the Bammerville sale Cranach's *Christ Blessing the Little Children* was described as "one of his most important works, for the number of figures, the correctness of design, and the enamel like solidity of the texture."⁵¹⁷ When the Master of the Bartholomew Altar's *St. Peter and St. Dorothea* was displayed (as by Lucas van Leyden) at Kensington Palace in 1848 it was praised as a remarkable technical achievement: the "excessive care" taken in pigment preparation and delicacy of application made St. Dorothea's robe "the very perfection of manipulative art" (fig. 84).⁵¹⁸ Unlike the National Gallery, dealers at the 1857 sale were not looking for the best specimens of particular masters of historical significance, but rather for generically marketable paintings of pleasing appearance for private display.

The collector who bought six lots at the National Gallery sale was closer to the kind of buyer Christie and Manson were targeting with their catalogue: someone with an appreciation for history and historical scholarship, for Christian sentiment in art, for works with the prestige of belonging to the National Gallery, and for the rare opportunity the sale afforded to purchase works that seldom came to market at prices a man of modest wealth could afford. Reverend William Buckley (d. 1892) was a former fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford where he had been Professor of Anglo-Saxon. He was Professor of Classical Literature at the East India College when Brasenose offered him the living of All Saints, Middleton Cheney, Oxfordshire, to which he moved in 1857.

⁵¹⁷ Lot 32. See Appendix 5b.

⁵¹⁸ "The Collection of Pictures Belonging to H.S.H Prince Louis of Oettingen Wallerstein," *Athenaeum*, July 22, 1848, 729-732, at 731.

He continued his academic pursuits from there.⁵¹⁹ Buckley appears to have gone on a spending spree with family money to furnish his new home in the rectory. He bought several lots at another sale in February 1857, and spent £27.8.0, or about 5% of his annual income on six paintings at the National Gallery sale.⁵²⁰ He otherwise had a collection of water-colours and about forty paintings including a small number of early Italian, Flemish and Spanish religious works and some drawings.⁵²¹ But his greatest love was books and prints, and when his book collection was sold after his death it attracted world-wide attention. Among them was a copy of the Nuremberg Chronicle from 1493, and prints by Holbein and Dürer.⁵²² The six Krüger paintings Buckley purchased were all either associated with the Liesborn school or the “Meister von Soest,” and were

⁵¹⁹ Obituaries in *Northampton Mercury*, March 25, 1892, 7; *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, March 26, 1892, 5; *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, May 6, 1892; “Roxburghe Club,” accessed January 9, 2015. <http://www.roxburgheclub.org.uk>; Frederick Charles Danvers, *Memorials of Old Haileybury College* (Westminster: Constable and Co, 1894), 194-96; “Buckley,” John Crockford, *Crockford's Clerical Dictionary for 1865, Being a Biographical and Statistical Book of Reference for Facts Relating to the Clergy and the Church* (London: John Crockford, 1865), 91. Thanks to Nancy Long, Bob Hunter, David Thornton and the Middleton Cheney Historical Society for kindly sharing their notes on Buckley and his church restorations.

⁵²⁰ Buckley's name appears in Lugt from 1857. His income was about £460 a year. He purchased pictures and objects of art in Christie and Manson, *Catalogue of the Extensive and Valuable Collection of Works of Art formed by that Distinguished Amateur Edward Vernon Utterson Esq FRS...24th February 1857* (London: Christie and Manson, 1857). Christie's archive priced copy.

⁵²¹ Robinson, Fisher, and Co, *A Catalogue of a Collection of Pictures by Old and Modern Masters and Water-colour Drawings by Direction of the Trustees of the Rev. W. E. Buckley, deceased...* (London: Doherty & Co, 1917). On middle class collecting see Westgarth and Jones, *A Biographical Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Antique and Curiosity Dealers*, 10; Dianne Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class: Money and the Making of Cultural Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁵²² Auctioned in February 1893 and April 1894 at Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge. “Sales of Books and Autographs,” *Times*, March 2, 1893, 3; “A Library Rich in Oxford Books,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, December 17, 1892, 4; “Chit Chat,” *Evening Telegraph and Sheffield Daily Times*, March 2, 1893, 2.

of joyful subjects or saints. They would have contributed to his self-expression as an educated man of some means and taste, and to his interest in Christian and Pre-Raphaelite art. He later undertook extensive renovations of the parish church under George Gilbert Scott, and was friendly with members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, many of whom designed its stained glass windows with William Morris and his firm.⁵²³ The historical value of the Krüger pictures was important enough to him that he kept a record of their provenance, although by the time his collection was sold twenty-five years after his death some of the information was garbled.⁵²⁴

Whether Buckley bought his six Krüger paintings for the kudos of owning former National Gallery property, for the intellectual pleasure of these historically interesting paintings, for their aesthetic properties, links to prints, or Christian sentiment in line with Pre-Raphaelite interests, or for a combination of these reasons, he represented the niche market for early German paintings to which the other dealer-buyers at the sale would seek to re-sell their purchases.

⁵²³ The restorations were 1864-5, and the windows from 1865. Parish Records for All Saints, Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire Record Office, 211p/501, "A Sermon Preached at the Re-Opening of the Parish Church of All Saints... after Restoration," 211/502/1, and newspaper clipping 211/501/2; Service of Dedication for the Windows, 211/503/1; and Plan of Restoration 109*/1-2; Middleton Cheney Parish, *Middleton Cheney Parish Booklet*, (Middleton Cheney: Bob Hunter, 2012); Simon Jenkins, *England's Thousand Best Churches. Revised Edition*. (London: Penguin, 2009), 496-97; Bill Waters, *Angels & Icons: Pre-Raphaelite Stained Glass, 1850-1870* (Worcester, England: Seraphim Press, 2012); Albert Sewter, *The Stained Glass of William Morris and his Circle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

⁵²⁴ Five of his pictures are listed as having been "purchased from the Trustees of the National Gallery in 1857" and attributed to "Kruger" (sic). The sixth was listed separately as the "Lisbon School. From the Cloister at Lisbon."

3 c. Weeding out “Superfluous” Krüger Paintings, 1861-62

However unrealistic expectations had been for the sale, the perception that it was a failure had implications for the reception of the seventeen paintings that remained on the Gallery’s walls. In 1860 the *Art-Journal* argued Eastlake had not gone far enough to weed out the unwanted Krüger pictures: there were still too many in the Gallery. It accepted the need for “works of this character” to illustrate the “dry manner and quaint conceptions of the schools of Cologne and Liesborn”, but opined that the Liesborn panels alone would amply supply the Gallery’s needs. The others were “not sufficiently various as to times and styles” to justify their number. The only reason they were not sold off was “the ruinous discrepancy between the buying and the selling prices”.⁵²⁵ Indeed, a key impact of the 1857 sale was that it convinced the Gallery to loan rather than sell unwanted pictures in future.⁵²⁶

The *Art-Journal* had a point. Of the eighteen pre-1600 paintings believed to be German on display in the Gallery in 1860, fifteen were attributed to just eight Westphalian or Cologne painters of roughly the same date.⁵²⁷ This compares to the more numerous and diverse seventy-eight named Italian artists from ten distinct Italian schools of the equivalent era.

Diversity added value because the Gallery’s role was seen as displaying specimens, not an exhaustive historical illustration. The press congratulated the

⁵²⁵ “The National Gallery,” *Art-Journal*, August 1, 1860, 231.

⁵²⁶ For example, the decision to loan rather than sell the unwanted portions of the Beaucousin collection: Eastlake to Treasury, May 21 1860, NG NG5/313/2.

⁵²⁷ Accepting the attributions in the 1860 catalogue, these were NG 250-264, 266. The others were attributed to Cranach (NG 291), Schoen (NG 658), Dürer (NG 254) and an anonymous painter (NG 195).

Gallery for acquiring specimens that filled “blanks in the chronological series illustrative of all schools”, including Cranach’s *Portrait of a Woman*, and “Schoen’s” *Death of the Virgin* acquired with the Beaucousin collection in 1860 (now after Hugo van der Goes).⁵²⁸ By 1859 critic Joseph Bevington Atkinson believed the collection varied enough to partially represent “all tastes... all schools, all nationalities... and has thus attained universality”. While the visitor ought to be instructed to “rightly appreciate the true greatness of the Italian masters”, and bask in their glory he also “may grope in the darkness of the darkest age”.⁵²⁹

For all his preference for early Italian paintings Eastlake believed the Gallery’s need for them was exhausted by the early 1860s.⁵³⁰ His successor William Boxall (1800-79, Director 1866-74) disagreed and continued to buy Italian works, although from a slightly later period than Eastlake had. He did not buy early German pictures. Boxall’s description of his tour of the Cologne museum in a letter to Wornum in 1867 reveals his dissatisfaction with needless repetition of early German paintings there. It also shows how much more valuable the Italian rather than German school would continue to be to the National Gallery. Boxall wrote of seeing some “very desirable things” in Cologne but “if half of the collection were destroyed visitors would be saved an

⁵²⁸ NG 291 and 658. For example, *Illustrated London News* reviews of new purchases, “Interesting Additions to the National Gallery,” November 1, 1856, 452; “Acquisitions at the National Gallery,” December 19, 1857, 612 and “The Beaucousin Collection,” November 24, 1860, 498-99. See Appendix 1, and Campbell, *Fifteenth Century Netherlandish*, 248-53.

⁵²⁹ Atkinson, “National Gallery,” 715.

⁵³⁰ Avery-Quash, “The Growth of Interest in Early Italian Painting in Britain with Particular Reference to Pictures in the National Gallery,” xxxi, citing his letter to Gladstone July 1859, BL Add. MS 44589.

immensity of trouble... perhaps the school (Cologne) is not likely to become popular with us".⁵³¹

The crisis of space at the Gallery was a good reason for avoiding redundancy. With Eastlake's acquisitions, bequests and gifts the displayed collection had swelled from 266 pictures in 1855 to 393 in 1860.⁵³² Forty-six paintings were acquired at one stroke from the Beaucousin sale in 1860, and screens had to be erected to accommodate the thirty-five intended for display.⁵³³ Wornum's attempts to rehang the collection during the annual gallery closures and the introduction of screens stretched exhibition capacity, but were not enough.⁵³⁴ The problem of whether to move the Royal Academy out, to move the Gallery to the new site at South Kensington, or to expand or rebuild it in Trafalgar Square dragged on until Pennethorne's scaled down extensions on its present site were finally approved in 1860, and a major rehang followed the works.⁵³⁵ When the Gallery reopened in May 1861 with a new long gallery and different corridor and vestibule spaces around the other rooms the

⁵³¹ Boxall to Wornum, September 6, 1867, NG NG5/170/5.

⁵³² Exclusive of the Vernon collection in 1855, and the Vernon and Turner collections in 1860. Wornum, *Abridged Catalogue, 1855, 2; Catalogue Descriptive and Historical* (London: Eyre and Spittiswoode, 1860), 6; Report... on Public Institutions, PP 1860 (181), 25.

⁵³³ Purchased from Edmond Beaucousin for £9, 205.3s. Eleven were "not required" for the National Gallery. NG Minutes February 2 and March 12, 1860; Director's Report, 1860.

⁵³⁴ It is not clear what happened to the Krüger pictures in 1859, when Wornum rehung all the Flemish and Dutch pictures in a room of their own, leaving the South room to mostly Italian fifteenth-century works. NG Minutes November 30, 1859 and February 2, 1860. Wornum's Diary, February –June 1860, NG NGA2/3/2/13.

⁵³⁵ Tyack, "A Gallery Worthy of the British People," 23-34; Conlin, *Nation's Mantelpiece*, 365-400 and 467-69. "Report, Site Commission" PP 1857 (2261).

early German pictures were again displayed next to the earliest Italian works.

The group now included "Schoen's" *The Death of the Virgin*.⁵³⁶

One critic praised the new hang in terms reminiscent of the review cited earlier, for promoting comparative evaluation of German and Italian art to illustrate the former's inferiority:

And here let us observe that it affords a singular illustration of the importance of the revival movement in Italy, to compare the, as yet imperfect, performances of that school, with the equally imperfect but still cruder efforts of German art of a century or two centuries later – the gushings of young aspiring genius with the pale efforts of decayed art – impetuous, onward-moving youth with paralytic, soulless, second childhood.⁵³⁷

The German pictures were essentially functioning like the "Chamber of Horrors" in Cole's *False Principles of Design* exhibition. This short-lived exhibition in the Museum of Manufactures at Marlborough House in 1852 aimed to instruct the public in good taste by showing them its opposite.⁵³⁸ Early German paintings proved the superiority of Italian ones, even when both were at a crude state of development, chiefly because German art failed to progress towards the glorious Italian High Renaissance. While this was exactly what Dyce had intended by the acquisition it ultimately contradicted his vision that the best of the pictures were accomplished expressions of Christian sentiment in a German form that was reminiscent of Raphaellesque idealism, and that there was

⁵³⁶ Wornum's Diary, January-May, 1861, NG NGA2/3/2/13.

⁵³⁷ "The National Gallery," *Illustrated London News*, June 15, 1861, 546.

⁵³⁸ Anthony Burton, "The Uses of the South Kensington Art Collections," *Journal of the History of Collections* 14, no. 1 (2002): 82.

instructive value in illustrating the progress and decline of the Westphalian school in itself. Moreover, it compromised the idea that the Gallery ought not to display any bad pictures.

In July 1861 Eastlake placed thirteen of the Krüger pictures on the list of thirty-eight “superfluous” paintings, that he and the Trustees agreed could be withdrawn from the National Gallery “without impairing the efficiency thereof” (see Appendix 12).⁵³⁹ There were two immediate practical reasons for drawing up this list. The first was that the Department for Science and Art (DS&A) which had oversight of the Kensington Museum (opened in 1857), the new National Galleries of Ireland and Scotland and some local municipal institutions had for some time been complaining of the unfair concentration of the nation’s art in London, and asking for a share of it through loan or gift.⁵⁴⁰ Eastlake drew up the list of thirty-eight pictures in July 1861 in response to a specific request from the Committee of Council on Education (CCE; with oversight of the DS&A), to have control of all the Gallery’s “superfluous” pictures.⁵⁴¹

The second reason was there was not enough room to display them. The crisis of space at the Gallery had meant some of its larger paintings and the Turner and Vernon bequests had been in a satellite gallery at the South Kensington museum after Parliament voted to grant temporary room for them

⁵³⁹ NG Minutes, July 22, 1861; Eastlake to Treasury, July 25, 1861, copy in Director’s Report, 1862, Appendix 3, 112-14.

⁵⁴⁰ For example, there were rival claims for surplus works from the Beaucousin collection from Scotland, Ireland, Bristol and Kensington. Eastlake to Treasury, May 21, 1860, NG NG5/313/2.

⁵⁴¹ NG Minutes July 22, 1861; a copy of the CCE’s request via the Treasury, NG NG5/339/3.

there.⁵⁴² Political and philosophical differences between the Gallery and the South Kensington Museum, headed by Cole with Richard Redgrave (1804-88) as first Keeper of Paintings there, led to strained relations. The Trustees believed South Kensington was attempting to usurp their control of the pictures and they repeatedly insisted the paintings be displayed according to the Gallery's regulations, rather than those of South Kensington.⁵⁴³ To meet the terms of Turner's will eighty-two pictures had to be returned to the Gallery, which coincided with the Trustees' need to wrest control of them back from South Kensington. The Gallery's future funding was also at stake; the Treasury was ill disposed to fund more purchases when there was no room to display them.⁵⁴⁴ The Turner pictures were therefore returned to the Gallery on September 24, 1861. Squeezing them into Pennethorne's new building was likened to "putting a quart into a pint pot" and the thirty-eight "superfluous" pictures were taken down and placed in the basement the same day to make space for them.⁵⁴⁵

From Wornum's brief comment in his diary it is clear that he was not in agreement with Eastlake: "some of these pictures too good to be removed"(sic).⁵⁴⁶ The following June when he, Lord Elcho and William Johnstone, the Curator of the National Gallery of Scotland were inspecting the removed pictures together, Wornum was more explicit about his

⁵⁴² Before this the British pictures were at Marlborough House. The Board discussed temporary storage at South Kensington early in 1859, and the transfer happened later that year. NG Minutes January 3, and November 30, 1859.

⁵⁴³ NG Minutes, January 3-November 30, 1859.

⁵⁴⁴ NG Minutes April 30, 1860.

⁵⁴⁵ "The National Gallery," *Illustrated London News*, June 15, 1861, 546. Frames of some of the Turner pictures had to be removed to make room for them. NG Minutes, July 22 and December 5, 1861; Wornum's Diary, September-October, 1861, NG NGA2/3/2/13.

⁵⁴⁶ Wornum's Diary, September 4, 1861.

disappointment at the removal of one of the “Master of Werden” pictures in particular. Given his earlier criticism of the acquisition it is ironic that Lord Elcho shared his view:

Lord Elcho regretted the removal of the two Guidos, the Poussin and the Conversion of St. Hubert by the Meister von Werden, I also very much regret ‘the Conversion of St. Hubert’ – it is one of the most interesting old German pictures I know.⁵⁴⁷

Unfortunately we do not know what Wornum thought of the other Krüger pictures, but clearly he appreciated the *Conversion of St. Hubert* enough to single it out for comment. His appreciation of this particular panel is further evidence of the level of connoisseurial skill he later displayed in the Meyer Madonna dispute.⁵⁴⁸ Of the four panels in this group from Krüger’s collection, the *Conversion* has consistently been judged the highest quality. Analysis of the underdrawing of these paintings reveals it to have been the only one to have undergone compositional changes, suggesting the hand of the Master of the life of the Virgin himself, where the others are workshop productions.⁵⁴⁹

Eastlake’s decisions in 1861 reflect the relative value he placed on any given picture taking up limited wall space. There was no question that the Turner and Vernon pictures, though housed elsewhere, were important and permanent to the national collection. So too were around ninety Italian works purchased or presented since the Krüger collection acquisition, for which wall space was found. Four Italian works from before 1600 were among the

⁵⁴⁷ Wornum’s Diary, June 18, 1862.

⁵⁴⁸ See Chapter 1 h.

⁵⁴⁹ See Appendix 2. Foister, notes for *The German Paintings Before 1800*, forthcoming.

superfluous pictures, but there were far more German works from this period than any other single school or period among the removed works.⁵⁵⁰ These decisions were purposeful. Eastlake was honing the collection to best express the Gallery's purpose and the rationale for its funding.

Some clue to the way practical and procedural matters were used to hide or excuse more subjective evaluations of the worth of paintings can be seen in the designation of the pictures as "superfluous." Eastlake had carefully defined this term in 1860 when dealing with unwanted pictures from the acquisition of the Beaucousin collection. Having been stung by Krüger sale, it was deemed better to loan them to other Galleries. Eastlake defined four classes of superfluous pictures:

1. Pictures not exhibited, forming the less eligible part of collections purchased in their entire state.
2. Pictures exhibited, which, however meritorious, may have been rendered comparatively superfluous by the subsequent acquisition of superior specimens.
3. Pictures exhibited, which, for whatever cause, may by universal opinion have been designated as unfit for the national collection.
4. Portions of collections, or single pictures bequeathed or presented, and for the most part not exhibited.

Eastlake recognized this last category was problematic, and explained that in the early days the Gallery had accepted "inferior" works to avoid discouraging donations.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁵⁰ Appendix 12.

⁵⁵¹ Eastlake to Treasury, May 21, 1860, NG NG5/313/2.

Ten years later Boxall believed the Krüger pictures had been amongst the first category. He explained,

In some few instances, a small collection of pictures has been purchased en bloc... with the full knowledge and recognition of the fact that some... were not desirable for the purposes of the National Gallery and might therefore be properly withdrawn... Such was the case with respect to the principal part of the pictures handed over in 1861... They were the rejected portions of the Krüger, Lombardi Baldi, and Beaucousin Collections.⁵⁵²

There is some inconsistency here because the *rejected* undesirable portions of the Krüger collection were sold in 1857, and the thirteen withdrawn in 1861 had been on display for seven years. Even allowing for interpretational errors, a further inconsistency is apparent from a report made by Johnstone, who discussed the categories with Eastlake when he inspected the Beaucousin pictures in June 1860, hoping to take some for Edinburgh. Eastlake told him that a number of pictures from category *two* were likely to be available in the near future.⁵⁵³ These turned out to be the superfluous pictures identified in July 1861.⁵⁵⁴ Not only does this suggest Eastlake had been thinking of removing the

⁵⁵² Boxall, Memorandum to Treasury Regarding the Loan of Superfluous Pictures to South Kensington Museum, the integrity of the Collection and the Inclusion of British Pictures in the National Gallery, April 12, 1870, NG NGA1/1/41/14.

⁵⁵³ Johnstone, "Report by the principal curator as to the pictures that may be obtained for the Scottish National Gallery," Letter from the Secretary, May 15, 1860; in File of Correspondence with the National Gallery, London 1860-67, National Gallery of Scotland Archives, National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh, (hereafter NGS) NGS: NG6/7/7/5.

⁵⁵⁴ They were all in the 1860 catalogue. List of Superfluous Pictures Lent to Dublin, Edinburgh and South Kensington, June 20, 1862, NG NG5/352/1;

Krüger pictures about a year before officially listing them as superfluous, but also that he was trying to avoid tarring them with the same “reject” brush that had undermined their value at the sale of 1857. Johnstone later understood the pictures on the list were superfluous because they had been replaced by “other more important specimens”.⁵⁵⁵ But aside from the “Dürer” and Cranach portraits, and the “Schoen” *Death of the Virgin*, no other examples of early German art had yet been acquired to render the Krüger samples redundant.⁵⁵⁶ In fact the loss of the thirteen pictures later in 1861 significantly reduced the presence of German art in the Gallery. The former Krüger pictures do not easily fit categories one or two, leaving us to wonder whether they were more accurately perceived as category three: exhibited works now considered unfit for the nation.

These complications in terminology point to difficulties in evaluating the worth of the early German paintings. The practical considerations I have outlined for reducing the Krüger pictures do not fully account for the decision to remove them, especially when we ask deliberately naïve questions like, why was it acceptable to have many early Italian pictures and not many German ones? What was the rationale for removing excess specimens by the Liesborn Master when there were, for example, nine works attributed to Orcagna at the time?⁵⁵⁷ Why was it justifiable to remove works by the Liesborn Master’s school and followers, when, for instance, there were two works by Fra Filippo Lippi

Johnstone to Primrose, 20 June, 1862 NGS NG6/7/5; Mulvany’s Report NGI Minutes, September 6, 1862.

⁵⁵⁵ Johnstone, “Annual Report, 30th September 1862 to 30th September 1863,” NGS: NG6/1/3.

⁵⁵⁶ NG 245, 291 and 658.

⁵⁵⁷ NG 569-578.

and one by his “school”?⁵⁵⁸ Why remove all the Meister von Werden’s works, and the only work then ascribed to the named Westphalian painter, Ludger zum Ring? The decision to retain works by some artists and not others shows how selectively and conveniently some principles were applied to suit underlying frameworks of value.

Eastlake’s designation of thirteen of the Krüger pictures as superfluous amounted to an admission that attempts to integrate them into the canon since 1854 had failed. Viewers, including and especially Eastlake, remained unconvinced of their historical or artistic importance relative to other pictures. Wornum’s and Elcho’s regret at the decision to remove the *Conversion of St. Hubert* show this perception was not universal, but under Eastlake’s leadership Dyce’s bold attempt to introduce newly discovered early German painters into the canon of Britain’s art-historical collection was largely reversed. In some senses removing the names of the followers of the Meister von Liesborn, the Meister von Werden and Ludger zum Ring from the tabular overview of German masters in the catalogue was more emphatic than removing their paintings from the gallery walls: the paintings were mere examples, but the names signified a canon of painters worthy of note (fig. 79). But of course this tabular overview only included those masters represented in the Gallery, which points to the close connection between canon building and textual representations of the history of art.

⁵⁵⁸ NG 589, 666 and 586.

3 d. New Early German Paintings for the National Gallery, 1862-3

Eastlake's purchase of the *Veronica with the Sudarium*, then thought to be by Meister Wilhelm (fig. 85), and selection of five early German paintings from the late Prince Albert's collection provide telling contrasts to the "superfluous" Krüger pictures (figs. 5, 7, 84, 86, 87). Krüger's were not the only German pictures to be refused wall space at the time: Eastlake also turned down the chance to acquire Cranach's *Woman Caught in Adultery*.⁵⁵⁹ The German paintings that were acquired were valued on the basis of empirical evidence of their attribution to a known master and their contribution to the progression of painting through transmission of influence between masters. They were also mostly by masters previously unrepresented in the collection, whose paintings were already prized in esteemed German collections, and would therefore enhance the National Gallery's reputation.

Eastlake first saw the *Veronica with the Sudarium* in Johann Peter Weyer's collection in Cologne in 1857. He thought its attribution then to Meister Wilhelm "probably genuine" and that it was "worth attention" despite his lacklustre description of the "emptiness" of Mary's head, and "Byzantine look" of Christ.⁵⁶⁰ It was a "good example of the early Cologne school".⁵⁶¹ He saw it again in 1862 when the collection was about to be sold and this time wrote to Wornum that it, and another much more "important" work by Memling, were the only ones "eligible" or "desirable" to consider purchasing (Fig. 88 *Virgin and*

⁵⁵⁹ NG Minutes, December 3, 1862.

⁵⁶⁰ Eastlake's Travel Notes, August 12, 1857, NG NG 22/14.

⁵⁶¹ Report to Trustees, NG Minutes, November 16, 1857.

Child with an Angel).⁵⁶² Eastlake's travel notebooks as a whole display a high regard for Memling in keeping with the revival of interest in early Netherlandish art at the time.⁵⁶³

His letter to Wornum suggests both would have understood the value of the Cologne painting as a genuine and well-preserved specimen to fill a gap in the Gallery's collection, as an answer to Munich's version of it from the Boisserée collection and especially because new research had increased the significance of Meister Wilhelm as the predecessor to Stephan Lochner.⁵⁶⁴ Stephan Lochner's name and the attribution to him of the *Altarpiece of the of the City Patron Saints* (or *Dombild*) in Cologne had only recently been supported by Johann Merlo's archival evidence, although this altarpiece had long been of German national significance through Romantic literature, and since archival research had shown Dürer paid to see it.⁵⁶⁵ Wornum's *Epochs of Art* had cited historical sources for "Wilhelm of Köln" and Stephan, and praised the school for its rich colouring, careful detail, technical expertise in tempera and noble

⁵⁶² Eastlake's Travel Notes, August 14, Cologne, NG NG22/30; Eastlake to Wornum, August 20, 1862, NG NG 5/142/9.

⁵⁶³ For his interest in Memling see NG NG22/14, cited in Avery-Quash, "Travel Notebooks," II: 388. On the revival of interest in Memling see Julien Chapuis, "Early Netherlandish Painting: Shifting Perspectives," in *From van Eyck to Breughel, exh. cat.*, ed. Maryan Ainsworth and Keith Christiansen (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 5-7; Borchert, "Moving Expression."

⁵⁶⁴ Eastlake to Wornum, September 7, 1862, NG NG5/120/155. On the Munich *Veronica* see Schawe, *Alte Pinakothek*, 228; Gisela Goldberg and Gisela Scheffler, eds., *Altdeutsche Gemälde, Köln und Nordwestdeutschland*, Alte Pinakothek Gemäldekataloge (München: Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlung, 1972), 395-403; Wallraf Richartz Museum and Doerner Institut, ed. *Let the Material Talk: Technology of Late-Medieval Cologne Panel Painting* (London: Archetype Publications, 2014), 222-25, no. 5; Foister, notes from *German Paintings Before 1800*.

⁵⁶⁵ Johann Jakob Merlo, "Die Meister der altkölnischen Malerschule," in *Nachrichten von dem Leben und den Werken Kölner Künstler, 1*, (Cologne: Heberle, 1852). Chapuis, *Stephan Lochner*, 14-22.

expressions (though he had disparaged its poor representation of anatomy).⁵⁶⁶

Both Wilhelm and Stephan were named in the Plan prepared for Prince Albert in 1853.⁵⁶⁷ There had been scholarly interest in Weyer's version of the *Veronica with the Sudarium*, and there was a copy of Weyer's catalogue amongst the Treasury archives relating to Dyce's trip to Minden, suggesting there had long been interest in the collection in Britain. Dyce may even have seen it in 1854.⁵⁶⁸

With this pre-established validation Eastlake acquired the Weyer *Veronica* through Mündler for £165 (including expenses) alongside the Memling for £759 in August 1862.⁵⁶⁹ Mündler was clearly delighted with the *Veronica* purchase, considering it a "capital acquisition ... by itself worth a whole campaign" and an "excellent omen" for future purchases.⁵⁷⁰ They had got something to rival the painting in Munich for a good price: Eastlake reported that the purchase had "grieved" Professor aus'm Weerth who, like some other scholars at the time, preferred this version to Munich's and had offered Mündler an extra 500 Thaler for it.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁶ Wornum, *Epochs*, 316-20. Although there is archival evidence for a "Meister Wilhelm" no paintings are now securely attributed to him.

⁵⁶⁷ SC 1853: 807.

⁵⁶⁸ TA T1/5881A, 6190/54. Johann Peter Weyer, *Beschreibung des Inhaltes der Sammlung von Gemälden älterer Meister des Johann Peter Weyer in Coeln* (Köln: Rothmann, 1852). For example, Merlo, "Die Meister der altkölnischen Malerschule," 31-35. See also Levey, *German School*, 95-96.

⁵⁶⁹ Eastlake to Wornum, September 7, 1862, NG NG5/142/10; Director's Report, 1863.

⁵⁷⁰ Mündler to Wornum, August 31, 1862, NG NG5/355/5.

⁵⁷¹ Eastlake to Wornum, September 7, 1862, NG NG5/120/155. Others thought it better or at least comparable to the Munich version, for example, Ernst Weyden, "Die h. Veronica mit dem Schweisstuche, altdeutsches Gemälde im Besitze des Hern. P. J. Weyerin Köln am Rhine," *Deutsches Kunstblatt* 1 (1851): 4-5; W. H. James Weale, "La Collection de Tableaux Anciens, Faisant Partie de la Galerie de Mr. J. P. Weyer," *Messenger des Sciences Historiques* (1862): 343-44; Levey, *German School*, 96. See also Goldberg and Scheffler, *Altdeutsche Gemälde, Köln und Nordwestdeutschland*, 395-403.

