

# ***The Man of Sorrows* in the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe: A Reconsideration of Dürer's Gold-Ground Painting\***

**Kayo Hirakawa**

## **Metal, Stone, and Silk: Paintings on Special Supports in the Sixteenth Century**

Oil painting on wood panel or canvas — the well-known standard form of painting in European art — was established in the late sixteenth century, after the invention of the oil technique in the early fifteenth century and the subsequent spread of canvas as an alternative to wooden painting support in the early sixteenth century. Going against this stream, however, special painting forms emerged and gained great popularity at the same time. Artists used metal, stone, or silk as painting supports, which had been scarcely utilized for artwork.<sup>1</sup> In certain paintings on special supports, painters left the surface partly unpainted and consciously demonstrated curiosity, novelty, and preciousness to art lovers (fig. 1). According to contemporary inventories, paintings on special supports were often collected in a small chamber called *Kunstkammer* or *studiolo*, which stored family treasures such as ancient coins and cameos, holy relics, goldsmith works, jewels, and minerals, as well as zoological and botanical specimens.<sup>2</sup> The earliest oil paintings on stone or metal plates were executed by Italian painters such as Sebastiano del Piombo and Correggio in the 1530s.<sup>3</sup>

This paper focuses on *The Man of Sorrows* (fig. 2), which German painter Albrecht Dürer completed at the end of the fifteenth century and which is now in the Staatliche



Fig. 1 Hans von Aachen, *The Triumph of Ceres, Bacchus, Venus, and Cupid*, ca. 1607, oil on alabaster, 37 x 45 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.



Fig. 2 Albrecht Dürer,  
*The Man of Sorrows*,  
late 1490s, mixed oil-  
tempera technique  
on fir, 30.1 x 18.8 cm,  
Staatliche Kunsthalle,  
Karlsruhe.



Fig. 3 Detail of fig. 2.



Fig. 4 Reverse of fig. 2.

Kunsthalle in Karlsruhe. Although it was painted on neither metal nor stone but on a usual wood panel, this small work anticipated the forthcoming trend of painting on special supports in the late sixteenth century in the sense that Dürer was fully aware of the painting support itself and successfully realized his ingenious pictorial representation on it.

### A Question: *The Man of Sorrows* in the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe

*The Man of Sorrows* in the Staatliche Kunsthalle in Karlsruhe was painted using the mixed oil-tempera technique on a fir wood panel 30.1 cm high and 18.8 cm wide (fig. 2).<sup>4</sup> Christ, wearing a crown of thorns and a loincloth, gazes at us from the middle of the painting. He is sitting behind a stone baluster with his right knee up and one cheek resting on his right hand. Fresh blood is dripping from the wounds on his side, palms, and forehead, flowing onto the baluster. On his right knee are a whip and bundled branches. Aura-like layers painted in brownish-red, blue, and white surround Christ, and brilliant gold adorns the background (fig. 3). On the reverse of the panel, Dürer painted a marble-like pattern in vivid yellow, red, greenish-blue, white, and brown (fig. 4).

The painting expresses the iconography of the Man of Sorrows, or *Imago Pietatis*, which shows Christ with his wounds from the crucifixion, at times accompanied by the instruments of his Passion, such as a whip, bundled branches, nails, and a spear. In other works with this theme, Mary, John the Evangelist, or angels are shown (fig. 23). The image does not represent an exact narrative scene from the life of Christ nor serve as an object of worship in church. Instead, it functions as a visual device to invite the beholder to meditate on and feel compassion toward the Passion of Christ. In the late Middle Ages, various kinds of devotional paintings, or *Andachtsbilder*, emerged and encouraged the devotional practice of believers in the private sphere. The Man of Sorrows, or *Imago Pietatis*, is one of the most popular themes in the medieval devotional paintings that spread to both sides of the Alps, and it had a variety of representations.<sup>5</sup> Among them, Dürer's *The Man of Sorrows* in Karlsruhe is a mixed type, as the work also represents another iconography, Christ in Repose,



Fig. 5 *Christ in Repose*, ca. 1460, oak, Cathedral, Brunswick.

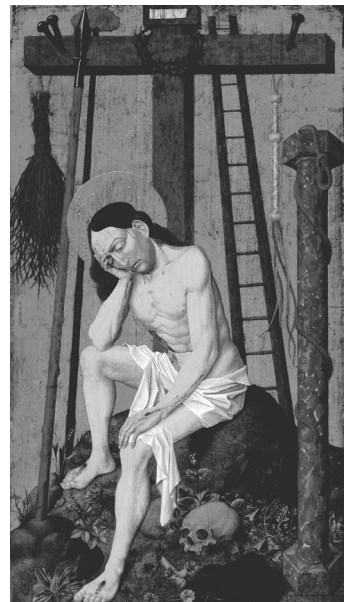


Fig. 6 Alsatian painter, *The Man of Sorrows*, 1450s, mixed oil-tempera technique on panel, 69.2 x 39.4 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



Fig. 7 Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1493, pen on paper, 20.4 x 20.8 cm, Erlangen University Library, Erlangen.



