

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott  
Turgenev Wallage Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil  
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London  
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer  
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup  
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff  
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt  
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier  
Garschin Defoe Descartes Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder  
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Schopenhauer Bebel Proust  
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot  
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy  
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius  
Chamberlain Langbein Schiller Iffland Sokrates  
Brentano Claudius Schilling Kralik Katharina II. von Rußland Bellamy Raabe Gibbon Tschechow  
Gerstäcker Klee Hölty Morgenstem Gleim Vulpius  
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Goedicke  
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus Musil  
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike  
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kierkegaard Kraus Moltke  
Machiavelli Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo  
Nestroy Marie de France Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht  
Nietzsche Marx Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz  
von Ossietzky May vom Stein Lawrence Irving  
Petalozzi Platon Pückler Michelangelo Knigge Kock Kafka  
Sachs Poe Liebermann Kock Korolenko  
de Sade Praetorius Mistral Zetkin



---

The publishing house **tredition** has created the series **TREDITION CLASSICS**. It contains classical literature works from over two thousand years. Most of these titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades.

The book series is intended to preserve the cultural legacy and to promote the timeless works of classical literature. As a reader of a **TREDITION CLASSICS** book, the reader supports the mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion.

The symbol of **TREDITION CLASSICS** is Johannes Gutenberg (1400 – 1468), the inventor of movable type printing.

With the series, **tredition** intends to make thousands of international literature classics available in printed format again – worldwide.

All books are available at book retailers worldwide in paperback and in hardcover. For more information please visit: [www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)



**tredition** was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, **tredition** offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. **tredition** is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: [www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)

# Holbein

Beatrice Fortescue

# Imprint

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series.

Author: Beatrice Fortescue

Cover design: toepferschumann, Berlin (Germany)

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg (Germany)

ISBN: 978-3-8495-0938-5

[www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)

[www.tredition.de](http://www.tredition.de)

Copyright:

The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.





# CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER I.

### HOLBEIN'S PERIOD, PARENTAGE, AND EARLY WORK

Historical epoch and antecedents—Special conditions and character of early Christian art—Ideals and influence of the monk—Holbein's relation to mediæval schools—His father, uncle, and Augsburg home—Probable dates for his birth and his father's death—Troubles and dispersion of the Augsburg household—From Augsburg to Basel—His brother Ambrose—Erasmus and the *Praise of Folly*; some erroneous impressions of both—Erasmus and Holbein no Protestants at heart—Holbein and the Bible—Illustrated Vernacular Bibles in circulation before Luther and Holbein were born—Holbein's earliest Basel oil-paintings—Direct and indirect education—Historical, geographical, and scientific revolutions of his day—Beginning of his connection with the Burgomaster of Basel—Jacob Meyer zum Hasen—Holbein's woodcuts—His studies from nature—Sudden visit to Lucerne—Italian influence on his art—Work for the Burgomaster of Lucerne

## CHAPTER II.

### HOLBEIN BASILIENSIS (1519-1526)

*Holbein Basiliensis*—Enters the Painters' Guild—Bonifacius Amerbach and his portrait—The Last Supper and its Judas—The so-called "Fountain of Life" at Lisbon—Genius for design and symbolism in architecture—Versatility, humour, fighting scenes—Holbein becomes a citizen and marries—Basel in 1519—Froben's circle—Tremendous events and issues of the time—Holbein's

religious works – The Nativity and Adoration at Freiburg – Hans Oberriedt – The Basel Passion in eight panels – Passion Drawings – Christ in the tomb – Christ and Mary Magdalen at the door of the sepulchre – Rathaus wall-paintings – Birth of Holbein's eldest child – The Solothurn Madonna: its discovery and rescue – Holbein's wife and her portraits – Suggested solutions of some biographical enigmas – Title pages – Portraits of Erasmus – Journey to France, probably to Lyons and Avignon – Publishers and pictures of the so-called "Dance of Death" – Dorothea Offenburg as Venus and Laïs Corinthiaca – Triumph of the Protestant party – Holbein decides to leave Basel for a time – The Meyer-Madonna of Darmstadt and Dresden, and its portraits

