

A CALENDAR OF
TREASURES FROM
THE RUSKIN
COLLECTION
(with additional material)

DECEMBER

Guild of St George
With thanks to Museums Sheffield

*Text by Louise Pullen and Stuart Eagles
Images selected by Stuart Eagles
Images scanned by Museums Sheffield
Edited & designed by Stuart Eagles*

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DECEMBER 1



C. Schultz, "The Meyer Madonna" after Holbein (1871).

This religious painting has taken its name from the man who commissioned the work, Jakob Meyer. Portraits of Jakob and his family surround the Madonna figure in this painting. Such portraits are known as "donor portraits" and the paintings were usually commissioned to commemorate an important event. Here, Jakob, who was Burgomeister (mayor) of Basle in Switzerland, appears with his two sons, both of whom died in childhood. On the other side, his first wife, Magdalena, and second wife, Dorothea, are shown kneeling together with Jakob's only surviving child, Anna. The Madonna appears here as the Queen of Heaven, symbolised through her crown. Her

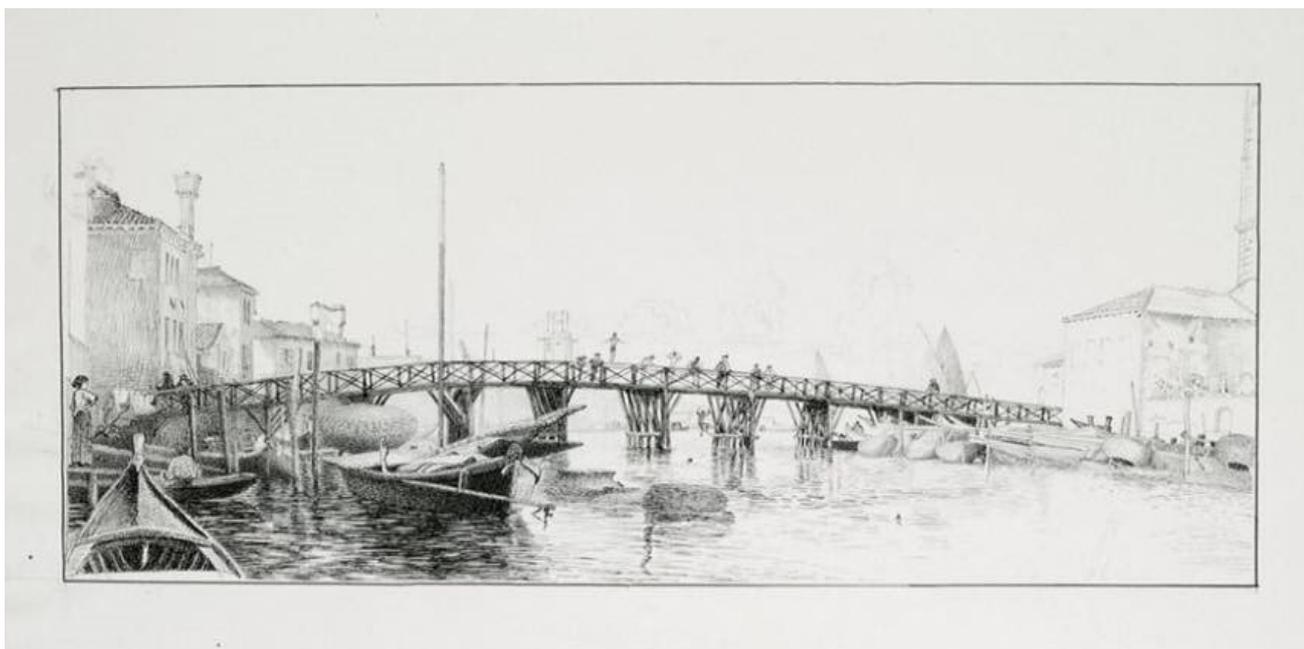
maternal pose depicts her as a sympathetic and kind figure. Meyer possibly commissioned this work in the hope that such devotion to the Madonna would bring him better fortune. As well as suffering the deaths of his first wife and two sons, Meyer was also dismissed from his position as Burgomeister.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

DECEMBER 2

J. W. Bunney, "Bridge from Calle Larga Rosa to Isola San Pietro di Castello, Venice, Italy" (1868-82).

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



DECEMBER 3

Illuminated manuscript.