Mündler sent Wornum further historical information about the work, suggesting how difficult it was in Britain, even for those in a position such as Wornum's, to keep up with new German research on early paintings.⁵⁷² In the National Gallery catalogue Wornum described the *Veronica* as painted by "the earliest distinguished master of the school of the Lower Rhine, and the most renowned painter of his time in the north".⁵⁷³ The *Art-Journal* praised the two new purchases as valuable additions to the collection using vocabulary that illustrated the shift towards aesthetic and historical, rather than the spiritual qualities in early Cologne paintings: "All his works are remarkable for brilliancy, and for a sweetness in his conceptions of female beauty far beyond his contemporaries."⁵⁷⁴ Brilliancy and sweetness were terms used by German writers to suggest spiritual and moral value, but here they are turned to ideas of female beauty in tune with nineteenth-century academic art.

Scholarly validation and presence of similar works in rival German galleries also influenced Eastlake's selection of five early German paintings from the seventy-seven paintings of Prince Albert's collection, offered in February 1863 by Queen Victoria after his death in accordance with his wishes.⁵⁷⁵ Eastlake also accepted seventeen Netherlandish and six of his Italian paintings. At least a dozen further early German paintings were among those he

⁵⁷² Mündler to Wornum August 31, 1862, NG5/355/5.

⁵⁷³ Ralph Nicholson Wornum, *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of the Pictures in the National Gallery, with Biographical Notices of the Painters: Foreign Schools* (London: Eyre & Spottiswode, 1863), 258.

⁵⁷⁴ "Minor Topics of the Month," *Art-Journal*, January 1, 1863, 18-19.

⁵⁷⁵ Letter from Charles Phipps offering the collection, read at Board Meeting, NG Minutes February 9, 1863; and November 23, 1863.

rejected.⁵⁷⁶ It was a courageous act to decline the other pictures and suggests Eastlake had robust, defensible reasons for his selections. As Foister explains, there was not enough space for them all, and there were concerns about dominating the national collection with Prince Albert's taste.⁵⁷⁷ The early German works Eastlake did select were all then attributed to known painters of some stature who had been on the Plan drawn up for Prince Albert in 1853 – although some names had changed since then. For example, recent archival research had shown Israel van Meckenem, to whom *The Presentation in the Temple* had been attributed, was a printer rather than painter (fig. 87). Eastlake's friend Waagen published this research for British audiences in his catalogue of the Prince's collection, and in *Galleries and Cabinets of Art in Great Britain* (1857), where he called *The Presentation* one of the "best works" of the Master of the Lyversberg Passion.⁵⁷⁸ Waagen had praised all the paintings Eastlake later selected, and they had further been relatively positively received in reviews and guides when loaned by the Prince to the Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition (1857), which will be discussed further later. Two of them were included in Caldessi and Montecchi's photographic record of the highlights of the exhibition (fig. 89 *The Virgin and Child* and *SS Peter and Dorothy, in Gems of the Art Treasures Exhibition*).⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁶ Attributions all as in National Gallery records of 1863 and Gustav Friedrich Waagen, *Descriptive Catalogue of a Collection of Byzantine, Early Italian, German and Flemish Pictures, Belonging to His Royal Highness Prince Albert,...* by Dr. G. F. Waagen (London: Woodfall and Kinder, 1854).

⁵⁷⁷ Foister, "Prince Albert's German Pictures," 8-9.

⁵⁷⁸ Waagen, *Descriptive Catalogue of... Prince Albert; Galleries and Cabinets*, 223-28.

⁵⁷⁹ Nos. 379, 380, 410, 437 and 441 in *Catalogue of the Art Treasures of the United Kingdom. Collected at Manchester in 1857. Definitive Edition* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1857). For example, "Exhibition of Art Treasures at

Given the Gallery's history of declining the Oettingen-Wallerstein collection it is remarkable that it was the early German works especially that seem to have prompted Eastlake to pursue Prince Albert's pictures. During his continental tour in 1862 Eastlake saw the *Crucifixion Altarpiece* recently acquired by the Wallraf Museum and *Saint Thomas Altarpiece* then in Herr von Stein's collection, which he recognized as being very similar to the *Saint Bartholomew Altarpiece* in Munich, after whom the master was named.⁵⁸⁰ The painter had previously wrongly been called Lucas van Leyden, but the von Stein panels were by then ascribed to Meister Christoph.⁵⁸¹ Seeing these prompted Eastlake's recall of *Saints Peter and Dorothy* in the Oettingen-Wallerstein collection at Kensington that had also once been attributed to Lucas van Leyden (fig. 84).⁵⁸² The Queen had by this time intimated to Eastlake her intention regarding Prince Albert's pictures, but it was by no means official. A letter written to Wornum in September 1862 strongly suggests that Eastlake's

Manchester," *Times*, May 28, 1857, 9; "The Art Treasures Exhibition: The Ancient Masters no. 5," *The Manchester Guardian*, June 8, 1857, 3; William Blanchard Jerrold, ed. *Jerrold's Guide to the Exhibition: How to See the Art Treasures Exhibition: A Guide Systematically Arranged, to Enable Visitors to Take a View, at once Rapid and Complete, of the Art Treasures Palace* (Manchester: A Ireland and Co, 1857), 15-16. The Schongauer and "Meister Christoph" were reproduced in Caldesi and Montecchi, *Photographs of the "Gems of the Art Treasures Exhibition," Manchester, 1857*, 5 vols. (London and Manchester: P. & D. Colnaghi and T. Agnew and Sons, 1858), plates 5 and 6.

⁵⁸⁰ *The Crucifixion Altarpiece*, No. 180, acquired 1862 and *St Thomas Altarpiece*, No. 179 acquired 1868, Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne. Zehnder, *Katalog*, 422-41, Plates 265-74. *The Saint Bartholomew Altar*, Inv no. 11863-5, acquired with the Boisserée collection, 1827, Alte Pinakothek, Munich. Schawe, *Alte Pinakothek*, 192-95.

⁵⁸¹ Eastlake's Travel Diaries, August 1862, NG22/30 and 32, in Avery-Quash, "Travel Notebooks," II: 591, 620. On the identity and oeuvre of the master, Budde and Krischel, *Genie ohne Namen: der Meister des Bartholomäus-Altars, exh. cat*; Corley, *Painting and Patronage*, 219-62.

⁵⁸² Attributed by Waagen to the Cologne Master or Meister Christoph. No 46. Waagen, *Descriptive Catalogue of... Prince Albert..*

interest in having that collection for the Gallery was sparked by recalling the *Saints Peter and Dorothy* whose painter was now well represented in Cologne and Munich. He asked Wornum to inspect the collection and assess how much space it would need.⁵⁸³ Eastlake used Waagen's catalogue when he selected from the pictures once they were offered, and he later sought Waagen's advice on their hang at the Gallery.⁵⁸⁴ However, Eastlake's initial interest arose from his own connoisseurship and incredible visual memory. Despite his self-declared ignorance of German painting in 1853, Eastlake's travel notes reveal he had long been developing an understanding of German painting.⁵⁸⁵

Eastlake's decisions regarding the *Veronica* panel and Queen's gifts highlight how important historical information and competition with other museums was for injecting value into some early German paintings, value that was perceived as comparatively lacking in the Krüger ones. The introduction of six new early German paintings (five of them religious, and four associated with Cologne) so soon after removing Krüger's Cologne and Westphalian works points to perceptions of the inferiority of Krüger's paintings, rather than a disinclination to have early German paintings at all from these schools. These new additions expose how subjectively the principle of superfluity had been applied when removing the Krüger works. For example, contradicting the idea of wanting specimens rather than numerous examples, Eastlake added three

⁵⁸³ Eastlake to Wornum, September 7, 1862. NG5/142/10. Wornum visited on September 18. The two inspected it again on January 14, 1863. Wornum Diary, NGA2/3/2/13; and Eastlake to Wornum, October 1, 1862. NG5/142/12.

⁵⁸⁴ Eastlake to Wornum, January 12 and April 13 1863. NG5/152/1-2.

⁵⁸⁵ SC 1853:6172-88.

Flemish works then attributed to Joachim Patinir, and a second attributed to Schongauer (fig. 7 *Virgin and Child in the Garden*).⁵⁸⁶

Eastlake's choices also expose what might now seem ironic arbitrariness. For example, he had called the four Krüger "Meister von Werden" panels superfluous shortly before accepting the Prince's *Presentation in the Temple*, then attributed to the Master of the Lyversberg Passion (figs. 37-40 and 87).⁵⁸⁷ The Werden panels and *Presentation* are now both attributed to the Master or Workshop of the Life of the Virgin, named after a series of panels in the Munich Pinakothek, to which the *Presentation* had originally belonged (fig. 90 Master of the Life of the Virgin, *The Virgin in the Temple*).⁵⁸⁸ When Eastlake made his decisions there was already debate about how to attribute the paintings associated with these hands, and how they related to each other. It has continued to prove difficult to resolve, and attributions are now partially derived from very recent methods of analyzing underdrawings.⁵⁸⁹ Eastlake's decisions to get rid of the Krüger Werden pictures were therefore taken in light

⁵⁸⁶ *John on the Island of Patmos*, NG 717, and *St Christopher*, NG 716, both now ascribed to the Workshop or Style of the master of the Female Half Lengths; *The Crucifixion*, NG 715, now given to the Workshop of Quentin Massys; and *The Virgin and Child in the Garden*, Style of Schongauer, NG723.

⁵⁸⁷ *Two Wings of a Passion Altar (The Lyversberg Passion)*, were acquired for the Wallraf Museum in 1864, Nos. 143-150, Zehnder, *Katalog*, 345-55, Plates 225-34.

⁵⁸⁸ Oettingen-Wallerstein had the *Presentation* by 1815. The Munich panels were formerly in the Boisserée collection, now Nos. 618-624. Schawe, *Alte Pinakothek*, 206-13. On the attributions and oeuvres of the painters associated with the Master of the Lyversberg Passion and Master of the Life of the Virgin and the Master of the Legend of Saint George, and full bibliographies see Hans Schmidt, *Der Meister des Marienlebens und sein Kreis: Studie zur spätgotischen Malerei in Köln* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1978), 181-99; Corley, *Painting and Patronage*, 177-218; Schawe, *Alte Pinakothek*, 206-13; Zehnder, *Katalog*, 345-55 and 466-84; Levey, *German School*, 87-90.

⁵⁸⁹ For example, David Bomford and Rachel Billinge, *Underdrawings in Renaissance Paintings, exh. cat. National Gallery, London* (London: National Gallery Company, 2002), 112-15.

of published scholarly opinions that had attributed the Werden panels to the Master of the Lyversberg Passion, which were summarised for British readers in Wornum's 1856 Gallery catalogue.⁵⁹⁰ Crowe and Cavalcaselle had also identified the Werden panels with the Master of the Lyversberg Passion in *The Early Flemish Painters* (1857). Having visited Krüger's collection, Crowe's text described the Werden panels as if still in Minden and cited Krüger's catalogue as his source, but in a footnote acknowledged that four were then in the Gallery.⁵⁹¹ As we have already seen, Wornum highly regarded *The Conversion of St. Hubert* from this group and thought it too good to remove from display (fig. 39). Eastlake himself must therefore have considered the Werden panels inferior specimens, or he may only have come to understand the historical significance of the Master of the Lyversberg Passion/ Life of the Virgin after he had disposed of the Krüger Werden panels as superfluous, and when he examined the *Presentation* from Prince Albert's collection.

His decision had implications. After their removal from display in London, the Werden panels were effectively sidelined from art-historical discourse. The 1872 edition of *Early Flemish Painters* still mentioned them, again describing them as being in in Minden and footnoting that they had been in the National Gallery until 1860, but it gave no clue to their current whereabouts. By then they were divided between the National Gallery of Scotland and the Circulating Collection of the South Kensington Museum.⁵⁹² This means both that the Werden panels did not feature in English literature on the

⁵⁹⁰ Förster believed Krüger's pictures were by the master of the Lyversberg Passion. Wornum, *Catalogue, 1856*, 201-02.

⁵⁹¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Early Flemish Painters*, 319.

⁵⁹² *The Early Flemish Painters: Notices of their Lives and Works* (London: Murray, 1872), 355. Their dispersal is discussed in Chapter Four.

work of the Master of the Lyversberg Passion or Master of the Life of the Virgin aside from their brief mention in *Early Flemish Painters*, and also that British viewers were directed to illustrative examples of these masters in Munich and Cologne rather than more accessible examples in Britain. Eastlake had removed them from the historically illustrative National Gallery despite them entering the historical canon as it was being developed in art-historical literature. It can be seen from the public response to *The Presentation* when it went on display in 1863 that its master was now understood to be canonical. The *Art-Journal* told readers he was “the next celebrity” in the Cologne school after Stephan (sic), the pupil of the founder of the school, Master Wilhelm, and whose most celebrated work could be seen in Cologne.⁵⁹³ Not only was the painting by a known master in the progressive chain of artistic influence, but also it was London’s answer to works in German galleries that gained fame through publication in British art historical texts. There was no plan to replace the Werden panels with better specimens when they were removed in 1861, and so the Queen’s gift of the *Presentation* was a fortuitous opportunity to remedy Eastlake’s designation of them as superfluous to the Gallery.

By 1863 Eastlake had re-shaped the Gallery’s collection of early German paintings: there were now twelve specimens by ten different fifteenth- and sixteenth-century German painters. All masters were independently validated by published research (even though some remained eponymous). The religious works were almost all of a similar aesthetic: that is, closer to the soft Cologne

⁵⁹³ “The National Gallery,” *Art-Journal*, January 1, 1864, 4 referred to *The Deposition Triptych* No. 136-8, the Wallraf Museum, which had been in the Boisserée collection. Now attributed to the Master of the Life of the Virgin and Master of the Legend of St George. Zehnder, *Katalog*, 475-84, Plate 289.

style or its early interaction with Netherlandish realism than to the hard angularity and crowded compositions of other painters from the Westphalian school, or those in the Dürer or Cranach circles. The decision to remove the Krüger pictures perpetuated a canon of acceptable art according to historical and aesthetic criteria, but also shaped that canon for visitors not familiar with art or how to assess its worth, who were depending on the Gallery for their instruction. It is already clear, however, that Eastlake and the Trustees may in turn have had their attitudes to the works shaped by new publications on the history of art and the display of German art in Manchester, to which we now turn.

3 e. Views Beyond the National Gallery: The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857

As already mentioned, most of the early German paintings Eastlake selected from Prince Albert's collection had been displayed and well-reviewed at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857 and this probably contributed to Eastlake's decision to accept them for the Gallery. The Manchester exhibition displayed the largest number of examples of early German painting lent from British collections to date, offering an unprecedented opportunity to shape and test public opinion of them. Pergam's and Graham's analyses of the exhibition amply show how important it was for increasing public awareness of Northern paintings, and for promoting comparative visual

evaluation of Northern and Italian painting.⁵⁹⁴ The arrangement, by the exhibition Committee Secretary George Scharf (1820-1895), of the Ancient Masters from Italy and North of the Alps chronologically on opposite walls of Saloons A-C, was the first such juxtaposition on this scale in Britain. The sheer volume of works in their purpose-built gallery exceeded the National Gallery's thwarted efforts to present a chronological display arranged by schools. Scharf was implementing the latest ideas about picture display influenced by Waagen's work in Berlin, and his advice on how to build and arrange a Gallery published in the *Art-Journal* in 1853.⁵⁹⁵ The early German art was in Saloon A, which began with the earliest samples of classical, Byzantine and Italian painters on the end wall, progressed from Masaccio to Parmagianino on the south wall, and from Jan van Eyck to Dürer on the north. Individual Italian and Northern schools were not differentiated.

Unlike other loan exhibitions that tended to allow private collectors to send what they wanted for display, the Committee behind the Art-Treasures exhibition asked owners for specific paintings following a list of desirable works drawn up using Prince Albert's Plan of 1853 and with Waagen's advice based on his research of British collections.⁵⁹⁶ They were not successful in securing all the

⁵⁹⁴ *Catalogue of Art Treasures*. Pergam, *Art Treasures Exhibition*; Graham, *Inventing van Eyck*, 149-54.

⁵⁹⁵ The size of some pictures and selection of examples prevented him from seeing through the plan completely. George Scharf, "On the Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition, 1857," *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 10 (1857-1858); Waagen, "Thoughts on the New National Gallery," 101-03, 21-25; Pergam, *Art Treasures Exhibition*, 63-64; Melva Croal, "'The Spirit, The Flesh, and the Milliner': Hanging the Ancient Masters at the Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 87, no. 2 (2005).

⁵⁹⁶ SC 1853, Appendix XVII, 791-828; "The Spirit, The Flesh," 55, note 7; Waagen, *Treasures; Galleries and Cabinets*.

German paintings they wanted. For example, the Rev. John Fuller Russell (1818-84) declined to lend works attributed to Wohlgemuth and Dürer.⁵⁹⁷ However, about forty fifteenth- and sixteenth-century German paintings were exhibited including portraits attributed to Cranach, Holbein, Dürer, Schaufelein and Pentz, fifteenth-century religious subjects attributed to, among others, Stephan Lothener, the Master of the Lyversberg Passion, Wohlgemuth, Mattias Grünewald, Schoen, Meister Christopher, Dürer and unattributed Westphalian painters.⁵⁹⁸ Lenders came from royalty and nobility, clergy, untitled collectors, and the Liverpool Royal Institution.⁵⁹⁹ Prince Albert lent fifteen, ten of them formerly Oettingen-Wallerstein pictures.⁶⁰⁰ Among Liverpool's loans were the two wings from the Master of the Aachen Altarpiece triptych (then attributed to Wohlgemuth) whose central panel was still not on display in the National Gallery (figs. 2 and 69).⁶⁰¹ Apart from Prince Albert, earlier and religious

⁵⁹⁷ Pergam, *Art Treasures Exhibition*, 23-35 and 139.

⁵⁹⁸ Names and spellings as they appeared in the catalogue. The only later German artists represented in saloons B and C were Elzheimer and Rottenhammer. *Catalogue of Art Treasures*, 37-45. Pergam traced the German and other pictures in public collections, from which the following information is taken. *Art Treasures Exhibition*, appendix VII.

⁵⁹⁹ Pergam, *Art Treasures Exhibition*, 138 and 162-63.

⁶⁰⁰ In the catalogue as nos. 380, 379, 410, 441, 376, 377, 437, 427, 473, 442. No. 386 was from the Orford collection. The four others were Dürer, *Madonna and Child with Saints* no. 440; Holbein, *Portraits of Francis I*, and *Dr. Stokesly* (nos. 461 and 456 (456 was only in the provisional catalogue), and "Pentz", *Portrait of Erasmus*, no. 492.

⁶⁰¹ Nos. 405 and 406. Also a "Wohlgemuth" *Madonna and Child* and "School of Wohlgemuth" *Madonna and Child* nos. 417-18 (now called Hinrik Levenstede the Younger, WAG 1230 and 1231); a "School of Wohlgemuth" *Circumcision* no. 411, (now Westphalian or Lower Rhine school, WAG 1229); Cranach, *Female Sleeping by a Fountain*, no. 457 (WAG 1223), Lucas Krug *The Nativity*, no. 460, (now Flemish school, WAG 1193) and Dürer, *Birth of the Virgin* no. 484 (now after Dürer, WAG 1224). See also Wilson, *William Roscoe: Commerce and Culture*, 123.

Northern works tended to be loaned by clergy and untitled collectors.⁶⁰² Green, whom we have already encountered as part of Aders' circle and patron of Dyce, was among the latter and lent "Schoen's" *Christ before Pilate* (no. 421), and five Netherlandish works.⁶⁰³ Alexander Beresford Hope (1820-87) and Fuller Russell who each had extensive collections loaned early Italian and Northern paintings.⁶⁰⁴

Scharf's hand-picked paintings visualized a historical canon of early German paintings within the limitations of British collections. Though incomplete, Waagen thought the German school display was "sufficient to give a knowledge of its character", although he reserved his greatest praise for the assemblage of German and other schools' engravings and woodcuts.⁶⁰⁵ Some criticized the relative dearth of early German and Flemish pictures, suggesting

⁶⁰² Exceptions include the Earl of Derby who sent an Old German *Marriage of the Virgin* (428) and Earl Spencer who lent a triptych attributed to Bartolomäus de Bruyn (444). There was a similar demographic for early Italian lenders.

⁶⁰³ Three by "Rogier van der Weyden": *Ecce Homo, Adoration of Kings* (now NG 1079 and given to Gerard David) and *A Pieta* (nos. 388, 415 and 449); Quentin Matsys altarpiece with wings (416); Mabuse *Male Portrait from an altarpiece wing* (431, now NG 1081 given to a follower of Quentin Matsys). He also loaned Stothard's *Prince Arthur and his Jailers* and Dyce's *Virgin and Child* (nos 686 and 623). Pergam, *Art Treasures Exhibition*, 163; Waagen, *Treasures*, I:36, II:458; Campbell, *Fifteenth Century Netherlandish*, 14-15.

⁶⁰⁴ Beresford Hope's loans included an Early Cologne Triptych, no. 382, Early Italian *Saints in Compartments*, no.1338 and numerous medieval objects. Fuller Russell's included "Bartolomeus Bruyn" *Two Saints in a Niche*, no. 459 (now Master of the Bruges Passion Scenes, NG 1087), a "Memling" diptych no. 399, a "Quentin Matsys" *Madonna and Child*, no. 448, and fragments from Ugolino da Siena's High Altar of Santa Croce, Florence, no. 25a-f. On their collections see Waagen, *Treasures*, I: 36, II:458, 61, 64; *Galleries and Cabinets*, 189-91, 284-86; Avery-Quash, "Collector Connoisseurs," 286-91.

⁶⁰⁵ Waagen, "On the Exhibition of Art-Treasures at Manchester," *Art-Journal*, August 1 1857, 233-36, at 234.

rising consciousness of Northern art, or perhaps that these paintings did not meet preconceived ideas of it.⁶⁰⁶

Pergam and Catherine Flood have shown how the brief catalogue and longer unofficial guides, reviews and articles spawned by the Art-Treasures exhibition addressed a range of audiences from the connoisseur to the common factory hand.⁶⁰⁷ Flood's assessment of the challenging triangulation of person-painting-written text, applies particularly well to the case of early German art. Visitors were prompted by the Gallery space and comparative arrangement to exercise their own visual judgment on these early German paintings, yet the multitude of unfamiliar and (controversially) unlabelled pictures, and the predetermined teleological historical arrangement, reinforced dependence on written instructions about them. Some called the exhibition a failure because it did not explain the meaning of the works enough.⁶⁰⁸ Many reviews promulgated the idea that 'experts' had displayed early art to teach the history of art, not merely for pleasurable recreation, in contrast to the role of modern art.⁶⁰⁹

About a dozen early German paintings were among the must-see works identified in Waagen's companion to the official catalogue. Aside from the Holbein, Dürer and Pencz portraits, Waagen picked out religious paintings lent

⁶⁰⁶ "Art Treasures at Manchester," *Athenaeum* May 2, 1857, 566.

⁶⁰⁷ For example, contrast Gustav Friedrich Waagen, *A Walk Through the Art-Treasures Exhibition at Manchester, Under the Guidance of Dr. Waagen, Author of 'Treasures of Art in Great Britain'* (London: John Murray and W. H. Smith, 1857), with E. T B., *What to See and Where to See It, or The Operative's Guide to the Art Treasures Exhibition, Manchester, 1857* (Manchester: Ireland and Co., 1857). Catherine Flood, "'And Wot does the Catlog tell me?': Some Social Meanings of Nineteenth-century Catalogues and Gallery Guides," *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* 5 (2007).

⁶⁰⁸ "The Art Treasures Exhibition," *Art-Journal*, December 1, 1857: 361-63.

⁶⁰⁹ Pergam, *Art Treasures Exhibition*, 107-09.

by Prince Albert, Beresford Hope and Green.⁶¹⁰ His notes on pictures were very brief and visitors were mostly instructed to admire the sentiment and “pure expression”, colour and finish of these paintings. They were to see these fifteenth-century paintings as part of art’s progress towards true representation of nature, culminating in sixteenth-century Italy. Along with Waagen’s praise for engravings, woodcuts and drawings by Dürer, Schongauer and Holbein he indicated that German artists’ greatest skills lay either in Christian sentiment or in representing nature, inventiveness and minute finish.

While Waagen focused viewers on the merits of individual works, a series of reviews in *The Times* instructed them to observe the merits and faults of early German pictures within a historical survey. The exhibition’s arrangement illustrated art history following the well established paradigm that it reached a pinnacle in Italian fifteenth and sixteenth-century masters, while German art failed to progress.⁶¹¹ The author recommended comparing “the two great national schools” i.e. the Italian and German, along the chronological route through the rooms and to:

see how soon and how strongly the fantastic element of the German imagination fastens upon the national art, betraying itself alike in broken and angular draperies, motley and crude colouring, exaggeration of expression, and a tendency to caricature wherever personages from common life are introduced.⁶¹²

⁶¹⁰ Nos. 379, 380, 383, 386, 421, 437, 441, 462, 469, 471, 489 and 492. Waagen, *Walk Through Art-Treasures*, 16-21.

⁶¹¹ Published anonymously, May 11, 15, 22 and 28, June 4, 11, 18, 1857.

⁶¹² “Manchester Exhibition of Art Treasures,” *Times*, May 28, 1857, 9.

The “two leading German schools” of Flanders and Cologne were singled out for avoiding that tendency to the fantastic.

The author is not unusual for using the word “German” to mean all Northern art and to distinguish between different Netherlandish and German schools. Publications about the exhibition used German sometimes to mean a race or group of races, a territory or group of territories.⁶¹³ Different senses of the word “German” could appear side by side in the same text. The exhibition catalogue entitled the Northern paintings in Saloon A as “German and Flemish Art”, but listed all the artists as “German”, even though more than two thirds were Flemish or Netherlandish (fig. 91).⁶¹⁴ Conversely, there seemed to be no difficulty in distinguishing art produced after the close of the sixteenth century as German, Flemish or Dutch. By the 1870s the denomination of works pre-1600 was sometimes reversed, so that early German works were subsumed within “Flemish and Dutch”.⁶¹⁵ This suggests the generic use of “German” was particularly important for discussing early German painting in the period under consideration.

The generic use of “German” for all Northern art mattered because the notion that art production was bound to national character was fundamental to

⁶¹³ For example, Germany is described as “vast regions” in Anon., “Art Treasures Exhibition: the Ancient Masters,” *Manchester Guardian* June 8, 1857, 3; as territories encompassing the Netherlands and now German regions in John Blackwood, “Manchester Exhibition of Art-Treasures,” *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 81, no. 500 (1857): 762-63. German identity is associated with certain characteristics found in both Flemish and German artists in Anon., “Manchester Exhibition of Art Treasures,” *Times*, May 28, 1857, 9.

⁶¹⁴ Some anonymous works were subtitled “Old Flemish” or “Old German” (nos. 481 and 466). *Catalogue of Art Treasures*, 37-45.

⁶¹⁵ For example in Henry George Blackburn, *Pictorial Notes in the National Gallery. Foreign schools* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1877), 42-44; Frederic Reiset, *Une Visite à la Galerie Nationale de Londres*, 2 ed. (Paris: Raphilly, 1887), 23.

the display of historical art. The tendency to seek commonality across Northern peoples, rooted in the late antique population of the region by Teutonic tribes, and revived in German Romantic literature, conflicted with the rising patriotism of local territories, and new scholarly interest in Northern painters that was creating a much more granular, or “scientific” definition of schools as Waagen put it in his 1860 edition of Kugler’s handbook on the German schools. But Waagen also used the generic term “Teutonic” to cover Flemish and German peoples.⁶¹⁶ At Manchester, the comparative chronological arrangement of Italian and “German” school paintings emphatically visualized contemporary art production in the two “schools” according to a teleological narrative ending in Italianate idealism. This reinforced Northern painting’s inferiority to Italian not only because its tendency to the fantastic ruined its aesthetic, but also because the diversity and disunity of different Northern schools when treated as one (all German, or Northern) reinforced the idea of its failed, stunted development. One review of the Art-Treasures exhibition described the early art of Italy as the fountainhead of a stream that would become a flooding tide, whereas Jan van Eyck was more like a lake that spawned rivulets that would “thread their humbler way through the German territories” never becoming a “full, free, flowing river”, but terminating without any grand results.⁶¹⁷

William Blanchard Jerrold’s (1826-84) guide to the Manchester exhibition for the inexpert visitor with little time (its subtitle was “How to See the Art Treasures Exhibition”) gives some insight into how “expert” art

⁶¹⁶ Gustav Friedrich Waagen, *Handbook of Painting. The German, Flemish and Dutch Schools: Based on the Handbook of Kugler. Enlarged and for the Most Part Re-Written* (London: Murray, 1860), xiii.

⁶¹⁷ Blackwood, “Manchester Exhibition of Art-Treasures,” 763.

knowledge was distilled and disseminated to everyday readers. Jerrold openly and lengthily cites *The Times* on the German paintings. He assumes the reader will find all the early works incomprehensible and the early Cologne paintings particularly uninteresting, and advises visitors to pass rapidly by them.⁶¹⁸ However, following *The Times*, Jerrold notes that the Meister Stephan's work is "quite free from that contortion and ugliness" found in the Flemish and Nuremberg schools, and exhibits "delicacy of colour" and "grace of form". Jerrold's contradictory advice to pass quickly on yet stay and look highlights the discrepancy between received ideas about all German art as fantastical and ugly, and the actual specimens now before the public. It is similar to the *Illustrated London News* review of the Krüger pictures cited in Chapter Two, whose emphasis on *The Coronation* rather than the more gentle, idealized Liesborn works aligned with pre-determined views that German art was characterized by "a rude Gothicism of character and detail".⁶¹⁹ Similarly, Jerrold advises visitors to note works like the "Meister Christoph's" *Saints Peter and Dorothea* (fig. 84), and "Wohlgemuth's" *Pilate Washing his Hands* (fig. 69) which are more in line with this expected German look. Jerrold offers a befuddling array of conflicting value frameworks to his readers: sometimes historical, sometimes Romantic, sometimes formalist, but always concerned with the question of progress and with national identity in art.

