

An attribution for two late Gothic central-European panels, in English public collections, depicting episodes from the life of St. Barbara*

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The subject of this article is a pair of late Gothic panels, now separated but originally part of one retable: the *Flagellation of St. Barbara* in York Art Gallery (inv. no. YORAG 752 [fig. 1]) and the *Martyrdom of St. Barbara* in the collection of the National Trust at Upton House, Warwickshire (inv. no. 446804 [fig. 2]). The panels have hitherto been attributed to the so-called Master of the Schotten Altarpiece or to his workshop – although the problem of authorship is complicated by a debate as to whether there were in fact two masters of this workshop (the elder and the younger), rather than one.

The Schotten Altarpiece was the high altar of the church in the Schottenstift (Scottish Abbey) in Vienna¹. 21 surviving panels from it are now divided between the Schottenstift Museum and the Belvedere, both in Vienna. It was the main commission of the workshop of the Master of the Schotten Altarpiece, referred to hereafter in this article as the Schotten Master². One of the most important workshops in Vienna in the third quarter of the 15th c., this was extremely influential, not only in Austria but more widely throughout central and eastern Europe, where it introduced stylistic elements of early Netherlandish painting³. The two sides of the wings of Schotten Altarpiece, depicting the cycles of the Passion and the Life of Virgin, have been attributed respectively to two different hands by some scholars, who supposed the existence of a Schotten Master I (or the Elder) and a Schotten Master II (the Younger). It was assumed that the latter was active towards the end of the 15th c., and the date of the altarpiece was therefore estimated as between 1469 and ca. 1480.



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¹ The full name was Benediktinerabtei unserer Lieben Frau zu den Schotten (Benedictine Ab-



fig. 1 *Flagellation of St. Barbara*, here attributed to J. Siebenbürger, ca. 1470–1480, panel, 73.6 × 54.6. York Museums Trust: York Art Gallery. Image courtesy of York Museums Trust (<http://yorkmuseumstrust.org.uk> [access date: 6 VI 2018]) Public Domain



fig. 2 *Martyrdom of St. Barbara*, here attributed to J. Siebenbürger, ca. 1470–1480, panel, 73 × 54.6.
National Trust: Upton House, Warwickshire. Fot. © National Trust Images / Christopher Hurst



bey of Our Dear Lady of the Scots). The abbey was founded in 1155 by Henry II Jasomirgott of Austria exclusively for the Irish-Scottish Benedictine monks, transferred from the Abbey of St. James in Regensburg (also called Schottenstift). In 1418 the Scottish Abbey in Vienna was transformed into a regular Benedictine Abbey (for German-speaking monks) but its name Schottenstift was retained. The church's choir, damaged in an earthquake, was reconstructed in 1446-1449, following which the new high altar was commissioned, and created over the next decades. That gothic altar was replaced in the 17th c. See **H. Ferenczy**, *Schottenstift und seine Kunstwerke*, Bild. Ch. Merth, Vienna 1980. I would like to thank Dr. **Veronika Pirker-Aurenhammer** (Curator of the Medieval Collection, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere) and Father **Augustinus Zeman** OSB of Schottenstift in Vienna for their kind support of my work.

² He should not be confused with the painter who created the high altar in the Our Lady Church in Schotten (Hesse) at the end of the 14th century. That German master should rather be called the Master of the Schottener Altar or the Schottener Master. See **F. Häring**, *Der Schottener Altar*, Lahn-Giessen 1976; **H. Hysky-Dambmann**, **D. Oesch**, *Der Schottener Flügelaltar*, Altenstadt 2001.

³ See **A. Simon**, *Österreichische Tafelmalerei der Spätgotik. Der niederländische Einfluß im 15. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2002, figs. 5, 29, 33-36, 51, 56, 57, 78, 84. The Netherlandish influences discernible in the art of the Schotten Master derive mainly from the works of R. van der Weyden. See **A. Rosenauer**, *Zum Einfluß der Niederlande auf die mitteleuropäische Kunst*, [in:] *Gotik in Slowenien. Vom Werden des Kulturraums zwischen Alpen, Pannonien und Adria. Vorträge des internationalen Symposiums Ljubljana, Narodna Galerija*, 20.-22. Oktober 1994, Hrsg. **J. Höfler**, Ljubljana 1995.

⁴ The concept of two Schotten Masters was promoted mainly by O. Benesch (see e.g. **idem**, *Collected Writings*, ed. **E. Benesch**, vol. 3: *German and Austrian Art of the 15th and 16th Century*, London - New York 1972, p. 266), while W. Buchowiecki and A. Stange attributed the retable to a single principle master (**W. Buchowiecki**, *Geschichte der Malerei in Wien*, [in:] *Geschichte der Stadt Wien*, Hrsg. **H. Zimmermann**, vol. 7: *Geschichte der bildenden Kunst in Wien*, Wien 1955, p. 27; **A. Stange**, *Deutsche Malerei der Gotik*, München-Berlin 1961, vol. 11: *Österreich und der ostdeutsche Siedlungsraum von Danzig bis Siebenbürgen in der Zeit von 1400 bis 1500*, p. 48. See also **F. Häring**, *op. cit.*; **C. Reiter**, *Der Wiener Schottenaltar. Geschichte, Stil und Charakteristika seiner Bildsprache*, [in:] **eadem**, *Museum im Schottenstift. Kunstsammlungen der Benediktinerabtei zu den Schotten in Wien*, Wien 1994. A recent monograph on the Schotten Master, collating previous references, is: **A. Saliger**, *Der Wiener Schottenmeister*, München - New York 2005; see also **A. Ebert**, *Der Wiener Schottenaltar. Das ehemalige Hochaltar-Retabel des Schottenstifts zu Wien*, Weimar 2015.