Fig. 8 Niclaus Gerhaert von Leyden, *Bust of a Man*, 1460s, sandstone, 44 x 32 x 31 cm, Cathedral Museum, Strasbourg.

which shows Christ sitting down and agonizing before the flagellation or nailing to the cross (fig. 5). This mixed type of the Man of Sorrows was already observed in a painting made around the middle of the fifteenth century in the Upper Rhine area, where Dürer was active as a journeyman from 1490 to 1494 (fig. 6).<sup>6</sup>

Neither a signature nor a date is found on the painting. Based on its style, however, this work was attributed to a young Dürer when the Karlsruhe Kunsthalle acquired it in 1941. Its provenance before the nineteenth century is not known.<sup>7</sup> Albrecht Dürer, born in 1471 in Nuremberg as a son of goldsmith Albrecht Dürer the Elder, apprenticed first as a goldsmith in his father's workshop and then as a painter at Michael Wolgemut's studio in Nuremberg. Beginning in 1490, Dürer traveled, mainly in the Upper Rhine area, and returned to his hometown in 1494. Before opening his own workshop in 1495, he probably visited Northern Italy, after which he drastically changed his painting style, namely from the traditional German late Gothic style to an innovative style strongly influenced by contemporary Italian art. A drawing Dürer made of himself during his period of wandering is supposed to be a study for *The Man of Sorrows* in Karlsruhe; this assumption is based on the similar physiognomy and the gesture of a cheek rested on a hand (fig. 7). This characteristic gesture had impressively been adopted by Niclaus Gerhaert von Leyden, a leading sculptor active in the 1460s in Strasbourg, where Dürer stayed during his journey in 1493 (fig. 8). Hence, it is generally assumed that *The Man of Sorrows* was made around 1493/1494 during Dürer's stay in Strasbourg.<sup>8</sup> Considering the elaborate and mature depiction of the body of Christ and other details, however, the painting could be dated to around 1496 or later, soon after Dürer opened his workshop in Nuremberg, as Ludwig Grote supposed.<sup>9</sup>

At this point, I shall precisely examine the background depiction of this painting, and then demonstrate Dürer's thoughtful invention to reconcile the realistic representation of the apparition of Christ and the traditional gold-ground required by the conservative taste for religious paintings in Germany.

### Dürer's Struggle for the Reality of the Holy Apparition on the Gold-Ground

In Dürer's *The Man of Sorrows*, the background is elegantly gilded with gold leaf. The gilded background was typical for medieval paintings of religious subjects. Painters and their patrons often chose this luxurious process for paintings to glorify the sacred figures and stories depicted on them as well as to demonstrate their wealth. The gold-ground, which was rubbed smooth and embellished using an incising, punching (fig. 9), or application technique (fig. 10), hid the cheaper material of wooden panel paintings and gave them a magnificent appearance equal to goldsmith works made from precious metals.<sup>10</sup>

A close look at Dürer's *The Man of Sorrows* reveals gold-ground that is elegantly decorated using punching with a fine needle (fig. 11). The punching was probably done by Dürer himself, who was formerly a talented goldsmith apprentice at his father's studio. Depicted in the ornament are two birds attacking an owl, symbolizing the innocent who is unjustly persecuted. Thistles, which symbolize agony, are in bloom around the birds. The punched ornament not only enhances the charm of the gold-ground but also resonates with the Passion and the agony of Christ depicted below it.<sup>11</sup>

Between Christ and the gold-ground are aura-like layers of brownish-red, blue, and white (figs. 2–3, 11). In usual gold-ground paintings, the gilded and the painted parts are definitely separated, and pigments never cover gold leaves (figs. 6, 9–10, 12–13, 20–21). In *The Man of Sorrows* in Karlsruhe, Dürer daringly integrated both parts of the painting in a unique way in that he applied brownish-red glaze directly to the gold leaves. The aura-like depiction surrounding Christ is sometimes thought to be a grave where the sarcophagus of Christ is laid.<sup>12</sup> At first glance, this hypothesis seems



Fig. 9 Nuremberg painter, *The Bishop of Assisi Giving a Palm to Saint Clare*, (a fragment of an altar), ca. 1360, mixed tempera-oil technique on oak, 33.7 x 22.2 cm, The Metropolitan Museum, New York (detail).



Fig. 10 Bodensee painter, *Crucifix*, ca. 1440, fir, 119 x 166 cm, Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe (detail).



