OF TORQUETUMS, FLUTE CASES, AND PUFF SLEEVES: THE ROLE OF THE IMAGE CATALOGER IN NON-ART HISTORICAL SUBJECT INDEXING
IN AN IDEAL WORLD, IMAGES WOULD COME WITH A COMPLETE LIST OF ALL APPLICABLE SUBJECT TERMS – BOTH LC STRINGS AND KEYWORDS. IN REALITY, OUR IMAGES COME WITH FEW, IF ANY, SUBJECT TERMS, AND RARELY THOSE SPECIFIC TO OTHER SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES, AREAS IN WHICH WE LACK EXPERTISE.
FOCUSING ON HOLBEIN’S AMBASSADORS, THIS TALK WILL EXAMINE TOOLS, STRATEGIES, AND NEW APPROACHES FOR INCREASING MULTI-DISCIPLINARY ACCESS TO ONLINE IMAGE COLLECTIONS
POSSIBLE SUBJECT SUBFACETS?

HISTORY

RELIGION

POLITICAL SCIENCE

PHILOSOPHY

MATHMATICS

GENDER STUDIES

PORTRAITS

INTERIOR DESIGN

ANAMORPHISM

MOSAICS

TEXTILES

RESTORATION
TARGET SUBJECT SUBFACETS:

HISTORY OF SCIENCE

MUSIC & MUSICIONOGRAPHY

COSTUME
THE DEMISE OF THE TAXONOMIC APPROACH:

- PRE-COORDINATED STRINGS
- AUTHORITATIVE LISTS
- UNNATURAL LANGUAGE

Steve.museum
EXPERIMENTAL APPROACHES TO TEST POSSIBILITIES FOR OBTAINING COSTUME, MUSICAL, SCIENTIFIC TAGS FOR HOLBEIN’S THE AMBASSADORS

- WEB RESOURCES
- SCHOLARLY SOURCES
- FLICKR PAGE
- BLOG
- GOOGLE GROUP
- POWERPOINT
The Ambassadors (Holbein)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**The Ambassadors** (1533) is a painting by Hans Holbein the Younger in the National Gallery, London. The sitters, both Frenchmen, were Jean de Dinteville (on the left), who was ambassador to England in 1533, and Georges de Selve, Bishop of Lavaur, who visited him in London in April or May of that year. As well as being a double portrait, the painting contains a still life of several meticulously rendered objects, the meaning of which is the cause of much debate.

Although a German-born artist whose career was based mainly in England, Holbein displayed the influence of contemporary Dutch painters in this work. This influence can be noted most outwardly in the use of oil paint, a recent invention whose technique was first taken advantage of by Flemish masters. What is most "Flemish" of Holbein's use of oils is his use of the medium to render meticulous details that are mainly symbolic: as Van Eyck and the Master of Flemalle used extensive imagery to link their subjects to divinity, Holbein used symbols to link his figures to the age of exploration.

Among the clues to the figures' explorative associations are two globes, a sextant, an astrolabe, and the various textiles, the rug on the floor and cloth on the upper shelf being the most notably oriental. The choice for the inclusion of the two figures can furthermore be seen as symbolic. The figure on the left, in secular attire while the figure on the right is dressed in protestant religious garb. They are flanking the table, which displays open books, symbols of religious knowledge and even a symbolic link to the Virgin, is therefore believed to be symbolic of a unification of capitalism and the Church.

The most notable and famous of Holbein's symbols in the work, however, is the skewed skull which is placed in the bottom center of the composition. The skull, rendered in anamorphic perspective, another invention of the Early Renaissance, is meant to be nearly subliminal as the viewer must approach the painting nearly from the side of the painting to see the form morph into a completely accurate rendering of a photograph.
exploration.

Among the clues to the figures’ explorative associations are two globes, a sextant, an astrolabe, and the various textiles, the rug on the floor and cloth on the upper shelf being the most notably oriental. The choice for the inclusion of the two figures can furthermore be seen as symbolic. The figure on the left is in secular attire while the figure on the right is dressed in protestant religious garb. They are flanking the table, which displays open books, symbols of religious knowledge and even a symbolic link to the Virgin, is therefore believed to be symbolic of a unification of capitalism and the Church.

The most notable and famous of Holbein’s symbols in the work, however, is the skewed skull which is placed in the bottom center of the composition. The skull, rendered in anamorphic perspective, another invention of the Early Renaissance, is meant to be nearly subliminal as the viewer must approach the painting nearly from the side of the painting to see the form morph into a completely accurate rendering of a human skull. While the skull is evidently intended as a vanitas or memento mori, it is unclear why Holbein gave it such prominence in this painting. One possibility is that this painting represents three levels: the heavens (as portrayed by the astrolabe and other objects on the upper shelf), the living world (as evidenced by books and a musical instrument on the lower shelf), and death (signified by the skull). It has also been hypothesized that the painting is meant to hang in a stairwell, so that a person walking up the stairs from the painting’s right would be startled by the appearance of the skull.\[1\] From such an angle, the skull appears in its correct aspect ratio.