Pergam interprets Jerrold's guide as evidence that public attitudes to German art had not, and would not, change because these tendencies set it

⁶¹⁸ Jerrold, *Guide*, 5, 15-16. The *Blackwood's* review gives the same advice.

⁶¹⁹ "The National Gallery. New Pictures," *Illustrated London News*, December 23, 1854, 612.

beyond the pale of good taste.⁶²⁰ She is right that there was no dramatic shift in favour of German art after this exhibition, but the Manchester exhibition alongside the introduction of early German painting to the National Gallery actively shaped new perspectives on the place of an increasing number of different early German painters and schools in the chronology of art's history. Among them, those of Cologne and Westphalia were establishing a place in the visual canon, albeit in conflicting frameworks of value that upheld two quite distinct "pinnacles" in works of Cologne and Dürer. This process of shaping perspectives proceeded in tandem with literature that emerged in the two decades leading up to the exhibition, as described in Chapter One, and with new English editions and Kugler and other art-historical texts to which we now turn.

3 f. Views Beyond the Gallery: Early German Paintings in Art Historical Literature, late 1850-80s

New German publications in the 1850s and 60s show the dynamic growth of new research into early German paintings, for example, in Förster's five-volume *Geschichte der deutschen Kunst*, Ernst aus'm Weerth's *Kunstdenkmäler*, Karl Schnaase's seven volumed *Geschichte der bildenden Künste* published 1843-64 and Wilhelm Lübke's (1826-93) *Die Mittelalterliche Kunst in Westfalen* and *Geschichte der Arkitektur*, to name a few.⁶²¹ Texts like these

⁶²⁰ Pergam, *Art Treasures Exhibition*, 162.

⁶²¹ Ernst Förster, *Geschichte der deutschen Kunst*, 5 vols. (Leipzig: Weigel, 1851-1860); Ernst aus'm Weerth, *Kunstdenkmäler des christlichen Mittelalters in den Rheinlanden*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Weigel, 1857); Carl Schnaase, *Geschichte der bildenden Künste* (Düsseldorf: Buddeus, 1843); Wilhelm Lübke, *Die mittelalterliche Kunst in Westfalen* (Leipzig: Weigel, 1853); *Geschichte der*

combined inventories of artistic monuments from tours of German towns with archival research and stylistic analysis, often synthesizing empirical research and philosophical frameworks. Little of this German research was translated into English but German scholarship gained notice through reviews of German literature, and through the increasing numbers able to read German.⁶²² Waagen, Crowe and Cavacalcaselle and translators of Lübke familiarized British audiences with recent German research on early paintings from Cologne and Westphalia, and pointed out examples of them in British collections. Lübke's *Grundriß der Kunstgeschichte* (1860) translated as *History of Art* in 1868 established him as a trusted source in England.⁶²³ The *Westminster Review* was not alone in appreciating his global art-historical survey for avoiding being overloaded with exhaustive details or heavy philosophy like other German authors (notably Schnasse and Kugler).⁶²⁴ Alongside public displays of art, these

Architektur von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart, dargestellt von Wilhelm Lübke (Leipzig: E. Graul, 1855).

⁶²² For example, Lübke's *Geschichte der Architektur* reviewed in "History of Architecture-Geschichte der Architektur," *Athenaeum*, November 27, 1858, 689, and Schnaase, Kugler and others in "ART. V-1. Geschichte der bildenden Kunst," *New Quarterly Review* 4, no. 2 (1844). However, one reviewer admitted not being familiar with Förster in 1869: John Chapman, "Art," *Westminster Review* 36, no. 1 (1869): at 327.

⁶²³ Followed by further editions. Wilhelm Lübke, *History of Art*, trans. F. E. Bunnett, 1st ed. (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1868). Reviews of his work mention his reputation: "A History of Art," *Art-Journal*, January 1, 1869, 20 and "German Ecclesiastical Art," *Art-Journal*, June 1, 1870, 185; "History of Art," *Athenaeum*, December 26, 1868, 889. He and Förster are both mentioned as important German scholars in a review of literature in the same publication, "Germany," December 25, 1869, 853. *History of Art* was revised and extended as *Outlines of the History of Art*, which went through numerous American editions published in New York edited by Clarence Cook almost every year from 1878 to 1888, and by Russell Sturgis in 1904.

⁶²⁴ John Chapman, "History and Biography," *Westminster Review* 35, no. 1 (1869): 279-80.

publications helped establish the chronology and underpinning narrative of early German painting in the history of art.

Waagen stated openly in his revised English edition of Kugler's *Handbook of the History of Painting* from German, Flemish and Dutch schools in 1860 that he was aiming for impartial scholarship rather than an emotive or nationalistic evaluative framework. He was concerned with correct attributions and with establishing the chronology of artistic influence from master to master, and he combined close examination of paintings with archival evidence.⁶²⁵ Similarly Waagen's rejection of the Boisserées' "arbitrary" attributions of early German paintings distinguished his catalogue of Prince Albert's collection from the more sentimental and imprecise writing of Grüner's in 1848.⁶²⁶ As we have already seen, Eastlake's evaluation of a painting's worthiness for the national collection was influenced by new scholarship. Waagen's re-attribution of Prince Albert's *Saints Catherine of Alexandria, Matthew and John the Evangelist* from "Meister Wilhelm" to Meister Stephan on the basis of Merlo's research would have given Eastlake solid grounds to accept it from the Queen in 1863 as an illustration of the transmission of artistic influence from the "Meister Wilhelm" *Veronica* already in the National Gallery, to his student (fig. 86).⁶²⁷

⁶²⁵ He provides an overview of recent scholarship and sets out his intentions, in the Introduction to Waagen, *Kugler's Handbook 1860*, especially xvi.

⁶²⁶ For example, compare their entries on *The Martyrdom of St. Ursula*, now given to the Master of the Magdalen Legend, which Grüner calls Aldegraver (cat no. 35) and Waagen Netherlandish (cat no. 63). [Grüner], *Descriptive Catalogue of the Collection of Ancient Greek, Italian, German, Flemish and Dutch Pictures now at Kensington Palace*. Waagen, *Descriptive Catalogue of... Prince Albert*.

⁶²⁷ Cat no. 51 in Grüner, 22 in Waagen. Merlo, "Die Meister der altkölnischen Malerschule," 126; Waagen, *Galleries and Cabinets*, 223. This point is made by Foister, "Prince Albert's German Pictures," 9.

It was not only that art-historical literature influenced decisions about displaying early German paintings at the National Gallery, but that the National Gallery's decisions whether or not to acquire or display particular early German paintings influenced art-historical literature, especially where it depended on illustrative examples in accessible public collections. In addition to the case of the Werden panels discussed earlier, paintings by Jan Baegert from the wings of the Liesborn Altarpiece in Krüger's collection illustrate the point. In the 1846 edition of Kugler, written while those panels were still in Krüger's collection in Minden and thought to be by a later follower of the Liesborn Master, they were introduced to readers to exemplify the start of the decline of the Westphalian school after it adopted Flemish realism.⁶²⁸ When those panels arrived in London only the *Coronation* was put on public display from this group and the rest sold, except one loaned to Ireland in 1857.⁶²⁹ Waagen did not think it worth mentioning any of the Krüger pictures in his account of the new pictures in the Gallery for *Galleries and Cabinets* in 1857, even though he drew readers' attention to the new "Dürer" acquired from the Bammerville collection around the same time.⁶³⁰ But when he published the revised edition of Kugler's handbook in 1860, Waagen needed an example to illustrate the decline of the Westphalian school, and his stated intention was to describe the developmental history of art for English audiences using examples they could access. Since the Gallery had sold most of Jan Baegert's panels in 1857, Waagen had to use a less accessible example from Germany, namely the Dortmund *Crucifixion* Altarpiece,

⁶²⁸ Kugler, *Handbook*, 51.

⁶²⁹ See Appendix 7.

⁶³⁰ They were too recently acquired to be in *Art Treasures*. Waagen, *Galleries and Cabinets*, 62.

then ascribed to the Dunwegge brothers and now to Derick Baegert, Jan Baegert's father (fig. 92).⁶³¹

Waagen did however point British readers to the example of the "Jarenaus" *Pietà* in the Earl of Pembroke's collection (fig. 66). The fictitious name Jarenius had entered the canon of Westphalian painters when Passavant had mistakenly read the partial word "Nazarenius" on this painting for the artists' signature.⁶³² The name was accepted by Kugler, Waagen, Wornum and Dyce, who showed skeptical interest when Krüger told him three of his paintings were attributed to him, "one of the very few of the earlier Westphalian painters whose name is known."⁶³³ Because the Pembroke *Pietà* had a named artist it became a canonical example of Westphalian art in Britain, even after Passavant's mistake was exposed in German publications in the 1850s and 60s, and in the English edition of Woltmann and Woermann's *History of Painting* in 1885.⁶³⁴ It still appeared in Crowe's 1898 edition of Kugler, though with a footnote correcting it.⁶³⁵ The painting is now thought South German rather than Westphalian. Based on his lost recommendation against the Krüger acquisition and his failure to mention Krüger's pictures in *Galleries and Cabinets*, it is clear Waagen had low regard for the specimens of Westphalian painting in Krüger's

⁶³¹ Kugler's *Handbook* 1860, 129.

⁶³² Passavant reattributed it dismissing its false Dürer monogram and date. Pembroke, *A Catalogue of the Paintings & Drawings in the Collection at Wilton House, Salisbury, Wiltshire*, 74-75.

⁶³³ Kugler, *Handbook*, 107. Dyce, Report, 1854.

⁶³⁴ Förster, *Geschichte der deutschen Kunst*, II: 166; Alfred Woltmann and Karl Woermann, *History of Painting, From the German of the Late Sr. Alfred Woltmann... and Dr. Karl Woermann. Volume II: The Painting of the Renaissance*, trans. Clara Bell (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1885), 101, note 11.

⁶³⁵ Joseph Archer Crowe, *The German, Flemish and Dutch Schools of Painting: Based on the Handbook of Kugler, Re-modelled by the Late Prof. Dr. Waagen and Thoroughly Revised and in part Re-written* (London: Murray, 1898), 133, note 1.

collection.⁶³⁶ However the role he played in canonizing “Jarenius” *Pietà*, which was not a Westphalian work, while neglecting to mention examples of ‘genuine’ Westphalian painting that came to Britain with the Krüger collection stands as another example of ironic arbitrariness, and of the role individual figures played in shaping the British reception of Westphalian art for decades.

Waagen’s decision not to mention *The Coronation*, or any of the Werden panels still on display in the National Gallery, in his discussion of the Cologne and Westphalian schools for his edition of Kugler’s Handbook may have helped shape Eastlake’s decision to remove all but two Liesborn Altarpiece fragments in 1861. Importantly, Waagen did mention the *Presentation* panel then still in Prince Albert’s possession as a good example of the school, which likely contributed to its acceptance into the Gallery in 1863, as already discussed.⁶³⁷

In contrast to the way the Gallery’s removal of Jan Baegert’s panels contributed to their omission from English translations of Kugler after 1846, the decision to display fragments from the altarpiece by the Liesborn Master contributed to their continued appearance in art-historical literature, including Waagen’s 1860 *Handbook*.⁶³⁸ Their public display and inclusion in published histories of art ensured that in Britain during the 1850s the Liesborn Master transitioned from a painter of chiefly German interest in an out-of-the-way private collection in Minden, to a canonical figure in the progress of early German painting.

⁶³⁶ Dyce to Gladstone, January 28, 1854, TA 1/5881A/17113/6013.

⁶³⁷ Waagen, *Kugler’s Handbook 1860*, 128.

⁶³⁸ He mentions only the two panels with saints, and *The Presentation* and *Annunciation* from the Altarpiece. Ibid.

However, the different ways the Liesborn Master was described in Waagen's, Lübke's, and Crowe's and Cavacaselle's accounts of Westphalian art history illustrate changes in art-historical language and evaluative criteria around the 1850s and 60s. All these authors agreed with the earliest assessments of the Liesborn Master as a transitional figure between Cologne idealism and the influence of Netherlandish realism on German art, but they valued his alignment to one or other of these influences differently. In the 1846 edition of Kugler, the "Meister von Liesborn" was aligned with the Cologne school at the pinnacle of German painting when it fulfilled its highest purpose in service to God. He was separated by around fifty pages from those Westphalian painters who fell into exaggeration and caricature, like the painter of the Dortmund altarpiece.⁶³⁹ Waagen's revised edition omitted Passavant's and others' praise for the master, and after briefly acknowledging the "purity of religious feeling and ... expression of peace" in the Liesborn altarpiece saints he declared them inferior to contemporary Netherlandish painters, and moved swiftly on to discuss other painters more representative of the fusion of German with Netherlandish style and the failure of the Westphalian school to progress.⁶⁴⁰ The Meister von Liesborn is in the section on the decline of Westphalian art, quite separate from the high point of the Cologne school under Meister Wilhelm or its later manifestation in Meister Stephan.⁶⁴¹

Notwithstanding his high opinion of Prince Albert's *Presentation*, Waagen called

⁶³⁹ Treated in Books 2 and 3. Kugler, *Handbook*.

⁶⁴⁰ Overall, he expanded the later developments of Flemish and Dutch painting at the expense of earlier schools. Waagen, *Kugler's Handbook 1860*, I:128.

⁶⁴¹ Treated in Book 2, and Book 3 chapter 4. The Liesborn Master is in Book 3 chapter 5. Chapuis has shown how Waagen used close visual analysis of Stephan Lochner's works to position him and order his oeuvre along this continuum of progress from idealism to realism. Chapuis, *Stephan Lochner*, 20.

all the panels associated with the Master of the Life of the Virgin and Lyversberg Passion “inferior”, “mechanical” and a degeneration of the earlier Cologne school.⁶⁴² As has often been pointed out, despite his scholarly approach Waagen never shook free of his Romantic roots.⁶⁴³ He maintained that the Cologne school was German painting’s “noblest” achievement and lamented Dürer’s inability to shake free of the tendency to the fantastic.⁶⁴⁴

Likewise Lübke’s *History of Art* presents thirteenth- to fourteenth-century Cologne art, which he calls “Gothic,” as the highest period of German artistic achievement for its unsurpassed purity of feeling and idealism. It fell into abrupt decline before the infusion of Flemish realism in the “Modern” era of the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries (also called Renaissance). Lübke finds his three most celebrated German painters, Holbein, Dürer and Cranach, all guilty of the tendency towards exaggeration and caricature, and he reiterates the long-established trope of Dürer as a tragic thwarted genius unfortunate to be born in Nuremberg rather than Italy. Lübke uses the examples of the Liesborn altarpiece in the National Gallery to illustrate how the Meister von Liesborn, though Modern, preserved the “majesty of the earlier school” with its harmonious beauty, while combining it with life-like realism.⁶⁴⁵ Following Passavant, he sees him as an isolated peak of development unmatched by anything before or after in Westphalia. Lübke lists only a few Westphalian artists who adopted Flemish realism, including the Master of the Lyversberg Passion.

⁶⁴² Waagen, *Kugler's Handbook 1860*, 127-28.

⁶⁴³ For example, Haskell, "Growth of British Art History."

⁶⁴⁴ Waagen, *Kugler's Handbook 1860*, 35-50.

⁶⁴⁵ Lübke, *History of Art*, II: 342.

Crowe's and Cavacaselle's *Early Flemish Painters* (1857) put the Liesborn Master in a much less positive light. They defined the Netherlandish schools as never before, linking their artistic outputs to the distinctive character and circumstances of the territory and its people, and distinguishing them from specific schools in German territories.⁶⁴⁶ They were more strident than Waagen in identifying German inferiority to Flemish art, and presented progress in art in terms of its movement towards the Italianate aesthetic of the idealized visual world. They traced Germany's adoption of realism especially to Rogier van der Weyden, whom they described as failing to progress the van Eycks' advances in realism and perspective, partly because his deep faith made him look back to "certain defined and conventional forms for effect, rather than upon the nobleness of sentiment and expression."⁶⁴⁷ Crowe and Cavalcaselle were forthright in describing how Northern schools interacted with each other to produce "bastard" children, such as Quentin Matsys, whom they described as the unhappy product of influences from Cologne, Bruges and Louvain.⁶⁴⁸ In this narrative, the later Cologne and Westphalian schools were degenerate because they regressed their own schools' development, as well as the influence of Flemish artists after the van Eycks. Crowe used some of Krüger's pictures and a few other Cologne and Westphalian works to illustrate the "bastardized and soulless school" that resulted from the merger of Flemish and Cologne art. Their mention of the four "Master of Werden" paintings in relation to the Master of

⁶⁴⁶ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Early Flemish Painters*, Preface, iii-iv.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 172-73.

the Lyversberg Passion has already been noted.⁶⁴⁹ They also cite the works collected by Krüger from Liesborn, and in a footnote inform readers they were now displayed in the National Gallery. They described the Master of Liesborn as “a limpid, feeble, and unenergetic painter, immeasurably behind the Flemings in finish, and the artists of Cologne in firmness and vigour.”⁶⁵⁰ In contrast, the authors moderately praised “Schoen”, Dürer, Holbein and Zeitblom and Kalkar of the Swabian school as legitimate progressors of the German and Flemish school for adopting and perfecting some positive influences from realism.⁶⁵¹ All of these German painters are presented by them as the “School of Bruges” within the final chapter of the influence of Flemish art abroad. But perhaps bad press for the Liesborn Master is better than none: Martin Conway completely ignored him in his *Flemish Artists and their Predecessors* in 1887.⁶⁵²

Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s definition of Netherlandish schools was important to shifting perceptions that realism belonged to the modern rather than medieval period, and to Flanders specifically. Studies on the reception of early Flemish art have shown that the extent to which it was identified as “German” significantly influenced its reception. The Romantic adoption of the van Eycks and Memling as German by virtue of their heartfelt piety and close attention to nature placed early Flemish art in a continuum with the progressive expression of Christian sentiment that began in Cologne and reached its climax with Dürer, Raphael’s equal. Conversely, historical, aesthetic, and later formal

⁶⁴⁹ They also mention works in Cologne, Linz, Munich and Nordlingen. *Ibid.*, 317-18.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 323.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 321-25.

⁶⁵² William Conway, *Flemish Artists and their Predecessors on the Lower Rhine* (London: Seeley & Co, 1887).

approaches saw the invention of oil painting, close attention to nature, and minute detail as particularly Flemish qualities, and as first steps away from medievalism towards a modern age. Whether connected to Cologne and Dürer, or the Italian Renaissance and Dutch realism, Flemish art gained kudos for being a progressive school, or at least a school with isolated bursts of progress.⁶⁵³ This was different from German schools, which never seemed to progress because of the tenacious grip of the German tendency to the fantastic. While art history rooted in Romantic perspectives had given the Liesborn Master new relevance to the concerns of the present, art history rooted in models of progress and formal appeal undermined that relevance, and placed him firmly in the past.

The relevance of early German painting was particularly problematised by increasing attempts to define the "Gothic" and "Renaissance" in literature of the 1850s and 60s, such as volumes II and III of Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (1846 and 1856), Lübke's *Geschichte der mittelalterliche Kunst in Westfalen* and Jakob Burkhardt's *Die Kultur der Renaissance* (1860).⁶⁵⁴ German architecture, sculpture, decorative and graphic arts and paintings were increasingly inventoried to illustrate the high point of German art in the medieval period. Conversely, Burkhardt presented the Renaissance as a quintessentially Italian phenomenon, arising from innate Italian genius but also the political and

⁶⁵³ Bernhard Ridderbos, "From Waagen to Friedländer," in *Early Netherlandish Paintings: Rediscovery, Reception and Research*, ed. Anne van Buren, Henk van Veen, and Bernhard Ridderbos (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005); Wessel Krul, "Realism, Renaissance and Nationalism," in *ibid.*, ed. Bernhard Ridderbos, Anne van Buren, and Henk van Veen; Graham, *Inventing van Eyck*, esp. 11-18; Deam, "Flemish versus Netherlandish: A Discourse of Nationalism."; Keith Moxey, "Motivating History," *Art Bulletin* 77, no. 3 (1995).

⁶⁵⁴ John Ruskin, *Modern Painters vol. 2*, Cook and Wedderburn ed., vol. 4 (London, 1846); *Modern Painters vol. 3, 5*; Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (Basel: Schweighauser, 1860); Lübke, *Die mittelalterliche Kunst in Westfalen*.

cultural circumstances of emerging Italian republics. Germany's inability to participate in this Renaissance was underscored when authors including Kugler, Waagen and Lübke enumerated all the social, political, climactic, ethnic and even physiognomic obstacles in the way of progress in German painting.⁶⁵⁵ Studies on the reception of Dürer have amply demonstrated the shift from earlier nineteenth-century perceptions of him as a medieval or Gothic German artist to perceptions of him as a Renaissance master in the second half of the century, largely due to his blend of German Gothicism with Italian Renaissance love of beauty and revival of classical culture and intellect.⁶⁵⁶ In contrast, Cologne and Westphalian painters like those in the Krüger collection were either firmly relegated to the medieval past, or caught in a no-man's land between the medievalism of Cologne and Flemish realism.

Woermann's two-volume *History of Painting* (1880 and 1885) offers a final and contrasting example here to illustrate the changing reception of early German paintings in English art-historical literature. Woermann consciously integrated different "specialist perspectives" of "the connoisseur, the antiquarian, the historian, and the art-student" (notably not the Christian art lover) to offer a new view of the history of art as the history of "aesthetic development."⁶⁵⁷ For the author artistic progress is teleologically driven by formal concerns above all, culminating in the idealized beauty arising from observation of nature and application of theoretical principles, especially perspective. The first volume, edited by Sidney Colvin, had traced the history of

⁶⁵⁵ For example, Waagen, *Kugler's Handbook 1860*, 141-42.

⁶⁵⁶ Jeffrey Chipps Smith, "The Invention of Dürer as a Renaissance Artist," in *Renaissance? Perceptions of Continuity and Discontinuity in Europe, c.1300-c.1550*, ed. Alexander Lee and J Pollman (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010).

⁶⁵⁷ Preface to Woltmann and Woermann, *History of Painting Volume II*.

early German painting in the “Gothic” or “Medieval” period up to the fourteenth century. In it, Wilhelm of Cologne (now merely a name to whom no panels could safely be ascribed) had exemplified the “subjective, lyrical spirit” of the Cologne school, which excelled in rendering the spirit rather than flesh.⁶⁵⁸ In the Second volume Woermann addressed the “German Renaissance” (sic) which he defined as a new age when “Art gained the power of apprehending objective truth through nature” in contrast to medieval art rendering spiritual truth.⁶⁵⁹ He located the “Master of Liesborn” firmly in this era, but unable to match Flemish realism. He oscillates between a decayed form of the earlier Cologne style and infantile attempts at realism.

The English translation of Woermann confirms the reciprocal interaction of text and picture display in Britain for establishing the canon of early German painting. Woermann cited the two remaining fragments of the Liesborn Altarpiece in National Gallery to exemplify Westphalian art that was closer to the earlier style. With English audiences in mind, the translator inserted a further example of the school closer to Flemish realism that was also on public display in the National Gallery: the Master of Aachen’s *Crucifixion* panel had finally been taken out of storage, cleaned and exhibited as an anonymous fifteenth-century Westphalian work by 1880 (fig. 2).⁶⁶⁰ The translator noted: “The composition is crowded, and the heads coarsely realistic, though full of imagination; the quaintness and variety of costume are endless.”⁶⁶¹ She also

⁶⁵⁸ *History of Painting from the German of the late Dr. Alfred Woltmann... and Dr. Karl Woermann. Edited by Sidney Colvin*, trans. Clara Courtenay Bell (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co, 1880), 412-13.

⁶⁵⁹ *History of Painting Volume II*, 4.

⁶⁶⁰ Discussed further in Chapter Four.

⁶⁶¹ Woltmann and Woermann, *History of Painting Volume II*, 101.

inserted the example of the *Presentation* among those paintings connected to the Master of the Lyversberg Passion, and cited Waagen's praise of it, which still conveyed authority.⁶⁶²

3 g. Conclusions

The reception of the Krüger and other early German paintings in the mid-nineteenth century was part of a triangulation of text, display and viewer experience. Displays of, and publications about, Cologne and Westphalian paintings reciprocally interacted to shape the narrative of early German painting in Britain, and both shaped and were shaped by perceptions of readers and viewers. For example, while new literature on art history increasingly adopted academic and formal evaluative frameworks British viewers continued to buy Kugler's and Lübke's art-historical surveys, in which the positive description of early German painting from Cologne and Westphalia remained virtually unchanged from the 1860s through multiple reprints to the end of the century. This shows the importance of the mid-century period for establishing the principles of the reception of early German painting in Britain which had long-lasting impact. Different evaluative frameworks continued to co-exist, though not without conflict. Ruskin defiantly reasserted notions of art as Christian poetry in the fifth volume of *Modern Painters*.⁶⁶³ But articles in the *Westminster Review* around 1870 illustrated intolerance of non-visual criteria for the pursuit of art history. One review of a Roesque history of iconography

⁶⁶² Ibid., 99.

⁶⁶³ John Ruskin, *Modern Painters vol. 5*, Cook and Wedderburn ed., vol. 7 (London, 1860). See also Atkinson, "National Gallery."

commented that this “stock of ideas... needs a great deal of revision and modification before it can serve as a history of painting”, and another review of a philosophical history of art claimed that German “excessive domination of the pure idea has left no room for ocular sensitivity.” Listing works from Cologne, Dürer, Wohlgemuth, Cranach and Peter von Cornelius (1783-1867) he concluded they were all “for theology, not for painting.”⁶⁶⁴

The Krüger pictures contributed significantly to nineteenth-century British encounters with early German pictures. Alongside the Manchester exhibition, they demonstrated the diversity of German schools while at the same time reinforcing notions of generic national or racial qualities uniting all Northern art. Dyce had been correct to see Krüger’s collection as an excellent illustration of the history of Westphalian painting for British viewers, but the failure to grasp that potential once the collection had been acquired for Britain led to the scattering of these works that impacted historical understanding of them, not only because they were withdrawn from public view, but also because they failed to receive attention from connoisseurs and writers like Waagen.

Mechanisms for comparative and chronological display by school in London and Manchester and in written narratives of the history of art underscored the presumption that early German painting was poor because it failed to progress as it ought to in relation to Italian and Flemish painting. The removal of so many of the Krüger pictures was linked to the perception that the German tendency to the “fantastic” was contrary to the highest aims of art. There was no dispute that the Krüger paintings were genuine historical samples

⁶⁶⁴ Reviews of F. A. Gruyer’s *Les Vierges de Raphael et l’Iconographie de la Vierge*, Paris (1869) and H. Taine’s *Philosophie de l’art dans les Pays-Bas*: Chapman, “Art,” 321; “Art,” *Westminster Review* 37, no. 2 (1870): 637-38.

of the Cologne or Westphalian school, but the utility of knowing or displaying them had shifted. For Dyce and Gladstone it had been above all the Krüger pictures' embodiment of Christian sentiment that made them relevant to, or in continuity with, the present. For Eastlake, Wornum, Crowe and Cavalcaselle, the paintings' significance for the present rested chiefly on their formal and technical properties. Only their contributions to the development of the art of painting brought them into continuity with, and therefore relevance to, the modern era. The Meister von Liesborn achieved canonical status only because his work was perceived unusually to straddle the medieval and modern. Even if there was disagreement about whether he belonged to the pinnacle or decline of the German school, and about whether the "Gothic" or "Renaissance" connoted positive or negative qualities, his realism and idealism were both in continuity with later art. Nothing else from the Krüger collection was apparently thought important enough to warrant wall or print space: it was seen to exemplify the worst of art in both eras.

The Gallery's designation of the Krüger pictures as superfluous reflects and embeds the message also of the Manchester exhibition and much contemporary literature on German art, that Cologne and Westphalian painting simply was not that important. It may, or may not, have artistic merit depending on the viewer's interpretation of the aims of art, but ultimately these were dead-end, derivative, regressive masters because they contributed so little to the progress of painting for its own sake. This raises serious problems for those individuals and institutions seeking to bring the paintings rejected by the Gallery into their own collections, to which we now turn.

CHAPTER 4

“A REFUGE FOR REJECTED PICTURES”?

KRÜGER PAINTINGS IN OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BRITISH COLLECTIONS

When Lord Elcho asked the Irish MPs during the debate on the National Gallery if they minded their new Irish Gallery becoming a refuge for rejected pictures he was under the impression they were “very bad”.⁶⁶⁵ Yet in the previous chapter I showed that they performed surprisingly well at auction in 1857. The Irish Gallery was keen enough to select ten of the Krüger pictures prepared for sale for its nascent national collection, and in 1862 the Irish and Scottish National Galleries and the South Kensington Museum lodged competing claims for the Gallery’s “superfluous” pictures, which included thirteen from the Krüger acquisition (Appendices 3 and 8). This chapter examines why those institutions wanted the early German paintings despite their reputation as rejects, and how they re-packaged those paintings more positively for their own purposes. In my earlier discussion of how English-language art-historical literature used some of the Krüger pictures when displayed in London to illustrate their histories of art, I mentioned that these texts failed to identify where those pictures went once they had been loaned to other Galleries, and this is indicative of the very limited documentation of the reception of these pictures outside the hub of the London art world. This raises questions about the hierarchies of political and cultural power in nineteenth-century Britain that go beyond the issues under consideration here. However, there is enough

⁶⁶⁵ HC Deb. July 2 1857, vol. 146 col. 769 and 830.

evidence to show that these paintings functioned and were appreciated in very different ways in public and private collections beyond the National Gallery.