Fig. 11 Detail of fig. 2

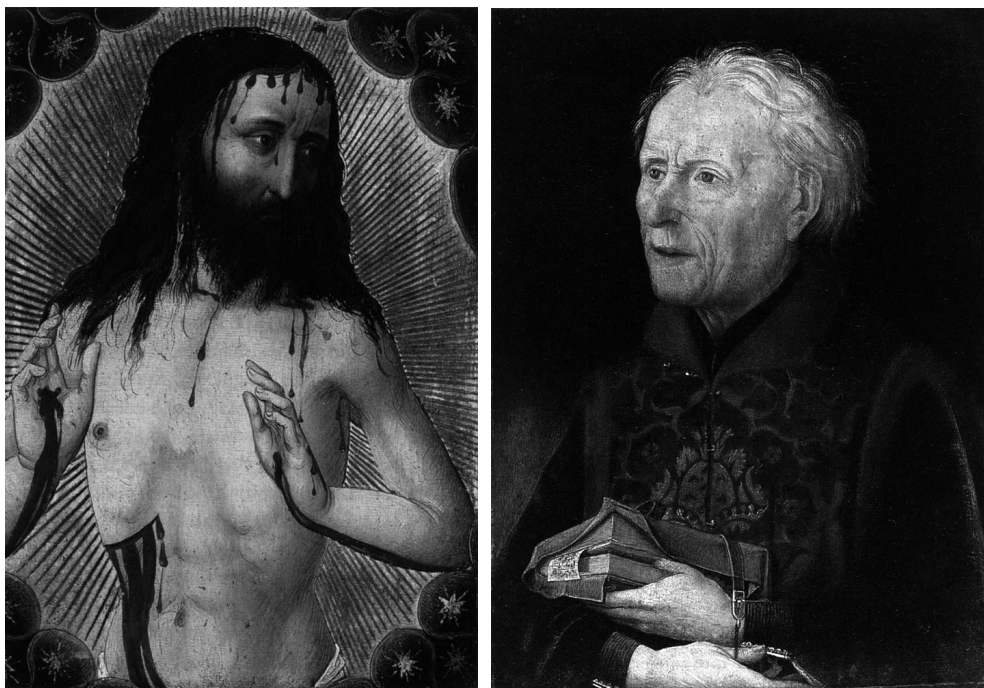


Fig. 12 Hans von Pleydenwurff, *The Diptych of Georg von Löwenstein*, late 1450s, mixed oil-tempera technique on lime wood, each 31 x 23 cm, Kunstmuseum, Basel and Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.

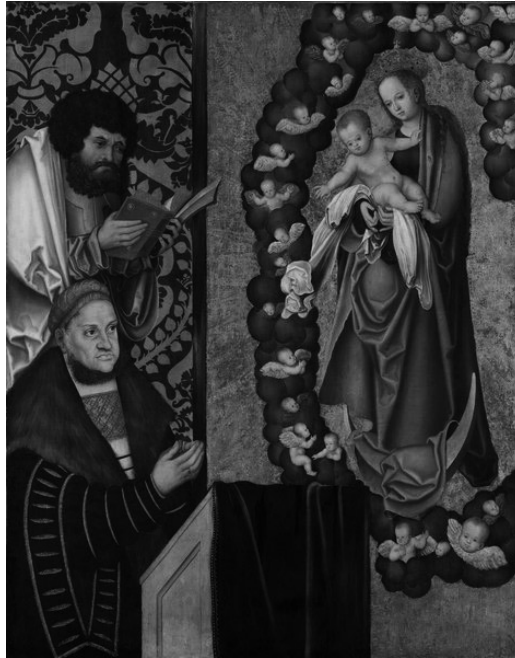


Fig. 13 Lucas Cranach, *Madonna on a Crescent Moon*, ca. 1516, mixed oil-tempera technique on lime wood, 115 x 91 cm, Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe.

appropriate, given that the stone baluster before Christ indicates his sarcophagus; other examples of the same subject clearly show the sarcophagus (fig. 19). The aura-like layers, however, should be interpreted as the circle of cloud, or *Wolkenkranz*, which is a pictorial code of the visionary apparition of saints often seen in early German paintings. For example, *The Diptych of Georg von Löwenstein* by Hans von Pleydenwurff shows Christ as the Man of Sorrows on the left wing and the portrait of Georg von Löwenstein on the right wing (fig. 12). The Man of Sorrows is surrounded by a blue cloud, which indicates that Christ appears as a vision before Georg von Löwenstein, who is shown to be gazing up from reading the Book of Hours.<sup>13</sup> In Lucas Cranach's *Madonna on a Crescent Moon*, Mary with her Child emerges before Frederick the Wise, who is praying at a prayer table with St. Bartholomew (fig. 13). The Virgin with her Child on the crescent moon is hovering before the gold-ground, surrounded by a blue cloud. The entire setting indicates they are visionary existences, appearing before the praying devout under the intercession of St. Bartholomew.<sup>14</sup>

In the context of these examples, it is easy to understand that the area of the aura-like layers in Dürer's work, which change in color from blue to white, is the mysterious cloud of the holy apparition, despite the more abstract depiction. Using the traditional pictorial code, Dürer emphasized that Christ is not a real existence but is appearing as a vision before the praying devout who is indulging in devotional meditation in front of the painting. In the examples by Pleydenwurff and Cranach, Christ or Mary and those who commissioned the artworks depicted in the portraits are making eye contact. In Dürer's work, the donor's portrait is not painted. Instead, Christ and the beholder are staring at each other. The devotional vision of Christ appears more directly before the beholder.<sup>15</sup>