The date 1469, painted on the panel depicting the *Entrance of Christ to Jerusalem*, was previously assumed to refer to the commissioning of the retable, in spite of the fact that such a date in any painting is usually that of completion. The most recent literature has revised previous ideas: it now seems reasonable to accept that the Schotten Altarpiece was completed in 1469 and created by a workshop led by one main master⁴. The most radical proposal concerning this master is that of Robert Suckale, who has identified the leader of the workshop as Johannes Siebenbürger⁵.

Johannes (or Hans) Siebenbürger was a painter active in Vienna, dying in 1483⁶. He created the *Epitaph of Jodok Hauser*, who died in 1478 (Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna, inv. no.4850 [fig. 3]), which is documented by a receipt of 1479 in the Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv⁷. Scholars have noticed a stylistic relationship between the Hauser *Epitaph* and the Schotten Altarpiece panels, but they also linked the *Epitaph* to the Crucifixion retable from the St. Florian Abbey near Linz, by the so-called Master of the Crucifixion Triptych⁸. The latter was assumed to have been influenced by the Schotten Master, and perhaps responsible also for an altarpiece with the scenes of the Life of the Virgin (now divided between various collections)⁹. As Suckale has proposed, the inscription on the Crucifixion Triptych from St. Florian may prove that it was created in the workshop of Hans Siebenbürger, for it includes 'IHOANES VII', where the number seven - German "sieben" - may refer to the artist's name¹⁰. It should be stressed here that the painter Johannes Siebenbürger obviously came from Transylvania, known in German as Siebenbürgen, meaning "seven cities". Interestingly, there are a good many 15th-c. Transylvanian panels that are described as being created by followers or within the circle of the Schotten Master¹¹. In 1991 Imre Takács attributed also the Eligius panel (Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest) to Hans Siebenbürger¹². As he noted, the Abbot of Schotten Abbey in Vienna between 1467 and 1475 was Matthias Vinckh (Fink) from Transylvania, and many Hungarian monks were present there too at that time¹³. While Suckale proposed accepting Hans Siebenbürger as the main master of the workshop that produced the Schotten Altarpiece in 1469, he also defined a group of paintings constituting the oeuvre of that master and his workshop. Additionally, it seems that Hans Siebenbürger may have worked in Nuremberg in the early 1460s as a painter in the workshop of Hans Pleydenwurff: in that case Siebenbürger would be responsible for the predella panels of the Behaim Altarpiece from St. Catherine's church in Nuremberg (1464; [fig. 9])¹⁴. Suckale's ideas have not been accepted by everyone: the hypothesis that Siebenbürger may have been the main master of the Schotten Altarpiece is considered speculative, so it seems safer to attribute to him the Crucifixion Triptych of St. Florian and to assume that he was one of the painters working in the Schotten Altarpiece workshop (whether or not he was its main master)¹⁵.