The "de Croy" Book of Hours (1460-65) by or from the workshop of Jean Fouquet , c. 1415-20- 1481.

This contains a selection of decorated texts, prayers and psalms for Christian devotion. The volume begins with a calendar which on magnificently decorated double-leaves illustrates the course of the year. All other miniatures are of equally excellent quality. All pages with large-format illustrations are surrounded by richly carved bronze-gold Gothic frames. The same framing system is used throughout, providing a uniform visual impression when opening the book.

All 58 miniatures are of stunning quality and conform to the usual content of a Book of Hours: the twelve initial calendar miniatures are followed by diverse illustrations related to the devotion in the face of Christ, of the Holy Cross and the Holy Ghost, and by illustrations referring to an Office of the Virgin and to pericopes of the four Gospels. The Office of the Virgin forms the core of the book around which the Penitentiary Psalms, an Office of the Dead as well as prayers dedicated to various saints are grouped.

Post 3 of 4.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>





omne ad adiuna
 me festina
 cora xatru
 iat erit rinitie
 emento salitis et
 offitium. ps.
 Dic serua uer
 sos meos qui in
 me malis
 cor hanc oculi serior
 am ambus dnor suor
 iat oculi an alle m
 nomibus domine huc
 qui ante me ad donnu

caueant ipse.
 omne exaudi
 et clamor oratio
 nichina domine oio
 eue neme oratio
 idellum. uis.

Amite
 ESTS

Raison commande
 & MASTAING

Madame se sçait que breuis asseru
 que vous vouldrez honorer christia
 supplant honore placez he deu qui
 15: P. 10.
 Raison se verra
 Halenim

Madame i' ne vien de a may
 que naites la croix de l'inc
 de l'enhe que fait pou
 vous rendre bie humble oratio
 fuis 33 tout
 lenore

DECEMBER 4



Illuminated manuscript.

The "de Croy" Book of Hours (1460-65) by or from the workshop of Jean Fouquet , c. 1415-20- 1481.

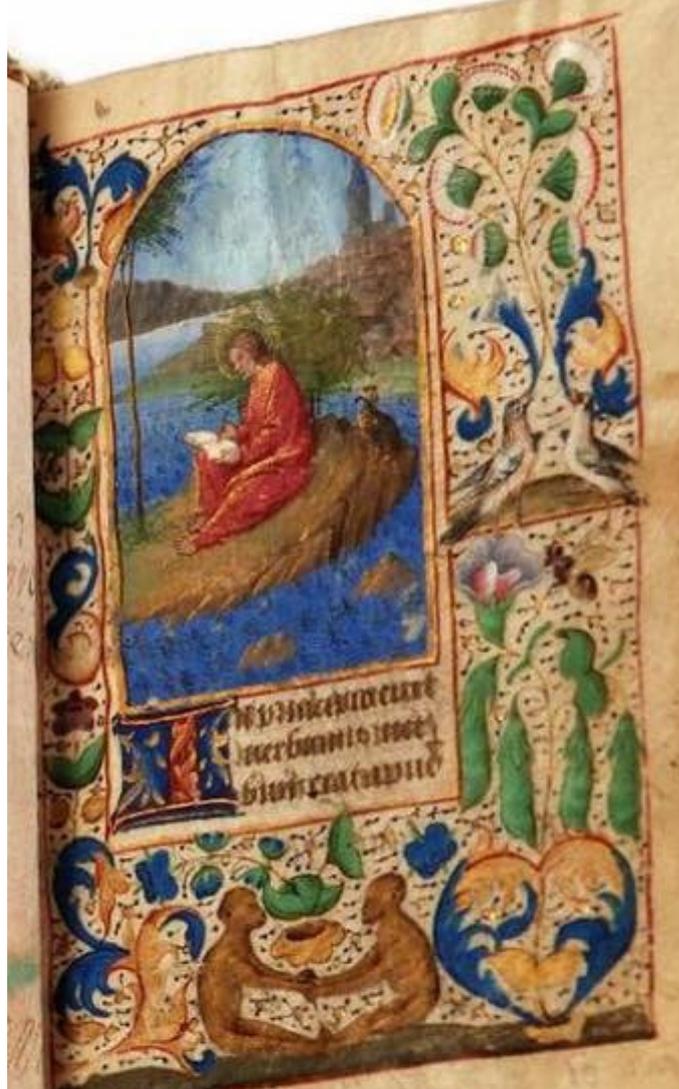
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Post 4 of 4.

