

LES ENLUMINURES

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Album of watercolor illustrations by Maria Jacobea Meyer
In German, illustrated manuscript on paper
Southern Germany (Lindau), c. 1705

i + c. 320 + i folios on paper, watermark, tower with two windows and the letters 'NG' (similar to Bernstein DE8085-PO-105337, Constance, 1681), modern foliation in pencil, 1-218, followed by around one hundred blank, un-foliated leaves, 251 WATERCOLORS, most with accompanying inscriptions in brown ink in cursive German hand, a tear through 1/3 of f. 29, minor stains throughout, slight foxing, occasionally trimmed top and bottom, in overall very good condition. In modern binding of white morocco over pasteboards, flat spine, brown silk ties attached to covers, modern cardboard slipcase, in overall excellent condition. Dimensions 97 x 157 mm.

The female artist, Maria Jacobea Meyer, is known only from this remarkably rich and utterly charming album (in the format of an Album amicorum), containing 251 watercolors. Illustrating the widest variety of subjects, proverbs, allegories, caricatures, satire, they depict all the social classes, ages of man, and people in diverse situations, at home, at market, in the country, in town. The longest series, with fifty-five depictions, illustrates episodes from "the Topsy-Turvy World," popular in art beginning in the mid-sixteenth century. Composed entirely in the confines of her own home (Maria was lame from birth), this album is an extraordinary testament to her creative impulse.

PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript was made in Lindau, in Southern Germany on the border of Lake Constance, c. 1705 based on the evidence of the later inscription on f. 1. According to this inscription, dated December 24, 1865, by Johanna Jacobea von Oetinger (below the inscription by her mother, Ursula Weber, discussed below), the manuscript was about 160 years old and was painted by Miss Maria Jacobea Meyer, who was lame in both feet from birth: "Es wird ohngefähr 160 Jahr alt sein. Es wurde von Jungf. Maria Jacobea Meyer gemalt, welche von Geburt an beyden Füßen lahm war. Sie wohnte im Paradies in dem Haus welches jetzt H. Gullman(n) gehört. Es war die Urgroßtante von der Obigen." Meyer was the great-great-aunt of Johanna Jacobea von Oetinger. The inscription further informs us that Meyer lived in a house named "Paradies" in Lindau, which in 1865 belonged to H(err) Gullman(n); the owner of this house can be identified in a publication of 1855 as the merchant Christoph Gullmann (d. 1877) (cf. Seiffert, 1855, p. 20). The manuscript stayed in the same family until the nineteenth century (see below).
2. Two nineteenth-century donation inscriptions on f. 1 record how the manuscript was given on December 8, 1816 by Ursula Weber, née Pfister, to her daughter Johanna Jacobea, who in turn gave it to her daughter Pepina von Oetinger on December 24, 1865. Ursula Weber was the daughter of the merchant Johann Michael Pfister from Lindau, who inherited the company from her mother (also Ursula Pfister) after her father's death in 1806 (cf. *Kaiserlich und Königlich bairische privilegierte allgemeine Zeitung*, vol.

1806, supplement p. 44). Her daughter, Johanna Jacobea, married a pastor named Oetinger; in 1871, the *Lindauer Tagblatt* published an obituary for Johanna Jacobea von Oetinger, née Weber, the pastor's widow. In 1861, an obituary for Gustav Adolf von Oetinger, civil servant in Klagenfurt, appeared in the *Lindauer Tagblatt*, signed among others by Pepina Hausner, née von Oetinger.

3. Modern booksellers' notes in pencil on the front pastedown: "744," "ZK 19/ 1199(92) M.FFEEEE" and "HN 3940".

TEXT AND ILLUSTRATION

Two-hundred and fifty-one watercolors. Most of the illustrations are on the recto of the leaf, with the verso blank, and there are also blank leaves between some of the illustrations (as evident from the list of illustrations below). Most of the illustrations have some explicative text accompanying them, and there is a long, illustrated story on ff. 187-194.