The German (and Netherlandish) identity of the rejected paintings was not necessarily the most important factor for those who borrowed or bought them. The first half of this chapter examines how the opportunity to borrow some of the Krüger pictures coincided with attempts by the National Galleries of Ireland and Scotland and the South Kensington Museum to establish the principle that the nation's paintings should not all be kept in the National Gallery, London. It is important therefore to examine the practical, financial and tactical reasons why they wanted the Krüger pictures, as well as the specific appeal and reception of them as early German paintings in each of these contexts. As part of their earliest collections, the Krüger paintings helped construct those institutions' identities and purposes within very constraining practical circumstances. Only South Kensington was asked to return its loans before the end of the century (in 1889), and that recall is used here to examine how attitudes to early German paintings had changed at the National Gallery since the early 1860s. The second half of the chapter returns to the fate of those Krüger paintings that were sold in 1857. Some of them have been traced to British private collections before the end of the century, providing clues about how they fared on the British art market after dealers had bought them, and the variety of collectors who appreciated them. Private settings offer insight into the continued appeal of Christian art models for appreciating early German paintings that had become unfashionable in the public realm of art-historical scholarship and display at the National Gallery.

4 a. Long Term Loans of Unwanted Krüger Paintings: Practical and Tactical Reasons

There were compelling practical, financial and tactical reasons why the National Galleries of Ireland and Scotland and the South Kensington Museum wanted the rejected and “superfluous” Krüger pictures, regardless of what school they came from. Ireland and Scotland wanted a fairer share of the nation’s art wealth, and were struggling to establish collections worthy of their nations in the face of little or no government funding. The National Gallery of Ireland was in its infancy at the time of the Krüger acquisition. The story of its development out of the success of the 1853 Dublin International Exhibition through the efforts of the Dargan Committee and Irish Institution has already been well told.⁶⁶⁶ Acts of Parliament in 1854 provided for a Gallery of Ireland, but it was expected to be locally funded and self-sustaining.⁶⁶⁷ A site was donated, and the Irish Institution encouraged local subscriptions and gifts for the building and collection, but by the time the Gallery opened in 1864 only twenty-six paintings had been donated or bequeathed by Irish collectors. Seventy more had been purchased with £3,000 raised by local subscriptions and a one-off Parliamentary grant of £2,500 in 1862. Parliament eventually

⁶⁶⁶ Peter Somerville-Large, *1854-2004: the Story of the National Gallery of Ireland* (Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland, 2004); Catherine de Courcy, *The Foundation of the National Gallery of Ireland* (Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland, 1985); Marie Bourke, *The Story of Irish Museums, 1790-2000: Culture, Identity and Education* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2011).

⁶⁶⁷ An Act to provide for the establishment of a National Gallery of Painting, Sculpture and the Fine Arts, for the care of a Public Library, and the erection of a Public Museum, in Dublin” 17 and 18 Vic cap 99 (1854). The Museums of Art Act 1845 (8 & 9 Vic c. 43) enabled large towns to fund museums through local rates and gifts.

contributed £27,000 for the building but the Treasury repeatedly refused to fund purchases of pictures. The average annual budget of £1,000 voted from 1866 allowed only the most prudent of acquisitions.⁶⁶⁸ It was obvious from an early stage that *any* pictures Dublin could obtain from London would be valuable for building the Irish collection.

The situation was similar for the National Gallery of Scotland, opened in 1859.⁶⁶⁹ The funds to build the Gallery came from the accumulation of an annual £2,000 granted since the Act of Union to the Scottish Board of Manufactures. The grant was initially intended to promote basic industry but, once that was self-sustaining, it was used to fund a School of Drawing and Design (1760), the Royal Institution (1826) and finally a National Gallery building.⁶⁷⁰ The building was also partly funded by a government grant.⁶⁷¹ The collection was made up of a combination of works already belonging to Scottish arts institutions (the collections of the Royal Institution, Royal Scottish Academy and Royal Association for the Promotion of Arts) as well as Sir James Erskine of Torrie's bequest of paintings and sculptures, and pictures temporarily deposited by two

⁶⁶⁸ Somerville-Large, *1854-2004*, 86.

⁶⁶⁹ A short history is in the introduction to William Johnstone, *Catalogue, Descriptive and Historical, of the National Gallery of Scotland, under the Management of the Board of Manufactures* (Edinburgh: H.M.S.O., 1860). See also Colin Thompson, Hugh Brigstocke, and Duncan Thomson, *Pictures for Scotland: the National Gallery of Scotland and its Collection, a Study of the Changing Attitude to Painting Since the 1820's* (Edinburgh: Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland, 1972); David Croal Thompson, "The National Gallery of Scotland: the Flemish School," *Art-Journal*, March 1, 1904, 89-92.

⁶⁷⁰ On the funding arrangements see "Board of Trustees for Fisheries, Manufactures and Improvements in Scotland", National Records of Scotland, (accessed January 13 2014), <http://catalogue.nrscotland.gov.uk/nrsonlinecatalogue/details.aspx?reference=NG&st=1&tc=y&tl=n&tn=n&tp=n&k=national+gallery&ko=a&r=&ro=s&df=&dt=&di=y>.

⁶⁷¹ £30,000 of Treasury money added to £20,000 of Board funds.

local collectors.⁶⁷² To these were added pictures bought by or presented to the Scottish Board of Manufactures. The Treasury's refusal to grant funds to purchase pictures made it difficult to populate the walls with worthy art. Funding inequalities rankled through the nineteenth century, especially when London bought paintings with taxes partly funded by Scotland.⁶⁷³

Mulvany asked the National Gallery for loans on behalf of the Irish Institution in December 1853, for the first of seven temporary exhibitions of Modern and Ancient art held in Dublin before Irish Gallery's opening.⁶⁷⁴ After waiting six months for an answer he was told the Gallery was not legally able to lend pictures.⁶⁷⁵ Shortly afterwards John Pigot, one of the most prominent men behind the Irish Gallery who had helped draft the Bill for its establishment, heard of the Krüger acquisition and, without knowing anything about the paintings, had the idea of using it to make the case for Dublin having artworks from London. Pigot had read press reports that only some of the Krüger collection was intended for display in London, and it was yet uncertain what would happen to the rest.⁶⁷⁶ He wrote to his father:

I do not know what this collection consists of.... nor do I know what schools, even, it includes: but the occurrence seems to me to present an opportunity of beginning a precedent which perhaps at this moment would be rather favourably received even in England.

⁶⁷² The Marquis of Abercorn and Mr Raeburn.

⁶⁷³ For example, "Our National Collections of Art and Antiquities," *The Scotsman*, 1887. Cutting in NGS-NG6/7/12.

⁶⁷⁴ Mulvany to Uwins, December 9, 1853, NG NG5/98/3.

⁶⁷⁵ Thwaites to Mulvany, June 6, 1854. NGI Larcom Letter Book 1.

⁶⁷⁶ John Pigot to D. Pigot, August 5, 1854, copy in NGI Larcom Letter Book 1. All citations in this paragraph from this letter.

Pigot's case went beyond the question of funding to the principle of public ownership of paintings bought with tax payers' money. Since the Krüger collection had been purchased with taxes, including those paid by the Irish, Dublin was entitled to some of the works. He wrote:

even if we may not succeed in obtaining what I think is truly the Owe of Dublin some share of [*inserted*: their] works purchased with public money for ever ... it may still be practicable to arrange the loan of pictures.... Good pictures lent for five or ten years would at first be almost as useful as if given to us [*crossed out*: for ever], & a greater number of works (& those of a higher class) could probably be made available to our students here in this way than in any other.

Pigot did not anticipate the Krüger collection would include many "good pictures", but he recognized the value of establishing a principle that would bring in more works in the future. He would not accept bad works, only examples by masters that were over-represented or under-appreciated in London.

The attempt to obtain some of Krüger's pictures in 1854 failed. Although Dyce and Gladstone had intended to distribute excess Krüger pictures to Dublin, Edinburgh or provincial museums the idea still had no legal basis.⁶⁷⁷ However, once the new law of 1856 extended the powers of the National Gallery to sell works of art, it was able to offer as loans any paintings it had already decided to sell.⁶⁷⁸ In November 1856 the Treasury informed Dublin it was "prepared to entertain favourably" the idea of loaning pictures, at the same time as

⁶⁷⁷ Gladstone to Aberdeen, April 17, 1854, BL Add MS 44529 fol. 83.

⁶⁷⁸ NG Minutes December 15, 1856.

reiterating its refusal to fund purchases for Ireland.⁶⁷⁹ Mulvany travelled to London in January 1857 to select for Dublin paintings from the fifty-five pictures being prepared for sale (Appendix 7).⁶⁸⁰ Eastlake had wanted to offer Dublin further unwanted presented and bequeathed paintings. Although this would have been in accordance with the caveat the Trustees introduced in 1845 to accept donations on the understanding they might be transferred to other galleries for display, legal obstacles meant only one picture from this category was offered: a Dutch seventeenth-century work, *Sportsmen Resting* (NG 2150) then attributed to Hererra.⁶⁸¹ Mulvany selected ten Krüger paintings, six Italian works, and the Dutch *Sportsmen*.⁶⁸² I will return to the criteria for his selection later. These paintings were presented to the Irish public for the first time in April 1857 at the Irish Institution Exhibition of Ancient and Modern Art as the “nucleus” collection of the National Gallery of Ireland.⁶⁸³ The catalogue listed all seventeen pictures from London as “presented” or “deposited” by the Treasury, suggesting a more permanent situation than the Trustees and Treasury had intended.⁶⁸⁴ Unusually this put early German paintings at the core of a non-German national collection from its foundation.

⁶⁷⁹ NGI Minutes, December 1, 1856.

⁶⁸⁰ NG Minutes, December 15, 1856 and January 19, 1857; Eastlake to Wornum, January 8, 1857, NG NG503/135/1; NGI Minutes, December 1, 1856, January 5, 1857.

⁶⁸¹ Letter from Eastlake December 22, 1856, cited in Mulvany’s Report, NGI Minutes January 21, 1857. The painting (NG 2150) was presented by Robert Goff in 1856.

⁶⁸² Minutes of NGI Board Meetings, January 21, 1857; 132-39.

⁶⁸³ Some paintings in the nucleus collection were too large to display, but they were included in the catalogue. Irish Institution, *Catalogue of the Exhibition of Ancient and Modern Paintings, Fourth Year, 1857*. (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1857).

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

The National Gallery of Scotland's and South Kensington's first application for loans was not connected to the Krüger collection, but established a foundation for later applying for the superfluous Krüger pictures Eastlake identified in 1861. The Edinburgh Board of Manufactures applied for some of the unwanted pictures from the National Gallery's acquisition of the Beaucousin collection in 1860 for Scotland: eleven of these forty-six paintings were not intended for display. Similar requests arrived from the Irish National Gallery and the Fine Arts Academy at Bristol.⁶⁸⁵ Adding to these competing claims the DS&A also asked for the Gallery's superfluous pictures for the Circulating Collection of the South Kensington Museum.⁶⁸⁶

While the Scottish and Irish requests had been primarily motivated by their difficulties acquiring adequate paintings for their local permanent collections, the South Kensington Museum's requests were driven by Cole's vision for educating the nation in the most efficient and economic way. In order to understand why he sought the Beaucousin pictures, and why he went on to seek the Krüger and other pictures when this bid failed, it is necessary to sketch some of the well-documented history of the South Kensington Museum and its Circulating Collection.⁶⁸⁷ The Circulating Collection was rooted in the principles

⁶⁸⁵ Eastlake to Treasury, citing a requests in March from Edinburgh, the Management of Fine arts Academy, Bristol, and Dublin, May 21, 1860, NG NG5/313/2. On the Beaucousin acquisition, NG Minutes January 23 and February 6, 1860.

⁶⁸⁶ DS&A Minutes, April 19, 1860. Copy in V&A MA/1/N120/1: 4243.

⁶⁸⁷ Anthony Burton, *Vision and Accident: The Story of the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: V&A Publications, 1999); Malcolm Baker and Brenda Richardson, eds., *A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London and New York: V&A Publications, 1997); Clive Wainwright and Charlotte Gere, "The Making of South Kensington Museum I: The Government Schools of Design and the Founding Collection 1837-51," *Journal of the History of Collections* 14, no. 1 (2002); "The Making of the South Kensington Museum III:

established at the 1835-36 Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures, that examples of good ancient and modern design could improve British manufactures and educate taste.⁶⁸⁸ The School of Design set up in 1837 amassed a collection of plaster casts, examples of design and ornament, prints and manufactured objects to instruct its students. The collection included copies of Raphael's *Loggia* lunettes and pilasters that showed the links between decorative and fine arts, but the collection itself was of applied arts and design, rather than paintings.⁶⁸⁹ Dyce and his successor acquired and circulated the collection as Superintendents of the School.⁶⁹⁰ Circulation of objects ceased before Cole took on responsibility for the Schools of Design when he was

Collecting Abroad," *Journal of the History of Collections* 14, no. 1 (2002); Julius Bryant, *Art and Design for All: the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: V&A Publications, 2011); Bruce Robertson, "The South Kensington Museum in Context: An Alternative History," *Museum and Society* 2, no. 1 (2004); Elizabeth Bonython and Anthony Burton, *The Great Exhibitor: the Life and Work of Henry Cole* (London: V&A Publications, 2003). On the circulating collection see Felix Driver and Sonia Ashmore, "The Mobile Museum: Collecting and Circulating Indian Textiles in Victorian Britain," *Victorian Studies* 52, no. 3 (2010); Joanna Weddell, "Room 38A and Beyond: Post-war British Design and the Circulation Department," *V&A Online Journal* 4 (2012), <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/journals/research-journal/issue-no.-4-summer-2012/room-38a-and-beyond-post-war-british-design-and-the-circulation-department>; Peter Floud, "The Circulation Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum," *Museum* 3.4 (1950); Burton, "Uses of South Kensington."

⁶⁸⁸ Select Committee Arts and Manufactures, PP 1835 (598).

⁶⁸⁹ "Inventory of the Objects in the Art Division of the Museum at South Kensington arranged according to the Dates of the Acquisition," Science and Art Department of the Committee of Council on Education (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1868), 28-33; Wainwright and Gere, "Making South Kensington I." See also Burton, *Vision and Accident*, 20-22; Mark Evans, "Raphael and Pre-Raphael in England and Germany, 1815-71," in *Art and Design for All: The Victoria and Albert Museum*, ed. Julius Victoria Bryant (London: V&A, 2011).

⁶⁹⁰ Charles Heath Wilson (1809-1882, appointed 1843-1848). Wainwright highlighted the difficulties of tracing the content and distribution of the collection pre-1852 from a confusing set of partial inventories. Wainwright and Gere, "Making South Kensington I." See also DS&A: Report on the System of Circulation of Art Objects from the South Kensington Museum, PP 1881 (C.2836) 3.

appointed General Superintendent of the Department of Practical Art (soon after, the DS&A) in 1852. Cole expanded the collection and extended its intended purpose to also educate the general public in the universal principles of taste.⁶⁹¹ The collection was subsumed within Cole's Museum of Manufactures at Marlborough House, renamed the Museum of Ornamental Art in 1853, and moved to South Kensington in 1857.⁶⁹² It was not as short on funds as the Scottish and Irish Galleries, but still relied on loans from private collectors to supplement its displays.⁶⁹³ Parliament granted £5,000 to purchase "industrial art" objects from the 1851 Great Exhibition, and funded further acquisitions through the 1850s and 60s, including the Gherardini Models in 1854 and parts of the Soulages Collection in 1857.⁶⁹⁴ John Charles Robinson, the museum's first curator (from 1853-63), drove forward acquisitions of Italian Renaissance sculpture and medieval and Renaissance objects from other countries.⁶⁹⁵

The circulation of objects to Schools of Art and their associated museums recommenced in 1854, under new terms and conditions typical of Cole's micro-management at the DS&A, and with much broader aims and audiences than before. As well as instructing students in provincial schools according to the curriculum set by the DS&A, Cole intended the Circulating Collection to educate the whole of society in the universal principles of design.⁶⁹⁶ The Circulating

⁶⁹¹ DS&A: Report on the System of Circulation, 3.

⁶⁹² The DS&A transferred from the oversight of the Board of Trade to that of the Committee for the Council of Education (CCE) in 1857.

⁶⁹³ On its use of loans see Barbara Lasic, "Going East: The Wallace Collection at Bethnal Green, 1872-1875," *Journal of the History of Collections* 26, no. 2 (2014).

⁶⁹⁴ "Inventory of Objects.," Burton, *Vision and Accident*, 20-22.

⁶⁹⁵ Davies, "Robinson's Work."

⁶⁹⁶ Circular signed by Henry Cole and Lyon Playfair, Board of Trade, DS&A, August 11, 1854 in Report on the System of Circulation, 2-3. Cole, "On the Facilities Afforded to All Classes of the Community for Obtaining an Education in

Collection had 430 “industrial art” objects divided into material classes, and 150 design drawings, photographs and framed materials, with additional loans from the Queen.⁶⁹⁷ As sections of it circulated around provincial towns, locals were expected to loan their art treasures, encouraged by Cole’s efficient and scrupulous system for keeping the objects safe through their travels and display.⁶⁹⁸ Between 1855 and 1859 the Circulating Collection visited twenty-six towns in England, Scotland and Ireland, and was seen by nearly 307,000 visitors in exhibitions lasting about three months each.⁶⁹⁹

The Circulating Collection epitomized the educational ideology of the DS&A and its museums, which set it apart from the National Galleries in London, Dublin and Edinburgh, and their associations with the Royal Academies. While the Galleries strove to acquire a complete permanent collection illustrative of the history of art, with pictures that would “silently” impart moral and historical instruction, the DS&A had oversight of a diverse group of artistic and scientific collections that were to be used for deliberate, practical, useful instruction.⁷⁰⁰ As the historical, rather than modern, manufactured collection of objects grew, the educational thrust of the South Kensington museum expanded from teaching

Art,” *Addresses of the Superintendent of the Department of Practical Art delivered in the Theatre at Marlborough House*, London, 1853, 12-13, cited in Burton, *Vision and Accident*, 27. On universal principles of design see Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament* (London: Day and Son, 1856).

⁶⁹⁷ Report on the System of Circulation, 3.

⁶⁹⁸ Portable space-saving stands were specially designed for the purpose. See DS&A Annual Report, 1869, Appendix D, 284-87. On encouraging local contributions to temporary exhibitions see Lasic, “The Wallace Collection at Bethnal Green.”

⁶⁹⁹ Report on the System of Circulation, Appendix A and B.

⁷⁰⁰ Robertson, “South Kensington Museum in Context,” 4. Burton uses the term “silent education” for the unarticulated and ill-defined common belief that looking at art was somehow good for you. Burton, “Uses of South Kensington,” 85.

universal principles to the history of art and aesthetic theory.⁷⁰¹ South Kensington was criticized for nudging into the territories of the National Gallery and British Museum, but Cole repeatedly asserted the distinctive aims of his museums to present works that “applied to some purposes of utility.”⁷⁰²

Until 1857 paintings purchased by the School of Design or DS&A had been reproductions of applied arts, but thereafter it began acquiring original paintings through gift, bequest and purchase. An important example acquired for utilitarian purposes was the Cologne *The Martyrdom of Saint Ursula and the 11,000 Virgins* by the Master of the St. Ursula Legend, c. 1492 purchased in 1857 “as an illustration of costume and ornament” (fig. 93).⁷⁰³ However, against the backdrop of unresolved debate about the inaccessibility and unsuitability of the National Gallery site and building, John Sheepshanks (1787-1863) made the surprising decision in 1857 to leave his collection of 233 British paintings and a similar number of drawings to the South Kensington Museum instead of the National Gallery.⁷⁰⁴ Sheepshanks intended his paintings to be accessible to the working classes and to be loaned around the nation.⁷⁰⁵ The display of Sheepshanks’ pictures in South Kensington led to tensions with the National

⁷⁰¹ Set out by Cole and Robinson in a series of articles in *Art-Journal* in 1855, guide books and lectures, as discussed in “Uses of South Kensington,” 84-85. On the shift to a more historical collection, *Vision and Accident*, 36-38.

⁷⁰² Minute signed by Cole for the Privy Council on Education, “Art Collections and the South Kensington Museum,” DS&A Annual Report, 1863, 6-8. On competition with the British Museum see “Minor Topics of the Month,” *Art-Journal*, May 1, 1862, 127-78. *Vision and Accident*, 100; Whitehead, *Museums*.

⁷⁰³ 5938-1857, bought for £31.10s from an unknown source. “Inventory of Objects,” 1857:29.

⁷⁰⁴ Brandon Taylor, *Art for the Nation: Exhibitions and the London Public, 1747-2001* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 72-76; Burton, *Vision and Accident*, 27-30.

⁷⁰⁵ “The Sheepshanks Collection,” V&A, (accessed March 13, 2014), <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/the-sheepshanks-collection/>; Taylor, *Art for the Nation*, 72-73.

Gallery, which insisted on its own regulations for displaying the Gallery's British pictures from the Turner and Vernon collections then also housed there. Under the different regulations of the South Kensington Museum, Sheepshanks pictures were displayed in the evening by gas light to allow the working classes in their "fustian jackets" to visit.⁷⁰⁶ As discussed in Chapter 3, these tensions contributed to the decision to move the Turner pictures to the National Gallery in 1861, and the removal of the thirty-eight superfluous pictures to make space for them.

Cole believed Sheepshanks' gift "laid the foundation" for the practice of circulating paintings to enable fair access to art around the nation.⁷⁰⁷ Including paintings in the Circulating Collection was important to Cole's zealous and competitive attempts to demonstrate the DS&A as the most efficient and effective means for disseminating art taste, and its moral improvement to the nation. At the 1860 Select Committee on Public Institutions, which met to discuss the best way to promote "healthful recreation and improvement" to the greatest number of people through tax-funded public institutions, Cole argued the British Museum and National Gallery should have their budgets cut because they were not of any practical use. He believed that the South Kensington Museum operating as a storehouse from which local museums and exhibitions could borrow works on rotation was better than any stagnant, permanent

⁷⁰⁶ Henry Cole, *The Functions of the Science and Art Department. Lecture delivered November 16, 1857* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1857), 26.

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 28. Only a few paintings circulated, chiefly from Sheepshanks' collection, but records are incomplete. Robert Lowe to Treasury, June 28, 1861, Copy in V&A MA/1/N120/1. Evans, "Raphael and Pre-Raphael."

collection.⁷⁰⁸ The Committee commended the Circulating Collection, recommended its expansion and called for superfluous objects from the National Gallery and British Museum to be circulated to bring the benefits of art to the widest population, so that:

instead of our vast national collection being virtually entombed at present, or becoming so vast as to bewilder, and yet so crowded as to be hidden, profitable recreation would be provided which would successfully compete with places of demoralizing amusement.⁷⁰⁹

The CCE duly recommended revising and enlarging the Circulating Collection to include paintings, drawings and engravings as well as industrial arts.⁷¹⁰

The DS&A used the Select Committee's recommendations to support their claim for the unwanted Beaucousin pictures in 1860. They believed it would kill two birds with one stone by bringing the pictures to the broadest public for their instruction, and putting pictures that were not good enough to have a permanent place in a collection, or to raise a profit at sale, to the most economical and publicly beneficial use.⁷¹¹ Cole was among those who saw the

⁷⁰⁸ Report and Minutes of the Select Committee on Public Institutions, PP 1860 (181), 6; Rafael Cardoso Denis, "Teaching By Example: Education and the Formation of the South Kensington Msuems," in *A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, ed. Malcolm Baker and Brenda Richardson (London: V&A, 1997).

⁷⁰⁹ Report, 1860 (181), iv.

⁷¹⁰ DS&A Minutes, March 29, 1860, a copy of which was sent to the Gallery: MacLeod to Eastlake, May 4, 1860. All papers regarding the circulating of superfluous pictures in V&A MA/A/N120/1: 74/967. The multiple copies of the correspondence between the National Gallery, South Kensington Museum and Treasury in these institutions archives attest to the complexity and controversy of the loan of superfluous pictures for the Circulating Collection.

⁷¹¹ For example, Lowe to Treasury, June 28, 1861, Copy in MA/1/N120/1, 385.

Krüger sale as a mistake because it “got rid, at very depreciated value, of pictures which would have been highly useful in other galleries.”⁷¹²

The DS&A request to the Gallery was not sent until May, after Eastlake and the Trustees had resolved in principle to loan the excess Beaucousin pictures to Dublin, Edinburgh and Bristol, asking the Treasury to sort out their rival claims.⁷¹³ At some point in March Eastlake had promised them to the Galleries in Dublin and Edinburgh, and Mulvany had already arranged to inspect them for Dublin in April. Mulvany found only one or two pictures suitable for Dublin, and the Board of the Irish Gallery decided against applying for them then.⁷¹⁴ While the Board of the Scottish National Gallery was arranging to send Johnstone to inspect the pictures, Eastlake and the Trustees in London were putting together a response to Cole’s request. They were reluctant to allow South Kensington to take any Beaucousin pictures after Cole had failed to recognize the Trustees’ concerns about their moral and legal responsibilities for the British pictures already housed at South Kensington.⁷¹⁵ Eastlake and the Trustees also feared that pictures could be damaged if repeatedly transported around the country.⁷¹⁶

The Trustees resolved to accept on principle that the Gallery’s paintings could be loaned to the Circulating Collection, but did not want paintings from

⁷¹² Cole, *National Gallery Difficulties Solved*, 9-10.

⁷¹³ MacCleod to Eastlake, May 4, 1860 V&A MA/1/N120/1 no. 74/967, and NG NG5/312/2, and NG Minutes, July 22, 1861.

⁷¹⁴ Eastlake’s invitation and Mulvany’s report in NGI Minute Book 1, April 21, 1860.

⁷¹⁵ These issues are discussed repeatedly in NG Minutes, February to June 1859.

⁷¹⁶ Johnstone mentions Eastlake’s fears in “Report by the Curator of the National Gallery, Selection of Pictures on Loan from the National Gallery, London,” NGS-NG 6/7/5. The Trustees raised concerns about damage when Eastlake proposed the list of superfluous pictures: NG Minutes, July 22, 1861.

the permanent collection to be circulated.⁷¹⁷ It was at this point that Eastlake put together his definition of “superfluous” pictures for the Treasury, and asked for their guidance on the Beaucousin question.⁷¹⁸ Eastlake was still waiting for the Treasury’s answer when Johnstone arrived from Scotland to inspect the Beaucousin pictures. Eastlake’s reluctance to let Cole have any superfluous pictures is evident from the way he encouraged Johnstone to “lose no time” in arguing his case at the Treasury. Johnstone successfully convinced the Treasury to allow Dublin and Edinburgh take the eleven Beaucousin pictures “in the same manner as the transfer in 1857,” with each Gallery selecting alternately from them.⁷¹⁹ But things did not run smoothly: misunderstandings between Mulvany, Johnstone and Eastlake meant that Dublin took six of the Beaucousin pictures while Edinburgh got only one, and this set up awkward expectations when the next round of superfluous pictures, including thirteen from the Krüger collection, became available a year later.⁷²⁰

Having missed out on the Beaucousin pictures, the DS&A applied directly to the Treasury in June 1861 for all of the Gallery’s superfluous pictures for the Circulating Collection.⁷²¹ The DS&A’s request coincided with the decision to return the Turner pictures to the National Gallery, and with Eastlake drawing

⁷¹⁷ NG Minutes May 16, 1860; NG NG5/312/2. Wornum to Cole, May 19, 1860 V&A MA/1/N120/1 no. 74/967, and NG NG6/2/281.

⁷¹⁸ Eastlake to Treasury, May 21, 1860, NG NG5/313/2.

⁷¹⁹ Hamilton, Treasury to Eastlake, June 5, 1860, NG NG5/314/1. Johnstone described the negotiations in “Report by the Principle Curator as to Pictures that May be Obtained for the Scottish National Gallery,” May 15, 1860, NGS NG 6/7/5.

⁷²⁰ Eastlake to Dublin and Edinburgh, enclosing a copy of the Hamilton’s letter, NGI Minute Book 1, 3 July 1860; and NGS NG6/7/5. NGS Minutes June 25, 1860; NG NG1/1/42 and NG Minutes, June 18, 1860.

⁷²¹ Robert Law, DS&A to Treasury, June 28, 1861, V&A MS/1/N120/1 no. 1861/8135. Copy in NG NG5/339/3.

up his list of thirty-eight superfluous pictures, which included the Krüger thirteen. When the Treasury passed the DS&A request to the Gallery the Trustees responded again that they agreed in principle to allowing superfluous pictures into the Circulating Collection, but asserted pre-existing agreements to send them to Dublin and Edinburgh instead.⁷²² On hearing this, Redgrave from the South Kensington Museum opined that if the pictures went to the Circulating Collection they would rotate through Edinburgh and Dublin anyway, and provide more useful, diverse and changing exhibitions than if a small number were permanently located there.⁷²³ A stalemate ensued and several months passed between the removal of the superfluous pictures from the Gallery's walls and the resolution of their dispersal.

In an effort to resolve the delay, Johnstone visited the Treasury when in London in May 1862. He realized that if the DS&A won this argument Scotland would lose all chance of further loans from London.⁷²⁴ Johnstone immediately, and again successfully, appealed to the Treasury and they granted Ireland and Scotland priority in taking turns to select from the superfluous pictures.⁷²⁵ But

⁷²² They were also concerned circulating the pictures would breach the terms of bequests, and risk damaging them. NG Minutes, July 22, 1861, and Eastlake to Treasury, July 25, 1861, NG NG5/341/1 and 2. Copy in V&A MS/1/N120/1.

⁷²³ Redgrave's notes and Lowe to Treasury, September 24, 1861, both in V&A MA/1/N120/1 8356/71 and 72. Ironically, Edinburgh had negotiated with Cole to have the Circulating Collection come to Edinburgh at the same time as pressing Scotland and Dublin's rights to the Beaucousin collection in 1860. Edinburgh received the Circulating Collection in 1862, where it attracted nearly 60,000 visitors. DS&A Annual Report, 1863; Johnstone, Report, May 15, 1860, NGS NG 6/7/5.

⁷²⁴ NGS Minutes, May 27, 1862, NGS 1/1/42.