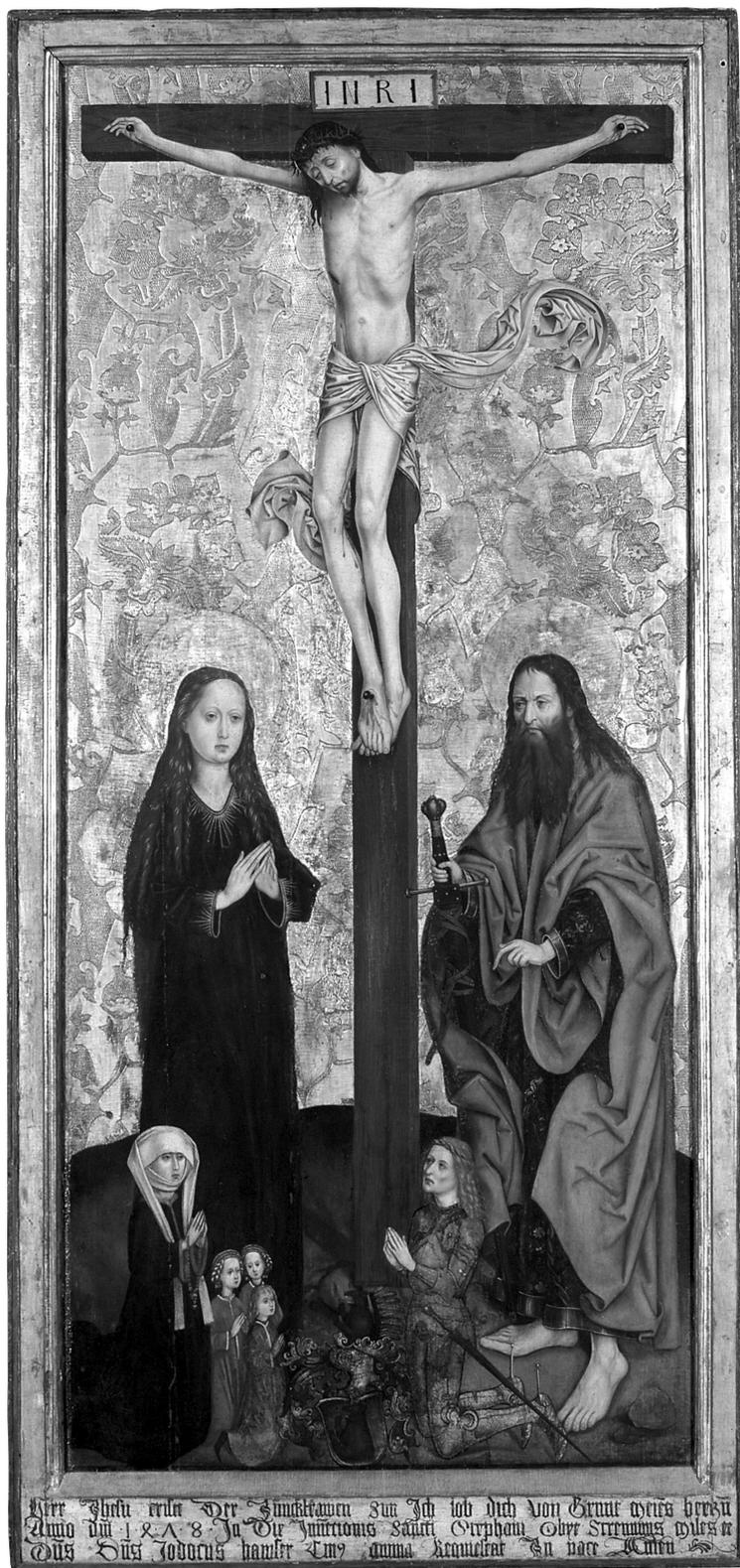


fig. 3 J. Siebenbürger, *Epitaph of Jodok Hauser*, 1478, panel, 166.5 × 75. Fot. Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna. Fot. © Belvedere, Vienna



⁵ R. Suckale, *Der Maler Johannes Siebenbürger (um 1440–1483) als Vermittler Nürnberger Kunst nach Ostmitteleuropa*, [in:] *Die Länder der Böhmisches Krone und ihre Nachbarn zur Zeit der Jagiellonenkönige (1471–1526): Kunst – Kultur – Geschichte*, Hrsg. E. Wetter, Ostfildern 2004; see also R. Suckale, *Die Erneuerung der Malkunst vor Dürer*, Petersberg 2009, vol. 1, pp. 185–198.

⁶ There was formerly a memorial inscription in the parish church of St. Michael by the Hofburg, Vienna. See R. Perger, *Zur Herkunft der Votivtafel des Jodok Hauser (†1478)*, “Mitteilungen der Österreichischen Galerie” 1973, no. 61; *idem*, *Hans Siebenbürger: Meister des Hauser Epitaphs und Stifter des Ölbergs zu St. Michael in Wien*, “Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege” vol. 34 (1980); recently all the sources have been collated by R. Suckale, *Der Maler...*, p. 379, note 2.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 379, note 3.

⁸ See A. Stange, *op. cit.*, p. 47; R. Feuchtmüller, *Wien zur Zeit des Schottenmeisters*, [in:] *Friedrich III: Kaiserresidenz Wiener Neustadt. Ausstellung St. Peter an der Sperr Wiener Neustadt 28. Mai bis 30. Oktober 1966* [exhibition cat.], Hrsg. *idem*, P. Weninger, Wiener Neustadt 1966, p. 429, no. 245; O. Benesch, *op. cit.*, p. 191; *Die Kunstsammlungen des Augustiner-Chorherrenstiftes St. Florian*, bearb. V. Birke [et al.], Beitr. R. Bauer [et al.] 1988; F. Oppl, *Das Antlitz der Stadt Wien am Ende des Mittelalters. Bekanntes und Neues zu den “Wien-Ansichten” auf Tafelbildern des 15. Jahrhunderts*, “Jahrbuch des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Wien” vol. 55 (1999).

⁹ Eight panels have been identified from an altarpiece with the scenes of the Life of Virgin based on the Schotten Altarpiece and attributed to the Master of the Crucifixion Triptych. They are: *The Presentation of Mary in the Temple* and *The Visitation*, both in the Abbey of St. Florian, Linz; *The Annunciation* and *The Adoration of the Magi*, formerly in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; *The Nativity*, in a Viennese private collection; *The Coronation of the Virgin*, in the Joanneum, Graz; and *The Birth of the Virgin* and *The Death of the Virgin*, sold at Sotheby’s, New York, 27 I 2011, lots 100 and 101. See note 39 below.

¹⁰ R. Suckale, *Der Maler...*, pp. 365–366.

¹¹ See H. Krasser, *Zur siebenbürgischen Nachfolge des Schottenmeisters. Birthälmer Altartafeln*, “Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege” vol. 27 (1973); *idem*, *Die Birthälmer Altartafeln und die siebenbürgische Nachfolge des Schottenmeisters*, “Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde” vol. 13 (1976); *idem*, *Der Birthälmer Altartafeln und die siebenbürgische Nachfolge des Schottenmeisters*, [in:] *Studien zur Siebenbürgischen Kunstgeschichte*, Hrsg. G. Gündisch [et al.], Bukarest 1976. Recently the problem was analysed by E. Sarkadi (*Produced for Transylvania – Local Workshops and Foreign Connections: Studies*



fig. 4 Comparison of the detail from *Visitation* from the Schotten Altarpiece (1469, panel, 87 × 80. Schottenstift Museum, Vienna) and the details of *Martyrdom of St. Barbara* [fig. 2] and *Flagellation of St. Barbara* [fig. 1]



of Late Medieval Altarpieces in Transylvania, PhD diss., supervisors: I. Takács, M. Sebök, Central European University, Budapest 2008, pp. 48–110) and D. Jenei (*Contributions to the Transylvanian Panel Painting at the End of the Fifteenth Century*, "Brukenthal. Acta Musei" 2013, no. 2).

