

ALBERTUS · DURER · NORICVS .

A European artist in the context  
of his native city, Nuremberg'  
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Over the last five hundred years, the official portrayal of Albrecht Dürer has undergone constant change. Depending on the particular circumstances, this portrayal has been defined by aesthetic, national or cultural factors<sup>2</sup>. Time and again, reference has justifiably been made to the relevance of the 19th century in the full-scale reevaluation of Dürer as one of the unchallenged heroes of his native city and of German cultural historiography. When painter Friedrich Wanderer was commissioned to capture Nuremberg's most famous artist in a painting for the city hall, he put Albrecht Dürer right at the centre of the action, *primus inter pares* [fig. 3.1]<sup>3</sup>. The painting is a harmonious depiction of twelve men, united in time and space. Whilst bronze-caster Peter Vischer the Elder turns respectfully towards Albrecht Dürer, painter Michael Wolgemut looks benevolently at his most successful pupil<sup>4</sup>. The other artists – Veit Stoß, Adam Kraft, Veit Hirsvogel the Elder and Wenzel Jamnitzer – are all shown performing their respective crafts, dressed in working garb. Albrecht Dürer, however, is shown not at work but as a “prince of painters” and a prosperous citizen. He is the embodiment of the artistic and commercial success which he enjoyed during his life time. In what other way could the artist do justice to the man of many talents that was Albrecht Dürer? Should he have portrayed him as a draughtsman, an engraver, a painter, a designer, a theoretician or a publisher? Wanderer's depiction of Dürer draws on one of the many self-portraits of this Renaissance painter, preoccupied with how future generations would see him. Dürer's clothing, poise and hairstyle are all based on the self-portrait which features in the Landauer Altarpiece [fig. 3.2]. In the *Adoration of the Trinity* commissioned by Matthäus Landauer (1508), Dürer signs himself ALBERTVS DVRER NORICVS. In other words, his choice of epithet emphasises his personal ties to the Free Imperial City of Nuremberg<sup>5</sup>. This was the city in which he was born and bred, and where he acquired a splendid house on Tiergärtnerort in 1509, the year in which he was declared “Honourable Citizen” by the City Council. This distinction reflects his elevated status in a city society dominated by merchants and humanist scholars. It also distinguished him from Nuremberg's other artists and craftsmen<sup>6</sup>.

In at least seven of his works, Dürer used the Latin form NOREMBERGENSIS or NORICVS<sup>7</sup>. His friend, the humanist scholar Conrad Celtis, also addressed Dürer explicitly with the title Citizen of the City of Nuremberg in 1500. In the four epigrams he wrote in the artist's honour, Celtis heaped praise on Dürer, using the dedication *Ad Pictorem Albertum Durer Nurnbergensem*<sup>8</sup>. Dürer uses the formula NORICVS for the first time in his paradigmatic self-portrait of 1500, in which he represents himself as a creative spirit fashioned in God's likeness [fig. 3.3]<sup>9</sup>. The concept *Noricus* goes back to the idea that the city of Nuremberg was named after the Noric tribe. In Conrad Celtis's account, the Norics were fighting the Huns when they recognised the favourable position of Nuremberg's castle hill and founded a small fortified settlement on the mound<sup>10</sup>. Dürer and his friends, in their enthusiasm for antiquity, must have liked this kind of foundational myth, which was particularly popular with the humanists. In a letter sent to Willibald Pirckheimer from Venice, Dürer signs in humorous vein *Albertus Durer/ Norikorius cibus*, in an ironic twist on the expression *Noricus civus*<sup>11</sup>.

Almost equally often, Dürer calls himself GERMANVS or ALEMANVS on his paintings<sup>25</sup>. He opts mainly for this second formula when working abroad or when a work of art is not intended for a location in Nuremberg. *The Feast of the Rose Garland*, for instance, which was commissioned by German merchants in Venice in 1506, bears the inscription *Albertus Dürer Germanus* [fig. 3.4]<sup>26</sup>. In far-off Italy, then, Dürer presented himself as a representative of what was dubbed the *Teutische Natziän* or German nation<sup>27</sup>.

The choice of epithet also illustrates Dürer's search for his own cultural identity. On the one hand, he wanted to distinguish himself from artists in other German-speaking cities, and on the other, from those in Italy. His intentions can partly be explained by his familiarity with the ideas espoused by the German humanists. In the early 16th century, scholars like Conrad Celtis and Heinrich Bebel were endeavouring to strengthen historical and national German consciousness in both text and image<sup>28</sup>. Between 1492 and 1500, Celtis was commissioned by the city of Nuremberg to write *De origine, situ, moribus et institutis Norimbergae libellus*, known for short as *Norimberga*<sup>29</sup>. The famous writer's Latin tract extols the virtues of the city, its institutions and inhabitants "so that our beloved Germany, its famous cities and their leaders and governors can follow this shining example"<sup>30</sup>. The text was checked for quality in about 1500 by Nuremberg councillors Johann Löffelholz and Willibald Pirckheimer<sup>31</sup>. Pirckheimer, a close friend and advisor on humanism to Albrecht Dürer, is described in Celtis's epilogue as "an irreproachable man, highly educated in philosophy and in the ancient languages of Latin and Greek". Dürer moved in Pirckheimer's circles and had even contact with Celtis himself. He will therefore have been aware of this text long before it was printed in 1502. Dürer's use of the epithet NORICVS or NOREMBERGENSIS forms part of a much broader cultural movement, born of municipal pride and an early kind of national awareness. But was Dürer's attitude to his native city really as exceptionally positive as this might suggest?