What, then, is the brownish-red border between the blue cloud and the gold-ground? This area may be corroding metal. When metal plates are exposed to certain kinds of liquid, moisture, or air, they undergo a chemical reaction and change in quality or become ruined with the passage of time. Corrosion can be observed in various old goldsmith works (figs. 14-15). Despite the name, few goldsmith artworks are made entirely of gold or silver. In fact, many examples have copperplates or wooden panels (which are covered by copperplates) as their cores (figs. 16-17, 25). These cores are gilded and often enameled; through such embellishment, the works gain the durability and splendor of gold. At times, however, the gilding or enameling peels off, and the copperplate core is exposed and then corrodes and decays. The brownish-red area on Dürer's work represents a copperplate that has lost its gilding coat and is corroding. This depiction of corroding copperplate lies between the blue cloud surrounding the vision of Christ and the gold-ground that gives the wooden panel an appearance of a gold plate, or specifically, an appearance of gilded copperplate. This pseudo gilded copperplate is corroded not by the usual chemical reaction but by the mysterious reaction with the cloud surrounding the holy apparition. In goldsmith art, gilded copperplates are usually embellished by engraving, punching, embossing, and enameling techniques. In a few examples, decoration is also done by painting (fig. 17). This kind of medieval metal-plate painting might have inspired Dürer to compare the wooden support of his painting to a gilded copperplate.<sup>16</sup>

With this ingenious and elaborate invention, Dürer challenged the trend of the realistic representation of the Man of Sorrows at the time. As mentioned above, the Man of Sorrows is a visionary image depicting the dead Christ standing up straight as if alive, with a few narrative details to encourage the beholder to meditate piously. From the fifteenth century onward, realistic painting styles were developing in the Netherlands as well as in Italy, and artists began to depict the Man of Sorrows in more realistic settings. Hans Memling, for example, depicted the Man of Sorrows against a



Fig. 14 Rhine region, *Wise Virgins*, mid 12th century, copperplate, gilded and enamelled, Musée de Cluny, Paris (detail).



Fig. 15 Limouge, *Christ and three Saints*, plates of Chasse, early 13th century, copperplate, gilded, enamelled, Musée de Cluny, Paris (detail).



Fig. 16 Limouge, *Roofless Vermiculated Chasse*, ca. 1200, wooden core covered by copperplate, gilded, enamelled, Musée de Cluny, Paris.

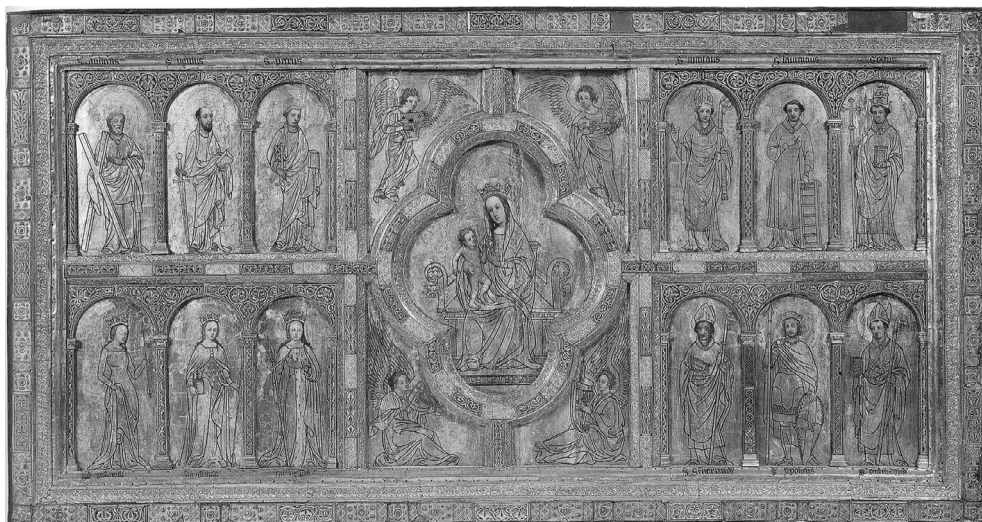


Fig. 17 Cologne, *Gold Panel*, ca. 1170, painting in the early 15th century and restored in the 19th century, wooden core (oak panel) covered by copperplate and bronze, gilded, enamelled and painted, Museum Schnütgen, Cologne.



Fig. 18 Hans Memling, *The Man of Sorrows*, 1490s, oil on oak, 12.9 x 9.2 cm, Christian Museum, Esztergom.

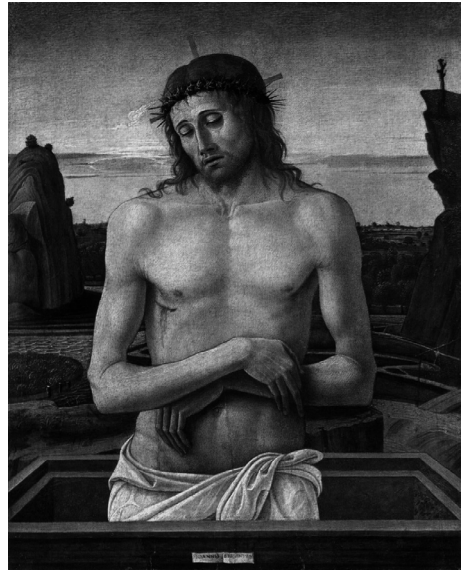


Fig. 19 Giovanni Bellini, *The Man of Sorrows*, early 1460s, tempera on panel, 48 x 38 cm, Poldi Pezzoli Museum, Milan.