⁷²⁵ The Treasury sanctioned this transfer June 9 and the Galleries were informed on June 10, 1862. NG NG5/350/1; Wornum to Johnstone, June 10, 1862, NGS NG 6/7/5 and copy in Johnstone's "Report by the Curator of the National Gallery: Selection of Pictures on Loan from the National Gallery, London, July 8, 1862," NG6/7/5.

once again things did not run smoothly. When Johnstone and Mulvany were in London preparing to make their selections, they heard Cole was anticipating they would only be taking a few of the larger pictures, leaving the rest of the smaller, more portable ones for the Circulating Collection.⁷²⁶ Eastlake was “anxious” the Treasury may have sanctioned that arrangement and told Johnstone that the Trustees “decidedly objected” to South Kensington getting the pictures, fearing damage through repeated transport, especially of the larger pictures.⁷²⁷ On the day of selection, Johnstone and Mulvany arrived to find Redgrave from South Kensington there expecting to select on equal terms. Wornum advised them to accept the situation. Mulvany and Johnstone at first refused, but after consulting privately with each other agreed, partly because Redgrave assured them he would not take works they especially wanted, but more because they realized the DS&A could use its considerable influence against them if they did not. The three men then took turns to choose the paintings they wanted, and everything left over went to South Kensington as well.⁷²⁸ However, at the end of the meeting, when Redgrave asked Johnstone if he had all he wanted, Johnstone told him that he regretted not getting the *Adoration of Kings*, a fragment from the Liesborn altarpiece, which Redgrave had selected before Johnstone got the chance. Redgrave was accommodating enough to allow Johnstone to swap *The Adoration* for another. There is no record of what he swapped.⁷²⁹

⁷²⁶ Wornum to Cole, June 17, 1862, NG NG6/3/48; Johnstone to Primrose, June 17, 1862, NGS NG6/7/5.

⁷²⁷ Johnstone, “Report,” July 8, 1862, NGS: NG6/7/5.

⁷²⁸ NG Minutes June 30, 1862 and Johnstone, “Report,” July 8, 1862.

⁷²⁹ Ibid.

This haggle shows that although the overriding motivations behind each institution taking the Krüger pictures as loans were tactical and practical, they were also connoisseurial, and some of the early German paintings pictures were selected by these institutions with deliberate care and purpose.

4 b. Early German Paintings and the National Galleries of Ireland and Scotland

The public debate regarding the purpose of the National Gallery as a comprehensive collection illustrative of the history of art were by no means restricted to London. In both Ireland and Scotland efforts to create National Galleries were additionally driven by the belief that comprehensive historical collections of art there would be emblematic of new levels of national, social and economic progress and improved relative status in the United Kingdom. The display of art in its development from “primitive” to advanced mirrored perceptions that the nations had likewise progressed, and that art and its appreciation was intricately tied to that process of civilization. Early German paintings were integral components of these comprehensive collections.

Ireland’s turbulent socio-political history made such a project particularly pertinent. As recently as 1847, Mulvany had recognised how difficult it was to contemplate the idea of a School of Design or display of Fine Art “with famine stalking through the land, desolation and death piling corpses on our shore, society almost shaken to its centre...”⁷³⁰ Sir Robert Kane, Director

⁷³⁰ George Mulvany, *Thoughts and Facts Concerning the Fine Arts in Ireland and the Schools of Design* (Dublin: Cumming and Ferguson, 1847).

of the Museum of Irish Industry in Dublin and agitator for educational reform, described how the Irish industrial and artistic spirit had been “paralyzed” and almost destroyed by the “absorption of all public energy and attention in the chaos of abstract political debate.”⁷³¹ Including Fine Art in the Industrial Exhibition of 1853 – which had previously only had utilitarian objects – was a demonstration that Ireland was emerging from that darkness. The Catalogue for the Exhibition explained the change:

When the necessities of life have been satisfied, civilization superadds to the useful the ornamental, and soon learns to recognize it as a necessity of life also... In truth it is difficult, once we have emerged from the rudest and most elementary state of society, to deny that the Fine Arts themselves are utilitarian.⁷³²

The 1853 exhibition impressed and reinforced notions of the progress of art as well as the inherently national character evident in art production and appreciation, which provides important context for Ireland’s application for some of the German Krüger paintings. Commentator William Kirby Sullivan shared the view, similar to Mulvany, Dyce and Gladstone, that the ultimate function of art was

to raise men’s minds...from the dross of the material world – to occupy for a little while in sympathy with the Spiritual which is Eternal...this is

⁷³¹ Robert Kane, "On the Uses of Industrial Exhibitions," *Monthly Journal of Progress, Part I Journal of Industrial Progress* 1 (1854): 6. Copy in NGI Larcom Letter Book 1.

⁷³² *Official Catalogue of the Great Industrial Exhibition 1853* (Dublin: J. Falconer, 1853), 151.

the very mission of Art its very highest sense, as the Civilizer of Mankind.⁷³³

He and Mulvany congratulated the Irish working classes for flocking to see and be civilized by fine art at the 1853 exhibition.⁷³⁴ The visitors may have lacked the skills of connoisseurs, but looked with “reverence as well as good taste” on the paintings, revealing natural Irish ability to recognize something of “the Spiritual, the Divine” in art.⁷³⁵ Sullivan argued that the role of an artist was ultimately to “express the pure ideal” in the visual idiom of his own time, something that could be stimulated through examples of art from different nations and eras. He linked a nation’s artistic productions to its appreciation of art, and claimed the Irish had “a particular bent for Art, for all that is Spiritual, for all that is Abstract.” An Irish National Gallery was essential to cultivate “Art” as a weapon in the civilization of the nation, and through Ireland, the civilization of other nations not blessed with the same “idealist” qualities as the Irish.⁷³⁶

Mulvany believed these Irish qualities were shared with the Germans. He set out similar views to Sullivan in his *Introduction* to the catalogues for the Irish Institution exhibitions, and reprinted in the Irish National Gallery catalogues.⁷³⁷ His survey of art history heavily depended on Kugler and his

⁷³³ William Sullivan, "On the Establishment of a National Gallery of Art in Dublin, and on the Means of Establishing Permanent Exhibitions of Art in Provincial Cities," *Monthly Journal of Progress, Part II Journal of Social Progress* I (1854): 2. Copy in NGI archives, Larcom Letter Book 1.

⁷³⁴ Mulvany, *Thoughts*, especially 11-12 and 26.

⁷³⁵ Sullivan, "Establishment of the National Gallery."

⁷³⁶ Reiterated in William Sullivan, "On the Management of Public Galleries of Painting and Sculpture," *Monthly Journal of Progress, Part II Journal of Social Progress* VII (1854): 54-60; "An Irish National Gallery," *Monthly Journal of Progress, Part II Journal of Social Progress* VII (1854): 110-18.

⁷³⁷ *Catalogue of the Exhibition of Ancient and Modern Paintings: First Year, 1854 at the Royal Hibernian Academy* (Dublin: Browne & Nolan, 1854); *Catalogue of*

framework of value, in which the beautiful expression of Christian sentiment is the pinnacle of art.⁷³⁸ Early German painting would have a rightful place in Ireland's National Gallery because it had "a distinct generic character" second only to Italy, and reached its pinnacle of achievement through the blend of idealism and truth to nature of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Cologne painting.⁷³⁹ Mulvany's appreciation for the spiritual qualities of German art is made all the more apparent in his selective use of Kugler's *Handbook*: although he mentioned Dürer and Cranach he did not elucidate their qualities as Kugler had, nor did he mention Holbein, but rather skipped from fifteenth-century Cologne to the modern school of German painters, including Cornelius and Overbeck, in whom he saw a continuation and culmination of the quintessentially German combination of high spiritual and intellectual truth with ideal form, which nevertheless found its best expression in Italian fifteenth-century exemplars. This contrasted with alternative views that the quintessentially German character was its penchant for the fantastic and mechanical skill. Mulvany encouraged the idea of an Irish historical collection through partly attributing the German revival in painting to access to ancient art in collections like that of the Boisserées'.⁷⁴⁰ Underscoring appreciation for art in spiritual terms, Mulvany's individual catalogue entries on paintings tended to explain the story behind their subjects rather than their manner of execution or

the Great Industrial Exhibition; George Mulvany, Catalogue, Descriptive and Historical, of the Works of Art in the National Gallery of Ireland, with Biographical Notices of the Masters (Dublin: Thom, 1864). It appeared in catalogues until at least 1875.

⁷³⁸ Kugler, *Handbook*.

⁷³⁹ *Catalogue... of Ancient and Modern Paintings, 1854*, 6-7. Copy in NGI Larcom Book 1.

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

style. He believed in art education and display for all, not just artisans and artists. Whereas connoisseurs looked for what he termed the fashion of the Art (its style) "the unlearned will look more to the invention, to the story."⁷⁴¹ Mulvany's language masterfully balanced the tensions inherent in a religiously divided Irish populace looking at Catholic images in a secular setting. He used religiously unifying vocabulary, for instance by calling Christ "Our Lord" or his mother the "Blessed Virgin Mary", but at the same time described overtly Catholic subjects from the safe Protestant distance provided by Anna Jameson's texts.⁷⁴² Despite being Protestant, Jameson was appreciated by Catholics in Ireland for bringing Catholic art to public knowledge and for her sensitive handling of it.⁷⁴³

So much for the theory of the spiritual qualities of Germans and their painting, but what of the realistic chances of obtaining some of the best Cologne paintings? During the 1850s the Irish Institution and Board of Governors and Guardians of the National Gallery of Ireland recognized Dublin would have to settle for inferior specimens because the best works by renowned masters were either too expensive or already in established collections.⁷⁴⁴ Taking a practical

⁷⁴¹ Mulvany, *Thoughts*, at 47. His comments corroborate Prettejohn's assessment of the shift from narrative to visual criteria accompanying the transition from generalist to professional art writers and audiences. Elizabeth Prettejohn, "Aesthetic Value and the Professionalization of Victorian Art Criticism 1837-78," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 2, no. 1 (1997).

⁷⁴² Contrast for example Wornum's use of "The Virgin" and "Christ". Wornum, *Catalogue, 1856*, 100.

⁷⁴³ "Christian Art," *Dublin Review* III, October, 1864. Jameson was connected with the Irish National Gallery's acquisition of over thirty pictures having introduced Lord Chancellor Brady to her niece's husband, the dealer Robert Macphearson Esq., through whom he purchased paintings for the Gallery. Somerville-Large, *1854-2004*, 77-86.

⁷⁴⁴ Many of the Irish Institution committee members joined the Board of Governors in 1855 and the Irish Institution was disbanded in 1860.

approach, they sought more affordable and attainable anonymous scholars of the great masters, looking for “true and genuine” specimens of schools that could support “a good, practical school of painting, and whose influence in thought and sentiment is best calculated to instruct the taste, and to purify and exalt the feelings of the public at large”.⁷⁴⁵

Before examining whether the Krüger gleanings on offer in 1857 met these criteria it is worth noting the differences between Ireland’s and Scotland’s approaches to the special value of having early German painting. The opening of the National Gallery of Scotland was similarly perceived as a mark of the country’s recent socio-economic progress, and the display of art within it as the means of its ongoing civilizing advance.⁷⁴⁶ It aspired to having a broad collection that illustrated the development of art and perceived the way that art was displayed as a reflection of the national reputation. Specimens from all schools, including German ones, had a rightful place in such a collection. Unlike Dublin, the rhetoric surrounding the exhibition of art in Scotland’s National Gallery was less about a national predilection for spiritual elevation and more about intellectual endeavour. Of course, religion remained a fundamental characteristic of advanced civilization, but, as Prince Albert put it at the laying of the foundation stone for the Gallery in 1850, Scotland’s new gallery would present the image:

⁷⁴⁵ “Address of the Governors and Guardians of the National Gallery Ireland,” 1856, copy in NGI Larcom Letter Book 1, 1-15, at 11-12. Also stated in Mulvany’s Introduction to the catalogues. There was some debate about whether copies of great masters were better than originals by mediocre ones: B. R. Holt to Larcom (undated), NGI Larcom Letter Book 1.

⁷⁴⁶ William Johnstone, *Catalogue, Descriptive and Historical, of the National Gallery of Scotland, Under the Management of the Board of Manufactures*, 1st ed. (Edinburgh: Murray and Gibb, 1859), Introduction.

of a most healthy national progress; the ruder arts connected with the necessities of life first gaining strength, then education and Science supervening and directing further exertions; and lastly, the Arts, which only adorn life, becoming longed for by a prosperous and educated people.⁷⁴⁷

The Gallery was the next stage in Scotland's progression from a nation of primary industries, then of secondary manufacturing industries, to a place for intellectual and aesthetic pleasures. This was consciously recognized in the re-direction of the annual grant to the Scottish Board of Manufactures away from supporting primary industry to supporting the arts.

Nick Prior has effectively argued that the Gallery's site at the heart of the rational new town of Edinburgh, a city linked to the Enlightenment, and with its rational neo-classical building design, operated as a semiotic system reinforcing ideas of social and intellectual elitism. It was a place "dedicated to disinterested and refined cultural pleasures and aesthetic knowledge."⁷⁴⁸ Prince Albert's speech, reprinted in the Introduction to the Scottish Gallery's catalogues, asserted that its target audience was both the public and artists. The internal architecture's modular octagonal galleries divided the collection into modern and ancient art, rhythmically repeating the movement from British to Dutch, Italian, Spanish and French Old Masters and back again. The separation yet proximity of these groups of art were calculated, so the catalogue tells us, to

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁷⁴⁸ Nick Prior, "The Art of Space in the Space of Art: Edinburgh and its Gallery, 1780-1860," *Museum and Society* 1, no. 2 (2003), <https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/museumsociety/documents/volumes/msprior.pdf>.

enable the student to compare and draw inferences to “advance him in the theory and practice of art.”⁷⁴⁹

On the other hand Scottish writers and collectors, such as Stirling, Lindsay, Dennistoun, the 8th Marquess of Lothian and Lord Elcho were strongly associated with love of early paintings or “Christian” art.⁷⁵⁰ Waagen described Elcho as an “intelligent” collector and “ardent admirer” of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Italian art.⁷⁵¹ Elcho acquired a number of celebrated works, among them Masolino’s *Annunciation* and a *Virgin and Child* attributed to “Fra Bartolommeo”, but as already mentioned a fifteenth-century Cologne *Virgin and Child* was already in the eclectic Elcho collection at Gosford House (fig. 83).⁷⁵² Lord Elcho, who had been a vociferous critic of the Gallery in London, was invited by the Board of the Scottish Gallery to help establish the principles by which purchases or gifts could be accepted into the Scottish national collection. It was decided that they should only admit works of artistic merit that were “calculated to be of use to the student or to instruct or interest the public.”⁷⁵³ Public instruction was a key strategy of the Board. Before the Gallery opened it resolved to label each picture and publish a catalogue along similar lines to London’s, with biographical notes on artists, descriptions of pictures and critical and historical remarks on them. The resolution to have Eastlake, Redgrave and

⁷⁴⁹ Johnstone, *Catalogue*, 1859, 4.

⁷⁵⁰ Timothy Clifford, "Introduction: Italian Art in Scotland in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries," *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History* 8 (2003); Peter Humfrey, "G. F. Waagen in Scotland," *ibid.*; Shelagh Wemyss, "Francis, Lord Elcho (10th Earl of Weymss) as a Collector of Old Masters," *ibid.*; Robert Wenley, "The 8th Marquess of Lothian as a Collector of Italian Old Masters," *ibid.*

⁷⁵¹ Waagen, *Treasures*, I:35, II:82-83.

⁷⁵² See Chapter 3 b. On the Masolino, Tancred Borenius, "The Annunciation, by Masolino," *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 29, no. 158 (1916).

⁷⁵³ NGS Board Minutes November 2, 1857.

Wornum review the picture labels and catalogue before publication points to Edinburgh's eagerness to maintain scholarly standards. Johnstone wrote the catalogue in an academic but accessible style. His entry on Raphael illustrates that he was well aware of prevailing ideas about the special religious qualities inherent in Christian Art, but treated them in an even-handed, disinterested manner. Raphael's paintings, he tells us, are divided into three classes each with their devoted admirers: those who see art at its best

employed in the service of religion, prefer the first manner embodying purity and religious feeling. His last manner... is held by many connoisseurs as the only kind of true art; while his middle... is admired as the result of harmonious combinations of all his artistic qualifications. In all these different styles he executes work of high excellence.⁷⁵⁴

Unlike in Ireland, the early German loans to Scotland would not be framed in a predominantly Christian art model.

4 c. Selecting and Displaying Krüger Paintings

i. Ireland

German art may have been important to Ireland and Scotland, but that did not equate to the Krüger pictures being desirable specimens. Mulvany was clearly disappointed with the Krüger pictures when he went to inspect those offered by the National Gallery in 1857. His report to the Board in Dublin gave the impression he was picking through a jumble sale:

⁷⁵⁴ Johnstone, *Catalogue*, 1859, 33.

It must be admitted that these Works are to be regarded under the unfavourable aspect of rejected Works, having been.... ultimately judged unsuitable for that Collection; and naturally no one of very striking interest or importance can be expected among them.⁷⁵⁵

A young gallery like Dublin had to take pictures more mature galleries would not want, and even “third rate Schools” and unknown Masters were acceptable, but Mulvany insisted on maintaining standards. He chose those he believed genuine, free from retouching, and either interesting specimens of early schools to illustrate the history of art, or “objects of pleasure or study”. The latter were “useful for the cultivation of public taste and the improvement of artists”, which presumably meant the former were not. The ten Krüger pictures he selected mostly fell into the “historically illustrative” category (Appendix 8). Mulvany thought these acceptable specimens of the early Westphalian and Netherlandish Schools valuable to the archaeologist and student of costume because of their anachronistic treatment of figures and clothing. He thought the *Virgin and Child* seemed “genuine”; *Christ Before Pilate* “curious” as a “specimen of the time and school”; and that the *Portrait of a Woman*, whose attribution then to Holbein Mulvany doubted, “at least” had “a genuine character which may render it acceptable” (figs. 52, 44 and 54). By contrast, Mulvany’s comments on the six Italian paintings suggest he chose them chiefly for their artistic qualities (he makes no observations about the Dutch painting). He described them as well painted even though at times hard or defective in drawing. Mulvany did notice

⁷⁵⁵ NGI Minute Book 1 January 21, 1857, from which all citations in this and the following two paragraphs are taken. Only a transcript was made available to me.

how badly some had been restored, particularly the portrait then attributed to Palma Vecchio which he considered to have been “originally... very sweet” (fig. 94, *Woman at the Window*). These observations are interesting in light of the 1978 restoration of the painting, which found it had been considerably overpainted to make the features and dress of the woman more acceptable to Victorian taste: clearly this did not convince Mulvany.⁷⁵⁶

Given Mulvany’s admiration for spiritual early German art and his reliance on Kugler who had praised the Meister von Liesborn, it is curious that most of the paintings he selected came from Part II rather than Part I of Krüger’s collection, that is later German and Netherlandish paintings. He certainly seems to have preferred those closer to Netherlandish realism than to Cologne idealism. The two Netherlandish pictures he chose (one was then called German) he thought “the most eligible of the lot.” He reported that the *Adoration of the Kings* was “very careful and faithful in details of costume etc.”, and the *Nativity* comparable to the school of van Eyck in its tone, style and treatment of light (figs. 61 and 60). The only reference he made to expression of sentiment was regarding *St. Dorothea* and *St. Margaret* which he found “not deficient of a certain grace and sentiment... notwithstanding the peculiarity of the School and the feebleness of execution” (figs. 33-34). He had not known these were also substantially overpainted before the Gallery acquired them, as the photograph of their condition in figure 95 shows.⁷⁵⁷ These circumstances indicate how

⁷⁵⁶ Scott Nethersole, “*Woman at the Window*,” National Gallery, 2010 (accessed January 13, 2014)

<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/research/woman-at-a-window>

⁷⁵⁷ NG Dossier File NG 2152 and 2153. Michael Levey, “Eine Altartafel aus der Werkstatt des Meisters von Liesborn,” *Westfalen, Hefte für Geschichte, Kunst und Volkskunde* 40 (1962). Koenig, *Meister von Leisborn*, plate 99.

difficult it was to identify what were the supposedly salient features of the German school, and how divergent actual examples were from the theoretical ideals in Mulvany's catalogue Introduction.

Mulvany did not report why he rejected the other thirty-seven Krüger paintings, or why the ten he chose seemed more genuine or curious than others. It is possible in some cases he rejected paintings with Roman Catholic subjects, for example *The Virgin and Child in Glory* by Gert van Lon (fig. 42), and he told Eastlake size was an important factor: those he selected were small enough to fit the proposed building for the future Gallery.⁷⁵⁸ However, he rejected many small paintings, so it appears he simply thought the Krüger examples poor specimens, and without extant visual record of many of them it is difficult to corroborate this. His choices were at least varied, and would well illustrate the Flemish influence on German painting.

Mulvany did not convey any sense of inferiority in the Krüger pictures when they were presented to the Irish public at the 1857 Irish Institution Exhibition. As already discussed, the Introduction to this catalogue praised early German painting for its idealism and naturalism in the service of pious sentiment, which would positively shape readers' expectations of German art. The individual entries for the new Krüger pictures made no reference to idealized, spiritual qualities, and instead positioned the pictures as valuable historical specimens demonstrating the "curious" and "peculiar" old German school. Alternatively the entries presented them as historical depictions of religious subjects, a topic familiar to readers of Jameson, whose *Sacred and Legendary Art* Mulvany referenced in explaining the legends of *St. Dorothea* and

⁷⁵⁸ Mulvany to Eastlake, January 22, 1857 NG NG5/215/3.

St. Margaret.⁷⁵⁹ Even more than other catalogue entries he primarily described the Krüger pictures' subjects rather than artistic style or technique, and his vocabulary encouraged emotional rather than connoisseurial viewing. For instance, for *Christ Before Pilate* he wrote: "Our Lord wears his crown of thorns, a coarse grey robe... He bends forward with an expression of weariness and pain, and does not look towards Pilate as he is pushed before him by the soldiers" (fig. 44).⁷⁶⁰ The Krüger paintings rejected by London, selected by Mulvany as the best of a bad lot, and repackaged by him for the Irish public in 1857, could now function exactly as Mulvany hoped for pictures in a new Irish National Gallery: they could educate the public in art and its history, if not through erudite connoisseurship, then through the stories the pictures depicted, and through the variety of genuine historical schools represented.

The press response was positive. For example, *Freeman's Journal* praised the diversity of the Irish National Gallery's nucleus collection and described "all" the pictures as "good" and warranting attention, valuable either for their artistic merit or illustration of the earliest development of painting. The author specifically mentioned the two Krüger pictures Mulvany had thought the "best of the lot" as "highly interesting".⁷⁶¹ Newspaper reports like these, which copied passages from the catalogue, disseminated instruction on how to look at the German paintings beyond the catalogue-reading population.

⁷⁵⁹ Irish Institution, *Catalogue of the Exhibition of Ancient and Modern Paintings, Fourth Year, 1857.*, 33-36. Quotes refer to *Christ Before Pilate* and *Christ Carrying the Cross*, Cat. nos 36, 37. *Ibid.*, 34.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶¹ Nos. 12 and 16 in the catalogue. "Irish Institution, Fourth Exhibition," *Freeman's Journal*, April 20, 1857, 1.

The Kruger pictures were displayed in the annual Irish Institution Exhibitions until the permanent Gallery opened in 1864, and then in that Gallery.⁷⁶² In 1861 Anthony Trollope remarked on the disparity between London's and Dublin's attitudes to the pictures, noting that Dublin rather seemed to like the Krüger collection, and he would not mind the rest of them being sent there.⁷⁶³ Mulvany chose only one further Krüger picture when offered London's superfluous pictures in 1861: *The Coronation* by Jan Baegert (then with a vague German school attribution), possibly because Kugler had referred to it.⁷⁶⁴ It may be generous to think Mulvany did not select any further Liesborn works because Dublin already had *St. Dorothea* and *St. Margaret*, and Scotland and South Kensington needed their share, rather than that he thought little of them as examples of German painting. Nevertheless, the Krüger paintings had enabled Mulvany to make early German paintings a core part of the Irish National Gallery collection. He acquired five further German paintings as well as prints and drawings while he was Director: "Hans Schaufelein's" *Joseph and Mary Refused Admittance to the Inn* (now given to Anton Woensam), a modern Romantic painting, *The Last of the Brotherhood*, by Herman Dyck, and three portraits by Georg Pencz, "Altdorfer" and "Hans Asper" (now Bernhard Strigel and Conrad von Faber, fig. 96a-c).⁷⁶⁵ The "Altdorfer" cost £160, and Mulvany purchased Dürer's drawing of a *Rabbit* for £11.11s, a price comparable

⁷⁶² The *Portrait of a Woman* (NG 2158) was withdrawn from display after 1857. See Appendix 8.

⁷⁶³ Anthony Trollope, "The National Gallery," in *Miscellaneous Essays and Reviews*, (New York: Arno Press, 1981), 167.

⁷⁶⁴ Kugler, *Handbook*, 51.

⁷⁶⁵ The portraits bought respectively in Paris, 1864 (Pencz, NGI.1373), Paris 1866 (Strigel, NGI.6) and London, 1866 (Faber, NGI.21). On these and other German acquisitions see David Oldfield, *German Paintings in the National Gallery of Ireland: A Complete Guide* (Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland, 1987).

to other drawings by Mantegna and Correggio.⁷⁶⁶ Mulvany appears to have been highly astute in employing his limited budget to the best effect. Mulvany's successor, Henry Edward Doyle (Director from 1869-1892), bought at least five further German paintings for Ireland, mostly portraits, but also *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* from the workshop of Lucas Cranach.⁷⁶⁷ This trend towards carefully finished portraits rather than historical devotional subjects hints at shifts towards formal rather than romantic art critical frameworks.

It is difficult to assess how the Krüger paintings were displayed, evaluated or received in Ireland over the following decades. The catalogues from the 1860s and 70s were full of uncorrected errors and discrepancies so that it is not even clear which remained on display or where. What is known of their changing display and attributions is set out in Appendix 8. It is curious that so little is known of the reception of Jan Baegert's *Coronation* in Ireland, and that it cannot even be ascertained that it remained on display (fig. 51). Doyle seems to have withdrawn it during his 1875 rehang of the Gallery because it entirely disappeared from catalogues until 1898, when it reappeared attributed to the school of Bernard Strigel, along with *Christ Before Pilate*. By 1914 both panels had been re-attributed to the Master of Cappenberg, now called Jan Baegert.⁷⁶⁸ The low profile of *The Coronation* from the 1860s is a reversal in

⁷⁶⁶ At the same sale he paid £360 for a painting by the School of Ghirlandaio, but only £42 for a "Tintoretto." NGI Minute Book 2, August 2, 1866. The drawings were purchased from the Wellesley Collection, London.

⁷⁶⁷ NGI 186, purchased 1879. Oldfield shows one or two other German panels turned up in the Gallery stores after Doyle's time, with no record of when they were purchased, including a *Lamentation of Christ* (NGI 1216) and *The Arrest of Christ*, Workshop of Michael Pacher (NGI 1305). Oldfield, *German Paintings*, 27-29, 48-53.

⁷⁶⁸ On their attribution changes see Tschira van Oyen, *Jan Baegert*, 9-10 and 101-04.

fortune from its description as a late vestige of Westphalian art at its best in the 1846 edition of Kugler, and from the rather different interest it generated in the *Illustrated London News* when it went on display in London (fig. 75).⁷⁶⁹ Its creeping obscurity is also evident in Waagen's omission of it from his 1860 edition of Kugler, and may evince the persistent difficulty British and other viewers had with images of the Virgin that did not fulfill expectations based on idealized classical and Italian Renaissance models.⁷⁷⁰

4 c. Selecting and Displaying Krüger Paintings

ii. Scotland

The three Krüger pictures loaned to the National Gallery, Scotland had a more steady and positive reception, perhaps because Scotland's criteria for accepting the paintings in 1862 were less Romantic, and more academic and scholarly than Dublin's had been in the 1850s (Appendix 8). Lord Elcho, who had objected when the rejected Krüger pictures went to Ireland in 1857, had raised concerns about Scotland accepting pictures London did not want, but Johnstone had convinced him in 1860 that good pictures could be had if London had too many by the same artist, or if the Trustees, who were not infallible, mistakenly rejected something worthy.⁷⁷¹ Johnstone believed the early works among the superfluous pictures in 1862 (some "good", some "passable") could

⁷⁶⁹ Kugler, *Handbook*, 51. See Chapter 3 a.

⁷⁷⁰ For example, Conway, *Flemish Artists and their Predecessors on the Lower Rhine*, 109.

⁷⁷¹ Johnstone, "Report," 1860, NGS: NG 6/7/5.

add interest and variety to the collection.⁷⁷² Before they were offered in 1862, Scotland had virtually no German paintings and very few from any schools before the sixteenth century. Johnstone sought Elcho's advice before the selection process in 1862, and it was as the two inspected the pictures with Wornum that they agreed the "Werden Master" *Conversion of St Hubert* was "the best picture" of the entire offering, which ought to be secured first (fig. 39). Johnstone did not specify their reasons, but it may have been the combination of published scholarship on the work, familiarity with the subject from Dürer's rather different treatment in his etching from the early 1500s, and their connoisseurial evaluations of the visual properties of this painting in particular (fig. 97, Dürer, *St. Eustache*). Johnstone used an abbreviated version of Wornum's text for his catalogue entry on this work, and did not cite Crowe's and Cavacaselle's *Early Flemish Painters*, so readers were given its attribution either to the Master of the Lyversbeg Passion or "Israel van Mechenen."⁷⁷³

It is also not clear why Johnstone and Elcho, as well as Redgrave from the South Kensington museum, were so keen to have the *Adoration of the Kings* fragment from the Liesborn altarpiece (fig. 31). The tender interaction of figures may have appealed, but equally Redgrave may have wanted it because it was small and therefore portable for the Circulating Collection. But there were other tender pictures neither man selected, and Redgrave only took the fragment of the *Head of Christ* from the Liesborn Altarpiece because no one else wanted it

⁷⁷² Ibid., and Johnstone to Primrose, June 17, 19 and 20, 1862, NGS NG6/7/5. These and the following citations from June 20.

