

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

HOLBEIN, Hans, d. J.

Augsburg c.1498 – London 1546

Holbein was the supreme draughtsman of his age. By 1524 he was using coloured chalk in the drawings he made on his journey through France. Whether he learned this technique directly from Jean Clouet or from the circle around Leonardo and Jean Perréal is now difficult to decide. The coloured chalk in these drawings is sometimes referred to as pastel; certainly the yellows and pinks he employed have a density and luminosity characteristic of fabricated colours, but their use was graphic and unmodulated, in contrast to soft pastel used to paint portraits with gradations of tone. Thus two drawings “fait en pastel” in the Jabach inventory have been identified as in coloured chalk and watercolour (Grossmann 1951). The self-portrait in the Uffizi comes closest to pastel in our sense; with coloured chalk drawings such as the portrait of John Godsalue (Windsor), he resorted to watercolour and gouache to produce areas of colour (apparently ground smalt, probably applied with water as a vehicle; in drying, the partial adherence of the pigment leaves an effect very similar to dragging a pastel crayon over an uneven surface). Here is Norgate’s account:

Another and the better way was used by Holbein by priming a large paper with a Carnation or Complexion of flesh Colour wherein he made Pictures by the Life of many great Lords and Ladyes of his time with black and red chalke, with other flesh Colours, made up hard and dry like small pencill sticks. Of this kind was an excellent Booke while it remayned in the hands of the Most noble Earle of Arundell and Surrey. But I heare it hath bene a Traveller, and where ever it is now, hath got his Errata, or (which is as good) hath met with an *Index expurgatorius*, and is made worse with mending.

These drawings are not catalogued here, nor are the copies by Luttrell, and possibly others (*v.* English sch.), of his famous portrait of Erasmus.

Monographic exhibitions

Holbein 1988: *Dessins de Hans Holbein le Jeune provenant de la collection de SM la reine Elisabeth II à Windsor Castle et de la collection du musée des Beaux-Arts de Bâle*, Bâle, Kunstmuseum, 12.VI.–4.IX.1988

Bibliography

Barrow 1735, *s.v.* Crayons; Bäschmann & Griener 1997; Brieger 1921; Foskett 1987; Grossmann 1951; Claude Kuhn, “Dessins de Hans Holbein le jeune”, *L’Œil*, 395, .VI.1988, p. 38–43; Lavallée 1949, p. 81; London 2012b; Meder 1919, p. 137; Norgate 1919; Wright 2006

Pastels

J.4004.101 AUTORITRATTO, cr. clr/ppr, 32x26, c.1540 (Uffizi). Lit.: Bell 2000, p. 75 repr. clr ϕ



J.4004.103 Two portraits in crayons (London, Christie’s, 28.XI.1812, Lot 29 part, 10/-; Joseph Woodin)

Anon. pastel copies

Desiderius ERASMUS (1466–1536), pnt. (Longford Castle; dep.: London, National Gallery)

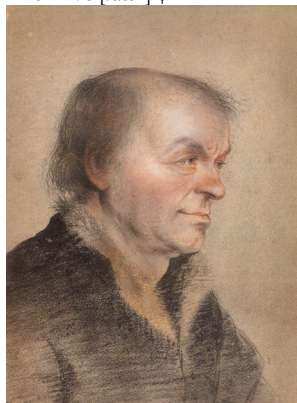
J.4004.106 ~cop., pstl, 38x29 (Oxford, Mallams, 12.III.2014, Lot 410 repr., est. £200–300) ϕ



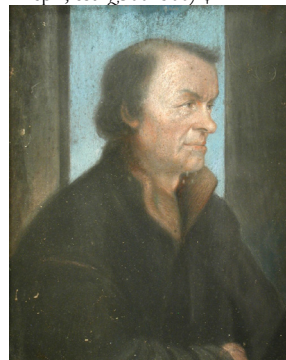
~*v.g.* Luttrell

Johannes FROBEN or John Frobenius (1460–1527), pnt., c.1522 (Windsor RCIN 403035)

J.4004.11 ~cop., cr. clr/buff ppr, 26x19.3 (Albert Hartshorne (1839–1910), FSA, archaeologist, 1890. London, Christie’s, 24.III.1987, Lot 61 repr., attr. Luttrell, est. £400–500, £650 [=£715]. London, Christie’s, 5.XII.2013, Lot 96 repr., as a/r Holbein, est. £800–1200). Exh.: *Tudor exh.*, London, New Gallery, 1890, no. 1178 [attr.] ϕ



J.4004.111 ~cop., pstl/ppr, 36x29 ([?]Dr Burton, Christ Church Oxford, according to old label, with pendant of Erasmus. F. C. Fane 1936. Cambridge, Cheffins, 13–14.IX.2017, Lot 522 repr., est. £300–500) ϕ



J.4004.112 William WARHAM (1450–1532), Lord Chancellor of England, archbishop of Canterbury

~cop. Bartolozzi, *q.v.*

J.4004.114 Youth, pstl, a/r Holbein (Wrest Park, Foster, 10.IX.1917, Lot 1000 n.r., with 6 prints; £1/6/-; Lane)