<http://www.gildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



DECEMBER 5

Frank Randal, Canopy of Principit adjoining Stalls, North side of Choir, Amiens, France (1881).

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



DECEMBER 6

Joseph Arthur Severn, "Coblentz, Germany" after JMW Turner (1880).

Severn made this copy for Ruskin of one of Turner's most "exemplary" works. Ruskin described it as a "swift but careful study by Mr Arthur Severn.... [It] has, I believe, been one of the ...most interesting and instructive [museum objects]." Ruskin made a number of comments about the original work [Coblentz (1842)] in his book, "The Elements of Drawing". He was particularly interested in its "simple" composition: "The leading or master feature is, of course, the tower on the bridge. It is kept from being too principal by an important group on each side of it; the boats, on the right, and [the mountain] Ehrenbreitstein beyond. The boats are large in mass, and more forcible in colour, but they are broken into small divisions, while the tower is simple, and therefore it still leads. Ehrenbreitstein is noble in its mass, but so reduced by aërial perspective of colour that it cannot contend with the tower, which therefore holds the eye, and becomes the key of the picture... It is observable that [Turner] uses the artifice...in pictures where he wishes to obtain an expression of repose... is first repeated by the low echo of it to the left; put your finger over this lower tower, and see how the picture is spoiled. Then the spires of Coblentz are all arranged in couples... The dual arrangement of these towers would have been too easily seen, were it not for the little one which pretends to make a triad of the last group on the right, but is so faint as hardly to be discernible; it just takes off the attention from the artifice, helped in doing so by the mast at the head of the boat, which, however, has instantly its own duplicate put at the stern. Then there is the large boat near, and its echo beyond it. That echo is divided into two again, and each of those two smaller boats has two figures in it; while two figures are also sitting together on the great rudder that lies half in the water, and half aground. Then, finally, the great mass of Ehrenbreitstein, which appears at first to have no answering form, has almost its facsimile in the bank on which the girl is sitting; this bank is as absolutely essential to the completion of the picture as any object in the whole series. All this is done to deepen the effect of repose." Ruskin also wrote about the work in relation to colour: "There is nothing in painters' work of any time more exquisite, as any painter may quickly find out, who will try to copy the right-hand side of it, with the gliding boat, struck with a few lines of brown and vermilion over the exquisitely laid ground of blue and purple; or who will similarly work out a square inch of the reflections on the left under the bridge."