⁷⁷³ No 442, William Johnstone, *Catalogue, Descriptive and Historical, of the National Gallery of Scotland, Under the Management of the Board of Manufactures* (Edinburgh: Murray and Gibb, 1867), 55. Wornum, *Catalogue, 1856*, 201.

(fig. 28).⁷⁷⁴ Johnstone's catalogue entry for the *Adoration*, and the third painting he chose (the *Annunciation* from the Liesborn altarpiece) also followed Wornum's earlier catalogue, picking out short biographical facts and the history of the objects themselves (fig. 29).⁷⁷⁵ Unlike in Dublin, the panels were presented as historical and artistic objects for inspection, not as conveyors of religious stories or spiritual truths.

Johnstone's academic presentation of the paintings was picked up in press reviews. For example, the *Caledonian Mercury* recited Johnstone's catalogue entries and drew particular attention to the *Conversion of St. Hubert* panel calling it "worthy of careful inspection, being one of the finest specimens of the antique within the walls of the gallery."⁷⁷⁶ The reporter gave no hint that the German paintings were inferior, curious or peculiar when comparing them to contemporary Italian paintings displayed beside them.⁷⁷⁷ Unlike Dublin, Edinburgh was unable to acquire other German specimens during the nineteenth century, although it did acquire early Italian works. The Krüger pictures remained highly valued specimens of the German school for the Scottish Gallery, and were displayed in the various positions through the century in the Gallery's octagons alongside Flemish, Dutch, Italian, French and

⁷⁷⁴ NG Minutes, June 30, 1862. Oddly, the *Head of Christ* was not given a number at South Kensington as the others were (Nos. 8058-8079). Donnelly (DS&A) and CCE to National Gallery, November 20, 1889, V&A NG7/117/6ii.

⁷⁷⁵ Johnstone, *Catalogue*, 1867, 26, 55.

⁷⁷⁶ "The National Gallery," *Caledonian Mercury*, November 29, 1862, 2.

⁷⁷⁷ Fragments from the Pratovecchio Altarpiece, Jacopo di Antonio (NG 584) and fragment of an altarpiece by Zanobi Machiavelli (NG 587).

Spanish works from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries (fig. 98, *Plan of the National Gallery, Scotland*, 1899).⁷⁷⁸

The esteem in which they were held is evident in the later catalogues, for example the 1906 catalogues had expanded descriptions of the panels and plates of the *Annunciation* and *Conversion of St. Hubert*.⁷⁷⁹ It is also clear from the disappointment felt when the loans were unexpectedly recalled in 1906.⁷⁸⁰ It is seen again in Scotland's request for replacements to take on loan from London.⁷⁸¹ After a decade's wait, Scotland received *The Conversion of St. Hubert* back again along with *The Mass of St. Hubert* (fig. 37). The two were recalled to London in February 1925, when London loaned Scotland the two saints panels by the same workshop.⁷⁸² These were finally returned to London in 1943. The enduring appeal of these panels in Scotland indicates the importance of midcentury decisions for establishing their place in the canon of art history as it was illustrated in the Scottish national collection. This was in spite of the panels falling off the radar in art historical texts like Crowe and Cavalcaselle, who never mentioned where they went after leaving the Gallery.⁷⁸³ Their national importance to Scotland also stands in contrast to Eastlake's readiness to label them superfluous: that London's gristle was Edinburgh's meat makes

⁷⁷⁸ Robert Gibb, *Catalogue of the National Gallery of Scotland, Under the Management of the Board of Manufactures* (Edinburgh: James Hedderwick & Sons, 1899).

⁷⁷⁹ *Catalogue of the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh* (Glasgow: H.M.S.O., 1906), 49-50, 96.

⁷⁸⁰ The inconvenience is noted in NGS Minutes, June 7, 1906.

⁷⁸¹ Scotland to London, April 11, 1906 NG7/310/15, and London's reply of May 10 copy in minutes June 7, 1906, NGS-NG1/1/57. James Guthrie, "National Galleries of Scotland: Report on the Present Composition and Suggestions as to the Desirable Development of the National Gallery Collection," November 29, 1907, NGS-NG6/7/21.

⁷⁸² NG NG18/1 Loans Out Book 1850-1932.

⁷⁸³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Early Flemish Painters*, 355.

Johnstone's taciturnity regarding the specific appeal of the pictures he chose in 1862 all the more frustrating.

4 c. Selecting and Displaying Krüger Paintings

iii. The South Kensington Museum

The early German paintings loaned to the South Kensington museum in 1862 functioned in very different ways to the Irish and Scottish Galleries. For a start, they were integrated with the whole South Kensington collection of arts and applied arts, in which German objects, and especially those of the "Gothic" era, already had a foundational and important position. Not only was the School of Design and its early museum rooted in appreciation of medieval design and workmanship, its history was also inextricably linked to German works and German approaches to design education that looked for inspiration in the medieval past.⁷⁸⁴ Leading figures at the Museum had knowledge of, and high regard for, German art objects and understood crossovers between media. Cole wrote a review of Aders' collection in 1832 singling out works by the van Eycks and Dürer from its "glorious specimens."⁷⁸⁵ He studied German prints in the British Museum and used Holbein's and Dürer's designs and prints for his *Bible*

⁷⁸⁴ Krysztof Pomain, "The South Kensington Museum: A Turning Point," in *Art and Design for All: The Victoria and Albert Museum*, ed. Julius Victoria Bryant (London: V&A, 2011); Julius Bryant, "Albertopolis: German Sources of the Victoria and Albert Museum," in *ibid.*, ed. Julius Bryant; Susanne Netzer, "The Revival of Art in Industry: The Minutoli Collection," in *ibid.*, ed. Julius Victoria Bryant; Clive Wainwright, "Principles True and False: Pugin and the Foundation of the Museum of Manufactures," *Burlington Magazine* 136, no. 1095 (1994).

⁷⁸⁵ Cole, "Exhibition of a Private Collection of Paintings at Suffolk Street Gallery," *Examiner*, February 25, 1832, 165, cited in Susanna Avery-Quash, "'Creating a Taste for Beauty': Henry Cole's Book of Ventures." PhD diss., Cambridge, 1997, 111.

Events, and *Home Treasury* publications, which Avery-Quash argues helped fuel interest in these artists.⁷⁸⁶ He and Robinson went to Germany to buy for the South Kensington collection.⁷⁸⁷ Robinson acquired the already mentioned *Martyrdom of St Ursula* (fig. 83) in 1857 and in 1859 the sixteenth century carved North German altarpiece based on the Dürer woodcut of the *Death of the Virgin* (fig. 99, Loy Hering, *Death of the Virgin*).⁷⁸⁸ Robinson wrote the catalogue for Hollingworth Magniac's celebrated collection, which contained many medieval and later German objects and portraits. He lavished glowing praise on Magniac's "pure and beautiful Gothic" Cologne monstrance.⁷⁸⁹ Redgrave was surveyor of the crown pictures (1856-80) and would have been familiar with the Oettingen-Wallerstein collection. In 1859 he recommended the acquisition of the triptych of the Apocalypse for the South Kensington Museum. At the time he thought it Flemish but it is now given with good probability to Master Bertram (fig. 100).⁷⁹⁰ As members of the Fine Arts Club Redgrave, Robinson and

⁷⁸⁶ Cole, *Bible Events, First Series; Bible Events, Second Series, Illustrated with Pictures Copied from Raffaele's Loggie; Bible Events: Life of Our Lord*; Avery-Quash, "Creating a Taste," 124.

⁷⁸⁷ Cole visited Vienna in 1851 for the School of Design, and Germany in 1853 and 1863 to buy works for South Kensington. Robinson was there in 1853 and 1858: Wainwright and Gere, "Making of South Kensington III," 48-49, 55; Bryant, "Albertopolis: German Sources of the Victoria and Albert Museum."

⁷⁸⁸ The carving bought for £18.10s from Carl Anton Milani in Frankfurt-am-Main. Mark Evans, "Raphael and Pre-Raphael in England and Germany, 1815-71," in *ibid.*; Norbert Jopek, *German Sculpture, 1430-1540: A Catalogue of the Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: V&A Publications, 2002). "Inventory of Objects," 1859, 39.

⁷⁸⁹ No. 20. John Charles Robinson, *Notice of the Principle Works of Art in the Collection of Hollingworth Magniac esq.* (London: Cundall, Downes & Co., 1861).

⁷⁹⁰ Purchased for £50, from unknown dealers who had transferred it from panel to canvas, restored and re-framed it with its original repainted frame. Nicola Costaras and Rachel Turnbull, "Master Bertram's Apocalypse Triptych: To Clean or Not to Clean," *Conservation Journal, Victoria and Albert Museum*, no. 58 (2009); "Altarpiece with 45 Scenes of the Apocalypse," V&A Collections (accessed January 12, 2015)

Cole helped select objects for the South Kensington 1862 loan exhibition of *Works of Art of the Medieval, Renaissance, and More Recent Periods* and Robinson helped edit the catalogue which particularly praised Schongauer and Dürer's life-like exactness and perfection of detail.⁷⁹¹

This appreciation for German art production meant that by the late 1860s there were a great number of German specimens from the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries across all media in the South Kensington collections.⁷⁹² German objects were almost as numerous as English, and only Italy had more, but until the loan of the nine Krüger pictures there were very few German paintings.⁷⁹³ In 1863 the CCE again definitively directed that purchases for the South Kensington museum be

confined to objects wherein fine art is applied to some purpose of utility, and that works of fine art not so applied should only be admitted as

<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O89176/altarpiece-with-45-scenes-of-altarpiece-master-bertram/>

⁷⁹¹ Burton, *Vision and Accident*, 68-69; Evans, "Raphael and Pre-Raphael." No. 6743, John Charles Robinson, ed. *Catalogue of the Special Exhibition of Works of Art of the Medieval Renaissance and More Recent Periods on Loan at the South Kensington Museum, June 1862* (London: Eyre & Spottiswode, 1863). This section of the catalogue was written by W. Chaffers but revised by Robinson.

⁷⁹² "Inventory of Objects." Including German medals (acquired 1867) and Medieval German textiles bought from and through collector and museum advisor Dr. Franz Bock in the 1860s and 70s. DS&A Annual Report, 1864; Davies, "Robinson's Work," 169-88, at 169; Clive Wainwright and Charlotte Gere, "The Making of the South Kensington Museum III: Collecting Abroad," *ibid.* 14, no. 1 (2002): 55; "Dr. Franz Joseph Bock," V&A, (accessed June 20, 2014) <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/d/dr-franz-johann-joseph-bock/>.

⁷⁹³ Appendix D records 1,304 German, 1,640 English, and 3,812 Italian objects in the European collection. DS&A Annual Report, 1869, 304-05.

exceptions, and so far as they may tend directly to improve art applied to objects of utility.⁷⁹⁴

This left some ambiguity over the perceived function and quality of paintings in the collection, especially those in the Circulating Collection.

As far as I can tell the nine Krüger paintings were the only original examples of early German paintings put into the Circulating Collection in 1862, although there were reproductions of Holbein portraits and Dürer's drawn *Study of a Kneeling Figure*, and *Woman's Public Bath at Nuremberg*.⁷⁹⁵ The DS&A's records of the contents and recipients of the Circulating Collection are incomplete, but Appendix 8 sets out the limited archived information on how the Krüger pictures were circulated and their repairs. The ways in which paintings could be circulated diversified from 1864 when the South Kensington museum developed special-interest loan collections, like ancient or modern oil painting, wood engraving or applied arts, and extended loans of paintings to local design schools.⁷⁹⁶ Paintings, including the Krüger ones, may have been intended to operate in tandem with applied art objects, but not necessarily in exactly the same way. They could provide practical instruction, for example in ancient clothing, design motifs, or techniques for art students, or morally uplift and ennoble viewers, or impart the "cumulative Art idea" worked out through

⁷⁹⁴ "Art Collections of the South Kensington Museum," Minute, June 13, 1863, printed in "Inventory of Objects," vii-viii.

⁷⁹⁵ Nos. c.236–314 and c.2253 and 2442, Register of Objects Found Without Numbers since 1872, and Loans from Stores and Education Division, 1868–1881, V&A: MA/9/1.

⁷⁹⁶ Report on the System of Circulation, 6. Catalogues of the special collections do not cover paintings.

painting's progressive history.⁷⁹⁷ This last aim to imbue the population with a sense of the historical advance of painting was more complex. In the National Gallery early paintings operated in a designated space as part of a permanent visual survey of the complete history of art. By contrast, in the Circulating Collection paintings would be stand-alone objects of instruction, interchangeable with other teaching samples in a virtual rather than visible museum. The cumulative history would have to be visualized in the visitor's memory.

When Redgrave went to select from the Gallery's superfluous pictures in 1862 he thought they would be useful, "some as examples of costume, some as studies for painting &c."⁷⁹⁸ When he, Mulvany and Johnstone took turns choosing, Redgrave only specifically selected the *Adoration* fragment and *Purification of the Virgin* (sic) from the Liesborn altarpiece, and the "Meister von Werden's" *Mass of St. Hubert* (figs. 30 and 37). At the end of the process, and after allowing Johnstone to take the *Adoration*, Redgrave took all the other superfluous pictures no-one else had wanted, including seven from the Krüger collection (Appendix 8). The fact none of the three institutions selected these seven works, despite their attribution to painters who had featured in art-historical literature, indicates how little the school was valued, how little scholarship on it was known even amongst leading figures in the art world, or how poor these particular specimens were thought to be.⁷⁹⁹

⁷⁹⁷ The quoted phrase alludes to John Charles Robinson, *An Introductory Lecture on the Museum of Ornamental Art of the Department* (London: Chapman and hall, 1854). Cited in Burton, "Uses of South Kensington," 92-93.

⁷⁹⁸ Note from Redgrave, September 13, 1861, V&A MA/1/N120/1.

⁷⁹⁹ NG Minutes, June 30, 1862; Wornum to Cole, August 12, 1862. Copy in V&A MA/1/N120/1. Johnstone, "Report... 1862, NGS:NG6/7/5.

By taking the Krüger pictures and others defined as “superfluous” by the Gallery, Cole and Redgrave were contributing to lingering perceptions that the Circulating Collection only had inferior paintings: it was a view that remained even up to the 1950s.⁸⁰⁰ These perceptions were fuelled by an understanding that the South Kensington Museum was a repository for all the objects and collections no-one else wanted, and that its target audiences were the working classes.⁸⁰¹ The Circulating Collection and the branch of the South Kensington Museum opened in Bethnal Green in 1872 were intended to serve the needs of the working classes.⁸⁰² The paternalistic tone of the 1860 Select Committee on Public Institutions showed there were clear distinctions between those who controlled the display of Fine Art, or were its chief consumers (the wealthy and connoisseurs), and the working classes who required special help to get anything out of such displays.⁸⁰³ Although the committee supported Cole’s Benthamite efforts to bring art to the masses, in his evidence Ruskin argued that such efforts should not be confused with doing away with the distinctions

⁸⁰⁰ Floud, "The Circulation Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum," 300.

⁸⁰¹ Anon., "The Nation's New Pictures," *Pall Mall Gazette*, August 1, 1890, 3. Burton, *Vision and Accident*, 122.

⁸⁰² Cole's Introduction to the catalogue for Sir Richard Wallace's collection explains its history. 40 temporary loan exhibitions passed through Bethnal Green before 1900. Richard Wallace, *Catalogue of the Collection of Paintings, Porcelain, Bronzes, Decorative Furniture, and other Works of Art, Lent for Exhibition in the Bethnal Green Branch of the South Kensington Museum* (London: Eyre & Spottiswode, 1872); "The Bethnal Green Museum," *Art-Journal*, November 1, 1875, 336; Burton, *Vision and Accident*, 105-08 and 122; Taylor, *Art for the Nation*, 82-86.

⁸⁰³ For a discussion of the terms 'Art' and 'art' and the use of art in social engineering: Burton, *Vision and Accident*, 9-16, 78; Marie-Louise von Plessen, "Art and Design for All: The Victoria and Albert Museum," in *Art and Design for All: The Victoria and Albert Museum*, ed. Julius Victoria Bryant (London: V&A, 2011), 14. On Cole's efforts to disseminate taste see Avery-Quash, "Creating a Taste."; "Henry Cole and the Society of Arts: A Partnership Set on Making Britain 'Healthy, Wealthy and Wise'," *Royal Society of Arts History Study Group* (1998-99); Bonython and Burton, *The Great Exhibitor*.

between the classes. Instead of making the National Gallery accessible, Ruskin argued that the working classes needed a separate gallery to meet their needs: one that displayed cheap, illustrative works rather than *chefs-d'oeuvres* of the great masters, in order to develop "the moral disposition" of the working classes "rather than the intellectual" faculties.⁸⁰⁴ Ruskin wanted a content working class. It was pointless for them to look at paintings that were "wholly valueless... their merits... wholly imperceptible except to persons who have given them many years of study." Likewise, saving the Gallery for the "artistically higher classes" would protect the most valuable Art from damage incurred through transport, pollution from the gas lights necessary for evening opening, and the detrimental effects of *hoi polloi* breathing over them.

Bethnal Green maintained its reputation as a working class museum, but the notion that it showed only inferior paintings was challenged by its first exhibition of Wallace's greatly admired collection of Old and Modern masters from 1872-75, and then by numerous well-reviewed collections of ancient paintings, water-colours, and decorative arts, and later, by Queen Victoria's Jubilee presents. However, reviews of these exhibitions consistently commented on their working class audiences.⁸⁰⁵

⁸⁰⁴ "Report," PP 1860 (181), 11-13, 37-42, 113-20. These and the following citations from 113-119. Similarly, Antonio Panizzi, Librarian and Secretary of the British Museum argued its chief purpose was for serious study rather than the amusement of the general public, and John Kenny, a printer, suggested working men like he sought relaxation and entertainment rather than instruction.

⁸⁰⁵ Many reviews commented on the working class audiences for these exhibitions: "The Bethnal Green Museum", *Standard*, June 22, 1872, 5; and "The Museum at Bethnal Green," *Art-Journal*, August 1, 1872, 217 and "The Bethnal Green Museum," *ibid.*, December 1, 1872, 301; November 1, 1875, 336, and G.R.R., "The Queen's Jubilee Presents at the Bethnal Green Museum," *ibid.*, May 1, 1888, 140-43. See also Lasic, "The Wallace Collection at Bethnal Green."

Taking the Gallery's "superfluous" pictures into the Circulating Collection therefore brought them under the heading of lower-value works, and at the same time the fact these paintings had been rejected by the gallery compounded the notion the Circulating Collection was full of rubbish. The National Gallery Trustees having resolved not to let anything from the "permanent collection" into the Circulating Collection, the fact these superfluous pictures entered it sent clear signals of the low estimation in which they were held. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Boxall expressed his contempt for the Krüger paintings in 1870 when he defined all except the four then in the National Gallery as "superfluous" from the point of purchase. He was writing in response to South Kensington's attempt to claim even more of the Gallery's pictures for their Circulating Collection, this time the British paintings still deposited in South Kensington that they assumed were "superfluous".⁸⁰⁶ A furious Boxall drafted letters and memoranda defending the Trustees' jurisdiction over the British pictures, and in doing so further exposed his low opinion of the Gallery's "superfluous" pictures already in the Circulating Collection. He described them as the "worst kind of art" and called into question the DS&A's methods of teaching art using them. He instructed Wornum to ask for proof of what "valuable instruction" the pictures had provided, stating "the worst art is seldom a good teacher."⁸⁰⁷

Yet the Trustees of the National Gallery maintained their legal guardianship of the superfluous pictures, asserted the loan was temporary,

⁸⁰⁶ Forster, CCE to Treasury, March 5, 1870, V&A MA/1/N120/1 no 8356/72.

⁸⁰⁷ Boxall, undated letter, March 1870, NG NG11/1/39/2; and especially undated handwritten Memorandum, March 1870, in response to a letter from Forster regarding the circulation of Superfluous pictures, NGA1/1/39/4; formal version, Boxall, "Memorandum on the treasury Proposal," April 12, 1870, NGA1/1/41/14.

controlled decisions about cleaning or repair, and unilaterally demanded their return in 1889.⁸⁰⁸ This would largely have been driven by fears of South Kensington taking liberties over future paintings, but there is some evidence there were particular concerns for the Krüger paintings while they were there. Despite the incomplete records for what happened to the Gallery's pictures at South Kensington there is slightly more information about their whereabouts and repairs than most of the others.⁸⁰⁹ The DS&A's report to the National Gallery in 1882 recorded the superfluous pictures had been circulated to sixty-two Schools of Art and provincial museums, without defining what had gone where, except for noting that six of the Krüger panels were then on display in Bethnal Green. No other Gallery pictures appear to have been with them.⁸¹⁰ Damage to the Krüger pictures and their frames suggests they were well travelled.⁸¹¹ The attention paid to the Krüger pictures was possibly due to their fragility but may also suggest particular esteem for them. At Bethnal Green they would have hung in spaces occupied by prestigious collections. By May 1889 six or seven of the Krüger pictures were hanging in the South Kensington Museum itself, in the area near the lecture theatre on the third floor, while the others were "in circulation" (or perhaps in storage with the Circulating Collection) with two (unspecified) in Paisley.⁸¹² They were recalled to the Gallery at this point after the Keeper of the National Gallery, Charles Locke Eastlake (1836-1906)

⁸⁰⁸ Copies of all correspondence, V&A: MA/1/N120/1. Especially June 26, and June 28, 1882, and notes from July 3, 1882. On the pictures return, NG Minutes, January 7, 1890, Minute Book 6, 114-115.

⁸⁰⁹ Excluding the *Virgin and Child* attributed to Ludger zum Ring.

⁸¹⁰ NG 250, 251, 253, 254, 255, 257.

⁸¹¹ See Appendix 8.

⁸¹² Listed as NG 250, 251, 253, 254, 255, 257 and 259. The Circulating Collection was stored on the third floor.

had inspected them, found they were no “no longer exhibited” in the Circulating Collection and required cleaning.⁸¹³

Records detailing the reception of the early German paintings in the Circulating Collection remain elusive. We can glean how popular the collection in general was from the Reports of the South Kensington Museum for this period, which record the “steady increase” of demand.⁸¹⁴ Attitudes to the use of paintings in the Circulating Collection shifted over the period the Krüger pictures were in it. For instance, in the early 1860s the *Art-Journal* was insisting that South Kensington “send away all works that in no way aid the manufacturer” and stick to training artisans, not middle class artists; but by the early 1880s it was praising the Circulating Collection for disseminating the “best possible kind” of objects because it was creating an appreciation of Art at a local level.⁸¹⁵ By 1884 the *Art-Journal* was accepting that the Circulating Collection had become “one of the most important features of the scheme for disseminating Art taste” among both middle class painters and artisans, yet it still concluded that the South Kensington collections were “more adapted to applied than to pure Art.”⁸¹⁶

While on loan to the South Kensington museum the early German paintings from the Krüger collection were even more removed than those in Dublin and Edinburgh from the central hub of London and its growing canonical

⁸¹³ NG Minute Book 6, January 7, 1890, 114-115; Loans Out Book NG NG18/1, NG7/117/6.

⁸¹⁴ For example, DS&A Annual Report, 1869.

⁸¹⁵ “Minor Topics of the Month.” *Art-Journal*, May 1, 1862, 127; “Report on the Select Committee on the Schools of Art,” *ibid.*, September 1, 1864, 279; “The Governmental and Educational Museums,” *ibid.*, April 1, 1882, 125.

⁸¹⁶ R. Kettle, “Our National Art Education,” *Art-Journal*, January 1, 1884, 13-17 at 15-16.

historical collection, and from notice in art-historical or critical publications. Nevertheless, through the thousands who saw them in the Circulating Collection we can speculate that they entered and were normalised in the virtual museum of historical art accumulating through the country's visual memory, even if historical information on them was scant or erroneous. They functioned in tandem with early German paintings exhibited in other provincial exhibitions. For example, the National Exhibition of Works of Art in Leeds, 1868 displayed numerous privately loaned German paintings and engravings attributed to Dürer, Cranach, Holbein, Wohlgemuth, Schongauer and others, as well as decorative arts.⁸¹⁷ According to the exhibition catalogue, "the earlier productions of the great masters in Italy, Germany and Flanders" were by then "well known."⁸¹⁸ But in reality, without repeated viewing or reproductions of paintings in texts to aid recall of them, it is hard to imagine they made any memorable impact. Perhaps they functioned more as objects of spectacle than education.

We can further speculate that the close relationships between fine and applied arts in South Kensington and provincial exhibitions produced a different viewing experience for early German paintings in light of the renowned workmanship and design of German products past and present. German painting could be appreciated on a variety of levels, whether for technique, costume, detail or the "cumulative Art idea." In the National Galleries in London, Dublin and Edinburgh, permanent displays presented the history of painting almost isolated from other arts: the rarified specimens provided definitive

⁸¹⁷ Leeds National Exhibition Executive Committee, *National Exhibition of Works of Art, Leeds, 1868: Official Catalogue* (Leeds: Edward Naines and Sons, 1868).

⁸¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

statements of particular schools and eras.⁸¹⁹ The “Germanness” of German art was particularly pronounced, and emphasized the national characteristics that defined and reinforced its inferiority to Italian art. Conversely, South Kensington’s arrangement by material rather than nation afforded a less predetermined context, allowing for an appreciation of workmanship on its own terms. The interconnectedness of all the arts, and the rapid change-over of examples on display, created a virtual museum of many different samples, none of which had the aura of being *the* nation’s specimen. The lingering sense that the Circulating Collection contained inferior specimens may therefore actually have encouraged a different viewing experience. No-one was expecting to see the *crème de la crème* of German painting, so there was no built-in disappointment when the works on show were not the best. Viewers would have been less dependent on instruction from text or display tactics, or to put it another way, messages portrayed by the ‘virtual museum’ created by the travelling exhibitions were not as easily controlled for the public as permanent displays in grand buildings. By circulating the pictures around the country, South Kensington introduced early German art to a much wider geographical and social demographic than the National Galleries in London, Dublin and Edinburgh, and for a much broader range of purposes.

4 d. Returning Krüger Pictures to the National Gallery, 1889

By the time the Krüger pictures were recalled from South Kensington in 1889, attitudes towards early German art had shifted. The *Pall Mall Gazette*

⁸¹⁹ Sculpture also formed part of these collections.

sums up the differences in a review of the pictures when they went back on display in Trafalgar Square. Of the twenty-two that returned the author believed:

The most important of them are nine early Flemish pictures which formed part of Mr. Gladstone's unlucky purchase, in 1854... These are now hung in Room XI ... and add to the historical interest of the Early Flemish collection. Some of them, – as for instance, the “Three Saints” (no 254) by the Meister von Werden – are also of much beauty in themselves.⁸²⁰

In the new paradigm of historical value, the pictures are shorthanded as Flemish, not German; a painting that is closer to the realism of the van Eycks rather than the spiritual purity of Cologne is of most interest, and a beauty, albeit unconventional, can be admitted in German art of this era.⁸²¹ The nine returned Krüger pictures now had a more worthy place in the permanent collection. The transition was not neat or complete, but things had changed.

Another indication of this shift was the decision publically to display the Master of the Aachen Altarpiece's *Crucifixion* by 1880 then ascribed to the Westphalian school (fig. 2), which was briefly mentioned in Chapter 3.⁸²² At midcentury this crowded, historiated Calvary scene was not deemed as suitable for display as the softer style of the Master of Liesborn with its closer resonance

⁸²⁰ “The Nation's New Pictures,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, August 1, 1890, 4.

⁸²¹ The reviewer was not alone using “Flemish” rather than German as shorthand for Northern works, although he is unusual in not sub-defining the German and Flemish schools. See Blackburn, *Pictorial Notes in the National Gallery. Foreign schools*, 42; Reiset, *Une Visite à la Galerie Nationale de Londres*, 23.

⁸²² It was cleaned and repaired in 1879. NG Director's Report, 1879, 3.

to the work of Fra Angelico. Yet the painting was not packed into storage, and was kept when Eastlake weeded out superfluous pictures in the 1860s. There is no extant explanation for these decisions, but it is possible the Trustees were caught in conflicting frameworks of value. On the one hand, the painting was historically important as the Gallery's only specimen of this sort of German art. On the other, it failed to achieve the naiveté, simplicity, pure colour and softness associated with the Cologne school's Christian sentiment, which at midcentury was still conferring value in public responses to the Gallery. Under Frederick William Burton (1816-1900), Director from 1874-94, the historically illustrative value of this painting would have had more currency. Not everyone was as convinced as Burton that the collection should be historically illustrative, rather than a showcase of masterpieces. Nevertheless, Burton oversaw the acquisition of other German paintings, including a portrait then ascribed to Aldegraver and Holbein's *Ambassadors*, despite limited funds for acquisitions.⁸²³ Joseph Green's widow bequeathed twelve early Northern paintings in 1880, and although none were by German artists, four were thought to be at the time.⁸²⁴ In 1887 and 88 the Gallery was rehung so that the early Flemish and German paintings were by themselves in Room 11 rather than with later Flemish and Dutch works.⁸²⁵

The wings originally attached to the *Crucifixion* panel, with *Pilate Washing his Hands* and the *Descent from the Cross* (their reverses obscured by bitumen until the 1960s), had been on display in the Liverpool Royal Institute since the 1840s, first as by Cranach and by the 1850s as by Wohlgemuth, which

⁸²³ NG 1232 (now called South German) and NG 1314.

⁸²⁴ NG Director's Report, 1880, 6-7. Conlin, *Nation's Mantelpiece*, 87-95, 323-26; Campbell, *Fifteenth Century Netherlandish Painting*, 14-15.