¹² I. Takács, *A budapesti Eligius-táblakép: A bécsi késgótikus festészet ismeretlen emléke* (with summary in German *Das Budapestener Tafelbild des Heiligen Egidius: ein unbekanntes Werk der wiener spätgotischen Malerei*), [in:] *Etudes sur l'histoire de l'art en honneur du soixantième anniversaire de Miklós Mojzer*, ed. *idem* [et al.], Budapest 1991.

¹³ See R. Suckale, *Der Maler...*, p. 376.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 367–379; *idem*, *Die Erneuerung...*, p. 185. Two of those panels were previously attributed to the Schotten Master: see O. Pächt, *Österreichische Tafelmalerei der Gotik*, Vienna 1929, p. 17.

¹⁵ See L. Madersbacher, *Wien und Niederösterreich Malerei*, [in:] *Geschichte der Bildenden Kunst in Österreich*, vol. 3: *Spätmittelalter und Renaissance*, Hrsg. A. Rosenauer, München 2003, pp. 419–421.

¹⁶ See O. Benesch, *Die Wiener Tafelmalerei im Zeitalter Friedrichs III.*, "Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte" vol. 7 (1930), pp. 189–190.

¹⁷ Walter Horace Samuel, 2nd Viscount Bearsted (1882–1948), was director and subsequently chairman of the Shell Transport and Trading Company, founded by his uncle and his father, the 1st Viscount. As a wealthy philanthropist, Lord Bearsted supported many Jewish causes and helped Jews to escape from

The supports of the York and Upton House paintings are pine-wood panels each measuring 73.6 × 54.6 cm and they are both painted only on one side. The *Flagellation of St. Barbara* depicts the kneeling saint beaten by her father, who also pulls her hair; the scene is set in a landscape with small figures in the background. The *Martyrdom of St. Barbara* shows the saint being beheaded by her father in a very similar composition. The panels almost certainly once formed part of the same retable, though one of unknown origin. The *Martyrdom of St. Barbara* is known to have been on the German art market in the early 20th century¹⁶. It was purchased on 12 II 1926 at Canon Sutton's sale at Christie's, London, by Walter Samuel, 2nd Viscount Bearsted (1882–1948), who gave it as part of his collection with Upton House to the National Trust shortly before his death in 1948¹⁷. The panel in York, on the other hand, was purchased on 4 XI 1931 at Sotheby's, London, by F. D. Lycett Green, who was to give it to the then City Art Gallery in York in 1955, along with over 130 other paintings forming his collection¹⁸.

The Upton House panel was referred to by Otto Benesch as by the Younger Master of the Schotten Altarpiece¹⁹; he did not mention the *Flagellation of St. Barbara* panel at all, but the attribution has been generally accepted for both paintings²⁰. Erwin Panofsky initially attributed the painting at Upton House to Michael Wolgemut, although later rejecting this, and additionally identified the martyr as St. Dymphna²¹. It seems clear, however, that both *Flagellation* and *Martyrdom* by beheading illustrate parts of the Legend of St. Barbara²². Subsequently the panels have been attributed to the Master of the Schotten Altarpiece himself (which assumes a dating to the



fig. 5 *Epiphany* from the Schotten Altarpiece, 1469, panel, 86 × 80.
Fot. Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna. Fot. © Belvedere, Vienna

third quarter of the 15th c.)²³, or to his workshop (thus dating from the end of 15th c., or more precisely the 1490s)²⁴. I believe that the panels in York Art Gallery and at Upton House can be attributed to Hans Siebenbürger. There are certainly many stylistic similarities between the panels of the St. Barbara Legend and the panels of the Schotten Altarpiece: the faces (both male and female), hands (especially female hands, with outstretched little fingers), folds of the clothes and landscape backgrounds may well have been painted in the same workshop. All the elements are delineated with a gentle and even slightly sketchy contour, and completed with colour in a relatively painterly way. Of course the creation of the Schotten Altarpiece was a major project and undoubtedly many painters in the workshop contributed to it, so even between the depictions of Virgin Mary in its panels we may note some differences. It seems that the head of St. Barbara in the panels under discussion is closest, for example, to



Nazi Germany. In parallel with these activities, he was Chairman successively of the Trustees of the National Gallery and then Tate Gallery, and of the Whitechapel Art Gallery, all in London, as well as being a benefactor of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. A Japanese collection formed early in his life was given in 1923 to the Maidstone Museum (and housed in a new wing financed by his father). Starting before the I World War, Bearsted assembled an important collection of Continental European and British old master paintings. In the last year of his life he donated both that collection and its setting, Upton House, his home in Warwickshire from 1927, to the National Trust. See **O. Lane**, *Samuel, Walter Horace, second Viscount Bearsted (1882–1948)*, [in:] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/62461> (access date: 3 X 2016).