### CHAPTER III.

#### CHANCES AND CHANGES (1526-1530)

First visit to England – Sir Thomas More: his home and portraits – The Windsor drawings – Bishop Fisher – Archbishop Warham – Bishop Stokesley – Sir Henry Guildford and his portrait – Nicholas Kratzer – Sir Bryan Tuke – Holbein's return to Basel – Portrait-group of his wife and two eldest children; two versions – Holbein's children, and families claiming descent from him – Iconoclastic fury – Ruined arts – Death of Meyer zum Hasen – Another Meyer commissions the last paintings for Basel – Return to England – Description of the Steelyard – Portraits of its members – George Gysze – Basel Council summons Holbein home – "The Ambassadors" at the National Gallery; accepted identification – Coronation of Queen Anne Boleyn – Lost paintings for the Guildhall of the Steelyard; the Triumphs of Riches and Poverty – The great Morett portrait; identifications – Holbein's industry and fertility – Designs for metal-work and other drawings – Solomon and the Queen of Sheba

## CHAPTER IV.

### PAINTER ROYAL (1536-1543)

Queen Jane Seymour – Death of Erasmus, and title-page portrait – The Whitehall painting of Henry VIII. – Munich drawing of Henry VIII. – Birth of an heir and the "Jane Seymour Cup" – Death of the Queen – Christina, Duchess of Milan – Secret service for the King – Flying visit to Basel and arrangements for a permanent return – Apprentices his son Philip at Paris – Portrait of the Prince of Wales and the King's return gift – Anne of Cleves – Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk – Catherine Howard – Lapse of Holbein's Basel citizenship – Irregularities – Provision for wife and children – Residence in London – Execution of Queen Catherine Howard – Marriage of Catherine Parr – Dr. Chamber – Unfinished work for the Barber-Surgeons' Hall – Death of Holbein – His will – Place of burial – Holbein's genius: its true character and greatness

### CATALOGUE OF PRINCIPAL EXISTING WORKS.

### REFERENCES.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### 1. HOLBEIN *Frontispiece*

Self Portrait. From a photograph in the Rischgitz Collection.

### 2. "PROSY" AND "HANS" HOLBEIN

Drawn by their father, Hans Holbein the elder. Silver-point.

### 3. SCHOOLMASTER'S SIGNBOARD

Oils. (Basel Museum.)

### 4. JACOB MEYER (ZUM HASEN)

Oils. (Basel Museum.) From a Photograph in the Rischgitz Collection.

### 5. DOROTHEA MEYER (*née* KANNEGIESSER)

Oils. (Basel Museum.) From a Photograph in the Rischgitz Collection.

### 6. BONIFACIUS AMERBACH

Oils. (Basel Museum.)

### 7. FIGHT OF LANDSKNECHTE

Washed drawing. (Basel Museum.) From a Photograph in the Rischgitz Collection.

### 8. THE NATIVITY

Oils. (University Chapel, Freiburg Cathedral.)

From a photograph by G. Röbbke, Freiburg.

### 9. THE PASSION

I. GETHSEMANE.

II. THE KISS OF JUDAS.

III. BEFORE PONTIUS PILATE.

IV. THE SCOURGING.

V. THE MOCKING.

VI. THE WAY TO CALVARY.

VII. "IT IS FINISHED."

VIII. THE ENTOMBMENT.

Eight-panelled Altar-piece. (Basel Museum.)

### 10. CHRIST IN THE GRAVE

Oils. (Basel Museum.)

11. THE RISEN CHRIST

Oils. (Hampton Court Gallery.)

12. THE SOLOTHURN, OR ZETTER'SCHE, MADONNA

Oils. (Solothurn Museum.)

From a Photograph by Braun, Clement, and Cie., Paris.

13. UNNAMED PORTRAIT-STUDY; NOT CATALOGUED AS  
HOLBEIN'S

Silver-point and Indian ink. (Louvre Collection. Believed by the  
writer to be

Holbein's drawing of his wife before her first marriage, and the  
model for the

Solothurn Madonna.) From a Photograph by Braun, Clement, and  
Cie., Paris.

14. ERASMUS

Oils. (The Louvre.) From a Photograph by A. Giraudon, Paris.

15. THE PLOUGHMAN; THE PRIEST

"Images of Death." Woodcut series.

16. DOROTHEA OFFENBURG AS THE GODDESS OF LOVE

Oils. (Basel Museum.) From a Photograph in the Rischgitz Collec-  
tion.

17. DOROTHEA OFFENBURG AS LAÏS CORINTHIACA

Oils. (Basel Museum.) From a Photograph in the Rischgitz Collec-  
tion.

18. THE MEYER-MADONNA

Oils. (Grand Ducal Collection, Darmstadt.) From a Photograph by F.  
Hanfstaengl.

19. THE MEYER-MADONNA

(Later Version. Held by many to be a copy.)