⁸²⁵ NG Director's Report, 1888, 5.

was how they were attributed when loaned to the Manchester Art Treasures exhibition in 1857, and Leeds in 1868 (fig. 69).⁸²⁶ The connection between them and the London panel was first made by Friedländer in 1900, but critical commentary on the wings's display in the nineteenth century give an impression of how this style of German art was received in the 1840s-70s outside London.⁸²⁷ Seeing the wings in Liverpool, Waagen called them "two very good pictures" by the rarely seen Wohlgemuth. He did not mention them among the must-see works at Manchester, even though Wohlgemuth was known as Dürer's teacher, but cited them as examples of Wohlgemuth's works in his 1860 edition of Kugler.⁸²⁸ Reviewers of the Manchester exhibition noted their "decided taste for ugliness", "overpowering ugliness to the features and an utter want of grace both in the single figures and in the composition."⁸²⁹ Eastlake and the Trustees were probably right to think the public would not accept the exhibition of unattributed, "ugly", unappealing works like these in the 1850s and 60s. However, by 1880 as the more scholarly, historical approach had

⁸²⁶ They first appear in the 1843 catalogue (nos. 62 and 64). By 1851 they were Nos. 49 and 50, Liverpool Royal Institution, *A Catalogue of the Paintings, Drawings and Casts in the Permanent Gallery of Art, Royal Institution, Liverpool* (Liverpool: Unknown, 1851); *Catalogue of Art Treasures*, No. 405-06; Committee, *National Exhibition of Works of Art, Leeds, 1868: Official Catalogue*, No. 512a. On their cleaning see John Jacob, "The Master of the Aachen Altarpiece: A Discovery," *Liverpool Libraries, Museums & Arts Committee Bulletin* 11 (1963).

⁸²⁷ Max J. Friedländer, "Die Leihausstellung der New Gallery in London, Januar-März 1900. Hauptsächlich niederländische Gemälde des XV und XVI Jahrhunderts," *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* (1900): 258; Levey, *German School*, 63-65; Alfred Stange, *Kritisches Verzeichnis der deutschen Tafelbilder vor Dürer* vol. 1 (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1967), 108, no. 333; Foister, notes for *The German Paintings Before 1800*, forthcoming.

⁸²⁸ Waagen, *Treasures*, III:235. *Walk Through Art-Treasures; Kugler's Handbook 1860*, 140.

⁸²⁹ "Art Treasures Exhibition," *Manchester Guardian* June 8, 1857, 3; "Manchester Exhibition of Art Treasures," *Times* May 28, 1857, 9.

become embedded, which accepted historical art as a product of its context, rather than only for visual pleasure or moral ennoblement, the central *Crucifixion* panel had a place, even though it was unattributed.

In his *Popular Handbook to the National Gallery* written for lay rather than expert readers, Edward Cook described *The Crucifixion* as

a good example of the strength and weakness of this German art. What is good are the clothes, which are very quaint and various. The figures show a ghastly enjoyment of horror and ugliness.⁸³⁰

Cook relied on Ruskin's technical notes on the Gallery's pictures, and his broader perspective that painting's role was to be a beautiful reflection of nature. Finding no beauty in the early German and Flemish works, he questioned their worth in the Gallery, and decided it was their "absolute fidelity to nature" and their being a link in the chain of progress in painting technique. The "Northern" (rather than "German") pictures were primarily there for historical study, and to display characteristic disregard for beauty through "unrelenting truthfulness" and attachment to the fantastical.⁸³¹ In other words, they were interesting *because* of their quirky ugliness. Cook relished Ruskin's description of the "absolute joy of ugliness" found in German works.⁸³² He focused on the costumes, jewellery or acquisition history of the early German pictures more than their pictorial qualities. Rather than the Romantic emphasis

⁸³⁰ Edward T. Cook, *A Popular Handbook to the National Gallery, including, by special permission, Notes Collected from the Works of Mr. Ruskin*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (London: Macmillan and Co, 1888), 266.

⁸³¹ *Ibid.*, 257-80 at 257 and 258.

⁸³² He cites Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, Vol IV, part 5, ch xix para. 18. *Ibid.*, 272-73.

on Christian sentiment in early Cologne school, Cook treated the *Veronica with the Sudarium* and Lochner's panel of saints as historical source evidence of medieval German mysticism (figs. 85 and 86).⁸³³ He called the saints from the Liesborn Altarpiece feeble and melancholy.⁸³⁴ By contrast, Dürer, whose star had long been rising to make him "the greatest of all German artists", represents the positive elements of the school: "Its combination of the wild and rugged with the homely and tender, its meditative depth, its enigmatic gloom, its sincerity and energy, its iron diligence and discipline."⁸³⁵ The hard, fantastical, energetic and emotional qualities of Dürer and his contemporaries are more readily visible in the kind of realist, contorted, strained images of Jan Baegert or the Master of Aachen than in the gently pious Liesborn or even Werden panels.

4 e. Krüger pictures in Private Collections

Away from the demands of public display, historical illustration and educational utility, the paintings from the Krüger collection that had been sold in 1857 were free to be used as commodities by dealers and as objects of contemplation and enjoyment by collectors. The dealers whom we encountered in Chapter 3 and Appendices 9 and 10 would have had resale markets in mind, and the fate of those paintings that can be traced in the nineteenth century illustrate the gamble they had taken in purchasing these unfamiliar early German paintings. Appendix 2 summarizes the provenances of all the pictures since their sale in 1857 (identified by KC and lot numbers). The following

⁸³³ NG 687 and 705. *Ibid.*, 266, 77.

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.*, 268.

⁸³⁵ *Ibid.*, 280.

discussion of a selection of the pictures purchased by Watson and Hermann gives a richer sense of the ways they were valued in different locations beyond the public art galleries during the nineteenth century.

4e. Krüger Pictures in Private Collections

i. Paintings Sold on by Watson

Watson, who had bought four of the most expensive lots and one other, was clearly connected to wealthy collectors. One of his paintings: *St. James the Elder* (lot 14), went to William Schomberg Robert Kerr, 8th Marquess of Lothian (1832-1870) for Newbattle Abbey (fig. 35). Robert Wenley's study of the Lothian inventories shows that he acquired the Krüger painting in London around 1857, but not from whom or for how much.⁸³⁶ Lothian may have purchased it from another dealer after Watson, but nonetheless, such a quick resale bodes well for Watson making a profit on this painting. It was the cheapest of his purchases and had cost him only £4. By contrast, nothing is known of what happened to the larger and more expensive companion *St. Mary Magdalen and St. John the Evangelist* (Lot 13). Whether or not Lothian bought the *St. James* knowing it was German or rejected by the National Gallery is unclear. There is nothing about the painting's purchase in the family papers. It was inventoried only by number until the 1930s when it was described as South

⁸³⁶ No. 575, 1878 inventory of pictures at Newbattle, falling in sequence with Italian paintings bought around this time. Its purchase "in London" first noted in the 1958 National Gallery of Scotland photographic survey of Newbattle, drawn up using additional notes on 1833 inventory, since lost. Kerr Family Papers, National Records of Scotland, GD 40/8/458. Wenley, "Lothian Picture Collection"; "8th Marquess." Thanks to Dr. Wenley for sharing this information in addition to his published works (emails to author, February, 2015).

German, but it is hard to imagine Lothian was unaware of the National Gallery sale in 1857.⁸³⁷

Lothian purchased many early paintings in Italy and Britain between 1856 and 1861, and had a particular taste for Christian art associated with his High Anglican beliefs.⁸³⁸ He was familiar with Rio and Kugler and had drafted his own notes on early art and his appreciation for Byzantine, Gothic and thirteenth-century Italian works.⁸³⁹ The Lothian collection already had a number of Holbein and Northern portraits and paintings, including wings of a Netherlandish triptych with saints by 1857, but the *St. James* was one of only two non-Italian acquisitions by the 8th Marquess.⁸⁴⁰ He later acquired Dürer's *Madonna with the Siskin*, 1506 (now in the Berlin Gemäldegalerie) that his brother, Schomberg Henry Kerr, (1833-1900, the later 9th Marquess) found in an Edinburgh furniture shop in 1869 (fig. 101).⁸⁴¹ Records of picture hangs at Newbattle show that by 1878 the Dürer was in prime viewing position in the Breakfast Room, whereas the Krüger picture hung in the Under Hall near portraits and still lifes, but low on the North wall where the light cannot have been very good. It was also separate from the Netherlandish wings and early

⁸³⁷ National Gallery of Scotland c. 1931 list of pictures loaned from Lothian collection, 1919 includes "South German School, St James & a Nun 46" x 15 ¼" £250". National Gallery Scotland Photographic survey of Newbattle (1958) records it as B/4391 (575) "German 16th century (sic). St James the Greater with an abbes donor. Wood 47 ½ x 16." *Ibid.*

⁸³⁸ Wenley, "8th Marquess." Some family members converted to Roman Catholicism in the 1850s. Letters from Lord Ralph Drury Kerr to Schomberg Henry Kerr, January 1855, GD40/9/403/4-7.

⁸³⁹ Cited in "Lothian Picture Collection," 114, 122.

⁸⁴⁰ *St. Christopher with Donor*, and *St. Catherine and Donor's Wife*, bought by the 3rd Earl of Lothian in 1649 (No 300-1), bequeathed to the National Gallery of Scotland, 1928. *Ibid.* Plate 44.

⁸⁴¹ No 597 of his collection, sold in 1893 to Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, No 557F. Henning Bock et al., *The Gemäldegalerie, Berlin: a History of the Collection and Selected Masterworks* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), 64-65.

Italian paintings in Lady Lothian's boudoir.⁸⁴² It is not surprising that this panel, which was merely a fragment from an unknown altarpiece, was not treasured as a masterpiece like the Dürer once it entered the family's eclectic collection, but it could have been a quirky, interesting and relatively inexpensive addition.

Watson's most expensive purchase at the Gallery's sale also went to a wealthy collector. *Christ Bearing his Cross* (lot 15) was acquired by Hugh Robert Hughes of Kinmel Hall, Denbighshire (1827-1911) (fig. 41). Hughes loaned it to the 1906 Burlington Fine Arts Club exhibition of Early German art as a late fifteenth-century Westphalian painting. Although there are no direct records, he is likely to have purchased it much earlier.⁸⁴³ Hughes made payments to dealers, auctioneers and booksellers in the 1850s to 70s, and four payments to Colnaghi totalling over £990 between 1866-69. These may have been for the Quentin Matsys' *Adoration of the Magi* purchased from Colnaghi before 1882.⁸⁴⁴ Around the time of the National Gallery sale Eastlake, Gladstone, Lord Elcho and other leading authorities on art visited Hughes at his London residence, so even though we cannot be sure when he acquired it, he was undoubtedly aware of the sale.⁸⁴⁵ The painting's Westphalian school attribution in 1906 suggests he knew its provenance. Supporting an earlier rather than later purchase, Hughes ran into financial difficulties in the 1880s and began selling some of his property. He had overspent the extraordinary family fortune from copper

⁸⁴² Picture hang published by Wenley, "Lothian Picture Collection," 152.

⁸⁴³ There are no inventories of his picture collection in the Kinmel MSS at the Bangor University Archives nor H. R. Hughes of Kinmel Hall Papers, Denbighshire Record Office.

⁸⁴⁴ Acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1911. H. R. Hughes' Cash Book for 1854-5, Kinmel MSS 1500; Bank Pass Book for H. R. Hughes 1866-1876, Kinmel MSS 1498. "Adoration of the Magi," Online Catalogue (accessed March 21, 2015) <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436984>.

⁸⁴⁵ Book of List of Visitors/ Callers 1857-1869, Kinmel MSS 1693.

mining and from his marriage to Florentina Liddell (later Lady Liddell) on extravagant and innovative building projects at Kinmel Hall under architect William Eden Nesfield (1835-1888).⁸⁴⁶

Hughes' painting collection can only be partially reconstructed from sales and exhibition catalogues, which show he owned a few high quality early Italian and Northern paintings, including another unattributed German *Day of the Crucifixion*.⁸⁴⁷ Both paintings were auctioned after his death in 1911 along with an engraving by Jacob Matham of "a similar composition, bearing the signature Albert Dürer and the date 1505," probably the one illustrated in fig. 102).⁸⁴⁸ The two paintings were roughly the same size (about 160 x 115 cm), and together narrated the story of Calvary. Hughes was a High Church man, but there is no evidence of a special interest in Christian art. He clearly had a liking for oil paintings with minute detail, non-symmetrical compositions, exaggerated, even grotesque physiognomies and hard, enamel like colours common to the Matsys and two German pictures. Having two German panels

⁸⁴⁶ Mark Girouard, "Kinmel, Denbighshire I," *Country Life*, September 4, 1969; "Kinmel, Denbighshire II," *Country Life*, September 11, 1969; Fred Roberts, "The Development of the Kinmel Estate," *Denbighshire Historical Society Transactions* 36 (1987); Elaine Boxhall, *Kinmel Characters: 12th-20th Century* (Abergale: Kinmel Publishing, 1990).

⁸⁴⁷ His British and Italian school paintings, engravings and lithographs sold at Sotheby & Co, June 4, 1929. He loaned *A Lioness*, by Ward and *Fish Salesmen at a Stall* by Teniers, to the RA Winter Exhibitions 1885 and 1886, and the Matsys to the RA exhibition 1882, and the New Gallery, London, 1899-1900. His ownership of Giovanni Bellini *St Dominic* is mentioned in E. K. Waterhouse, "Review of Giovanni Bellini by Luitpold Dussler," *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 66, no. 384 (1935). "Royal Academy Exhibition Catalogues," Royal Academy of Arts, accessed March, 2015, http://www.racollection.org.uk/ixbin/indexplus?_IXACTION_=file&_IXFILE_=templates/pages/exhibition_list.html

⁸⁴⁸ Christie's, June 16, 1911, lots 82 (sold for £178.10 to "Mori") and 81 (sold to Tallyn(?) for £714), not sold under his name. They are the only paintings of his sold that day. Annotated copy of the catalogue in Christie's archives.

and a print of Christ's Passion implies a particular interest in this subject, or perhaps different artistic treatments of it. His delight in visual minutiae, love of historical research and penchant for pursuing visual themes across media is also evinced by Hughes' deep interest in Welsh history and heraldry. He had a significant collection of manuscripts and was an authority on Welsh genealogies. Nesfield integrated heraldic decorations with exterior and interior designs of Kinmel Hall, including a heraldic window and decorative carved fireplace.⁸⁴⁹

Watson's other two purchases disappeared for decades after 1857 but when they resurfaced they were also recognized as German works. *Christ Before Caiaphas* (lot 22) was acquired between 1892 and 1913 by the Philadelphian lawyer, John G. Johnson (1846-1917), and was first catalogued as by the Master of Cappenburg, like the two Jan Baegert paintings loaned to Dublin by 1914 (fig. 48).⁸⁵⁰ *The Ascension* (lot 18) was discovered in an antique shop in Newark or Grantham by 1886 by the wealthy Rev. Frederick Heathcote Sutton (1833-1888) (fig. 32), who knew it was German but thought it was from the Nuremberg school.⁸⁵¹ Sutton was an admirer of "Christian Art" and would have

⁸⁴⁹ Correspondence regarding heraldry in the National Library of Wales (the T Llechid Jones Collection, GB 0210 TLLNES) and Kinmel MSS attest to his reputation. E. Gwynne Jones, Introduction to the "Catalogue of Kinmel MSS," Bangor University Archives, 1955. Kinmel Hall 1879-1884, Elevations and Designs, Kinmel MSS 1789; "List of Plate taken at Kinmel Park Feb 4th 1911," and "Catalogue of MSS belonging to Mr Hughes of Kinmel," and Kinmel MSS, Bangor 1710, 1711 and 1713; Kinmel Park, in Nesfield Plans, NAL DD12, and D1434.

⁸⁵⁰ See Appendix 2. Wilhelm Reinhold Valentiner, *Catalogue of a Collection of Paintings and Some Art Objects; German, French, Spanish and English Paintings and Art Objects (John, G. Johnson Collection)*, 3 vols., vol. 3 (Philadelphia: J.G. Johnson, 1914).

⁸⁵¹ Newspaper clipping, *Newark Advertiser*, April 17, 1971, 1 and 19, copy in Witt Library, Courtauld Institute. Koenig incorrectly credits a later vicar (Rev. C.

been unusually familiar with German paintings, which were already in his large collection of early Italian and Northern paintings, along with ecclesiastical objects, missals and relics. Much of his collection was purchased on the continent.⁸⁵² Sutton was deeply involved in the Ecclesiological movement.⁸⁵³ He was a leading figure in organ design; had a stained glass workshop with his brother Augustus where they created, among others, nearly thirty windows for Lincoln Cathedral; and he was patron, advisor and designer for numerous church renovations and ornamentations, including his own parishes.⁸⁵⁴ He collaborated with George Frederick Bodley (1827-1907) on restoration projects and shared Bodley's enthusiasm for architectural polychromy, for reintroducing carved and painted reredos and for creating an integrated harmonious and refined interior for churches. Sutton had designed stone and wooden carved

S. Thornton) for its discovery. Koenig, *Meister von Leisborn*, 67-68. Rev. C. S. Thornton was mistaken when he wrote that it had been given by Canon Arthur Sutton: Thornton to NG August 18, 1933, in Dossier File NG 2152/3. "The Death and Funeral of Frederick Sutton," *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, (undated) reprinted in Robert Pacey, *Frederick Heathcote Sutton and the Restoration of Brant Broughton Church, Lincolnshire 1874-76* (Burgh Le Marsh, Lincolnshire: Old Chapel Lane Books, 2011), 51-56; Grössinger, *North-European Panel Paintings*, 63-64.

⁸⁵² His collection was sold at Sotheby's June 25, 1924 and June 26, 1925, and at Christie's February 12, 1926. Avery-Quash, "Collector Connoisseurs," 288-90; C. Hilary Davidson, *Sir John Sutton: a Study in True Principles* (Oxford: Positif Press, 1992).

⁸⁵³ Webster and Elliott, *A Church as it Should Be: the Cambridge Camden Society and its Influence*; James White, *The Cambridge Movement: the Ecclesiologists and the Gothic Revival*, 1979 ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962).

⁸⁵⁴ Frederick Heathcote Sutton, *Church Organs: Their Position and Construction: with an Appendix, Containing Some Account of the Mediæval Organ Case Still Existing at Old Radnor, South Wales* (London: Rivingtons, 1872); Pacey, *Frederick Heathcote Sutton*; Jim Cheshire, "The Post Medieval Period," in *Stained Glass of Lincoln Cathedral*, ed. Carol Bennett, et al. (London: Scala Publishers Ltd, 2012); Andrew Haydon, "A New Look at the Activities of Sir John Sutton, the Rev. F. H. Sutton and G. F. Bodley, and their Legacy in Cambridge," *British Institute of Organ Studies: Bois Reporter* 22, no. 4 (1998).

sculpted reredos in other Lincoln churches.⁸⁵⁵ When he discovered the *Annunciation* panel it seems to have been just the picture he had been looking for to place in a new carved reredos in his parish church of St. Helen's Brant Broughton, Lincolnshire in keeping with on-going beautification of the church. He donated the painting and had the frame designed by Thomas Garner (1839-1906) and carved under Bodley's supervision 1886-87, and it was installed in the chancel in time for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (fig. 103).⁸⁵⁶

Using the German painting this way was contentious. Bodley and Garner had undertaken the main renovations at St. Helen's in 1874-76. When Sutton applied for the Faculty for these renovations he had submitted three design sketches for a stone or wooden reredos for the new chancel (fig. 104).⁸⁵⁷ The sketches show canopied niches and Sutton's intention to insert contemporary paintings of Christ's passion. But the Faculty that was granted specifically excluded authorization for the reredos.⁸⁵⁸ The application was made when the Public Worship Regulation Bill was under debate in the church courts and parliament, and while there was controversy over the legality and historical

⁸⁵⁵ St Mark's (now partly in Washingborough) and St Botolphs. Sutton, "On the Use of Colour in the Ornamentation of Churches," paper read at Architectural Society of the Archdeaconry of Northampton, October 6, 1868, reprinted in Pacey, *Frederick Heathcote Sutton*, 51-56 with additional information 39-44. Michael Hall, "Bodley, George Frederick (1827-1907)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); "Emily Meynell Ingram and Holy Angels, Hoar Cross, Staffordshire: A Study in Patronage," *Architectural History* 47 (2004); "The Rise of Refinement: G. F. Bodley's All Saints, Cambridge, and the Return to English Models in Gothic Architecture of the 1860s," *Architectural History* 36 (1993).

⁸⁵⁶ Carved by Messrs Godbold & Co. of Harleston, Norfolk, and gilded and decorated by Powell of Lincoln "Jubilee Gift to the Church," *Grantham Journal*, April 16, 1887, 7.

⁸⁵⁷ "Reredos of Brant Broughton," Diocesan Faculty Papers, 1874/13, Lincolnshire Archives (hereafter LA) N1-3.

⁸⁵⁸ Memoranda and note on reverse of the Faculty.

correctness of painted or carved reredos in churches.⁸⁵⁹ Sutton was told to provide more exact designs or to omit the reredos from the application. He opted to omit it recognizing this was not a “favourable moment” for resolving the question.⁸⁶⁰ A temporary plain red and green painted wooden reredos was installed in 1876, replaced by a “delicately carved super altar” of painted and gilded wood paneling designed by Bodley the following Easter.⁸⁶¹ Renovations to St. Helen’s continued and were carefully recorded in a detailed diary throughout Sutton’s life and that of his successor, Rev. Arthur Frederick Sutton. However, there is no reference in the diary to the installation of *The Ascension* in its new carved reredos and no Faculty was ever granted for it.⁸⁶² Sutton died within a year of its installation, and an obituary remarked that the “splendid reredos” was one of his last gifts to the church and “of which he was particularly fond”.⁸⁶³

The reredos was similar to Sutton’s sketches of 1874 but unusually inserted an original rather than modern painting. Bodley had installed a modern painting in the Netherlandish style into a similar reredos in another Lincoln

⁸⁵⁹ Avery-Quash, "Collector Connoisseurs," 269-81; Woods, *Imported Images: Netherlandish Late Gothic Sculpture in England c1400-1550*, 173.

⁸⁶⁰ W. G. F. Phillimore to J Swan Esq, April 17, 1874, and Sutton to Swan, April 20, 1874. LA N1-3, Diocesan Faculty Papers, 1874/13.

⁸⁶¹ Designed by Bodley, executed by Rattee & Kett of Cambridge. Report from *Lincolnshire Chronicle* of the re-opening of Brant Broughton, September 28 1876, cited in Pacey, *Frederick Heathcote Sutton*, 16. Sutton Diary entry, September 12, 1876. My thanks to Churchwarden Jennifer Hervey for showing me Sutton’s Diary and for discussing the altarpiece. The diary is partly transcribed by Pacey.

⁸⁶² On Arthur Sutton’s records of renovations: LA: Newspaper clippings, Arthur Frederick Sutton, Brant Broughton Parish Parish Records, Lincolnshire Archives 23/6.

⁸⁶³ “The Death and Funeral of Frederick Sutton,” *Lincolnshire Chronicle* (undated) cited in Pacey, *Frederick Heathcote Sutton*, 51-56 at 54.

parish in 1882 (fig. 105, *Altar Reredos*, St Laurence's Parish).⁸⁶⁴ The *Ascension* painting is remarkably well suited to the aesthetic, theological and liturgical space of the Anglo-Catholic chancel of St Helen's. The painting's dominant reds, greens and gold harmonise with the painted and gilded frame, and echo the green of the painted ceiling. Its theme of the culmination of Christ's time on Earth and hope for his return completes the story of his death in the East window, recalled in the instruments of the passion carved on the reredos, and remembered in the service of Holy Communion. *The Ascension* is the visual culmination of the journey through the church from the nave, up the chancel steps to the altar, where the upward momentum is continued in the up-turned faces of Mary and the apostles gathered on the hill. At the altar where communion is celebrated it evokes Christ's paradoxical presence and absence in the world, his promise to return, and the hope of the faithful to worship him with the angels. In this setting, this early German painting surpasses any hopes regarding the moral or spiritual power of Christian art that Dyce or Gladstone might have had for the Krüger pictures in the National Gallery (indeed they may not have approved this use for it). At installation it was described locally as "an interesting German" painting, but more relevant than its school or its interest as a piece of 'art' were the way its subject and aesthetic properties interacted with Christian worship in the space of its display.

⁸⁶⁴ St. Laurence's church, restored by Bodley and Garner. For the limited number of Northern paintings inserted in British altarpieces, Grössinger, *North-European Panel Paintings*.

4e. Krüger Pictures in Private Collections

ii. Paintings Sold on by Hermann

That Watson's higher-priced lots from the Gallery's sale kept some connection with their German identity, and most ended up with discriminating collectors who took care of their display, becomes all the more obvious when compared to the fate of the cheaper lots purchased by Hermann (Appendices 2, 9 and 10). There is no trace at all of six of the lots Hermann bought. He, or a later dealer, fraudulently added Dürer monograms to two of the "Later Meister von Liesborn" lots: a common practice to enhance the value of a painting (lots 23, 25). These panels, now known to be by Jan Baegert, were loaned by George Fryer as Dürers to the Leeds exhibition in 1889 (figs. 45 and 47, *Crowning with Thorns* and *Carrying the Cross*).⁸⁶⁵ If Fryer was, as seems likely, a local businessman in the North, he would have been in a different buyers' market from the aristocratic and super-rich collectors to whom Watson's pictures went.⁸⁶⁶ A review of the Leeds exhibition called the panels "great works" exemplifying Dürer's "hard and dry" character, vigorous action and expression of emotion. For the author, the grotesque figures, over-firm line, flat colour, and the brutal cruelty reflected "the manner of a Northern race."⁸⁶⁷ The false Dürer attribution would have turned these rather negative visual qualities into

⁸⁶⁵ No. 340, 341; Municipal Art Gallery Leeds, *Catalogue of the Loan Collection of works by "Old Masters" and by Deceased Artists of the English and Foreign Schools*. (Goodall and Suddick: Leeds, 1889); Tschira van Oyen, *Jan Baegert*, 100.

⁸⁶⁶ Fryer could be one of a number of local tradesmen of that name listed in Kelly's Directories and census records for Yorkshire. The collection of "Fryer" of the "North of England" was auctioned by Foster's, on March 10, 1858 and included ancient Italian and Northern works.

⁸⁶⁷ "Leeds Art Exhibition," *Leeds Mercury*, October 1, 1889, 9.

something worth seeing, but this illustrates obstacles unscrupulous dealers created for understanding the work of Dürer and other German painters. Even so, the reviewer's enthusiasm for these paintings suggests greater tolerance for these paintings outside London.

The only other lots purchased by Hermann to have been relocated since the sale are fragments from the wings of the Bielefeld *Marienaltar* (fig. 64). Hermann purchased all six lots (4-9) containing the wing fragments then said to have come from a chapel in Schildesche, Bielefeld rather than the Neustadt where the central portion of the altarpiece remained.⁸⁶⁸ It has been assumed Hermann cut up the three-subject panels of lots 4, and 6-9 and sold their fragments individually, because eventually they all ended up in single-subject panel form.⁸⁶⁹ It would be normal for dealers to cut up paintings to make them easier to display in their shops, more attractive to buyers and more likely to make a profit.⁸⁷⁰ However, it is not certain that he did cut them all up, and while the question may seem trivial (and could only be settled through technical analysis of the saw marks), it would help us understand Hermann's expectations for how these German paintings would operate as commodities, and how they actually performed.⁸⁷¹ Figure 65 shows that the Bielefeld wing fragments were dispersed in three different ways based on how they were later recovered.⁸⁷² All

⁸⁶⁸ See the Introduction.

⁸⁶⁹ Pfeiffer, *Malerei am Niederrhein und in Westfalen*, 18; Kemperdick, Graf, and Cermann, *Deutsche und Böhmisches Gemälde*, 168; Iris Herpers, "Die Restaurierung des Bielefelder Retabels," in *Der Bielefelder Marienaltar. Das Retabel in der Neustädter Marienkirche*, ed. A Menzel (Bielefeld: 2001), 113.

⁸⁷⁰ Rolf Fritz, "Ein Flügelbild des Bielefelder Altares im Deutschen Museum," *Berliner Museen* 53, no. 1 (1932).

⁸⁷¹ Thanks to Iris Herpers for sharing her notes on the panels and their technical analysis. Email message to author, February 13, 2015.

⁸⁷² Further details and literature on their provenances is in Appendix 2.

parts of Lot 9 were recovered together when they came to auction in 1997 reframed as a triptych with the *Last Judgment* in the centre rather than in its original position at the end of the sequence (fig. 106).⁸⁷³ According to Iris Herpers, their oak frame was made in the nineteenth century.⁸⁷⁴ Perhaps Hermann, another dealer, or a collector reframed the subjects into a more symmetrically balanced arrangement with Christ in the mandorla as central axis. Dealers like Hermann would know that triptychs sold well at auction, and would have more value as complete works rather than fragments. Krüger's label was still affixed to the back of *The Pentecost*, so the "history" of this group of three could have been maintained with the pictures as they passed into private ownership, and may have contributed to their attraction.

All of lot 4, and parts of lots 6, 7 and 8 were also recovered together sometime between 1928 and 1936. The art dealer Tomas Harris (1908-64) of the Spanish Art Gallery, bought them with the contents of an outhouse from an unidentified country sale.⁸⁷⁵ It is hard to believe this jumble of eight episodes from the Garden of Eden to Christ's Infancy and Passion would have appealed as a group, and it therefore seems more likely they failed to sell, or if they did sell, the buyer simply put them into storage. There is some evidence that before these fragments were sawn apart someone attempted to sell them in their complete three-subject format as Flemish works: One fragment from each of

⁸⁷³ Christie's, *Old Master Pictures, 18 April 1997* (London: Christie's, 1997). Lot 143, as the "property of a gentleman."

⁸⁷⁴ It is unlikely the frame was made by Krüger given the description of the panel with three subjects in its original order in the 1857 sales catalogue. Alfred Menzel, "Der Bielefelder Marienaltar, ein Retabel für die Gebildeten im Hohen Chor als Lehrtafel und Himmelsfenster," *ZiF: Mitteilungen* 1 (2001): 124; Herpers, "Die Restaurierung des Bielefelder Retabels."