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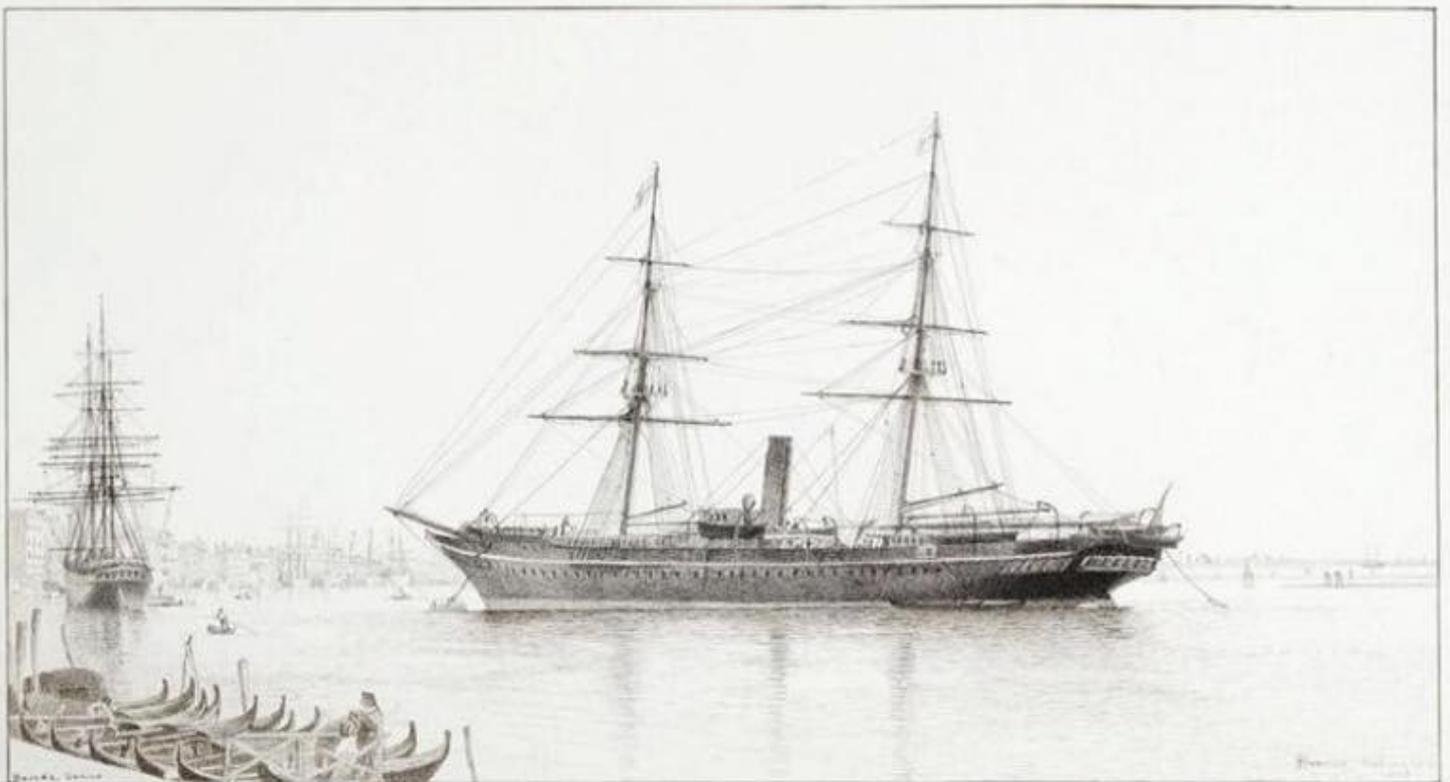


DECEMBER 7

J. W. Bunney, "P&O Steamship with Harbour in the Background, Venice, Italy" (late 19th Century).

The ship at the centre of the image is the Baroda, which was run by the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O). Between 1864, when the ship was built, and 1881, the Baroda served as a mail ship. Here, the Baroda is moored in St Mark's Basin, which forms a natural port. The view is taken from the Riva degli Schiavoni, looking along the walkway to the Riva dei Sette Martiri, a sea-promenade from St Mark's Square, where for centuries it has been fashionable to take an evening stroll. In the distance, the campanile or church tower of San Francesco da Paola can be seen. This view, with its many points of interest, is common among artists such as JMW Turner and Canaletto, yet few artists have focused on the ships themselves. Perhaps Bunney, who lived on Venice's waterfront, and whose father was a seaman, found this view more interesting for an informal drawing.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



DECEMBER 8

On This Day in 1842: Thomas Matthews Rooke was born.
Happy Birthday : Celebrating T. M. Rooke.