Oils. (Dresden Gallery.) From a photograph by F. Hanfstaengl.

20. SIR THOMAS MORE

Chalks. (Windsor Castle.) From a Photograph by F. Hanfstaengl.

21. JOHN FISHER, BISHOP OF ROCHESTER

- Chalks. (Windsor Castle.) From a Photograph by F. Hanfstaengl.
22. SIR HENRY GUILDFORD
- Oils. (Windsor Castle.) From a Photograph by F. Hanfstaengl.
23. NICHOLAS KRATZER
- Oils. (The Louvre.)
24. SIR BRYAN TUKE
- Oils. (Munich Gallery.) From a Photograph by F. Hanfstaengl.
25. ELSEBETH, HOLBEIN'S WIFE, WITH THEIR TWO ELDEST CHILDREN
- Oils. (Basel Museum.) From a Photograph in the Rischgitz Collection.
26. "BEHOLD TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE."  
SAMUEL DENOUNCING SAUL
- Washed drawing. (Basel Museum.) From a photograph in the Rischgitz Collection.
27. JÖRG (OR GEORGE) GYZE
- Oils. (Berlin Museum.) From a photograph by F. Hanfstaengl.
28. "THE AMBASSADORS"
- Oils. (National Gallery.) From a photograph by F. Hanfstaengl.
29. THE MORETT PORTRAIT
- Oils. (Dresden Gallery.) From a photograph by F. Hanfstaengl.
30. QUEEN JANE SEYMOUR
- Oils. (Vienna Gallery.) From a photograph by F. Hanfstaengl.
31. KING HENRY VIII. AND HIS FATHER
- Fragment of cartoon used for the Whitehall wall-painting.  
(Duke of Devonshire's Collection.)
32. KING HENRY VIII.
- (Life Study; probably for the Whitehall Painting.)
- Chalks. (Munich Collection.) From a photograph by F. Hanfstaengl.
33. DESIGN FOR THE "JANE SEYMOUR CUP"
- (Bodleian Library.)

34. CHRISTINA OF DENMARK, DUCHESS OF MILAN  
Oils. (National Gallery.) Lent by the Duke of Norfolk.
35. ANNE OF CLEVES  
Oils. (The Louvre.) From a photograph by A. Giraudon, Paris.
36. THOMAS HOWARD, THIRD DUKE OF NORFOLK  
Oils. (Windsor Castle.) From a photograph by F. Hanfstaengl.
37. CATHERINE HOWARD  
Chalk drawing. (Windsor Castle.)
38. DR. CHAMBER  
Oils. (Vienna Gallery.) From a photograph by F. Hanfstaengl.



# HOLBEIN <sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER I

### HOLBEIN'S PERIOD, PARENTAGE, AND EARLY WORK

Historical epoch and antecedents—Special conditions and character of early Christian art—Ideals and influence of the monk—Holbein's relation to mediæval schools—His father, uncle, and Augsburg home—Probable dates for his birth and his father's death—Troubles and dispersion of the Augsburg household—From Augsburg to Basel—His brother Ambrose—Erasmus and the *Praise of Folly*; some erroneous impressions of both—Erasmus and Holbein no Protestants at heart—Holbein and the Bible—Illustrated vernacular Bibles in circulation before Luther and Holbein were born—Holbein's earliest Basel oil paintings—Direct and indirect education—Historical, geographical, and scientific revolutions of his day—Beginning of his connection with the Burgomaster of Basel—Jacob Meyer zum Hasen—Holbein's woodcuts—His studies from nature—Sudden visit to Lucerne—Italian influence on his art—Work for the Burgomaster of Lucerne.

The eighty-three years stretching from 1461 to 1543—between the probable year of the elder Hans Holbein's birth and that in [Pg 2] which the younger, the great Holbein, died—constitute one of those periods which rightly deserve the much-abused name of an Epoch. The Christian era of itself had known many: the Yellow-Danger of the fifth century making one hideous smear across Europe; the *Hic Jacet* with which this same century entombed an Empire three continents could not content; the new impulse which Charlemagne and Alfred had given to Progress in the ninth century; the triumphant establishment of Papal Supremacy, that Napoleonic idea of Gregory VII.—*Sanctus Satanas*, of the eleventh, and grand architect in a vaster Roman Empire which still "humanly contends for glory"; and lastly, at the very threshold of the Holbeins, the invention of movable printing types about 1440, and the fall of Constantinople in 1453,

which combined to drive the prodigies and potencies of Greek genius through the world.