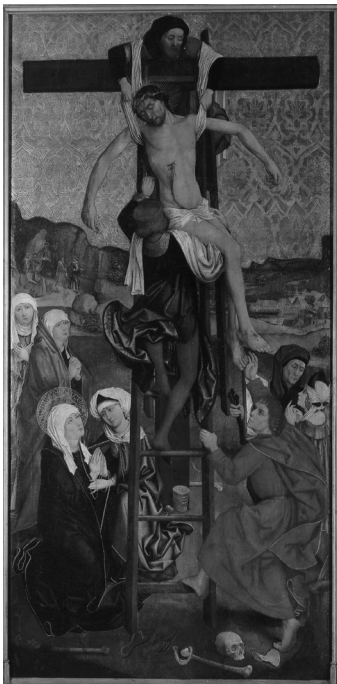


Fig. 20 Hans Pleydenwurff, *The Descent from the Cross* (fragment of the high altar of the St. Elisabeth's Church in Breslau), 1462, mixed oil-tempera technique on fir, 286.3 x 142.2 cm, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.



Fig. 21 Martin Schongauer, *Madonna in the Rose Arbour*, 1473, mixed oil-tempera technique on panel, 201 x 112 cm, St. Martin's Church, Colmar.

neutral black background, as in a usual portrait, whereas Giovanni Bellini depicted the Man of Sorrows against a landscape (figs. 18–19). In contrast, German painters at the time were restricted by the more conservative taste for religious art in the country. This policy is clearly seen in *The Descent from the Cross* by Hans von Pleydenwurff, who probably spent time at a painter's workshop in the Netherlands during his period of wandering and then introduced the Netherlandish painting style to Germany (fig. 20). In this work, Pleydenwurff borrowed his composition and main figures from the work of Rogier van der Weyden but filled the sky of the landscape with the traditional gold-ground to adorn the sacred event.<sup>17</sup> In *Madonna in the Rose Arbor*, Martin Schongauer, another adherent of Netherlandish art in Germany, followed the Netherlandish style and painted birds and flowers based on studies drawn from life, as an excellent watercolor drawing testifies (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, inv. no 92.GC.80).<sup>18</sup> However, the background was still gilded (fig. 21).

The necessity for realistic representations of the Man of Sorrows arose from another direction as well. About 1490, German printmaker Israhel van Meckenem published an engraving that reproduced an old icon enshrined in the Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome (fig. 22). According to the Latin inscription, this icon is an authentic image of Christ as the Man of Sorrows, who appeared as a vision before St. Gregory the Great during mass. After the miracle, St. Gregory the Great had this icon executed exactly after the vision.<sup>19</sup> In this way, Meckenem gave the Man of Sorrows another kind of reality, which had the approval of the Church. The printmaker was surely aware of the power of the image based on the old, authentic icon and adopted it strategically in his other works — for example, *The Man of Sorrows between Mary and John the Evangelist* (fig. 23).



Fig. 22 Israhel van Meckenem, *The Man of Sorrows*, 1490s, engraving, 16.8 x 11.2 cm.



Fig. 23 Israhel van Meckenem, *The Man of Sorrows between Mary and John the Evangelist*, 1490s, engraving, 11.6 cm (diameter), The British Museum, London.

Dürer, a painter of the new generation, had avoided the gold-ground in general, opting to set sacred figures and their stories onto realistic landscapes or domestic situations. Even so, the young Dürer could not have broken away from the conservative taste and given up the gold-ground altogether, especially when a piece was on the theme of the Man of Sorrows, one of the holiest visions among Christian iconography. To harmonize his aspiration for realism with the conservative environment, he adopted the traditional gold-ground, compared the gilded wooden panel to a gilded copperplate, and represented the apparition of Christ more realistically, convincingly, archaically, and mysteriously. It is a reality on a new dimension, fully aware of the materiality of artworks, not relying on the alleged authentic image guaranteed by the church authority but based on the ingenious invention of the artist.

### The Reverse of the Painting

The final question is how Dürer arrived at the unique idea of comparing the wooden support of his painting to another material. The reverse of the painting might give us a clue (fig. 4). There, Dürer painted a pattern in vivid colors. Pigments are laid directly on the wooden panel without grounding. The pattern is, therefore, far from a precise depiction; even so, it brings to mind marble or semiprecious stones such as agate.<sup>20</sup> In some devotional paintings executed in fifteenth-century Italy, the reverse assumes the appearance of a semiprecious-stone plate like marble or porphyry, which is thought to imitate the surface of a portable altar (fig. 24).<sup>21</sup> A portable altar is made from a wooden core, which is covered in gilded silver or copperplates and a plate of semiprecious stone on the top (fig. 25). High-ranking clerics used to carry this luxurious item while



Fig. 24 Pietro Lorenzetti, *Reverse of the Right Wing of the Diptych with Madonna and Child and the Man of Sorrows*, ca. 1330, tempera on panel, 35.2 x 25.9 cm, Museum, Altenburg, Lindenau.



Fig. 25 Cologne, *Portable Altar*, late 12th century, 13 x 20 x 32 cm, Museum Schnütgen, Cologne.

traveling and put the Host on it during mass. In addition, portable altars in the form of a box stored relics and also served as a reliquary.<sup>22</sup> Simulating the appearance of a semiprecious-stone plate, small-sized Italian panel paintings for private devotion aimed to assume sacredness and preciousness comparable to the treasure of high-ranking clerics.