¹⁸ **Francis Dennis Lycett Green (1893–1959)** was a scion of the wealthy Green family, industrialists and benefactors originally from Wakefield (his uncle, Frank Green, presented the Treasurer's House, York, to the National Trust in 1930). He began buying pictures during the 1920s, advised by some of the leading dealers of the day. By the 1940s he owned examples from almost every school and period of European art – a comprehensive collection of over 130 paintings dating from the early 14th c. to the end of the 18th century. In 1952 he offered this to the National Gallery of South Africa, having moved to Cape Town in the hope that the climate would improve his health (impaired by serious injury in the I World War). However, when a dispute arose with the Cape Town Gallery, Lycett Green withdrew his pictures in protest and shipped them back to England. The entire collection of 137 pictures was first on loan to the York Art Gallery and in the spring of 1955 he decided to give it to the Gallery. His gift was made through the then National Art-Collections Fund, now the Art Fund. See the York Art Gallery files.

¹⁹ **O. Benesch** (*Die Wiener Tafelmalerei...*, p. 189) wrote that this attribution was first proposed by E. Buchner and *The Martyrdom of St. Barbara* was noted as having then been on the German art market for a few years: it seems that Benesch was not aware that by this time the painting was already in the collection of Viscount Bearsted.

²⁰ See **A. Stange**, *op. cit.*, p. 47; see also **York City Art Gallery**, *Catalogue of Paintings*, vol. 1: *Foreign Schools 1350–1800*, York 1961, pp. 90–91, pl. 77 (described as workshop of the Younger Master of the Schotten Altarpiece, “Austrian/German School late 15th century”); *German Art, 1400–1800, from Collections in Great Britain* [exhibition cat.], comp. F. G. Grossmann, Manchester City Art Gallery, 24 X – 10 XII, Manchester 1961, p. 21, no. 38; *The Bearsted Collection: Pictures*, comp. Lord Bearsted, London 1964, p. 68, no. 214; *Oil Paintings in Public Ownership in North Yorkshire*, ed. S. Roe, London 2006, p. 309.

²¹ **E. Panofsky**, *The Life and Art of Albrecht*



Dürer, Princeton 1943, vol. 2, fig. 3. In the 3rd ed. of the book (1948) the author changed the attribution to the Master of the Schotten Altarpiece after consulting Benesch, although the painting was still described as in the “Wolgemut manner” since, according to Benesch, the Master of the Schotten Altarpiece was educated in Nuremberg. M. Wolgemut was a pupil of H. Pleydenwurff and, when the latter died in 1472, Wolgemut married his widow, taking over Pleydenwurff’s Nuremberg workshop.

²² Barbara was an early Christian saint and martyr, living in the 3rd c. in Nicomedia. She was said to have been the daughter of a rich pagan named Dioscorus. Having secretly become a Christian, she rejected an offer of marriage; her father tried to break her resolve by locking her up in a tower and torturing her (e.g. by flagellation), but he did not manage to make her change her mind. Finally she was condemned to death by beheading and her father himself carried out the death-sentence. See *The Life of Saint Barbara*, [in:] *The Golden Legend, or Lives of the Saints*, comp. J. de Voragine, transl. W. Caxton, London 1483, vol. 6, pp. 93–95.

²³ See *Oil Paintings...*, p. 309; *The Grove Encyclopedia of Northern Renaissance Art*, ed. G. Campbell, Oxford 2009, vol. 3, pp. 472–73.

²⁴ See *York City Art Gallery*, *op. cit.*, pp. 90–91; S. Roller, *Zwei Arbeiten aus der Werkstatt Hans Pleydenwurffs in der Nationalgalerie in Prag: Teil II / Dvě práce z dílny Hanse Pleydenwurffa z Národní galerie v Praze: část II*, “Bulletin Národní Galerie v Praze” no. 9 (2001), p. 32.

²⁵ The altarpiece was struck by lightning in the late 15th c. and probably partly destroyed; it was replaced in the 17th c. with a Baroque retable. The only surviving panels are the *Deposition*, now in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg (GM1127), and a fragment of the *Presentation in the Temple* in the National Museum, Warsaw. There were once two other fragments in a public collection in Wrocław (*Crucifixion and Epiphany*) but they have been missing since 1945. See *Der frühe Dürer*, [exhibition cat.], Hrsg. D. Hess, Th. Eser, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, 24 V – 2 IX 2012, Nuremberg 2012, no. 25.



fig. 6 *Masacre of the Innocents* from the Schotten Altarpiece, 1469, panel, 87 × 80. Schottenstift Museum, Vienna. Fot. Wien, Museum in Schottenstift

the head of the Virgin in the *Visitation* from the Schotten Altarpiece [fig. 4]. The costume of St. Barbara’s father can be compared with that of the youngest of the three kings in the Schotten Altarpiece’s *Epiphany* [fig. 5]. In addition, the dynamic folds of drapery around St. Barbara’s father’s legs, are paralleled in the Schotten Altarpiece panel of the *Massacre of Innocents* (the soldier to the left [fig. 6]).