See also

- Anamorphosis
- Anamorphism

External links

- The National Gallery article on the painting
Even More Scientific Terms

The Ambassadors

Full title: Jean de Dinteville and Georges de Selve ('The Ambassadors')
1533
HOLBEIN the Younger, Hans
1497/8 - 1543
NG1314. Bought with contributions from Charles Cotes, Lord Iveagh and Lord Rothschild, 1900.

This picture memorialises two wealthy, educated and powerful young men. At the left is Jean de Dinteville, aged 29, French ambassador to England in 1533. To the right stands his friend, Georges de Selve, aged 25, Bishop of Lavaur, who acted on several occasions as ambassador to the Emperor, the Venetian Republic and the Holy See.

The picture is in a tradition showing learned men with books and instruments. The objects on the upper shelf include a celestial globe, a portable sundial and various other instruments used for understanding the heavens and measuring time. Among the objects on the lower shelf is a lute, a case of flutes, a hymn book, a book of arithmetic and a terrestrial globe. Certain details could be interpreted as references to contemporary religious divisions. The broken lute string, for example, may signify religious discord, while the Lutheran hymn book may be a plea for Christian harmony.

In the foreground is a distorted image of a skull, a symbol of mortality. When seen from a point to the right of the picture the distortion is corrected.

Oil on oak
207 x 209.5 cm.
The Art of Science

Instruments for Observation and Measuring Time

The collection of scientific instruments included in this display would have been used in the 16th century to tell the time and make astronomical observations. The cylindrical object to the far left is a type of portable sundial called a pillar dial or shepherd's dial. Next to it is another sundial known as a universal equinoctial dial, which functioned at all latitudes and could be used in the manufacture of other sundials. The example shown here is partly dismantled. The pale object behind this, in the shape of a quarter-circle, is a horary quadrant, which was an instrument used for observing the position of the stars.

The most remarkable scientific instrument in the picture is the polyhedral sundial placed at the front of the shelf. These sundials with many faces were mainly created to show off the skill of their makers and were very expensive. This one has a tiny compass fitted in its uppermost face. Towards the back of the shelf, at the far right, is an instrument known as a torqueulum. It is likely that this was used for finding out the positions of the stars and planets.

Choose a detail below or go back to the introduction page.
INTERESTING USE OF KEYWORDS, BUT NO COSTUME TERMS
The Ambassadors, detail of the astronomical instruments, 1533 (oil on panel) (detail of 4147)

Jean de Dinteville and Georges de Selve;

Holbein, Hans the Elder (1460/5-1524)

National Gallery, London, UK

Oil on panel

207x209.5

C16th

Gorman

Celestial globe portable

Corinidal sundial quadrant

Polyhedral carpet torquetum

Fur
Although the entry on Torquetum mentions the Ambassadors, the entry on the Ambassadors doesn’t mention the Torquetum.
Alt Title: Jean de Dinteville and Georges de Selve.

Date: 1533.

Medium: oil on oak panel, 207 x 209.5 cm.

Location: National Gallery (Great Britain).

Note: Jean de Dinteville, Seigneur de Polisy, Bailly de Troyes, is on the left. He was the French Ambassador to England in 1533. To the right stands his friend Georges de Selve, Bishop of Lavaur, who acted many times as an ambassador to the Emperor, the Venetian Republic, and the Holy See.

The mosaic floor is a copy of Abbot Ware’s in Westminster Abbey. In the foreground is a skull in distorted perspective (anamorphosis); when seen from the right or through a cylindrical piece of glass the distortion is corrected.

Inscription: at lower left: IOANNES / HOLBEIN / PINGEBAT / 1533
on Dinteville’s dagger: AET.SVAE / 29
on de Selve’s book: AE.TAT.VS.SVAE 25
Other inscriptions on hymnbook, globes, quadrant, and torquetum. See Levey 1959 for transcription.

Subject: 
Dinteville, Jean de, 1504-1555.
Selve, Georges de, Bishop of Lavaur, 1508/9-1541.
Lutes (chordophones).
Portraits --Group --France --16th century.
Painting --Germany --16th century.
Globes (cartographic spheres).
Sheet music.
Books.
Sundials.
Quadrants.
Flutes (aerophones).