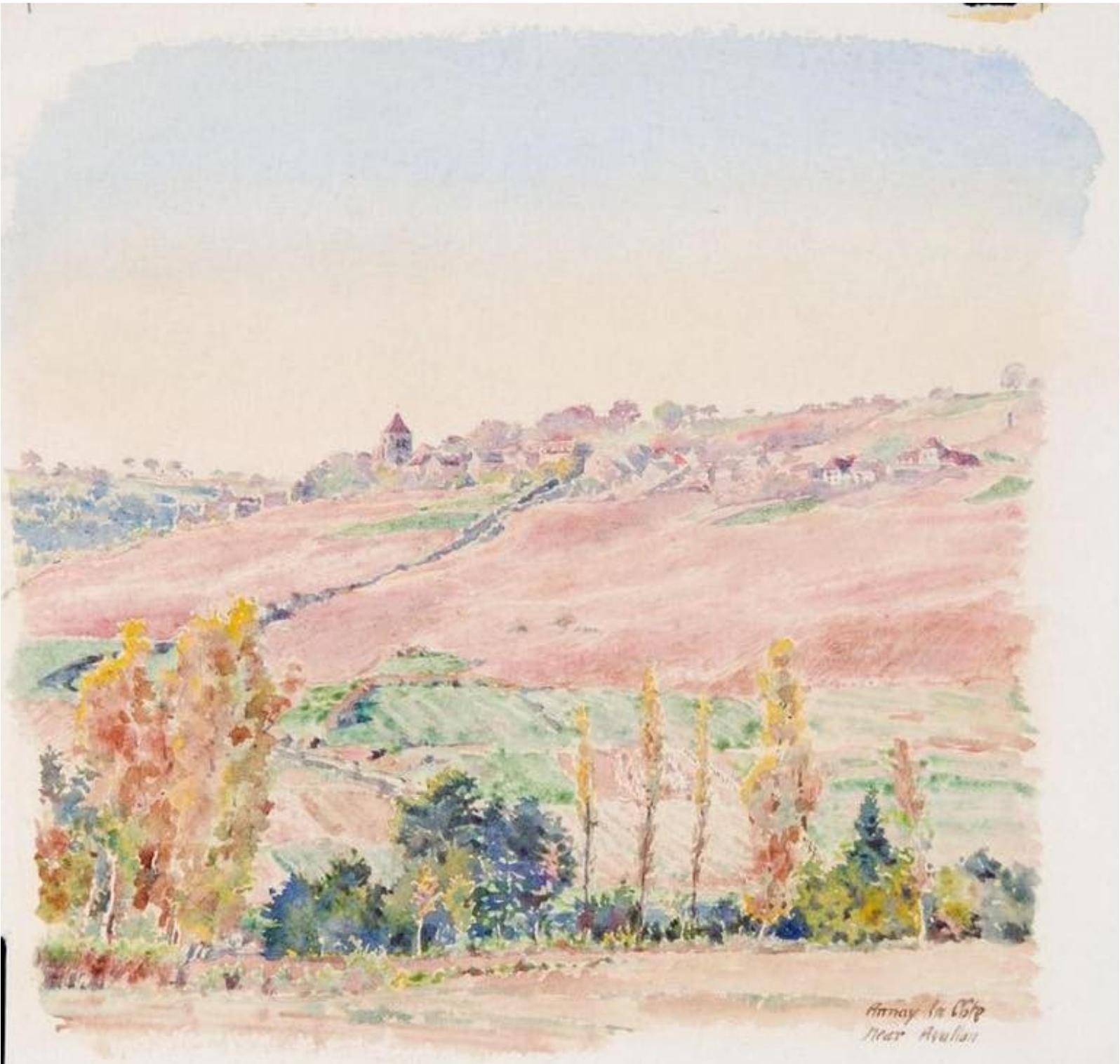
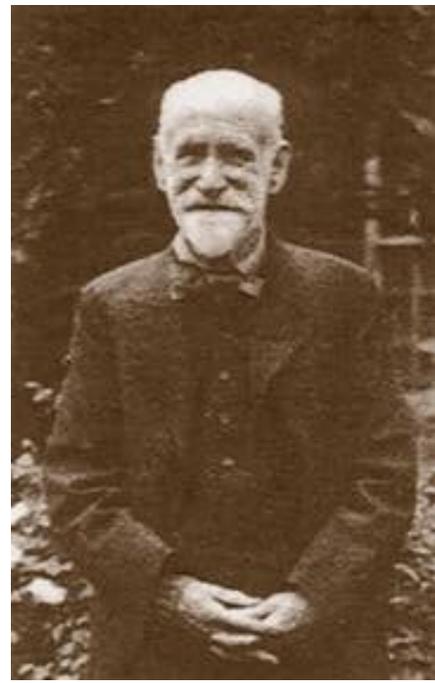
"Annay la Côte, near Avallon, France" (1886).