Particularly distinctive in the composition of both St. Barbara panels is the figure of her father: he is depicted dynamically, with the lower part of his robe billowing out and swirling around his legs. This feature can be traced back to works by Hans Pleydenwurff: it is present in his only documented painting, a panel depicting the *Deposition* from the high altar of St. Elisabeth in Wrocław, completed in 1462 (the cloak of a man on the ladder [fig. 7])²⁵. An interesting comparison can also be made with a panel depicting the *Martyrdom of St. Barbara*, in the National Gallery, Prague (inv. no. O 10106 [fig. 8]),



fig. 7 H. Pleydenwurff, *Deposition* from the high altar for St. Elisabeth Church in Wrocław, 1462, panel, 286.3 × 142.2. Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg. Fot. G. Janssen



fig. 8 H. Pleydenwurff and his workshop, *Martyrdom of St. Barbara*, ca. 1465–1470, canvas on panel, 146 × 85.5. National Gallery, Prague. Fot. J. L. Mazieres (via flickr.com, CC license - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mazanto/38136113444> [access date: 6 VI 2018])

fig. 9 J. Siebenbürger, *Martyrdom of St. Ursula and her Companions*, panels of the predella of Behaim Altarpiece from St. Catherine church in Nuremberg, 1464, panels, 49 × 27 each. Present location unknown. Fot. after: R. Suckale, *Der Maler Johannes Siebenbürger (um 1440-1483) als Vermittler Nürnberger Kunst nach Ostmitteleuropa*, [in:] *Die Länder der Böhmisches Krone und ihre Nachbarn zur Zeit der Jagiellonenkönige (1471-1526): Kunst - Kultur - Geschichte*, Hrsg. E. Wetter, Ostfildern 2004, pp. 367, fig. 4-5



²⁶ See J. Pešina, *Altdeutsche Meister von Hans von Tübingen bis Dürer und Cranach*, Prag 1962, pp. 5-7. The painting was formerly attributed to H. Schüchlin - see O. Benesch, *Die Wiener Tafelmalerei...*, p. 186; J. Pešina, *German Paintings of the 15th and 16th Centuries*, Prague 1962, p. 9; D. von Pfeil, *Die Stellung Hans Schüchlins in der Ulmer Malerei*, [in:] *Meisterwerke massenhaft: Die Bildhauerwerkstatt des Niklaus Weckmann und die Malerei in Ulm um 1500* [exhibition cat.], Katalogkonzeption H. Meurer [et al.], Katalogred. G. Weilandt, Mitarb. S. Roller, Württembergischen Landesmuseum Stuttgart, Altes Schloss, 11 V - 1 VIII 1993, Stuttgart 1993, pp. 161-167. However, it is now attributed to H. Pleydenwurff, perhaps with the assistance of H. Schüchlin, his pupil - see S. Roller, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-37; O. Kotková, *German and Austrian Paintings of the 14th-16th Centuries. Illustrated Summary Catalogue, National Gallery in Prague*, Prague 2007, p. 76, no. 43; R. Suckale, *Die Erneuerung...*, pp. 169-171; *Van Eyck bis Dürer, Altniederländische Meister und die Malerei in Mitteleuropa 1430-1530* [exhibition cat.], ed. T.-H. Borchert, Groeningemuseum in Bruges, 29 X 2010 - 30 I 2011, Stuttgart 2010, pp. 406-407.

²⁷ See E. Baum, *Katalog des Museums mittelalterlicher österreichischer Kunst*, Vienna 1971, p. 161, no.126.

²⁸ W. Buchowiecki, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

²⁹ The panel was recorded in the 1930s in the collection of Artur von Werther in Vienna. It was probably taken to London by Marianne von Werther (1901-1984), who moved there in 1939, and stayed for the rest of her life. On 3 XI 1970 she wrote to the then curator of York Art Gallery, stating that she had enjoyed her visit to York and liked the painting depicting the *Flagellation of St. Barbara*, adding that she owned a similar panel of which she enclosed a photograph. This letter is in the York Art Gallery files; her painting was undoubtedly the *St. Ursula being blessed by the Pope* from Lilienfeld Abbey. It is likely that the panel remains in Britain, perhaps in the possession of M. von Werther's descendants.

now attributed to Hans Pleydenwurff and a co-worker²⁶. At first this seems really close to the panel at Upton House, but further examination indicates that the similarities are mainly in the composition: the face of a female saint is surely not created by the same artist in both panels. Even the dynamic folds of St. Barbara's father's coat are in fact composed in a slightly different way: in the Prague panel they are comparatively angular (as in Pleydenwurff's *Deposition* from the altar from Wrocław [fig. 7]), while in the two English panels they are more rounded in form, closer to the coat of the Angel in the *Annunciation* of the Schotten Altarpiece or of the soldier in the *Massacre of the Innocents* mentioned above [fig. 6]. It seems that the composition may have been taken by the author of the St. Barbara panels from works by Hans Pleydenwurff, but that the actual painting was executed in the former's own individual style.

Hans Siebenbürger several times depicted a man seen from behind killing a martyr, as in the case of his images of the *Martyrdom of St. Ursula and Her Companions*, in two panels from the Nuremberg Behaim Retable [fig. 9] and a panel in the Österreichische Galerie Belvedere in Vienna (inv. no. 4973 [fig. 10]. The Vienna *Martyrdom of Saint Ursula* is part of an altarpiece from the Lilienfeld Abbey²⁷ and all together three panels can be identified as belonging to the same altarpiece. I believe that they provide a fruitful comparison with the panels in York and Upton House. The Vienna *Martyrdom of Saint Ursula* was completed with depictions of the *Baptism of St. Ursula's Companions* [fig. 11] and *St. Ursula being blessed by the Pope*²⁸ [fig. 12]. The latter is most probably in a British private collection²⁹,



fig. 10 J. Siebenbürger and his workshop, *Martyrdom of St. Ursula*, ca. 1470-1480, panel, 73 × 49 cm. Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna. Fot. © Belvedere, Vienna