Related Resources: "Jean de Dinteville and Georges de Selve ('The Ambassadors')"
No Science or Music, Broad LC Costume terms
John North is Professor Emeritus of History of Philosophy and the Exact Sciences, University of Groningen, the Netherlands and the author of numerous books including Stonehenge: A New Interpretation of Prehistoric Man and the Cosmos and The Ambassadors' Secret.

LONDON. NATIONAL GALLERY. MAKING AND MEANING

(It’s rare to have resources like these)
Top shelf
1. Celestial globe
2. Cylindrical or shepherd’s dial
3. Quadrant
4. Quadrant
5. Small dial
6. Polyhedral sundial
7. Torquetum

Bottom shelf
8. Terrestrial globe
9. Arithmetic book
10. Set-square
11. Dividers
12. German hymn-book
13. Case of flutes
14. Lute

(NO COSTUME DIAGRAM THOUGH)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUSIC TERMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diagram</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LNGL web</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JSTOR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Making</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mary Rasmussen's Musical Iconography

include some of the iconographical research of Prof. Mary Rasmussen on our home page. We currently offer files concerning the iconography of the bagpipe, lute, pipe and tabor, and tambourine in Western-European Art.

General Information

- Abbreviations and Bibliography

Bagpipe Iconography

- A Listing of Pictures of the Bagpipe in Art Works of the 15th Century
  - An Index for the Above
- A Listing of Pictures of the Bagpipe in Art Works of the 15th and 16th Century
  - An Index for the Above
- A Listing of Pictures of the Bagpipe in Art Works of the 16th Century
  - An Index for the Above
- A Listing of Pictures of the Bagpipe in Art Works of the 16th and 17th Century (new 09/04)
  - An Index for the Above (new 09/04)

Bell Iconography

- A Listing of Pictures of Bells in Art Works of the 15th Century
  - An Index for the Above
- A Listing of Pictures of Bells in Art Works of the 15th and 16th Century
  - An Index for the Above
Iconography

A Listing of Pictures of the Lute in German, Austrian, and Swiss Art Works of the Late 15th -- Early 16th Century
An Index for the Above
A Listing of Pictures of the Lute in German, Austrian, and Swiss Art Works of the 16th - 17th Century
An Index for the Above
A Listing of Pictures of the Lute in 16th Century German Art
An Index to the Above
A Listing of Pictures of the Lute in Italian Art Works of the Late 15th -- Early 16th Centuries
An Index for the Above
A Listing of Pictures of the Lute in 16th Century Italian Art
An Index to the Above
A Listing of Pictures of the Lute in Italian Art 16th-17th Century
An Index to the Above
A Listing of Pictures of the Lute by Netherlands Artists, late-15th and early 16th Century
An Index of the Above
A Listing of Pictures of the Lute by Netherlands/Dutch Artists, 16th Century
An Index of the Above
A Listing of Pictures of the Lute - Dutch 16th-17th Century
A Listing of Pictures of the Lute - Flemish 16th-17th Century
An Index to the Above
A Listing of Pictures of the Lute in French Art 16th-17th Century
An Index to the Above
A Listing of Pictures of the Lute in French Art 17th Century (new 12/04)
An Index to the Above (new 12/04)

Hoch and Tabor
The French Ambassadors Jean de Dinteville and Georges de Selve (1533). London NG. Includes among the objects displayed a lute and a case with four flutes, plus the tenor partbook of Johan Walther’s Geystliche gesank Buchleyn (Worms, P. Schöffer d. J., 1525) with Martin Luther’s hymns "Kom heiliger geyst" and "Mensch wiltu leben seliglich".


XII: Decorative Elements

SCIENTIFIC TERMS

Diagram

Celestial globe, Cylindrical or shepherd’s dial, Quadrant, Small dial, Polyhedral sundial, Torquetum, Terrestrial globe, Arithmetic book, Set-square, dividers,

LNGL web

celestial globe, portable sundial, shepherd’s dial, pillar dial universal equinoctial dial, horary quadrant, polyhedral sundial, book of arithmetic, terrestrial globe

Making

celestial globe, portable sundial, scientific instruments, book of arithmetic, terrestrial globe, astronomy, arithmetic, Trivium, Quadrivium, time keeping, cylindrical shepherd’s dial, solar clock, latitude, polyhedral sundial, compass, plumbline, gnomon, clocks
SCHOLARLY ARTICLES FOUND USING GOOGLE SCHOLAR AND JSTOR

The Scientific Instruments in Holbein's Ambassadors: A Re-Examination
Elly Dekker; Kristen Lippincott

The Case of the Flutes in Holbein's "The Ambassadors"
Hans Holbein; Mary Rasmussen
Early Music > Vol. 23, No. 1, Flute Issue (Feb., 1995), pp. 114-123

(out of 280 returns)

No Comparable scholarly article on the costume