#### 1524: DÜRER'S FINANCIAL OFFER TO THE CITY OF NUREMBERG

In October 1524, the 53-year-old Albrecht Dürer sent a letter to the Council of Nuremberg offering the city 1000 florins of his wealth in return for a fixed rate of interest by way of old age pension<sup>32</sup>. In an attempt to convince the municipal authority to accept his proposal, Dürer argued that he had always been loyal to Nuremberg and his native country, despite the many attractive offers with which he had been tempted by Italy and the Low Countries. Whilst the City of Venice had offered him an annual salary of 200 ducats and the City of Antwerp an annual salary of 300 Dutch guilders, tax exemption and his own house, in Nuremberg he had received virtually no financial privileges. Over the previous thirty years, he contended, he had obtained a total of just 100 florins from what the city had commissioned from him, not least because he had provided many of his services for no financial benefit. Moreover, Dürer claimed that he had to date earned his living almost exclusively from commissions elsewhere, in his words, "from princes, lords and other foreign persons". As a result, Dürer's request for a fixed yearly interest of 50 florins was granted by the Council of Nuremberg on October 17, 1524.

This negative picture drawn by Dürer at the end of his working life of the much-praised and commercially flourishing city is also reflected in a phrase he had used in an earlier letter sent to his friend Pirckheimer from Venice: "Oh, how I shall freeze after being in the sun! Here I am a gentleman but at home nothing but a parasite". Back in 1506, Dürer commented on the considerable difference in the social status of the artist and complained that the city of Nuremberg denied him the recognition he considered his due.

When judging both letters, we should bear in mind that Dürer was apparently wont to complain about the lack of recognition accorded to him and the financial disadvantages he had suffered, whether in the shape of missed opportunities in Venice or insufficient recompense from Archduchess Margaret of Austria<sup>33</sup>.

#### 1526: ALBRECHT DÜRER'S GIFT TO THE CITY OF NUREMBERG

Two years later, Albrecht Dürer wrote to the Council again. On this occasion, he expressed his wish to present the City of Nuremberg with a valuable painting which would safeguard his memory (as a *Gedechnus* or "memorial") during his life-time<sup>34</sup>. The gift was of the painting known as *The Four Apostles*, a framed diptych with the life-size portraits of the Evangelists John and Mark and the Apostles Peter and Paul [fig. 3.5]<sup>35</sup>. Given the reproaches contained in Dürer's letter of October 1524, such a generous gift must at first have come as something of a surprise to the Council. On October 6, 1526, the City decided to accept Dürer's offer. In return, the artist and his wife received an honorarium of 112 florins.

Dürer's initiative is remarkable in many respects. His clever move forced the council to make payment in return – to refuse the gift would have been seen as an insult. On the other hand, by leaving a work of such great artistic value and significance, Dürer was writing himself into the historical memory of the City. The City accepted his wish that the picture should "not fall into foreign hands"<sup>36</sup> and by accepting his gift, accorded the artist the respect he demanded. For a long time, Dürer's picture hung in obere Regimentsstube (the upper government chamber) of Nuremberg's town hall. A few years after his death, the original wooden frame was gilded by Nuremberg's city painter Georg Pencz<sup>37</sup>.

*The Four Apostles* is rightfully considered one of the Nuremberg painter's principal works. Its conceptual content, the modern depiction of the figures and the execution of the painting are all testimony to the artistic proficiency of the mature Dürer. With carefully spatial positioning, the grey-haired Peter is placed on the left-hand panel with the youthful John, whilst a spirited Mark and watchful Paul are shown on the right. Dürer commissioned Nuremberg calligrapher Johann Neudörffer the Elder to insert a block of text underneath with four biblical passages in German taken from Luther's Bible of September 1522<sup>38</sup>. The texts of these four authors and the preceding introduction provide an explanation for the unusual choice of subject, evoking a highly original concept which is attributed to Dürer himself. The significance of the twin panel is closely linked to the introduction of the Reformation in Nuremberg, which brought about a religious reorientation among the population after 1525 and led to far-reaching social upheavals. In a quotation based on the Book of Revelations, Dürer warns observers to beware the dangers and temptations lurking within this period of disruption and unrest:

All worldly rulers in these dangerous times, beware of mistaking human delusion for the word of God. For God wishes nothing to be added to his word nor taken from it. Take heed of the warning issued by these four excellent men, Peter, John, Paul and Mark<sup>39</sup>.

By 1518, Albrecht Dürer had turned to Luther's teachings and, as a member of the Inner Council, had personally participated in the religious discussions taking place in Nuremberg in 1525. In the years to come, he was also to take an active part in the confessional debate which gave rise to much tension between Protestant cities and their Catholic counterparts<sup>40</sup>. He contemplated the approaching riots and confessional struggles with growing alarm and condemned religious

fanaticism of any sort. It has been correctly pointed out that Dürer's choice of biblical quotation does not indicate a specific religious orientation, thus leaving his work open to interpretation. His warning against heresy and religious deluders remains a very general statement<sup>4</sup>.

The entire gift process – from the act of donating until its acceptance by the City – is indicative of how the artist's role changed during these early years of the 16th century. Albrecht Dürer was no born patrician, but his education, experience of life and close contacts with rulers, princes and humanist scholars earned him an elevated status in Nuremberg society. He no longer had much in common with the medieval craftsmen, tied to their guilds. And this is a fitting context in which to pose the question as to how much of the work which Dürer undertook was really commissioned by the City of Nuremberg and its citizens, and in what way he contributed to the face his native city presented to the outside world?