This pictorial invention was certainly also known in Northern Europe, as Jan Provost's work testifies.<sup>23</sup> On the reverse of *The Man of Sorrows*, Dürer followed this practice and compared his wooden panel to a semiprecious stone. The wooden core of a portable altar gains its sacredness and preciousness through the semiprecious-stone plate embedded on it, whereas the wooden support of small panel paintings does so through the painter's brush. It would be natural that the young Dürer, with acute sensitivity and in contact with this traditional practice, became even more conscious of the materiality of artworks and went forward to the innovative representation of the Man of Sorrows on the obverse of the panel. With this keen consciousness of the materiality of his painting, Dürer surely anticipated the painters in the late sixteenth century, who experimented with various kinds of material for their painting supports to realize novel and rare pictorial images never done before.

## Notes

\* This research was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 26370132 and the Kyoto University Global Frontier Project for Young Professionals: The John Mung Advanced Program. I am grateful to Professor Andreas Tacke for accepting me as a guest researcher at Trier University from April to September 2014.

1 As to the oil paintings on copperplate and stone, see Michael K. Komanecky *et al.*, exh. cat. *Copper as Canvas: Two Centuries of Masterpiece Paintings on Copper 1575–1775*, Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix *et al.*, 1998–1999; Marco Chiarini and Cristina Acidini Luchinat, exh. cat. *Pietre colorate: Capricci del XVII secolo dalle collezioni medicee*, Palazzo Franchi Servanzi, San Severino Marche, 2000; Hana Seifertová, *Painting on Stone: An Artistic Experiment in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries*, Prague, 2007. While silk is traditionally used as a painting support in Asia, few examples still remain in Europe. One of them is *The Holy Shroud* in the Sabauda Gallery in Turin, attributed to Giulio Clovio. About this work, see Maria Giononi-Visani and Grigo Gamulin, *Giorgio Giulio Clovio: Miniaturist of the Renaissance*, London, 1993, pp. 75, 101. As to paintings on rare materials and the narrative images painted on them, see Kayo Hirakawa, "Narrative and Material: Painting on Rare Metal, Stone and Fabric in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," Kayo Hirakawa (ed.), *Aspects of Narrative in Art History: Proceedings of the International Workshop for Young Researchers, Held at the Graduate School of Letters, Kyoto University, Kyoto 2–3 December 2013*, Kyoto, 2014, pp. 33–45.

2 The Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II of Habsburg, for example, stored oil paintings on stone in the Kunstkammer of Prague castle. See Rotraud Bauer and Herbert Haupt, "Das Kunstkammerinventar Kaiser Rudolfs II, 1607–1611," *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen Wien*, 72, 1976, pp. vvi–191, esp. 139–140.

3 See Edgar Peters Bowron, "A Brief History of European Oil Paintings on Copper, 1560–1775," Komanecky *et al.*, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 9–30, esp. 11; Seifertová, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 17–41; Kayo Hirakawa, "Birth of the Painting on Copperplate," *Kyoto Studies in Aesthetics and Art History*, 8, 2009, pp. 1–31 (Japanese/English version is now in preparation).

4 Albrecht Dürer, *The Man of Sorrows*, the mixed oil-tempera technique, fir wood panel, 30.1 x 18.8 cm, without signature, no date, the Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe, inv. no. 2183. For basic information about the painting, see Johann Eckart von Borries, *Albrecht Dürer: Christus als Schmerzensmann*, Karlsruhe, 1972; Fedja Anzelewsky, *Albrecht Dürer: Das malerische Werk*, Berlin, 1971, 2nd ed. 1991, pp. 122–124, cat. no. A9, pls. 8–9, figs. 11–12.

5 As to the iconography of the Man of Sorrows and its origin and development in the visual arts, see Erwin Panofsky, "Imago Pietatis: Ein Beitrag zur Typengeschichte des Schmerzensmanns und der Maria Mediatrix," *Festschrift für Max J. Friedländer zum 60. Geburtstag*, Leipzig, 1927, pp. 261–308; Borries, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 9–13; Catherine R. Puglisi and William L. Barcham (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Man of Sorrows*, Kalamazoo, 2013.

6 Borries, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 15–19, fig. 10; Dietmar Lüdke, *et al.* (ed.), exh. cat. *Spätmittelalter am Oberrhein: Maler und Werkstätten 1450–1525*, Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe, 2001–2002, pp. 102–103, cat. no. 34; Mitchell B. Merback, "The Man of Sorrows in Northern Europe: Ritual Metaphor and Therapeutic Exchange," Puglisi and Barcham, *op. cit.* (note 5), pp. 77–116, esp. 97–112.

7 Borries, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 26–28, 33–35.

8 Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1493, pen on paper, 20.4 x 20.8 cm, Erlangen University Library, Erlangen, inv. no. B155V. See Borries, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 25–28; Anzelewsky, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 122–123; Anke Fröhlich, "III.1 Albrecht Dürer am Oberrhein," Dietmar Lüdke, *et al.*, *op. cit.* (note 6), pp. 398–408, esp. 398–401, cat. no. 235; Michael Roth, "Albrecht Dürer und Straßburg," Daniel Hess (ed.), exh. cat. *Der frühe Dürer*, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, 2012, pp. 39–48, esp. 43–46.