Each of these had done its own special work for the advancement of man—as for that matter all things must, whether by help or helplessness. Not less than Elijah did the wretched priests of Baal serve those slow, sure, eternal Purposes, which include an Ahab and all the futile fury of his little life as the sun includes its "spots."

But although the stream of History is one, [Pg 3] and its every succeeding curve only an expansion of the first, there has probably been no century of our era when this stream has been so suddenly enlarged, or bent so sharply toward fresh constellations as in that of the Holbeins,—when Religion and Art, as well as Science, saw a New World upon its astonished horizon. So that we properly call it a transition period, and its representative men "transitional."

Yet we shall never get near to these real men, to their real world, unless we can forget all about the pose of this or the other Zeitgeist—that tale

*Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.*

For we must keep constantly in mind that what we call the Middle Ages or—worse yet—the Dark Ages, made up the Yesterday of the Holbeins and was the flesh and blood transmitted to them as their own flesh and blood with all its living bonds toward the Old and all its living impulses toward the New.

A now famous New Zealander is, we know, to sketch our own "mediævalism" with contemptuous pity for its darkness. But until his day comes, our farthing-dips seem to make a gaudy illumination. And, meantime, we are [Pg 4] alive; we walk about; we, too, can swell the chorus which the Initiated chant in every century with the same fond confidence: "We alone enjoy the Holy Light."

The New is ever becoming old; the old ever changing into New. And if we ask why each waxes or wanes just when it does and as it does, there is, in the last analysis, no better answer than Aurora's explanation for chancing on the poets—

*Because the time was ripe.*

And the Holbein century is one of stupendous Transitions because the time was ripe; and not simply because printing was invented, or Greek scholars were driven from Constantinople to scatter abroad in Europe, or Ferdinand and Isabella wanted a direct route to Cathay, or Friar Martin nailed ninety-five Theses to the door of Wittenberg's church, and built himself thereby an everlasting name as Luther.

And because the time was ripe for a new Art, even more than because this or that great painter entrained it, it also had its transition period, and Holbein is set down in manuals as a transitional painter. Teutonic, too; because all Christian art is either Byzantine or Italian or Teutonic in its type.

When it first crept from the catacombs under [Pg 5] the protection of the Constantinople Court it could but be Byzantine; that strange composite obtained by stripping the Greek "beast" of every pagan beauty and then decking it out with crude Oriental ornament. But who that prizes the peculiar product of that fanaticism would have had its cradle without this sleepless terror, lest for the whole world of classic heathendom it should lose the dear-bought soul of purely Christian ideals? Or who, remembering that in thus relentlessly sacrificing its entire heritage of pagan accumulation it put back the clock of Art to the Stone Age, and had to begin all over again in the helpless bewilderment of untaught childish effort,—could find twice ten centuries too long for the astounding feat it achieved? Ten centuries, after all, make but a marvellous short course betwixt the archaic compositions of the third century and the compositions of Giotto or Wilhelm Meister.

A great deal of nonsense is talked about the "tyrannies" which the Monastic Age inflicted on Art. Of course, monasticism fostered fanaticism. It does not need the luminous genius that said it, to teach us that "whatever is necessary to what we make our sole object is sure, in some way or in some time or other, to become [Pg 6] our master." And with the monk, the true monk in his day of usefulness, every knowledge and every art was good or bad according as it served monastic ideals. But it is absurd to say that the monk—*qua* monk—"put the intellect in chains." The whole body of his op-

pression was not so paralysing as the iron little finger of Malherbe and his school of "classic" despots. To charge upon the monk the limitations of his crude thought and cruder methods is about as intelligent as it would be to fall foul of Shakespeare because boys played his women's parts.

The springs of Helicon were the monk's also, as witness Tuotilo and Bernard of Clairvaux; but it was by the waters of Jordan that his miracles were wrought. As Johnson somewhere says of Watts, "every kind of knowledge was by the piety of his mind converted into theology." And for the rest, — by the labour of his hands, by his fasting from the things of the flesh, by his lofty faith — however erring or forgotten or betrayed, in individual cases, — by every impressive lesson of a hard life lived unto others and a hard death died unto himself, century after century it was the monk who taught and helped the barbarian of every land to turn the desolate freedom of the wild ass into [Pg 7] a smiling homestead and the savage Africa of his own heart into at least a better place. The marvel is that he could at the same time find room or energy to make his monastery also a laboratory, a library, and a studio. And yet he did.