#### ALBRECHT DÜRER'S COMMISSIONS FROM THE CITY OF NUREMBERG

On October 6, 1526, in other words, on the very same day the City decided to accept Albrecht Dürer's donation, the Council reached a second decision which reflected the artist's status in the city. At the City's behest, two of Dürer's larger paintings, about which no further details are given, were to be moved from the house of Hans Fütterer into the neighbouring town hall<sup>5</sup>. It is hard to avoid the impression that Dürer's letter to the Council of October 1526 had drawn their attention to the wrongful state of affairs and had spurred them into action. The two panels in question were the painted doors of the city's reliquary which housed the imperial regalia and coronation robes which went on ceremonial display each year [fig. 3.6]<sup>6</sup>. With the City's recent adherence to the Reformation, the adoration of relics and the issue of indulgences that went with it had since been abandoned. The shrine with its painted doors had therefore lost its original function. Portrayed on them were two highly relevant figures for the history of Nuremberg: Emperor Charlemagne in his coronation robes and Emperor Sigismond. Sigismond had presented the Free Imperial City of Nuremberg with his imperial regalia in 1423 for eternal safe-keeping. Both of Dürer's panels had been commissioned by the City back in 1511 and were intended to emphasise the City's rightful claim to the imperial regalia depicted. To judge from the long inscriptions and diverse coats of arms on both the front and back of this political commission, the City must have given Dürer comprehensive instructions. Dürer made many individual studies of the different regalia and it took him almost twenty months to complete the work, for which he received an honorarium of about 145 florins.

Another work was commissioned by the City in 1521, when the council asked Dürer to produce a commemorative medal in honour of the newly-elected Emperor Charles v. Albrecht Dürer supplied the design<sup>7</sup>.

The third major commission which Albrecht Dürer received from the City of Nuremberg, was the painting of the large council chamber and the lay-out of the medieval town hall façade. Although Dürer did not paint the town hall murals himself, his contribution to the process was of considerable significance. Virtually nothing is now left of the original work. But with the help of contemporary watercolours, old paintings and photographs, Matthias Mende has been able to reconstruct the decorative programme almost in its entirety<sup>8</sup>.

During Dürer's lifetime, with the exception of a handful of patrician houses, Nuremberg was a medieval city on which the Renaissance had as yet left very little imprint. As the impending Reichstag, or Diet of Nuremberg, approached, in 1521 the council felt compelled to give the old town hall a face lift with a new

modern façade. The large-scale pen-and-ink drawings produced in about 1530 from Dürer's original sketches reveal how effectively the artist embedded the narrow Gothic tracery window in an illusionistically-fashioned Renaissance façade with pilasters, half-columns, ledges and barrel vaulting [fig. 3.7]<sup>9</sup>. The classical architectural backdrop was complemented with a number of narrative scenes taken from antiquity and the Old Testament, which it was popular to display on town halls by way of moral lessons. In this case, the scenes were of *David and Bathsheba*, *The Death of Absalom*, *The Suicide of Lucretia* and *The Mocking of the Prophet Elias*. As a result, the shops on the ground floor of the town hall, where renowned Nuremberg citizens like Albrecht Dürer the Elder sold their wares, were also given a more contemporary appearance.

Dürer's creative talents were also called upon for the great council hall. He took on the task of designing the decorative programme for the large wall opposite the south window, although he did not produce the paintings himself. It is obvious from the paintings of Paul Juvenel the Elder (1613) and Lorenz Hess (1629) [fig. 3.8] that the north wall was divided into two thematic halves<sup>10</sup>. The eastern wall section near the *Ratsstube*, or small council chamber, displayed the triumphal carriage of Maximilian I, with a six-horse chariot and female personifications of virtues. This motif was based on the *Large Triumphal Carriage* (1518-1522), designed jointly by Dürer and Pirckheimer and was an integral part of the uncompleted *Triumphal Procession of Emperor Maximilian* [CAT. 23]<sup>11</sup>.

The second west-facing section of the great hall displayed a legend passed down by Greek writer Lucian about truth, justice, envy and deceit<sup>12</sup>. The so-called *Calumny of Apelles* [fig. 3.9]<sup>13</sup> became known north of the Alps as a result of Leon Battista Alberti's treatise *De pictura* (1435) and an engraving by Girolamo Mocetto (1505). The legend based on the life of court painter Apelles soon met with considerable interest among German humanists. By 1518, Philipp Melancthon, Luther's scholarly fellow reformer at the University of Wittenberg, had already published his Latin translation of Lucian in Leipzig in 1518. His Nuremberg contact, Willibald Pirckheimer, was also a great expert and admirer of Lucian. We can assume that Pirckheimer made a significant contribution to the preparation of the new theme of the Nuremberg council chamber. The Latin-German inscriptions shown on Dürer's pen-and-ink drawing (1522) are attributed to him, not least because the cooperation between these two reform-oriented men has been proven time and again. Its theme of justice was particularly appropriate for a council chamber. Could the fact that Dürer was celebrated everywhere as the "new Apelles" or *Apelles Germaniae* perhaps also have had something to do with the choice of subject matter? Dürer's aspiration to *memoria* (*Gedechtnus*) may well lead us to this conclusion<sup>14</sup>. In 1522, the City paid Dürer 100 Rhine guilders for the services rendered<sup>15</sup>. In addition to the drafts for the town hall murals, this work must also have included Dürer's preliminary drawings for the chandelier in the form of a dragon (1522) and the woodcut of the *Allegory on the good governance of the City of Nuremberg* (1521)<sup>16</sup>.