⁸⁷⁵ Anthony Blunt, "Obituary" January 29, 1964, newspaper cutting in NAL Tomas Harris Files, 1908-1964.

lots 4, 6 and 8 had the words “Flanders” or “Product of Flanders” written in English on its reverse.⁸⁷⁶

The remaining five fragments were all sawn into individual fields and sold separately. The *Annunciation* (lot 5) had already been sawn into an individual panel before the collection reached England. The two fragments that can be traced to British private owners within the nineteenth century had shed all information about their German origins or links with the National Gallery. A fragment from lot 8 with *Christ Before Pilate* was designated Spanish rather than German when it came to public attention in 1913, when the widow of the architect taught by Ruskin, James Reddie Anderson (1850-1907) gave it to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (fig. 15).⁸⁷⁷ In 1914 Tancred Borenius published it as “Catalan,” and by 1923 it was said to have been “discovered in Spain” – a claim that has not otherwise been substantiated.⁸⁷⁸ A previously unpublished note from Mrs Anderson in the Ashmolean archives claims her husband bought

⁸⁷⁶ Herpers’ notes on the backs of the pictures, email message to author, February 13, 2015.

⁸⁷⁷ On Anderson and his family’s other gifts to the Ashmolean: Christopher White, *Catalogue of the Collection of Paintings in the Ashmolean Museum: Dutch, Flemish and German Paintings Before 1900* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 83-85; Christopher Lloyd, *A Catalogue of the Earlier Italian Paintings in the Ashmolean Museum* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), xxv-xxvi; Colin Harrison, Catherine Casley, and Jon Whiteley, *The Ashmolean Museum: Complete Illustrated Catalogue of Paintings* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2004), 142, 277; Avery-Quash, “Collector Connoisseurs.” Catherine Whistler, Acting Keeper, The Ashmolean Museum, email message to author, September 18, 2014.

⁸⁷⁸ Tancred Borenius, “The Anderson Gift to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford,” *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 25, no. 138 (1914): 326. No. 54 William Constable, *Exhibition of British Primitive Paintings (from the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century) with some related Illuminated Manuscripts, Figure Embroidery, and Alabaster Carvings. Exh. cat., Royal Academy of Arts, London, October and November, 1923* (London: W. Clowes, 1924).

it at the sale of John Bell's collection in Glasgow, 1881.⁸⁷⁹ John Bell (1806-1880) was a prolific and idiosyncratic collector whose 800 paintings included a remarkable number of pre-sixteenth-century works from north and south of the Alps. He had eight "Dürers" and three "Cranachs".⁸⁸⁰ Bell had intended to leave his collection to the city of Glasgow but did not sign his will, and it was only at auction in 1881 that the unprecedented number and variety of his old masters became known. Sale reports suggested most were fakes or misattributed, and that the many "very old works" were not excellent as art, but were "of high antiquarian interest and value."⁸⁸¹ A *Christ Before Caiaphas* of the same dimensions as the one now in the Ashmolean was among them, but it was called a thirteenth-century work by "Pietro Cavallino" (*sic*), presumably Cavallini, c. 1250-1330, the mosaicist and fresco, rather than panel, painter from Rome.⁸⁸² Cavallini had been described in Vasari but none of his extant works were authenticated until the twentieth century.⁸⁸³ Unfortunately, Anderson is not recorded as its buyer, though he is identified as purchasing many at the sale.⁸⁸⁴ If this was the Bielefeld *Christ Before Pilate* then perhaps Hermann or another dealer had altered the painting's attribution to a rare but "known" painter to

⁸⁷⁹ Mrs. Emilie Anderson to Mr. Bell, The Ashmolean, February 12, 1913, Ashmolean Archives. Thanks to Prof. Timothy Wilson for discovering this during my research visit.

⁸⁸⁰ The catalogue was made up posthumously using his notes and receipts for purchases. Morrison, Dick, and M'Culloch, *The Bell Collection, North Park, Glasgow. Catalogue of the Extensive and Varied Gallery of about Eight Hundred Rare Oil Paintings by the Old Masters. 1-5 February, 1881* (Glasgow: Morrison, Dick & M'Culloch). NAL priced catalogue.

⁸⁸¹ See for example "Mr Bell's Pictures," *New York Times*, June 10, 1881. Quote from, "The Bell Art Collection," *Glasgow Herald*, January 12, 1881, 6.

⁸⁸² Lot 50. See Appendix 2.

⁸⁸³ Vasari, *Lives*, I:164-5; "Cavallini" in *Cavallini to Veronese*, online article accessed May 15, 2015 on <http://cavallinitoveronese.co.uk>

⁸⁸⁴ It was bought by "Wilson" for £5.15s.6d.

increase its value. Whether or not this was where Anderson got the painting, its German origins had been entirely erased.

When the second panel that can be traced in the nineteenth century came to light in 1922 it was quickly linked to Anderson's panel in the Ashmolean.⁸⁸⁵ Ernest Hockliffe and his wife discovered *The Flagellation* when visiting All Saints' parish church, Milton Ernest, Bedfordshire where it was in the tiny vestry (fig. 20). Thinking it early English, they persuaded the vicar to send it to Lord Lee of Fareham with a view to exhibiting it in the forthcoming British Primitives exhibition at Burlington House.⁸⁸⁶ It was cleaned and exhibited there, and catalogued as a fifteenth-century English or North German work. Borenius, Conway and Sydney Cockerell (1867-1962) were among its admirers there, who debated its school and association with the Ashmolean panel. Cockerell oversaw the painting's loan to the Fitzwilliam until the 1950s.⁸⁸⁷ The *Flagellation* was probably bought by Rev. Charles Beaty-Pownall (1825-1880, vicar from 1835), who aggrandized and ornamented the vicarage and church from the 1840s to 60s with independent wealth acquired through marriage. He worked with the Gothic revival architect William Butterfield (1814-1900), who had family connections to the parish.⁸⁸⁸ Butterfield did not

⁸⁸⁵ Some sources state December 1923, based on an error in a newspaper clipping "The Flagellation, A Picture in Milton Ernest Church of German Origin," Newspaper April 14, 1933 in the Bedfordshire Record Office (hereafter BRO), "Information etc. relating to a primitive German painting which once belonged to Milton Ernest Church," CRT/130/MIL: 8.

⁸⁸⁶ Correspondence between Hockliffe, Lord Lee, Mr. Holmes, January-November 1923. Milton Ernest Parish Records, BRO P80/28/1-2.

⁸⁸⁷ No 54. Constable, *British Primitive Paintings*. Hockliffe to Holmes, October 10 and 15, and November 9, 1923, BRO P80/28/1-2.

⁸⁸⁸ The parish living was only around £250 but Beaty-Pownall's effects were around £12,000 at his death. Crockford, *Clerical Dictionary*. "Charles Colyear Beaty-Pownall," Clergy of the Church of England Database, accessed 5 June,

approve of paintings in churches and Beaty-Pownall may have wanted it for his own private devotion, or it may possibly have been hung in the vestry to aid parishioners giving confession there in this High Anglican parish.⁸⁸⁹ There is no evidence Beaty-Pownall had a collection of paintings, but he was interested in antiquities and archaeology, and had donated an Elizabethan chalice and paten to the parish in 1844.⁸⁹⁰ He often visited London and could have bought the panel there.⁸⁹¹

The difficulties of trying to pin down exactly what happened to the Bielefeld fragments and other Krüger paintings after the 1857 sale underscores the impact of the collection's dispersal via dealers at midcentury. Treating the panels as commodities, dealers were not concerned with preserving information about the pictures' histories or their form unless it would improve profits. The majority of these sold pictures passed entirely out of public view for the rest of the century. This sets them apart from the Krüger paintings that were loaned to other institutions for public display at midcentury, for whom

2013,

<http://ccedb.cch.kcl.ac.uk/jsp/persons/CreatePersonFrames.jsp?PersonID=7013>

3. On Butterfield and Milton Ernest, Paul Thompson, *William Butterfield* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), 12-14; David Newman, *The Importance of Milton Ernest: Village History and Heritage Trail* (Milton Ernest, Bedfordshire: David Newman, 2006), 67-78. Thanks to David Newman for sharing his research with me.

⁸⁸⁹ Thanks to the Warden of Milton Ernest church for granting access, and to Paul Howitt-Cowan for his helpful insights into local parish practices at this time.

⁸⁹⁰ Chris Pickford, "Bedfordshire Churches in the Nineteenth Century: Part II: Parishes Harlington to Roxton," *Bedfordshire Historical Record Society* 77 (1998): 506-14. He was a member of the Cambridge Camden and Ecclesiological Societies (from 1842) and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London from 1845. Newman, *Importance of Milton Ernest*, 8, 215-33. There are no references to him as a seller or buyer in Lugt.

⁸⁹¹ He was recorded in the society pages as a regular guest at Langham Hotel, Portland Place, for example, *Morning Post*, November 10, 1868, June 15, 1869, August 10, and 20 1869.

historical genuineness and verifiable artistic interest were paramount. It is notable that many of them were chiefly valued as Christian art in private settings. Perhaps more surprising is the number that ended up in the hands of leading and innovative architects or those closely connected to them linked to the Gothic revival or Ecclesiastical Movement in the latter nineteenth century: Buckley (the private collector who bought at the sale) who was connected to Gilbert Scott, the Pre-Raphaelites and William Morris' Firm; Rev. Sutton and his connections with Bodley and Garner at Middleton Cheney; Beaty-Pownall and Butterfield at Milton Ernest parish church; Anderson and his connections with Ruskin for the Ashmolean panel; and Hughes with his connections to Nesfield at Kinmel Hall. It is tempting to think these early German panels appealed to the visually adventurous.

4 f. Conclusions

This chapter has shown that the primary motivations behind those who borrowed the Gallery's rejected Krüger paintings in 1857 and 1862 were practical and tactical. Intentionally and accidentally these pictures were critical to establishing the principle of sharing national art resources beyond the permanent collection in London: their acquisition realized a new policy of buying entire collections for the Gallery with the intention of jettisoning unwanted portions by sale and loan, and their sale was taken as proof it was better to loan than sell, to the benefit of these other collections.

Aside from these practical considerations the institutions that selected them used a variety of evaluative criteria to justify displaying these rejected

pictures. It was critical to the Irish and Scottish national galleries that they only take worthy paintings that would benefit local populations, whether through aesthetic, historical, moral or practical instruction. Mulvany found it challenging with the quality of specimens he selected in 1857, and only a handful of the Krüger pictures were specifically chosen from the superfluous pictures offered in 1862. The *Conversion of St. Hubert* and some of the Liesborn fragments had particular value, but the majority were 'left-overs' taken by South Kensington, where utility took precedence over quality. Literature from the 1840s and early 50s influenced the evaluation and display of these paintings in Ireland and Scotland, but there is little evidence of ongoing engagement with developing scholarly and critical literature in catalogue entries for the pictures. Literature played even less of a role in the display and viewing experience of those in the "virtual museum" of South Kensington's Circulating Collection. The dispersal of the paintings removed them from critical attention reinforcing hierarchies of centrality and peripherality in the 1850s and 60s.

Limited records show the Krüger paintings were well received in each of these institutions. It is virtually impossible to quantify their impact on viewers, especially if we want to disentangle their specific value from local audience enjoyment of the spectacle of genuinely old paintings. At the very least the distribution of Krüger paintings improved opportunities for broader viewing publics to encounter early German painting, and in Ireland and Scotland they contributed to the idea that these had an important and integral place in historical collections of national significance.

By contrast, on the private art market dealers sought those pictures most likely to make a profit at resale regardless of authenticity or canonicity, and

collectors purchased with an eye to a bargain according to their own taste. Through their sale thirty-seven of the Krüger pictures were removed from public view and scholarly attention, and efforts to remarket and display them with different attributions and schools obfuscated them even further. However, when these privately owned paintings were loaned to public exhibitions, such as at Leeds, the Royal Academy exhibitions and the British Primitives Exhibition, they could have superior exposure to those still in the National Gallery. Critical evaluations of Milton Ernest's *Flagellation* panel at the British Primitives exhibition of 1923 illustrate how such targeted and choreographed exposure could catalyze new scholarly interest in these previously rejected and ignored paintings. Perhaps the most important of these was the Burlington Fine Arts exhibition of early German art in 1906. Not only did this bring hidden gems like Hughes' *Calvary* picture and other early German paintings into the limelight, it also published up-to-date historical research on German schools and previously unknown masters for British audiences so that these paintings could be newly appreciated for their place in the school's development. Alban Head's introduction to the fifteenth-century schools of Cologne, Hamburg and Westphalia updated the 'canon' of important masters, pointing readers to illustrative examples from the exhibition and elsewhere. Among these were the four Werden panels and fragments from the Liesborn altarpiece in the National Gallery (and other fragments in Germany), and Head acknowledged those that had been on loan to Scotland.⁸⁹² The Gallery declined to send its German paintings to the exhibition, and directly following that request it recalled the

⁸⁹² Conway et al., *Early German Art*, xxiv-xxvii.

German pictures from Scotland which meant it could boost its own display of German art while the exhibition was happening.⁸⁹³

Although Head wrote about Viktor and Heinrich Dunwegge to whom Derick Baegert's works were then given, and his "pupil" the Master of Cappenberg (now called Jan Baegert) the only examples of their work cited in the exhibition catalogue were in Germany or the Duke of Norfolk's collection.⁸⁹⁴ The two Jan Baegert panels of *Christ Before Pilate* and *The Coronation* then on loan to Dublin were not considered (figs. 44 and 51). Despite being ignored like this the loan of *Christ Before Pilate* to Dublin in 1857 saved it (and the other nine Krüger paintings) from being sold. These two are the only fragments from the Liesborn altarpiece wings now in the national collection. The connection between these panels and the other altarpiece fragments by the Liesborn Master was first suggested in the 1950s and since then research has established clearer evidence of their relationships through close visual and dendrochronological examination, and through collaboration between the museums in Münster and London that now house the fragments (see Appendix 4). Attempts to reconstruct the altarpiece, including the most recent partial reconstruction in the *Strange Beauty* exhibition at the National Gallery in 2014, reveal how much better and sooner the altarpiece might have been understood had the wing panels all been kept together in 1857. The partial reconstruction combined the Gallery's original fragments with grey-scale photographic reproductions of the fragments now in Münster, most of which had come to London with the Krüger collection and were sold in 1857. The contrast between

⁸⁹³ Letter requesting NG 251, 256, 258 and 723 for the exhibition, March 13, 1906, NG7/309/18.

⁸⁹⁴ Conway et al., *Early German Art*, 11-12, cat no. 19.

original and reproduction fragments was intended to evoke the history of the Krüger collection and the Gallery's interaction with early German paintings in the 1850s. However, combining original and reproduction fragments led to significant challenges to making an accurate reconstruction. The resultant awkward spacing between some fragments, and the disjointed visual experience tangibly underscored the obstacles that dispersing the Krüger collection had on advancing understanding of its paintings.

CONCLUSION

This study has answered key questions about why the Krüger collection was bought for Britain and how it was dispersed here. It has demonstrated that the motivation to buy it came from British visitors to Minden who recognized the historical value of the collection according to personal views that art was a fundamentally Christian or spiritual exercise articulated through the peculiar character of different peoples and times. Its dispersal through sale and loan has revealed that these paintings had appeal, albeit limited, across Romantic, scholarly and aesthetic frameworks of value. This study has contributed new understanding to the place early German paintings played in the histories of key British art institutions and in historical literature at pivotal moments in their development to a degree not before seen. It has added a new perspective on a period of study normally preoccupied with early Italian, and more recently Netherlandish art, that rounds out our view of the complex factors pertinent to the re-evaluation of early art at midcentury. Despite the relatively limited numbers of early German paintings and the perception of their marginality, early German paintings intersected with, and influenced, key moments of practical and ideological development in the National Galleries in London, Ireland and Scotland, and the South Kensington Museum, and added a new paragraph, if not quite a chapter, to British literature on the history of art.

The case of the Krüger collection improves our understanding of the close interaction between practical and tactical decisions and more ideological re-evaluations of early paintings in general at midcentury. It also sheds further light on the importance of select figures in shaping such decisions, and their

long-lasting impact. This was demonstrated by Dyce's use of the collection to enact his vision for the purpose and operations of the National Gallery and the place of early German paintings within it, and similarly by Mulvany and Johnstone at the National Galleries of Ireland and Scotland, and Cole at South Kensington. It was also demonstrated by Eastlake's subjective implementation of his criteria for "superfluous" pictures in the 1860s, and Wornum's inability to prevent the removal of some early German paintings he thought worthy of the Gallery.

The story of the Krüger and other early German paintings at the National Gallery and beyond has provided new and specific insight into the reception of early German painting in nineteenth-century Britain. As a result of Gladstone's trust in Dyce, and of other key actors for dispersing the national collection to other parts of the nation, early German paintings from Westphalia gained unprecedented exposure in different parts of Britain and in British accounts of art history. Without having to go overseas, audiences could test theoretical ideas about Cologne idealism, its interaction with Flemish realism, and its fatal fantastical grotesqueness from Romantic as well as more formal and historical paradigms for evaluating art, against actual specimens. Early German painting was no longer just a German, or idiosyncratic British collector's niche interest, but was rather part of national, canonical collections of paintings intended to educate and improve the public and the British school of art. This is best seen in new attention paid to the Liesborn Master and, to a lesser extent, the master of the Werden panels. The failures and perceived failures associated with the acquisition and dispersal of the pictures were equally important for contributing to understanding of the re-evaluation of early art from different

schools at this time. Eastlake's decision to sell or treat as "superfluous" the vast majority of the Krüger collection largely unravelled Krüger's work in creating an historically illustrative collection, and ironically spoiled the chance for British viewers to see examples of the kinds of paintings being newly described in published histories of art. At the same time, their withdrawal was implicated in the subsequent omission of certain works and masters from art-historical literature of the 1850s and 60s, when scholarship on newly rediscovered painters was becoming both more granular and comprehensive. The perceived failures of the Krüger acquisition also reveal the role early German paintings played in bringing about changes in the National Gallery's management, procedures and interactions with other institutions. These German pictures gave occasion for clarifying the boundaries of what was worthy of national collections in London, Dublin and Edinburgh as new historical frameworks of display were shifting away from Romantic approaches to early art.

The Krüger acquisition marked a watershed in British interactions with early German painting yet, like the Manchester Art Treasures exhibition, it did little to change what Vallance later called British ignorance of and prejudice against German paintings. On the contrary, through the insertion, removal or refusal of its paintings for public display, and through displays that promoted the comparison of Northern and Italian schools, these pictures helped embed notions of the inferiority of early German painting. This narrative of inferiority grew stronger as scholarship on Netherlandish paintings and rhetoric about the Renaissance increased.

Because of the limited nature of this study it was not possible to discuss the reception of these early German paintings much beyond the 1860s, nor of

other German paintings introduced to Britain. Further work is needed to unpick the implications of aesthetic and expressionist models for evaluating art in Britain, and the relative fortunes of different German schools and artists towards the end of the century, and to join this study to the various perspectives presented at the 2014 conference, *Primitive Renaissances: Northern European and Germanic Art at the Fin de Siècle to the 1930s*.⁸⁹⁵ It was also not possible to explore the relationship between French and British responses to German painting.⁸⁹⁶ Both would be fruitful avenues for future collaboration. More work is also needed to gain better insight into the way German paintings entered and circulated in nineteenth-century British art markets and in private collections. Reitlinger was correct to say the school remained minor, but nevertheless it did sell more than he suggested, and the way dealers and collectors like Roscoe, Northwick and Graves handled early German paintings offers an untapped resource for expanding understanding of early German painting beyond the Krüger collection that would be useful to other branches of nineteenth-century research, especially because German paintings were so often confused with Netherlandish and other schools.

This study was intended to test Ettliger's position that the Krüger pictures were a "sad medley" of provincial art with little aesthetic appeal acquired under the influence of German Romanticism and patriotic art history. To an extent it has proved him right: without the German Romantic and historical literature that penetrated British – and specifically Dyce's and

⁸⁹⁵ Held at the National Gallery, April 11-12, 2014. Publication in preparation.

⁸⁹⁶ For example the work of the Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte, <http://www.dtforum.org>.

Gladstone's – perspectives on art, and without German patriotism that inspired collectors like Krüger to rescue the paintings displaced by French expansionism, those pictures would not have entered the Gallery. Eastlake's moves to whittle the collection down show British resistance to German-led evaluative frameworks, even then. Yet predominant and persistent negative rhetoric around the collection and its acquisition has obscured alternative perspectives on the positive qualities of some of the pictures and their perceived value to British public and private collections in the nineteenth century.

Ettlinger wrote that attempts by twentieth-century German historical writers, notably Alfred Stange, Wilhelm Pinder and Otto Fischer, to aggrandize German art left "more objective students" (presumably he includes himself here) "suspicious" of their true values.⁸⁹⁷ New art history and historiographical reviews since Ettlinger have done much to expose political or other agendas of past scholarship, and indeed to shed light on the kind of value-laden subjectivity of Ettlinger's own approach, despite his incisive scholarship. To this end, I have tried to avoid making value judgments on the Krüger pictures, and to treat them as historical objects rather than to position them in any artistic hierarchy of value. However, while examining whether nineteenth-century viewers liked them or not, I could not help wonder why they still occupy a marginal place as artworks in Britain. The portions now in the national collection in London are not all on display, and those that are hang tucked away in a room at the far end of the Sainsbury Wing: its architecture was designed to house the earlier paintings from the collection in an evocative *Italianate* arcade. Passing through this wing, Italian masterpieces offer a rewarding vista through arches and

⁸⁹⁷ Ettlinger, "Reflections on German Painting," 135.

doorways, and more or less follow a chronological path through the development of paintings in the Italian Renaissance (fig 107. *The Sainsbury Wing*). The Northern pictures grouped in a series of small rooms – possibly better suited to their small sizes – seem something of a backward step for the visitor. On several occasions I have stood for a long time before the fragments of the Krüger collection and other early German paintings in these rooms without crossing paths with many other visitors.

The *Strange Beauty* exhibition of 2014 was unusual for giving these pictures in the collection a moment in the spotlight, nearly fifty years after the previous focus on them through an exhibition at the Gallery.⁸⁹⁸ Integral to the Exhibition's design was the intention to provoke reflection on their role and value: to ask if they were beautiful, what beauty was, and why these pictures were in the collection. Even if Ettliger was right to imply that the Master or school of Liesborn, Jan Baegert, the Master of the Life of the Virgin, Gert van Lon or the Master of the Berswordt Altarpiece are in any sense minor or provincial artists of little aesthetic value (and much has been done to challenge that) I would argue that he failed to account for the very significant role these paintings had in Britain from the point of the Krüger acquisition for provoking reflection on what art in a Gallery should be. Practical and financial factors remain strong determinants of decisions about permanently displaying art in the National Gallery. The *Strange Beauty* exhibition allowed the Gallery to engage the public in reflection on its own involvement in creating and reinforcing frameworks for appreciating art in public collections, arising from historical value systems. Even so, in their permanent Gallery setting in London

⁸⁹⁸ At the 1966 exhibition of the Liesborn Altarpiece.

these paintings might never be appreciated as anything more than minor provincial works of little aesthetic value, in contrast to the deeper resonances examples of their work have in German museums local to their production. Since the 1857 sale, most of the recovered Krüger paintings have returned to Germany. The recent renovations at the Westphalisches Landesmuseum in Münster display its large collection of early Westphalian paintings among other objects in a setting whose lighting, accents, colours and sounds evoke the way the paintings interacted with the monasteries and churches for which they were painted. Münster's display comes much closer to Dyce's vision for the Krüger pictures in England, in that it presents a progressive development of artists from one area, but without Dyce's value system that privileged Italianate idealism as the highest standard in art.

The Krüger pictures that probably had the longest and deepest impact on British viewers were those that were never thought worthy of display in the National Gallery, but later found their way into places of worship. Visitors now jostle to see Gert van Lon's *Madonna of the Rosary* in the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge (fig. 108). In the intimate setting of a side chapel reserved for silent prayer where it is the only painting, it creates a glowing golden focus for the room. Viewers can appreciate up close details like the Virgin's brocade robe, the emblems of the passion tucked in among the roses edging the mandorla, and the instrument-playing angels. Only the most motivated visitors would seek out information about its artist or school. Whether providing the backdrop to prayer, or treating the roaming tourist as one of the few paintings in King's College Chapel, its importance is signalled just by being in this prestigious location. It is a surprisingly honoured resting place for a painting

that Dyce barely noticed in his Report; that neither he nor anyone else thought worth displaying in the National Gallery, nor in Ireland's new Gallery; and that disappeared after being sold to Graves for £13 in 1857. It was found in a sale of bankrupt stock in Cheapside thirty years later where it was purchased by Elizabeth Ashbee (1841-1919), a German Jew married to Henry Ashbee (1834-1900), who was a lapsed Anglican with a decided dislike for Roman Catholicism. After leaving her husband she, and presumably the picture, moved in with her son, the Arts and Crafts architect Charles R. Ashbee (1863-1942) who later donated it to King's College where he had studied, and carved a frame for it in keeping with the fifteenth-century chapel there.⁸⁹⁹ It still had its identifying label on the back by the 1930s, so Elizabeth Ashbee's unlikely purchase of this painting with a decidedly Catholic subject may have been inspired by its German provenance.⁹⁰⁰ It is yet another of the Krüger paintings to fall into the hands of an innovative architect, and to find its most pertinent value in a place of worship.

The Ascension in the reredos of St. Helen's church, Brant Broughton is less public, but has engendered deep feelings locally (fig 103). There was mild

⁸⁹⁹ On its discovery and donation to the chapel Massing and Petiot, "In the frame: Gert van Lon, C. R. Ashbee and the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge.;" Massing, "Gert van Lon's *Madonna in the Rosary*." The painting is not in the family photographs (now archived at the NAL), nor in the published memoir: Felicity Ashbee and Alan Crawford, *Janet Ashbee: Love, Marriage, and the Arts & Crafts Movement* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2002). David Chambers, "Ashbee, Henry Spencer (1834–1900)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Alan Crawford, "Ashbee, Charles Robert (1863–1942)," *ibid*.

⁹⁰⁰ King's College Annual Report, November 16, 1935 describes it as a "magnificent Madonna and Child.... Painted in 1481 by the "Master of Soest" for an Ursuline Convent in that neighbourhood." Cited in Massing and Petiot, "In the frame: Gert van Lon, C. R. Ashbee and the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge," 412, 14.

interest in it as a German painting when it was installed, but in the 1930s speculation about its history and value prompted the incumbent vicar to approach the National Gallery.⁹⁰¹ This led to art-historical investigations into the painting, but on being told it was only of interest to German galleries and was worth at best £100, nothing more was done by the parish until the 1960s and early 70s, when it caused a rift with lasting wounds. The parish was split between those who wanted to sell the painting and replace it with a copy to save on insurance and conservation costs and to provide cash for the parish upkeep, and those who saw the proposal of replacing it with a copy as almost sacrilegious. The altar was “not the place for subterfuge” claimed some, signalling the relic-like status of the painting to them.⁹⁰² In ways close to both Dyce and Gladstone’s ideas, the painting’s value came from its genuineness, and more nebulously from a sense of it being a link in the chain of Christian sentiment connecting its painter with viewers over the centuries, and especially those viewers who had enjoyed it in St Helen’s church since the 1880s. The painting was described by a parishioner as the centerpiece of one of the loveliest churches in Lincolnshire.⁹⁰³ That no faculty had ever been granted for it was used to strengthen the case to sell, but in the end it has remained in the church, where it is still much loved by parishioners.

Since entering Britain fragments of the Liesborn Altarpiece have passed through revolutions in ways of evaluating art: as an expression of the divine, as historical instruction, as “racial” and national illustration, as beautiful works to

⁹⁰¹ Rev. Thornton to NG, August 18 and 22, 1933. In NG Dossier for NG 2152/3

⁹⁰² Burrows, Derek. “Query Still on Painting,” *Newark Advertiser*, April 17, 1971, 1 and 19. Copy in file of the Master of Liesborn, Witt Library, Courtauld Institute.

⁹⁰³ Mr. Coldron, *Ibid.*

be enjoyed. They have been treasured as outstanding masterpieces of a school, as the worst of art and as superfluous. They have graced the walls of major Galleries, been touted around the country to provincial art schools, and found homes in a variety of private collections. Despite what parishioners at Brant Broughton thought of the subterfuge of using a copy of a painting from this school in their church, a reproduction of the fragment of *Christ Crucified* from the Liesborn altarpiece recently inspired a poem for Good Friday in an Indiana Christian magazine (fig. 109). Whatever the vicissitudes of art historical investigations, and the shifting perspectives on German art they create, the paintings can still resonate with those who look at them as they were originally made to be seen: as aids to devotion.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BL	British Library
BRO	Bedfordshire Record Office
CCE	Committee of Council on Education
DP	William Dyce Papers, Aberdeen Art Gallery Archives
DS&A	Department of Science and Art
GG	Glynn-Gladstone MS, Flintshire Record Office
GPI	Getty Provenance Index Database
HC Deb	House of Commons Debate, Hansard
KC	Krüger Catalogue, 1848
LA	Lincolnshire Archives
LWL	Ladsmuseum, Münster
NAL	National Art Library
NG	National Gallery Archives
NGI	National Gallery of Ireland Archives
NGS	National Galleries of Scotland Archives
PP	House of Commons Parliamentary Papers
SC 1853	Select Committee 1853. "SC 1853," denotes page, "SC 1853:" denotes paragraph of witness evidence
SPCK	Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge
TA	Treasury Archives
V&A	Victoria and Albert Museum Archives

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Kinnel Hall Papers. Denbighshire Record Office, North Wales.

Kinnel Manuscripts. Bangor University Archives, Bangor, Wales.

Kinnel Manuscripts. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, Wales.

Krüger Collection Sketches. Landesmuseum, Münster.

Llechid Jones, T. Collection. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, Wales.

Liverpool Royal Institution Files Relating to Picture. Liverpool Royal Institution Archives, Special Collections, University of Liverpool, Liverpool.

Middleton Cheney (All Saints), Parish Records. Northamptonshire Record Office, Northampton.

Milton Ernest (St. Helen's) Parish Records. Bedfordshire Record Office, Bedford.

National Gallery Archives. National Gallery, London.

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