To say that he abhorred Greek ideals is to say that the shepherd abhors the wolf. His life was one long fight with the insidious poison of the Greek. He did not, — at any rate in his best days — believe at all in Art for Art's sake; and had far too intimate an acquaintance with the "natural man" to do him even justice. What he wanted was to do away with him.

Yet with all its repellent features, it is to this unflinching exclusiveness of the monkish ideal that we owe one of the most exquisite blossoms on the stock of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, — their innocent and appealing art; an art as original and as worthy of reverence, within its own peculiar province, as the masterpieces of Greece or Italy. You must turn from the beauty of Antinous to the beauty of, say, the Saint Veronica, among the works of the Cologne school at Munich, before you can estimate the Gulf of many things besides time which for ever divides the world of the one from the world of the other. And then you [Pg 8] must essay to embody the visions of Patmos with a child's colour-box and brushes, before you

can compare the achievements—the amazing achievements—of the monkish ideal with the achievements of classic paganism.

With the school of Wilhelm Meister this tremendous revolution had accomplished itself; and solely through the indomitable will of the monk. The ideal of Greece had been to show how gods walk the earth. This Christian ideal was to show how devout men and women walk with God. Their ineffable heavenly faces look out from their golden world—

*Inviolat, unwearied,  
Divinest, sweetest, best,*

upon this far-off, far other world, where nothing is inviolate, and divinest things must come at last to tears and ashes.

But the monk had had his day as well as his way. The so-called Gothic architecture had expressed its uttermost of aspiration and tenuity; and painting had fulfilled its utmost accommodation to the ever more slender wall-spaces and forms which this architecture necessitated. And once again, in the fifteenth century, the time was ripe for a new transition. Art was now to reveal the realities of this world, and to concern itself with Man among them. And [Pg 9] just as the law of reaction flung the mind into religious revolt from the outworn dogmas and overgrown pretensions of the monkish ideal, so did it drive the healthy reaction of art into its own extravagances of protest. And we shall see how even a genius like Holbein's was unable to entirely free itself from this reactionary defect. For with all his astonishing powers, imaginative and technical, he never wholly overcame that defect of making his figures too short and too thick-set for grace, which amounted to a deformity in the full-length figures of his early work, and was due to his fierce revolt from the unnaturally elongated forms of an earlier period.

Yet we should make a grave mistake if we were to regard Holbein as cut off by this reaction from all affinities with the monkish ideals of the Cologne school. On the contrary. We shall see, especially in his religious pictures, how many of those ideals had fed the very springs of his imagination and sunk deep into his art; only expressing themselves in his own symbolism and in forms unlike theirs.

In the Augsburg Gallery there is a painting by Holbein's father, the "Basilica of St. Paul," in which there is a group introduced after the [Pg 10] fashion of the period, which has a special biographical interest. This group, in the Baptism of St. Paul, is believed by many authorities to be a portrait-group of the painter himself,—Hans Holbein the Elder, and his two young sons, Ambrose (or Amprosy, as it was often written) and Johannes, or "Hanns." The portrait of the father is certainly like Holbein's own drawing of him in the Duke d'Aumale's Collection, which Sandrart engraved in his account of the younger Holbein; while the heads of the two boys are very like those which we shall find later in a drawing in the Berlin Gallery. From the pronounced way in which his father's hand rests on little Hans' head, while the left points him out,—and even his elder brother "Prosy" shows by his attitude the special notice to be taken of Hans,—it is clear that if this is a portrait-group either it was painted when the boys were actually older, or the younger had already given some astonishing proof of that precocity which his early works display; for in this group the younger boy cannot be more than eight or nine years old.

Hans Holbein the Elder, who stands here with his long brown hair and beard falling over his fur gown, was a citizen of Augsburg, [Pg 11] living for a while in the same street with the honoured Augsburg painter, Hans Burgkmair, and occasionally working with him on large commissions. That he was a native of Augsburg, and the son—as is generally believed—of "Michel Holbain" (Augsburg commonly spelt *Holbein* with an *a*), leather-dresser—I myself cannot feel so sure as others do. There is no documentary evidence to prove that the Michael Holbein of Augsburg ever had a son, and there is both documentary and circumstantial evidence to prove that the descendants of Hans Holbein the Elder claimed a different origin. That a man was a "citizen," or burgher, of any town, of course proves nothing. It was a period when painters especially learned their trades and practised it in many centres. And this, when guilds were all-powerful and no one could either join one without taking citizenship with it, or pursue its calling in any given place without