#### ALBRECHT DÜRER AND PATRICIAN FAMILIES ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP ON THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

In his letter to the council of October 1524, Dürer pointed out that he had earned his money primarily from commissions abroad rather than in his native city of Nuremberg. Yet if we take a closer look at his preserved oeuvre, it quickly becomes apparent that he undertook more work for Nuremberg clients than he chose to admit. As Machilek, Mende and Schlemmer have shown, we will find it easier to understand an artist like Albrecht Dürer, if we consider him in the context of his social, and in this case municipal, network<sup>17</sup>. Dürer mixed with Nuremberg burghers who, like himself, lived in a respected part of the city

beneath the Imperial Castle and gathered at St. Sebald's parish church. In the 14th century, anyone who belonged to the old-established patrician lines of Nuremberg automatically ensured themselves a place inside St Sebald's Church. Families of a less elevated social status – to which Dürer's own family belonged, alongside prominent citizens like Sebald Schreyer and Matthäus Landauer – had to be content with a grave outside the church or look for a place befitting their station in St Laurence's Church on the other side of the river. The Nuremberg patricians left a record of their upper-class status by donating windows, epitaphs and altars, which can easily be identified from the ever-present family coats of arms<sup>45</sup>. Albrecht Dürer produced much work of varying significance for the families linked to the city's patron saint and his church. But his artistic contribution to Nuremberg is not always easy to gauge because he often produced the first draft or design, but then left the mechanical execution of the work to his colleagues.

Dürer's clients from the parish of St Sebald included the patrician families Behaim, Ebner<sup>46</sup>, Haller<sup>47</sup>, Holzschuher<sup>48</sup>, Imhoff, Paumgartner, Pirckheimer<sup>49</sup>, Pfinzing, Tucher and Stark<sup>50</sup>. Most of these families had distinguished themselves by donating valuable windows to the church of Nuremberg's patron saint<sup>45</sup>. Whilst most of the window-panes dated from the time the church was built, the upper choir windows were replaced by new panes in about 1500. Albrecht Dürer supplied the designs for the window donated by the Pfinzing family (1515) and the Bishop of Bamberg window (1502), although they were actually executed by the workshop of Nuremberg stained glass producer Veit Hirsvogel the Elder<sup>49</sup>.

The influential Tucher family made its presence felt across several window bays on the south side of St Sebald's hall choir and erected a kind of family chapel over their crypt. The members of this powerful patrician family were regular clients of Albrecht Dürer and his workshop. In 1499, the brothers Hans XI and Nikolaus Tucher ordered two portrait diptychs, one of which depicted Hans and his wife Felicitas Rieter [fig. 3.10], and the other Nikolaus and his wife Elsbeth Pusch<sup>51</sup>. In 1502, Dr Sixtus Tucher commissioned designs from Dürer for two small trefoils depicting the priest in a dialogue with death [CATS. 15 and 16]<sup>52</sup>. In 1513, Martin Tucher had a large-scale epitaph mounted in St Sebald's for his deceased stepbrother, provost Lorenz Tucher. Albrecht Dürer supplied a detailed sketch for this in 1511 and the work was actually executed by one of the best painters to emerge from his workshop, Hans von Kulmbach<sup>53</sup>. Nuremberg merchant Linhardt Tucher commissioned a medium-sized devotional image of *Saint Anne with Mary and the Christ Child* from Dürer [fig. 3.11]<sup>54</sup>. The painting, for which Dürer produced several detailed preliminary drawings, presents an original variation on this popular theme. Dürer's own wife Agnes was the model for a St Anne who seems to blend harmoniously into the picture with Mary and the Christ child. In this interesting panel, the well-travelled Dürer combines German costume figures with the Dutch close-up perspective and arranges the ensemble in an Italian triangular composition<sup>54</sup>.

#### THE PAUMGARTNER AND LANDAUER ALTARPIECES

There were originally two altars in Nuremberg painted by Albrecht Dürer and commissioned by the Paumgartner family [fig. 3.12]<sup>55</sup> and by Matthäus Landauer respectively [fig. 3.2]<sup>56</sup>. Both are very different kinds of altarpiece. The first is a painted folding altar with movable wings, commonly used north of the Alps, whereas the second is a square-shaped, wingless *pala* in the Italian style.

Matthäus Landauer was a well-to-do trader with a flourishing bronze foundry in Nuremberg. He commissioned an All Saints picture for the chapel he had endowed in the old part of the city [fig. 3.13]<sup>57</sup>. The chapel, dedicated

to the Trinity and All Saints, was part of a charitable endowment for twelve impoverished Nuremberg artisans<sup>58</sup>. Dürer's altarpiece, with its own carved wooden frame, was given a central position in the late Gothic chapel. The adoration of the Trinity by the throng of saints is specifically linked to its patron by the addition of contemporary portraits, with the donor himself kneeling in the picture. Matthäus Landauer is being invited to take part in this communal adoration of the Trinity by a cardinal who forms part of the group. The reference to the Apocalypse is supported by the Last Judgement depicted on the round arch of the wooden frame and by the original glass window, for whose design Albrecht Dürer and his workshop may well have been responsible<sup>59</sup>. Landauer's concern for his spiritual salvation had already been made apparent in the Schreyer-Landauer tomb on the outside of the east choir of St Sebald's Church, erected by Nuremberg sculptor Adam Kraft between 1490 and 1492<sup>60</sup>.

The donor family in the Paumgartner Altarpiece is incorporated into the picture in a completely different way [fig. 12]. The central scene represents Mary and Joseph adoring the Christ child. The shepherds summoned by the angels can be seen at the entrance to the stable. In keeping with 15th century tradition, the members of the Paumgartner family are depicted in miniature on the lower edge of the picture, with the men on the left and the women on the right. We can identify Martin Paumgartner by the coat of arms (D. 1478), with his two sons Lukas (D. 1525) and Stefan (D. 1518). On the women's side are Martin's wife, Barbara Volckamer, and two of their daughters. The reduced scale ensures that the members of the donor family are clearly differentiated from the holy figures in the picture. The wings on either side show two saints dressed as knights, which lack spatial unity with the central panel. On the left is St George with the dead dragon and on the right, St Eustace with the stag's head on his flag. According to a 17th-century source, the brothers Lukas and Stefan commissioned the altarpiece in about 1498 and posed for the portraits of the saints [fig. 14]<sup>61</sup>. This kind of crypto-portrait was very popular in the early 16th century, as a wealth of similar portrayals of saints from the estate of Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg reveal. While Albrecht chose to be portrayed as cardinal or bishop, the Paumgartner brothers preferred to pose as fashionably-clad knightly saints. This commission may well have marked the start of a long-standing friendship between Stefan Paumgartner and Albrecht Dürer. The patrician son, who was nearly ten years older than Dürer, was a respected man in Nuremberg. In 1498, he had followed Herzog Heinrich of Saxony on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and was municipal judge from 1504 to 1523. In the letters Dürer posted to Willibald Pirckheimer in 1506, he regularly sends regards to Stefan Paumgartner and also conducted business for him in Venice, including the acquisition of a carnelian rosary<sup>62</sup>.