Subjects as follows:

ff. 3-12, Ten illustrations of the ten decades of life;

ff. 13-47, Thirty-five wittily illustrated proverbs, beginning with "Gott lässt sich nicht trüht" (God cannot be deceived, variant of Galatians 6: Gott lässt sich nicht spotten);

ff. 48-51, Four illustrations of the four times of day: der Morgen, der Mittag, die Abend, die Nacht;

f. 52, Seller of spectacles;

f. 53, Couple drinking and smoking;

f. 54, Man holding two packets of sheets with writing;

f. 55, Woman holding a distaff and a spindle, perhaps in reference to *The Lazy Spinning Woman* story by the Grimm brothers;

f. 56, Man carrying a large flag;

f. 57, Man attacking a woman with a wooden bat;

f. 58, Laughing jester with a needle and a thread, after Hendrick Goltzius, c. 1590-1610;

f. 59, Man in luxurious clothes and hat;

f. 60, Couple dancing;

f. 61, Man with a green pot;

f. 62, Sick man with children asking for alms;

- f. 63, Ugly man with a large lower lip; f. 64 blank;
- f. 65, Three ladies in fine dresses and headwear;
- f. 66, Three aristocratic boys bowling;
- f. 67, Doctor standing outside in front of a table on which are scales and medical tools;
- f. 68, Man smoking between a mother, holding a pipe, comforting a weeping daughter and an aged woman holding a rag;
- f. 69, Man smoking;
- f. 70, Boy hiding his face in his arms on a table with a candle and a pipe while two women discuss angrily;
- f. 71, Two men, one is smoking;
- f. 72, Woman smoking in the accompany of two men at table;
- ff. 73-92, Twenty illustrations of merchants selling vegetables, cheese, wine, meat, grapes, fish, fruit and flowers, game, butter, sausages, parmesan cheese, pies with parmesan cheese, tobacco, beer, bread; [f. 93 blank];
- f. 94, Mermaid playing a harp;
- f. 95, A primitive Stone Age man, on the left, and on the right a contemporary man eating babies, perhaps inspired by Hans Gieng's *Kindlifresserbrunnen* fountain in Bern, created in 1545-1546;
- f. 96, Baby in swaddling clothes and a child riding a stick horse and holding a light whip;
- f. 97, Two young men;
- f. 98, Nobleman with a hawk and a physician pointing at a urine flask;
- f. 99, Two men, one leaving on a journey;
- f. 100, Two men, one sleeping, the other holding a pie on a platter;
- f. 101, Family travelling afoot with two children, a chicken and a sheep;
- f. 102, Man with a sword and a chicken attached to his spear;
- f. 103, Young woman wearing a luxurious fur-trimmed dress and a hat with a feather;

f. 104, Woman buying an egg from a merchant with a basket of eggs and a closed basket holding a hen;

f. 105, Two women discussing;

f. 106, Men drinking and smoking in a barn;

ff. 107-110, Four depictions of famous dwarfs: f. 107, Dwarf as the French Mademoiselle Jolicoeur (cf. etching by Martin Engelbrecht); f. 108, the dwarf Mademoiselle Poupon, Parisian beauty, with the caption "Mademoiselle Poupone, die Pariser Schönheit genandt, einige Tochter deß bekandten Parlaments Advocaten Monsr. Chican"; the same caption appears on Martin Engelbrecht's etching made in Augsburg c. 1705-1715; f. 109, the dwarf Robert von Parukenfeldt, with the caption "Monsieur Robert von Parukenfeldt, Ritter deß langen Halßtuechs in der grossen Galla"; the same caption appears on Martin Engelbrecht's etching of c. 1705-1715; f. 110, the dwarf Ruffanella as a shepherdess (cf. etching by Martin Engelbrecht);

ff. 111, 112 and 114, Three illustrations with folding pop-up flaps: f. 111, woman playing a hurdy-gurdy on her lap; the folding piece reveals a baby in her womb; f. 112, man plays the lute; the folding piece reveals a swaddled baby; f. 114, woman keeping geese in a cage; the folding piece reveals a man in the cage;

f. 113, Man selling flutes;

f. 115, Couple spinning wool;

ff. 116-118, Three illustrations of haymaking;

f. 119, Jester dancing with a woman dressed as a brown bear; a grey bear plays a lute;

ff. 120-175, Fifty-five illustrations on the theme of *The World Turned Upside Down*, as follows: f. 120, donkey riding a man; f. 121, nobleman working while a workman watches; f. 122, child teaching the professor; f. 123, old man playing with toys; f. 124, wise man instructed by a proletarian; f. 125, a gypsy taking the hand of a nobleman; f. 126, donkey washing his master's hair; the man kneels on a prie-dieu; f. 127, hog roasting his master; f. 128, putting the cart before the bulls; f. 129, bull playing a lute to a donkey at a window of a house; f. 130, bull ploughing the field as two men pull the plough; f. 131, lady subservient to the maid; f. 132, man with an ax; f. 133, man building the roof before the house is ready; f. 134, chicken attacking a man; f. 135, fish catching a man with a fishing rod; f. 136, man fishing in a field; f. 137, man scything a field with no hay at a lakeside; f. 138, two ravens; f. 139, rabbit chasing a dog; f. 140, birds leaving a cage; f. 141, hen chasing a preying bird away from her chicks; f. 142, mouse chasing a cat; f. 143, chicken chasing a fox; f. 144, executioner caught in a gibet; f. 145, belltower inside the bell; f. 146, millstone floating at sea; f. 147, winged anvil flying off; f. 148, goat chasing a lion; f. 149, rabbit chasing a hawk; [f. 150, blank]; f. 151, world upside down; f. 152, sick person examining the urine flask while the physician watches; f. 153, collecting taxes(?); f. 154, king with scepter watches as a workman with a hoe rides off on his horse; f. 155, lord serves the servant some wine; f. 156, beggar gives money to the rich; f. 157, baby feeds his maid/mother; f. 158, wife beats the husband; f. 159, child puts the old man to sleep in