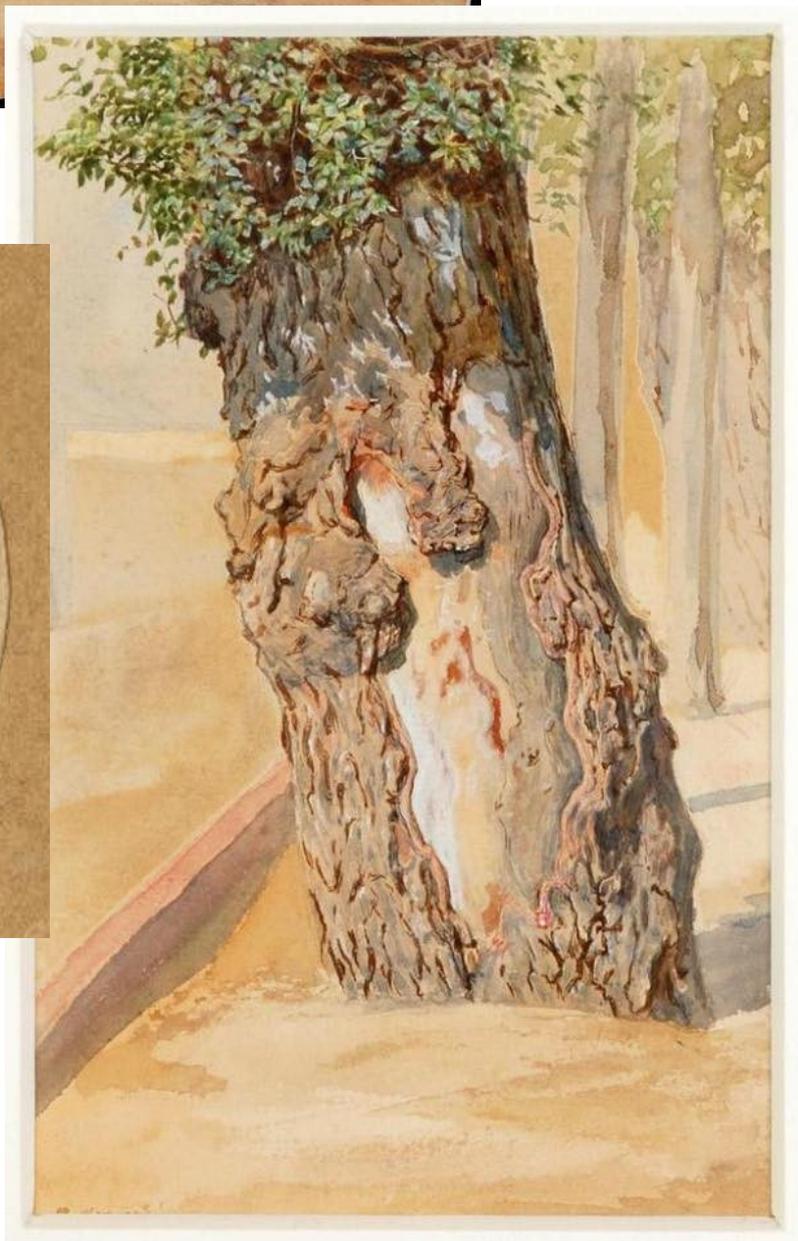
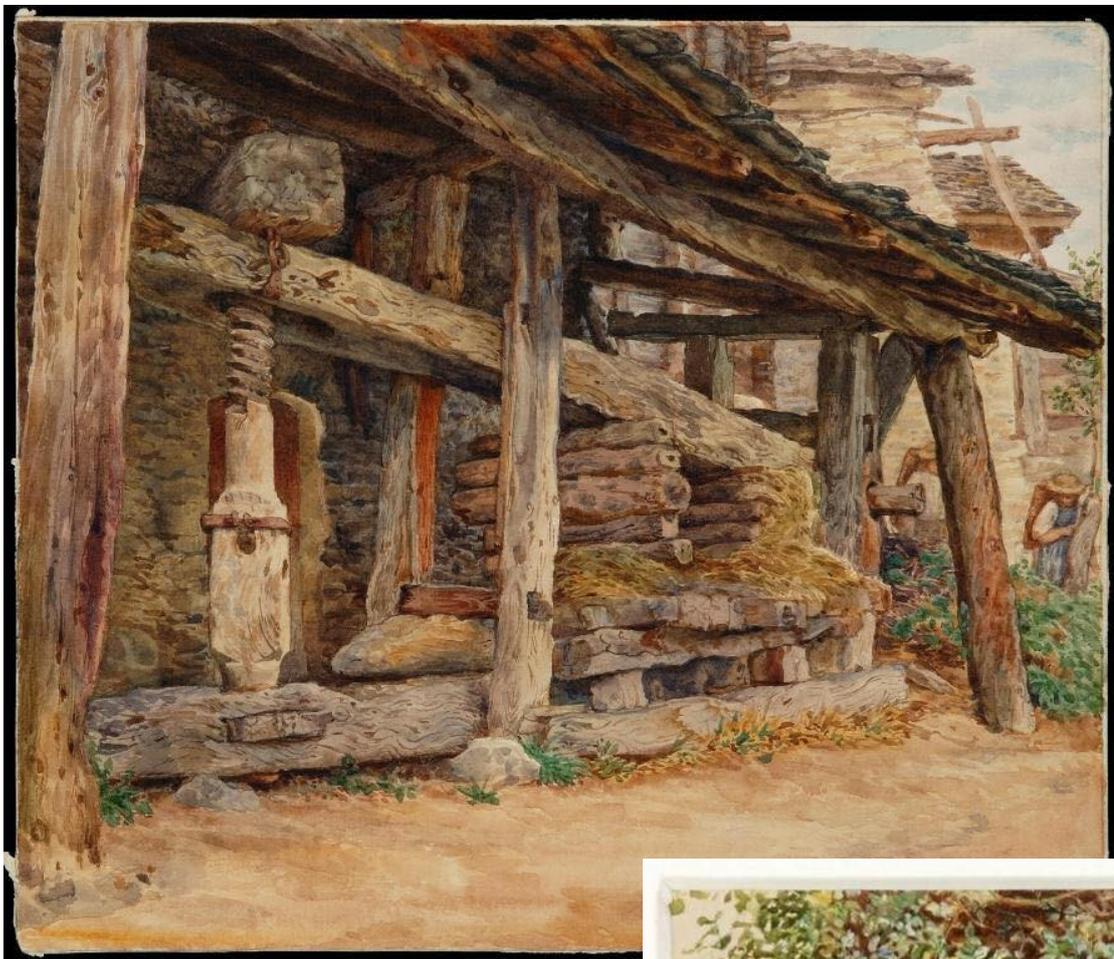
"Old Wine-press at Sierre, Switzerland" (1884).