9 Ludwig Grote, "Dürer-Studien," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft*, 19, 1965, pp. 151–169, esp. 154–156.

10 About the technique of the gold-ground, the following Web sites are informative: Erling S. Skaug, *Punchmarks.net* (<http://punchmarks.net/index.html>. Access: 01/10/2014); "Art History Basics: The Materials and Techniques Artists Use: Gold-Ground Panel Painting," *Khan Academy* (<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-history-basics/artists-materials-techniques/painting-materials-techniques/v/gold-ground-panel-painting>. Access: 01/10/2014).

11 Borries, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 18–21. About owls and thistles, or *Eryngium campestre*, depicted in Dürer's works, see also Grote, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 156–169. Grote, however, interpreted the owl in Dürer's *The Man of Sorrows* as the evil and the two birds attacking it as Christian souls that are blaming the evil for denying Christianity. Grote, *ibid.*, p. 152.

12 For example, the painting is titled "Christ in der Grabböhle" in Friedrich Winkler, *Albrecht Dürer: Leben und Werk*, Berlin, 1957, pp. 40–43, fig. 13.

13 The following are recent studies on the visionary representation of diptychs of the fifteenth century including Pleydenwurff's work: Peter Schmidt, "Inneres Bild und äußeres Bildnis: Porträt und Devotion im späten Mittelalter," Martin Büchsel and Peter Schmidt (ed.), *Das Porträt vor der Erfindung des Porträts*, Darmstadt, pp. 220–239; David Ganz, *Medien der Offenbarung: Visionsdarstellungen im Mittelalter*, Berlin, 2008, pp. 162–188.

14 The visionary character of this painting is precisely analyzed in Ines Dresel et al., *Christus und Maria: Auslegungen christlicher Gemälde der Spätgotik und Frührenaissance aus der Karlsruher Kunsthalle*, Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe, 1992, pp. 73–79, cat. no. 12.

15 Merback discusses the function of Dürer's panel in the context of spiritual-ethical training in fifteenth-century Germany. Merback, *op. cit.* (note 6), pp. 97–112. Beate Fricke, on the other hand, confronts it with the medieval debate on sacred images. Beate Fricke, "Artifex ingreditur in artificium suum: Dürers Schmerzensmann in Karlsruhe und die Geschichte eines Arguments von Johannes von Damaskus," Martin Büchsel and Rebecca Müller (ed.), *Intellektualisierung und Mystifizierung mittelalterlicher Kunst: Kultbild: Revision eines Begriffs*, Berlin, 2010, pp. 183–206.

16 The technique of painting on metal plates was well known in the Middle Ages. The so-called Lucca Manuscript of the eighth century, Theophilus' *Schedula Diversarum Artium* of the twelfth century, and Cennino Cennini's *Il Libro dell'arte* of the fourteenth century continuously reported it. See Isabel Horovits, "The Materials and Techniques of European Paintings on Copper Supports," Komanecky *et al.*, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 63–92, esp. 63; Theophilus Presbyter, *Schedula Diversarum Artium*, vol. 1, A. Ilg (trans.), 1874, *Quellenschriften für Kunstgeschichte und Kunsttechnik des Mittelalters und der Renaissance*, vol. 7, 1970, pp. 62–63; Cennino Cennini, *Il Libro dell'arte*, F. Brunello (ed.), Vicenza, 1971, pp. 97–98, 102–103. As far as I know, however, few examples of medieval metal-plate paintings still remain. About the Cologne example (fig. 17), see Hiltrud Westermann-

Angerhausen and Dagmar Täube, *Das Mittelalter in 111 Meisterwerken aus dem Museum Schnütgen, Köln*, Cologne, 2003, pp. 126–127, fig. 82; Dagmar Täube, “Spuren des Wandels: Überlegungen zu den Malereien und der Golden Tafel aus Sankt Ursula,” Andrea von Hülsen-Esch and Dagmar Täube (ed.), *„Luft unter die Flügel...“ Beiträge zur Mittelalterlichen Kunst: Festschrift für Hiltrud Westermann-Angerhausen, Hildesheim*, 2010, pp. 226–237. The work was considerably restored in the nineteenth century. Dagmar Täube questioned whether the painted parts actually came from the Middle Ages.

17 Compare this work to *The Descent from the Cross*, from the workshop of Rogier van der Weyden (Alte Pinakothek, Munich, inv. no. 104).

18 Though Pleydenwurff and Schongauer were strongly influenced by contemporary Netherlandish art, their stays in the Netherlands are still controversial because of the lack of records. See Peter Strieder, *Tafelmalerei in Nürnberg 1350–1550*, Königstein im Taunus, 1993, pp. 52–59; Stephan Kemperdick, *Martin Schongauer: Eine Monographie*, Petersberg, 2004, pp. 235–239, 244. Historical documents of southern-Netherlandish cities in the late fifteenth century, however, testify that many German-origin painters were active there. See Till-Holger Borchert, “Introduction,” Till-Holger Borchert (ed.), exh. cat. *Van Eyck to Dürer: The Influence of Early Netherlandish Painting on European Art, 1430–1530*, Groeningemuseum, Bruges, 2010–2011, pp. 12–17, esp. 14. About Schongauer’s nature study, see Fritz Koreny, “A colored flower study by Martin Schongauer and the development of the depiction of nature from van der Weyden to Dürer,” *Burlington Magazine*, 133, 1991, pp. 588–597. As to the influence of Rogier van der Weyden on German painters in the late fifteenth century in general, see Antje-Fee Köllermann, “Model of Appropriation: The Reception of the Art of Rogier van der Weyden in Germany,” Till-Holger Borchert (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 18), pp. 69–81.