Albrecht Dürer painted many portraits of fellow Nuremberg residents. These includes his parents Albrecht Dürer the Elder [CAT. 3] and Barbara Holper, his brothers Endres and Hans, his wife Agnes Frey, his friends Willibald Pirckheimer and Ulrich Varnbüler, humanist scholars Philipp Melanchthon and Helius Eobanus Hessus, patricians Hans V and Conrad IV, Imhoff, merchant Johannes Kleberger [CAT. 6] and foreman of the Ravensburg trading company Oswalt Krel<sup>63</sup>. Space prevents me from describing all of these in detail. Instead I shall concentrate on the portrait of Nuremberg painter Michael Wolgemut [fig. 3.14]<sup>64</sup>. Before Dürer's arrival, the man to whom he was apprenticed ran the most productive and influential workshop in Nuremberg. Consequently, Wolgemut is depicted as a finely-dressed gentleman who had achieved fame and respect in his lifetime. In this portrait, Dürer creates a lasting memorial to his aged teacher and turns his portrait into a contemporary document by adding an inscription. Only rarely did Albrecht Dürer add an apparently so spontaneous and unstructured text as this to one of his paintings. The

inscription comprises two parts, added to the surface of the painting at different times. Paraphrased in modern language, the first section reads: "Albrecht Dürer painted this portrait of his teacher Michael Wolgemut in the year 1516". At a later date, Dürer added: "and he was 82 years old and lived until 1519, when he departed this life on St Andrew's Day morning before sunrise"<sup>66</sup>. The style and content of the inscription is reminiscent of one of Dürer's most personal drawings, the portrait of his mother just before she died [fig. 3.15]. In this case too, the date of death was added in afterwards. The first part of the text is written in charcoal: "1514 on Oculi Sunday/ This is Albrecht Dürer's mother, who was 63 years old". The second part of the text was written two months later in ink: "and departed this life in the year 1514 on the Tuesday of Holy Week, at two o'clock in the morning"<sup>66</sup>. The portrait of his mother is like a vivid snapshot in which the signs of old age and the severity expressed in her disposition are reflected directly and unfiltered. The portrait of the aged Wolgemut, on the other hand, is characterised by an inner peace and radiates dignity and calm level-headedness. We can assume that the portrait of Wolgemut was painted on Dürer's own initiative. Until that point, it was not usual to honour a fellow artist in this way, and the portrait of Wolgemut is therefore a novelty in the genre of portrait painting. Like Dürer's self-portraits, this picture shows an underlying change in the artist's self-perception.

#### VIEWS OF TOWN, COUNTRY AND PEOPLE

When considering Dürer's relationship with his native city, we cannot neglect his drawings and watercolours of the city of Nuremberg and its immediate surroundings. Back in the fourteen nineties, Albrecht Dürer had begun to capture the region around the imperial city in coloured drawings<sup>67</sup>. One gets the impression that he systematically directed his attention towards different aspects of nature and the landscape shaped by man. Dürer's watercolours depict Franconian villages, views of city streets and water mills [fig. 3.16], some of which lay directly beyond Nuremberg's city walls<sup>68</sup>. The panoramic landscape views are accompanied by picturesque details from nature as in *House by a Pond*, now in London, which has *Study of Water, Sky and Pine Trees* on the reverse of the same sheet<sup>69</sup>. A third category is composed of close-up studies of individual trees or groups of trees and rock formations. The artist executed all of these not in silverpoint or charcoal – as we might perhaps expect in a sketch book – but in colour. The written identification of the places depicted, together with the initials AD, suggest Dürer considered some of these watercolours completed works in their own right.

The use of colour played an important role in Dürer's drawings. The atmosphere and light of a stormy sky or sunset could be captured better in water- or body-colour than in plain black and white. These studies by Albrecht Dürer were early examples of a conscious analysis of landscape and nature devoid of religious or mythological intent. At times, Dürer incorporated individual motifs into his graphic representations, as in his *Madonna with the Monkey*<sup>70</sup> [fig. 1.11]. This is the second usage of an original motif from the artist's workshop repertoire. Such topographical quotations are usually found in the background to religious representations, like the engraving *Virgin and Child Sitting in Front of the Nuremberg City Wall* [fig. 3.18] from 1514<sup>71</sup>. This very finely worked, small-scale representation transposes the Italian idea of the Madonna of Humility – with the Mother of God seated humbly on the ground – in this case to a Franconian setting. For those familiar with the area, the architectural backdrop is immediately recognisable as an inverted portrayal of Nuremberg's Imperial castle.

Yet Dürer did not simply make use of this novel coloured-drawing medium to study the effects of light or to ascertain how these could be used in his

picture. He also used it as a way of documenting the world in which he lived. This second category includes water-coloured pen and ink drawings, like *The Covered Bridge by the Hallertor in Nuremberg*<sup>72</sup> [fig. 3.17]. This is a carefully executed snapshot of the fortified bridge over the river that runs through Nuremberg.

