

# Beham – Burgkmair – Holbein – Weiditz

## The Printed Models for the Illuminations in Choirbook Mus.ms. C (Bavarian State Library, Munich)

### Bartel Beham (1502–1540):

The Nuremberg painter produced two copperplate engravings, probably in the 1520s, showing children with skulls. These were included in the border paintings for Pierre de la Rue's *Missa pro defunctis* in the choirbook Mus.ms. C. From 1527, Beham was court painter to Duke Wilhelm IV (1493–1550), who may have commissioned Mus.ms. C. Ottheinrich of Palatinate-Neuburg (1502–1559) and Susanna of Bavaria (1502–1543), the owners of the manuscript, were Wilhelm's brother-in-law and sister.



Barthel Beham (c. 1528–30):  
*Mors omnia aequat.*



Mus.ms. C, fol. 189r.



Barthel Beham (1525):  
*Child sleeping on skull.*



Mus.ms. C, fol. 189v.

### Hans Weiditz (c. 1500–1536):

Originally from southern Germany, Weiditz moved to Augsburg in 1518 and received his training in Burgkmair's workshop. He mainly created woodcuts, including the well-known print of *Emperor Maximilian I attending Mass*. Individual elements – the praying ruler, the organist and the court choir – were included in Mus.ms. C and their arrangement adapted for the layout of the choirbook.



Hans Weiditz (before 1519):  
*Emperor Maximilian I attending Mass* (detail).

Mus.ms. C, fol. 188r.



### Hans Burgkmair the Elder (1473–1531):

Most of the prints that served as models for the illuminator were created by Hans Burgkmair. In addition to series like the *Virtues and Vices*, individual prints such as *The Woman clothed with the Sun and the Seven-Headed Dragon* were also included in the choirbook. Burgkmair worked primarily for Emperor Maximilian I from 1508 and was also active for Duke Wilhelm IV in Munich in the late 1520s.



Hans Burgkmair  
(before 1520):  
*Die Sterck.*



Mus.ms. C, fol. 71v.



Hans Burgkmair:  
Illustrations for the  
Apocalypse (1523):  
*The Woman clothed  
with the Sun and the  
Seven-Headed Dragon.*



Mus.ms. C, fol. 41v.

### Hans Holbein the Younger (1497/98–1543):

Hans Holbein, a native of Augsburg who was active throughout Europe, created his famous *Dance of Death* in 1524/25, a series of 41 woodcuts. In penultimate place is the depiction of the *Last Judgement* with Christ as judge of the world on a sphere. Striking are the signs of the zodiac on a broad belt of longitude and latitude lines. It is precisely this sphere that also appears in the depiction of the Last Judgement in Mus.ms. C, while other elements of the model are missing. Its appearance is likely related to Ottheinrich's documented interest in astrology and alchemy.



Hans Holbein: Dance of Death (1524/25):  
*Last Judgement.*



Mus.ms. C, fol. 188r.

### Conclusion:

The workshop of illuminator Nikolaus Bertschi the Elder (c. 1475–1541/42), who was presumably responsible for illuminating this manuscript, proceeded with a variety of different approaches in transferring the prints to book painting: While Burgkmair's designs were **copied true to detail**, Beham's engravings served as **typological models** and were adopted mirror-inverted. Only **one single element** from Holbein's print was incorporated into the miniature. The figures in Weiditz's woodcut were **adapted to the format** of the bottom border and **heraldically transformed** into Wittelsbachs.

Both the repertoire and the illuminations point to a **deliberately enacted connection to the imperial court of the Habsburgs**. This kind of approach can also be observed among other members of the Wittelsbach family, who sought to maximize their power in this manner. Whether Mus.ms. C was commissioned by Ottheinrich and Susanna themselves or by Wilhelm IV remains an open question at this point.

Table showing the pictorial program and the known printed models for the illuminations in Mus.ms. C.

Mass	Pictorial Program	Number of Printed Models by
Heinrich Isaac: <i>Missa Virgo prudentissima</i>	Marian Scenes	-
Josquin Desprez: <i>Missa de Beata Virgine</i>	Marian Scenes	1 Burgkmair
Pierre de la Rue: <i>Missa Incessament mon pauvre coeur</i>	Virtues and Vices	7 Burgkmair
Mattheus Pipelare: <i>Missa Fors seulement</i>	Three Jewish Heroines and Heroes, Three Christian Heroines and Heroes	4 Burgkmair
Noel Bauldeweyn: <i>Missa En douleur en tristesse</i>	Marian Scenes, Scenes of Power of Women	1 Burgkmair
Jheronimus Vinders: <i>Missa Stabat mater</i>	Evangelists, Apostles and Church Fathers, Christ as Victor over Death	-
Pierre de la Rue: <i>Missa pro defunctis</i>	Scenes on Death and Resurrection	2 Beham, 1 Weiditz, 1 Holbein