fig. 11 J. Siebenbürger and his workshop, *Baptism of the Companions of St. Ursula*, ca. 1470–1480, panel, 70 × 53. Present location unknown. Fot. after: *Wien und Wiener Patrizierbesitz: Gemälde alter und neuerer Meister, Aquarelle und Miniaturen, Antiquitäten; Kunstmobiliel, Luster, Uhren, Silber, Porzellan, Glas, Fayencen, Bronzen, Skulpturen, Bronzeplaketten [...]; 20. bis 22. Oktober 1931*, Hrsg. Auktionshaus Albert Kende, Wien 1931, Nr. 294, Tafel III



fig. 12 J. Siebenbürger and his workshop, *St. Ursula Blessed by the Pope*, ca. 1470–1480, panel, 74 × 49. Probably private collection in UK (in 1970 Werther collection in London). Fot. ÖNB Bildarchiv und Grafiksammlung (POR), L 20582 - C (<http://www.bildarchiv.austria.at/Preview/14703369.jpg> [access date: 6 VI 2018])



³⁰ The panel was formerly in the collection of PhD A. E. Wien and sold through the Auktionshaus Albert Kende in Vienna (20–22 X 1931, lot 110), as by Cologne master of the 15th century.

³¹ R. Suckale, *Der Maler...*, p. 372, fig. 6, attributed to Siebenbürger and workshop, and dated ca. 1480.

³² *The Martyrdom of St. Ursula* measures 73 × 49 cm. *The Baptism of St. Ursula's Companions* is recorded as being 70 × 53 cm.

but the location of the former remains completely unknown³⁰. While the panel in Vienna is now dated ca. 1470–1480 and ascribed to Hans Siebenbürger³¹, it is difficult to assess the other two panels now unavailable. Nevertheless comparison of photographs suggests that the figure of St. Ursula in these panels may have been painted by different artists, which is not surprising as altarpieces were often completed by more than one person in a workshop. It seems that the closest connection to the panels in York and at Upton House is in the lost panel of the *Baptism of St. Ursula's Companions* – both in the figure of St. Ursula and in the male characters' faces [fig. 13]. Interestingly, the St. Ursula panels from Lilienfeld were painted on the same support (pinewood) and are of similar size³² to the St. Barbara panels. It seems very likely to me that both altarpieces were created in the same workshop and around the same time [fig. 14].



— fig. 13 Comparison of the details of *Martyrdom of St. Barbara* [fig. 2] and *Baptism of the Companions of St. Ursula* [fig. 11]



— fig. 14 Comparison of the details of *Flagellation of St. Barbara* [fig. 1] and *Martyrdom of St. Ursula* [fig. 10]

fig. 15 J. Siebenbürger, *Christ Visiting St. Barbara in Prison*, ca. 1470–1480, panel, 36 × 45. Present location unknown. Fot. after R. Suckale, *Der Maler Johannes Siebenbürger (um 1440–1483) als Vermittler Nürnberger Kunst nach Ostmitteleuropa*, [in:] *Die Länder der Böhmisches Krone und ihre Nachbarn zur Zeit der Jagiellonenkönige (1471–1526): Kunst – Kultur – Geschichte*, Hrsg. E. Wetter, Ostfildern 2004, pp. 371, fig. 12.



³³ M. Weinberger, *Über die herkunft des Meisters LCz.*, [in:] *Festschrift Heinrich Wölfflin. Beiträge zur Kunst- und Geistesgeschichte; zum 21. Juni 1924 überreicht von Freunden und Schülern*, Mitarb. P. Wolters, München 1924, pp. 179–182.

³⁴ See A. Stange, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

³⁵ R. Suckale, *Der Maler...*, p. 372, note 28, fig. 12.

³⁶ *Idem*, *Die Erneuerung...*, p. 189, fig. 314.

There is one more panel recently attributed to Hans Siebenbürger which in my opinion should be considered alongside the St. Barbara panels in York and at Upton House: it is a fragment depicting Christ visiting an imprisoned saint and giving her the crown of martyrdom [fig. 15]. The location of this painting is unfortunately now unknown: it was published by Martin Weinberger in 1924 as having been on the Munich art market for some time³³. The panel was recorded as being 36 × 45 cm, although it had probably been cut. We only have a black-and-white photograph, but Weinberger wrote that the complexion of the characters was cool and pale, and that the colours were close to Wolgemut's panels of the high altar in Zwickau Cathedral (1479). This suggests that the palette was rather warm, so seemingly close to the colours of the British St. Barbara panels. Weinberger attributed the panel to the circle of Master L. Cz. and identified the subject as *Christ visiting St. Barbara in prison*. Later the panel was associated with the Schotten Master³⁴. Suckale proposed an identification of the saint as Catherine, and at first attributed the panel to a Nuremberg co-worker of Hans Siebenbürger, and dateable to ca. 1465–1470³⁵, but later attributed it to Hans Siebenbürger himself, as dateable to ca. 1469³⁶. While the account of St. Barbara in the *Golden Legend* does not mention Christ bringing her a crown, it records that he visited her when she was imprisoned and healed the wounds which she received from torture. It seems possible that there was some version of the St. Barbara legend that added the motif of the crown of martyrdom;