Albrecht Dürer began his studies at exactly the time the great humanist scholar Conrad Celtis was working on the aforementioned *Norimberga* text. Indeed, some passages of the descriptions contained in it are reminiscent of Dürer's watercolours, as are certain subjects and the depiction of man's relationship with nature. Celtis discusses the position of the city, its forests, its river and its people all in graphic detail<sup>73</sup>. One section of the fourth chapter bears considerable similarities with Dürer's artistic representation of the river landscape at the Haller Gate, even though the place referred to is not identical:

But, no sooner has the river reached the city in two wide bends, protected by portcullises and fortresses, than it forms two islands. [...] the other [island] is narrower, and yet has certain advantages over the larger one: a wonderful avenue leads right around it; its thick, luscious foliage makes it grove-like and provides welcome shade in summer; its trees act as columns, creating a kind of covered pathway along both banks of the river<sup>74</sup>.

His text reflects a similar tribute to the Nuremberg lifeworld shown in Dürer's watercolours. The parallels between the artist's studies of nature and Celtis's literary contemplations can also be seen in Dürer's intense preoccupation with Nuremberg costume. In the sixth chapter of *Norimberga*, Celtis refers to the fashion-conscious dress of the upper strata of Nuremberg society<sup>75</sup>. In 1500, Dürer made several studies of Nuremberg women, depicting elegantly-dressed patrician women at home, at city dances or on the way to church. In London and Vienna, there are two almost identical versions of *A Nuremberg woman dressed for going to church* [figs. 3.19 and 3.20]<sup>76</sup>. The drawing in London contains the following text, "1500 AD, how a Nuremberg woman goes to church" [own trans.]<sup>77</sup>. The inscription on the Vienna picture is as follows: "Remember me in your empire 1500/ How people go to church in Nuremberg / AD"<sup>78</sup>. Rowlands has demonstrated that the London drawing must have been the first version of this subject, whereas the picture in Vienna is a fine drawing. This can be deduced not just from the stylistic execution of the drawing, but also from the way in which the content of the inscription is modified and arranged on the paper. The expression "Remember me in your empire" remains a mystery. It could be understood as a reference to the Heavenly Kingdom<sup>79</sup> or could alternatively be read as a dedication to a person who received the drawing as a gift. That might explain why Dürer produced two such similar drawings on the same subject, which was not characteristic of his working practice.

In his lifetime, Dürer travelled far beyond the boundaries of Nuremberg. Twice he went to Italy, where he made many useful contacts and acquainted himself with the art scene in both Venice and Rome. The rapid distribution of his prints soon made him well known across Europe. In his maturity, he organised a lengthy trip to the Low Countries and was proclaimed everywhere as one of the leading artists of his day. An examination of the sources shows that Dürer was commissioned to produce many important works for his native city of Nuremberg and its patricians. The artist seemed constantly under the impression that his achievements were not sufficiently acknowledged in Nuremberg, and yet regularly signed himself NORICVS. There can be no doubt that he was proud to come from this famous commercial metropolis. In *Norimberga*, Celtis described the typical inhabitant of Nuremberg thus:

Men and women are both charming and clever; their character, as scholars would have it, gives shape to the place in which they live. They are then, what in Greek is known as *philotimoi*, which means they ardently long for honour, fame and recognition [...] Like bees who visit one blossom after another to build up their honeycomb, filling its cells with the rich spoils, so the latter collect immense riches and bring them back to their city<sup>60</sup>. [own trans.]

This was intended as a character study of Nuremberg's successful entrepreneurs rather than its artists or craftsmen. Yet some of Celtis's comments about patricians apply equally to Albrecht Dürer, to his ambition, his cosmopolitan attitudes and his interest in fashionable dress. Even though Dürer was unable to overcome the strict class distinctions of Nuremberg society, he nevertheless became a respected and wealthy man. Today, the artist Albrecht Dürer continues to command the respect and admiration he so craved during his lifetime, not only in his native city of Nuremberg, but also in Melbourne, Washington, Vienna and Madrid.