his cot; f. 160, wife with swords and a spear tells her husband to spin wool; f. 161, wild animals hunt the man; f. 162, man serves wine to a group of animals sat around a dinner table; f. 163, four women pull a carriage filled with horses; f. 164, blind-folded man leads a sighted man with a stick; f. 165, lame man carries a healthy man; f. 166, bird has put a man in a cage; f. 167, sheep shearing the shepherd; f. 168, sheep eating a wolf; f. 169, donkey making a man carry heavy trunks; f. 170, bull slaughtering a man; f. 171, chicken mating with the hen atop the rooster; f. 172, man wearing a boot on his head and a hat on his foot; f. 173, galley sailing on a field; f. 174, birds swimming, while fish are flying, nesting and catching birds for food; f. 175, the city is in the clouds, while the sun and moon are underground;

ff. 177-179v, Text entitled "Medicina universalis" about faith, hope and patience, illustrated with a gold medicine jar;

ff. 182-184, Three illustrations of peasants, couples and children, dressed in colorful clothes and often depicted with animals, with inscriptions;

f. 185, Group of Chinese figures having tea, probably copied from a Chinese genre scene;

f. 186, Three dancers, the inscription below reads "le pa(s) de minuet";

ff. 187-194, Long story (unidentified) with humorous examples of letters illustrated with five pictures: the first shows a man having tea with two women (in Venice?), then a nobleman writes a letter from Germany to a woman Italy, man delivers a letter to a young woman (in Italy?), and in the final scene a nobleman appears to buy fine floral fabric to a woman (his wife?);

f. 197, Jester dancing with a young woman;

f. 198, Man drinking (drunkenness);

f. 199, Woman counting coins (avarice);

ff. 200-205, Six illustrations of proverbs [followed by two proverbs that were never illustrated, ff. 206, 207];

f. 209, Three young ladies, one of which is wearing a crown and another a helmet;

f. 218, Boating party; [Followed by about 100 blank, un-foliated leaves].

This is a remarkably rich collection of watercolors by a female artist, Maria Jacobea Meyer. They illustrate a wide array of subjects, proverbs, allegories, caricatures, and satire. They depict everyday life, in the market, at parties, at home. The longest series, with fifty-five depictions, illustrates episodes from *The World Turned Upside Down*, which was popular in art, especially prints, from the mid-sixteenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century. The scenes illustrate the exact opposite of the rules in human society, presenting a grotesque alternative world. As satirical, scholarly discourse, such illustrations would reinforce the benefits of social order in real life.

There are numerous depictions of jesters, some of which might be based on Brant's Ship of Fools, the German satirical verse allegory published in 1494. The laughing fool with a needle and a thread on f. 58 is copied after an engraving by Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617), a German-born Dutch printmaker and painter, made around 1590-1610. It illustrates the Dutch proverb "iemand een oor aannaaien" (literally "to sew an ear on somebody"), which means "to fool somebody." The portraits of the famous dwarves are copied from contemporary etchings by Martin Engelbrecht. There are also three fascinating illustrations with folding parts, illustrating a hurdy-gurdy player, a lute player and a goose seller. Culturally interesting is the early depiction of the minuet; the steps and musical form of the minuet originated in France in the 1660s (see f. 186).

This rich collection offers precious insight into social mores and daily life at the beginning of the eighteenth century. It survives as an important monument to the work of one female artist, although at the present moment we can only speculate on why she compiled this charming album.

LITERATURE

Ashton, J. *Humour, Wit, and Satire of the Seventeenth Century*, London, 1883.

Available online: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/50874/50874-h/50874-h.htm>

Mayor, A. H. *Prints and People: A Social History of Printed Pictures*, New York, 1971.

Seiffert, A. *Lindau und seine Umgebunden*, Lindau, 1855.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Bernstein, The Memory of Paper (database of watermarks)

<https://www.memoryofpaper.eu/BernsteinPortal/>

TM 1403