19 “Hec ymago contrafacta est ad instar et similitudinem primae ymagine pietatis, custoditae in ecclesia sanctae crucis in urbe romana quam fecerat depingi sanctissimus Gregorius papa magnus post habitam ac sibi ostensam desuper visionem.” About the icon in the Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome, see Carlo Bertelli, “The Image of Pity in Santa Croce in Gerusalemme,” Douglas Fraser *et al.* (ed.), *Essays in the History of Art: Presented to Rudolf Wittkower*, London, 1967, pp. 40–55; Gerhard Wolf, *Schleier und Spiegel: Traditionen des Christusbildes und die Bildkonzepte der Renaissance*, Munich, 2002, pp. 163–166.

20 Borries, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 33–35. Walter Seitter, furthermore, interprets it as agate enlarged in the microscope sight. Walter Seitter, “Zeigen, verstecken? Zur Problematik der Doppelbilder von Albrecht Dürer,” esp. pp. 4–5 (<http://www.spinnst.at/seitter/nova/DuererDoppel.htm>. Access: 23/07/2014). Daniel Hess, on the other hand, suggested that this pattern might indicate the visionary light of the resurrection of Christ. Daniel Hess, “Der Karlsruher Schmerzensmann,” Hess, *op. cit.* (note 8), pp. 49–50, cat. no. 175.

21 Jochen Sander, *Kult Bild: Das Altar- und Andachtsbild von Duccio bis Perugino*, Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main, 2006, pp. 177–188, 301, cat. nos. 40–43, pls. 45–51. Most of the panels of which the reverse intimates a semiprecious-stone plate are one part of a diptych. There exist, however, a few examples that are in the form of a single panel, such as Giovanni di Paolo’s Madonna with the Child. See *ibid.*, pp. 185–188, cat. no. 43, pls. 50–51.

22 About portable altars, see Élisabeth Taburet-Delahaye *et al.*, *Musée de Cluny, Musée National du Moyen Âge: A Guide, Paris*, 2009, pp. 39, 49, cat. nos. 26, 38; Westerman-Angerhausen and Täube, *op. cit.* (note 16), p. 110. Professor Akira Akiyama kindly suggested to me the relationship between portable altars and relics.

23 Jan Provost, *Reverse of the Left Wing of the Diptych with Christ Carrying the Cross and a Franciscan Monk*, 1552, oil on oak, 35 x 25.5 cm, Musea Brugge, Hospitaal Museum Sint-Janshospitaal, Bruges. About this work, see John Oliver Hand *et al.*, exh. cat. *Prayers and Portraits: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, 2006, p. 210–217, cat. no. 31.

## Photo Credits and Sources

Fig. 1 (Hana Seifertová, *Painting on Stone: An Artistic Experiment in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries*, Prague, 2007, p. 134, fig. 75), figs. 2–3, 11 (© bpk/Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe/Annette Fischer/Heike Kohler/distributed by AMF), fig. 4 (© bpk/Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe/Wolfgang Pankoke/distributed by AMF), figs. 5–6 (Johann Eckart von Borries, *Albrecht Dürer: Christus*

als Schmerzensmann, Karlsruhe, 1972, pp. 14, 19, 35, figs. 7, 10, 20), fig. 7 (Friedrich Winkler, *Die Zeichnungen Albrecht Dürers*, vol. 1, Berlin, 1936, fig. 26), figs. 8, 10, 14–16 (photo: Kayo Hirakawa), figs. 9, 12, 20 (Peter Strieder, *Tafelmalerei in Nürnberg 1350–1550*, Königstein im Taunus, 1993, pp. 21, 53, 55, figs. 12, 56–58), fig. 13 (Ines Dresel et al., *Christus und Maria: Auslegungen christlicher Gemälde der Spätgotik und Frührenaissance aus der Karlsruher Kunsthalle*, Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe, 1992, p. 75, fig. 78), figs. 17, 25 (Hiltrud Westermann-Angerhausen and Dagmar Täube, *Das Mittelalter in 111 Meisterwerken aus dem Museum Schnütgen, Köln*, Cologne, 2003, pp. 100, 127, figs. 69, 82), fig. 18 (Dirk de Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works*, Ghent, 1994, p. 317), fig. 19 (Anchise Tempestini, *Giovanni Bellini: Catalogo completo*, Florence, 1992, p. 15), fig. 21 (Hermann Brommer, *Die Madonna im Rosenhag*, Colmar, 1996, p. 6), fig. 22 (Wikimedia Commons (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki>, access: 01/10/2014), fig. 23 (© The Trustees of the British Museum), fig. 24 (Jochen Sander, *Kult Bild: Das Altar- und Andachtsbild von Duccio bis Perugino*, Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main, 2006, p. 180, pl. 47).