#### NOTES

- For Dr Matthias Mende, with many happy returns for his 70th birthday. The world would be a much poorer place without his countless contributions on Albrecht Dürer and the culture of Nuremberg.
- Münch 1998, pp. 181-199; Lüdecke / Heiland 1955; Mende 2000 and Gebhardt 2004, pp. 272 ff.
- Mende 2000, p. 123. See also Smith 2002, pp. 17-38, and Celtis 2000, pp. 16-43.
- Here Wanderer follows the small portrait of Peter Vischer on the Tomb of St Sebald and Dürer's portrait of Michael Wolgemut.
- Anzelewsky 1971, pp. 228-230, CAT. 118 on the original frame see Frank Kammel in Nuremberg 2004, pp. 52-54.
- Rebel 1996, pp. 270-271.
- Self Portrait*, 1500, Munich, Alte Pinakothek: "Albertus Durerus Noricus"; *Adam and Eve* (engraving), 1504: "ALBERT(US) / DVRER / NORICVS"; *The Holy Family*, 1509, Rotterdam, Museum Boymans van Beuningen: "ALBERTUS DVRER NORENBERGENSIS"; *The Resurrection of Christ* (preliminary drawing for the Fugger Chapel), c. 1510, Albertina, Vienna: "ALBERTUS DVRER / NORENBERGENSIS"; Landauer Altarpiece, *All Saints Adoring the Trinity*, 1511, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum: ALBERTVS DVRER / NORICVS; *Portrait of Ulrich Varnbühler* (woodcut), 1522: "Albertus Dürer Noricus"; *Portrait of Frederick the Wise* (engraving), 1524: "ALBERTVS.DVRER.NVR(IMBERGENSIS)". See Mende 2000.
- Ibid.*, p. 33; see also Wuttke 1967 and Wuttke 1980.
- See Goldberg / Heimberg / Schawe 1998, pp. 314-335, fn. 9, inv. no. 537; see also Koerner 1993.
- Celtis 2000, p. 24.
- See Rupprich 1956-1969, vol. 1, p. 53 and fn. 36.
- Madonna with a Siskin*, 1506, Berlin, Gemäldegalerie: "Albert(us) durer Germanus"; *Portrait of a Young Man*, Genova, Municipal Gallery (1506): "Albert(us) durer german(us)"; *The Feast of the Rose Garland*, Prague, Národní galerie (1506): "Albertus Dürer Germanus"; *Eve*, 1507, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado: "Albertus durer alemanus"; *The Tortures of 10,000 Christians*, 1508, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum: "Albertus Dürer alemanus"; Heller Altarpiece, 1508/09, Frankfurt, Historisches Museum: "ALBERTVS / DVRER / ALEMANVS". On the Hans Schwarz portrait medal of 1520, which was produced on Dürer's instructions, the inscription reads ALBERTVS DVRER PICTORIS GERMANICVS, see Maué 1986, p. 107 and 407, CAT. 216.
- Anzelewsky 1971, pp. 187-199, CAT. 93; Kotková 2006.
- Dürer uses this expression in 1513 in the draft for his teaching textbook *Lehrbuch der Malerei*. See Rupprich 1956-1969, vol. 2, p. 130.
- Silver 1998, pp. 38-68; Gebhardt 2004, pp. 308-309.
- The first text version was submitted to the council in 1495 and a second reworked version was produced between 1497 and 1500. Celtis 2000, p. 5-6.
- Ibid.*, p. 19; on Nuremberg's role as a trading centre, see Nuremberg 2002.
- Celtis 2000, p. 75.
- Rupprich 1956-1969, vol. 1, pp. 109-110.
- Ibid.*, p. 57: "So as to be able to return as soon as possible, I have turned down work worth more than 2000 ducats since I finished my picture." (23.9.1506). On this letter, see also Strieder 1996, p. 300.
- Rupprich 1956-1969, vol. 1, p. 117: "Now that I have painted a panel upon which I have taken more trouble than other paintings, I considered none more worthy to keep it as a *memorial* than your excellencies." (Before 6.12.1526). In the council records and the municipal accounts of 1526, there are explicit references to this as a "memorial" (*zueyner Gedechnus* and *zuseim Gedechnuff*): see Goldberg / Heimberg / Schawe 1998, p. 551 (docs. 4 and 6) and pp. 519-520.
- Goldberg / Heimberg / Schawe 1998, pp. 478-559. My basis for the following is primarily the findings published here; see also Price 2003, pp. 258-275.
- Ibid.*, p. 551, doc. 6.
- Strieder 1996, p. 326.
- Left-hand panel, under John: *Second Epistle of Peter*, 2, 1-3/ under Peter: *First Epistle of John* 4, 1-3; right-hand panel, under Mark: *Second Epistle of Paul to Timothy* 3, 1-7/ under Peter: *Gospel according to Mark* 12, 38-40. See Strieder 1996, pp. 480 and 486.
- The original German text can be found in Goldberg / Heimberg / Schawe 1998, p. 487, fn. 9. The text is based on The Book of Revelation 22, 18f. taken from the Luther Bible, but is not a verbatim quotation.
- Arndt / Moeller 2003, pp. 42-43.
- Goldberg / Heimberg / Schawe 1998, p. 531.
- Rupprich 1956-1969, vol. 1, p. 243, n. 24.
- See Löcher 1997, pp. 203-210.
- Maué 1987, pp. 227-244. Many thanks to Jeffrey Chipps Smith for this important tip and for his additional comments on Dürer's *Four Apostles*.
- Nuremberg 1979 and Mende 2000.
- Mende 2000, pp. 218-237, CATS. 36-39. On Dürer's *Weibermacht* drawing see Barbara Drake Boehm, in New York / Nuremberg 1986, pp. 329-330, CAT. 146.
- Nuremberg 1979, pp. 178-181 (CAT. 110) and pp. 181-182 (CAT. 112).
- Ibid.*, pp. 224-245; Schauerte 2002, pp. 470-483, CAT. 257; and Eichberger 2002, pp. 28-36.
- Nuremberg 1979, pp. 192-211.
- Ibid.*, pp. 194ff., CAT. 160; see also Mende in Vienna 2003, pp. 515-517, CAT. 182.
- Matthias Mende expressed this idea in 1971; Mende 1978, p. 38.
- Nuremberg 1979, pp. 58-68.
- On the sconces, Rainer Kahsnitz in New York / Nuremberg 1986, pp. 333-334, CATS. 149-150; on the Nuremberg allegory, see Mende 2000, pp. 176-177, CAT. 20.
- Machilek 2000, pp. 44-76; Schlemmer 2000, pp. 77-98; and Mende 2000, pp. 107-127.
- Wedehorst 1986, pp. 11-25.
- In 1516, Hieronymus Ebner had an *ex-libris* made by Dürer, and Michael Behaim a woodcut with his coat of arms, see Schoch / Mende / Scherbaum 2001-2004, vol. 2, pp. 438ff (n. 246) and pp. 451ff (n. 250).
- Albrecht Dürer. *Madonna and Child or Haller-Madonna / Lot and his Daughters* (verso). Washington, National Gallery, Samuel H. Kress Collection [CAT. 31]. See Strieder 1993, pp. 318ff.
- Albrecht Dürer. *Lamentation over the Dead Christ* (epitaph of the Holzschuher Family), after 1498. Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Inv. no. 165. In Goldberg / Heimberg / Schawe 1998, pp. 288-313, CAT. 5; *Portrait of Hieronymus Holzschuher*, 1526. Berlin, Gemäldeausammlung, inv. no. 557 E. See Anzelewsky 1971, p. 271. CATS. 179-180.
- For more on the relationship between Dürer, Willibald Pirckheimer and the Nuremberg humanists, see the essay by David H. Price in this catalogue.
- Albrecht Dürer. *Portrait drawing of Ulrich Stark*, 1527. London, British Museum, inv. no. 5218-51. See London 1988, pp. 112-114; on the façade paintings on the house of Ulrich Stark, see Mende 2000, pp. 44-45 (CATS. 45-46) and pp. 246-249.
- The window arrangement as shown by Günther Fehring, Anton Röss and Wilhelm Schwemmer is as follows: Paumgartner (SIX), Tucher (NIV-NVI), Holzschuher (NXI), Haller (SIV), Ebner (NIV, SIX), Stark (NIII) and Behaim (SVI). The Imhoff window (SVIII) is from the early 17th century, most of the family's donations were made to St Laurence's Church. See Fehring / Röss / Schwemmer 1982, pp. 127 and 140-146.
- Scholz 2000, pp. 27-33.
- Albrecht Dürer. *Elisbeth Tucher, née Pusch*. Kassel, Hessisches Landesmuseum, inv. no. 6. See Anzelewsky 1971, pp. 165-167, CAT. 63.
- Los Angeles / Saint Louis 2000, pp. 109-111, CATS. 19-20; see also sketches for the garden house of Sixtus Tucher on the outskirts of Nuremberg in Los Angeles / Saint Louis 2000, pp. 114-116, CATS. 21-22. Not all are attributed to Dürer, see Rainer Schoch in New York / Nuremberg 1986, pp. 286-287, CAT. 116.
- Strieder 1993, pp. 134-135.
- Rainer Schoch in New York / Nuremberg 1986, pp. 326-327, CATS. 143-144; also Heinz Wiedauer in Vienna 2003, pp. 478-480, CAT. 167.
- Two other devotional images for Nuremberg citizens include the epitaphs of the Glimm and Holzschuher families (see fn. 43); Albrecht Dürer: *Lamentation over the Dead Christ* (epitaph of the Glimm Family), c. 1500. Munich, Alte Pinakothek, inv. no. 704. In Goldberg / Heimberg / Schawe 1998, pp. 260-287, CAT. 4. The epitaph of the goldsmith family Glimm was intended for Nuremberg's Dominican Church.
- Anzelewsky 1971, pp. 155-159, CAT. 50; and Goldberg / Heimberg / Schawe 1998, pp. 166-235, CAT. 2.
- Anzelewsky 1971, pp. 228-230, CAT. 118.
- Albrecht Dürer: *Coloured drawing for the Landauer Altarpiece*, 1508. Chantilly, Musée Condé; see Strieder 1996, p. 314.
- Madersbacher 1994, pp. 89-119.
- Los Angeles / Saint Louis 2000, pp. 116-121, CATS. 23-24. See also Hess 2002, pp. 458-463.
- See Kammel 2002, esp. pp. 109-130 (Ulrich Söding) and pp. 271-294 (Gerhard Weilandt).