or perhaps the crown is just a visualisation of the fact that according to the *Golden Legend* Christ comforted Barbara and not only healed her wounds but also announced her impending martyrdom and the salvation of her soul³⁷. Support for this idea would be for example a 15th-c. stained-glass window in the cathedral in Stendhal– the window is dedicated to St. Barbara and one of the scenes is actually Christ visiting the saint in prison and giving her a crown, in a very similar composition to the panel in question³⁸. It thus seems reasonable to accept the traditional identification of the scene as a part of the Legend of St. Barbara, not Catherine. Moreover, I believe that it is very likely that this panel was a third piece of the retablo that included the paintings now at York and Upton House. Stylistically (as far as it is possible to judge from the old photograph) the panel of Christ visiting the saint matches those of both *St. Barbara's flagellation* and *St. Barbara's martyrdom*: in particular, the female figures seem to have been painted by the same hand [fig. 16]. The proportions of the figures in all three panels are also the same, assuming that the lost panel had been cut on all sides, which is probable, as its composition now seems to be incomplete [fig. 17]. It is impossible to determine what scene was depicted in a fourth panel, which would have completed the cycle, most probably, together with the other three, constituting the altar wings. If each wing comprised two panels (one above another), it would have a size of approximately 160 × 55 cm, which would mean that the missing central section of the altarpiece measured about 160 × 110 cm.

fig. 16 Comparison of the the details of *Martyrdom of St. Barbara* [fig. 2] and *Flagellation of St. Barbara* [fig. 1] with the detail from *Christ Visiting St. Barbara in Prison* [fig. 14]



³⁷ See *The Golden Legend...*, p. 94: "And then at midnight descended a great light and clearness into the prison in which our Lord showed him to her, saying: Barbara, have confidence, and be firm and steadfast. For in heaven and in the earth thou shalt have great joy for thy passion, therefore, doubt not the judge, for I shall be with thee, and I shall deliver thee from all thy pains that any shall make thee suffer, and incontinent she was all whole. And then, when our Lord had said thus, he blessed her and remounted into heaven. Then S. Barbara was greatly rejoiced by the great comfort of our Lord".

³⁸ K.-J. Maercker, *Die mittelalterliche Glasmalerei im Stendaler Dom*, Berlin 1988, p. VII. Photograph at the digital Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi project website: <http://telota.bbaw.de/cvma/HyperCVMA/StendalDom/content/X32957.html> [access date: 31 V 2018].



fig. 17 Reconstruction of possible original size of the panel showing *Christ Visiting St. Barbara in Prison* [fig. 14] in comparison with the panels of *Flagellation of St. Barbara* [fig. 1] and *Martyrdom of St. Barbara* [fig. 2]



³⁹ As mentioned before, the Schotten Altarpiece was a source of inspiration for the scenes of the Life of Virgin, attributed to the Master of the Crucifixion Triptych (see note 9 above). *The Adoration of the Magi* from that cycle, formerly in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, is now in a private collection; it was published in: *Galerie Sanct Lucas (Wien), Ausstellung Gemälde Alter Meister. Neuerwerbungen*, Wien 1965–1966. As far as it is possible to judge from a reproduction, the only evidence available, the Black King in that panel is shown with sleeves modelled in a very similar way to those in the St. Barbara panels.

Conservation of the York panel in 2007 revealed a work of high artistic quality, a characteristic also of the panel at Upton House. Very significant features in both paintings are the sleeves of St. Barbara's father: their folds are modelled with yellow hatching creating the illusion of golden light. A similar way of modelling the fabric may be seen in the Schotten Altarpiece in the scenes of the *Birth of the Virgin* (the dress of St. Anne [fig. 18]) and the *Visitation* (the dress of the Virgin [fig. 4]). Very similar wide sleeves, although not modelled with shiny hatching, are depicted on the Black King in the *Epiphany* from the Schotten Altarpiece [fig. 5]³⁹. As mentioned before, the heads and the hands of the figures in the panels at York and Upton House are very close to those in the Schotten Altarpiece, and St. Barbara's father's coat is formed in a similar way to the coat of one of the soldiers in the *Massacre of the Innocents* in the Schotten Altarpiece [fig. 6]. If Hans Siebenbürger (involved in the creation of the Schotten Altarpiece, whether as principle master of the workshop or just a member) was indeed responsible for the St. Ursula altarpiece from Lilienfeld [figs. 10–12] and if we accept the attribution of the fragment with *Christ Visiting the Saint in the Prison* [fig. 14] to Siebenbürger as well, we may attribute to him also both the St. Barbara panels now in English public collections. The composition of these panels seems to be rooted in the works of Hans Pleydenwurff, which also supports the idea of Siebenbürger's presence in the Nuremberg workshop. My fol-



fig. 18 Comparison of the the detail of *Flagellation of St. Barbara* [fig. 1] with the detail from *Birth of the Virgin* from the Schotten Altarpiece (1469, panel, 87 × 80. Schottenstift Museum, Vienna. Fot. Wien, Museum in Schottenstift)

Following conclusion is thus proposed: the York *Flagellation of St. Barbara* and the Upton House *Martyrdom of St. Barbara* formed a part of an altarpiece, possibly including the *Christ visiting St. Barbara in Prison* (current location unknown); all three panels may have been created by the Transylvanian artist Johannes (Hans) Siebenbürger, who was also involved in the completion of the Schotten Altarpiece in 1469. It is most likely that the St. Barbara panels were created in the 1470s as a part of an altarpiece similar to the St. Ursula retable from Lilienfeld Abbey.

Keywords

15th c. panel painting, late gothic painting, Master of the Schotten Altarpiece, Johannes Siebenbürger, Hans Siebenbürger, Viennese Schotten Altarpiece, St. Barbara

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