61. Goldberg / Heimberg / Schawe 1998, p. 205.
62. Ruppriich 1956-1969, vol. 1, pp. 42, 43, 44, 51, 55 and 59, and fn. 26.
63. On Hessus's portraits, see London 1988, pp. 110-111, CAT. 80. On Imhoff's portraits, see Mende 1991b.
64. See Goldberg / Heimberg / Schawe 1998, pp. 416-429, CAT. 10.
65. For the original inscription, *ibid.*, p. 415 and p. 425.
66. Strieder 1996, p. 15, and Berlin 2006.
67. Pfeiffer 1971; Endres 2000, pp. 30-39; and Eberlein 2003, pp. 43-49.
68. Kalkreuth, for instance, north-east of Nuremberg or the street leading from St. Sebald's to St. John's church and the cemetery belonging to it. See Matthias Mende in Vienna 2003, pp. 208-209, CAT. 42.
69. London, British Museum, inv. no. 5218-165 (recto and verso). See London 1988, p. 68, CATS. 42-43. On the identification of the reverse side as the *Weissensee Lake by the Erlenstegen Forest*, see Mende 2000, pp. 26-27.
70. Rainer Schoch in Schoch / Mende / Scherbaum 2001-2004, vol. 2, pp. 70-72, CAT. 20.
71. Matthias Mende in Schoch / Mende / Scherbaum 2001-2004, vol. 2, pp. 187-188, CAT. 73.
72. Matthias Mende in Vienna 2003, pp. 190-191, CAT. 34.
73. Celtis 2000, chap. 2: "Ursprung, Lage und Umgebung der Stadt Nürnberg im Allgemeinen"; and chap. 4: "Über das Erscheinungsbild Nürnbergs, seine Inseln, Bäder und die Hallerwiese".
74. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.
76. On London's version, see London 1988, pp. 72-73, CAT. 46; on Vienna's version, see Jutta Zander-Seidel in Vienna 2003, pp. 192-193.
77. London 1988, p. 72: "1500 AD Ein Nörmergerin/ a(l)s man zw kirchen gatt".
78. "Gedenckt mein In Ewerm Reych 1500/ Also gett man zw Nörmerck In Die Kirchn/ AD", on dress rules and class awareness in Nuremberg, see Jutta Zander-Seidel in Vienna 2003, pp. 192-196, CAT. 35.
79. In Luke 23, 42 the good thief says to Christ on the cross: "Remember me when thou comest into your kingdom".
80. Celtis 2000, chap. 7, p. 45.