"Study of an Elm Tree Trunk" (1869).

"The Burning of Her Majesty's Opera House, Haymarket, London" (1867).

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80 Years Ago: Edith Hope Scott, first historian of the Guild of St George, Companion from Liverpool who settled in the Wyr Forest, died in 1936 <http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/guild-history/>



DECEMBER 9

"Angels in Adoration"
from the Medici
Riccardi Chapel, after
Benozzo Gozzoli,
published by The
Arundel Society (1885).

This print
(chromolithograph)
depicts a small section
of a fresco or wall
painting in the private
chapel of the Medici
Palace in Florence. The
Medici, a powerful,
ruling family in
Renaissance Florence,
finished their chapel in
1449 and commissioned
fresco decoration from
the Florentine artist
Benozzo Gozzoli. The
Magi, or Three Kings
with a multitude of
attendants, are shown
processing along the
walls. This detail is
taken from the altar area
of the chapel where
angels kneel in
adoration of the Christ
Child. The Arundel
Society produced prints
from various areas of
this highly-decorative
chapel; all are filled
with background details



that show landscapes and architecture from around Florence, mingled with exotic animals and plants to give the work a luxurious feel. The society's aim was to bring art to people who would have little chance of seeing the original works, a project intended to improve "public taste" and to provide an affordable resource to art students.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

DECEMBER 10

Frank Randal, "South West Angle, Notre Dame-la-Grande, Poitiers, France" (1883). The Church of Our Lady in Poitiers is famous for its western façade which was built in the mid 1100s. The church is Romanesque, an architectural style popular around 900 to 1200s, characterised by dominant round arches. Ornate sculptures fill the three tiers of the western façade. The lower tier shows Biblical scenes with the apostles and bishops in the



tiers above. Surrounding the figures and within the arches, decorations of leaves and animals make the façade a highly decorative sight. Ruskin wrote that it was carved "in overwhelming redundance." Ruskin felt that "redundance" was a positive thing, because it was only present in buildings where the building's beauty was more important than the cost of creating it. This drawing shows some of the features for which the church is famous, in particular the Romanesque arches and one of the conical turrets to the side of the façade. Ruskin did not admire the study, however, saying that the perspective and tinting were "flat".

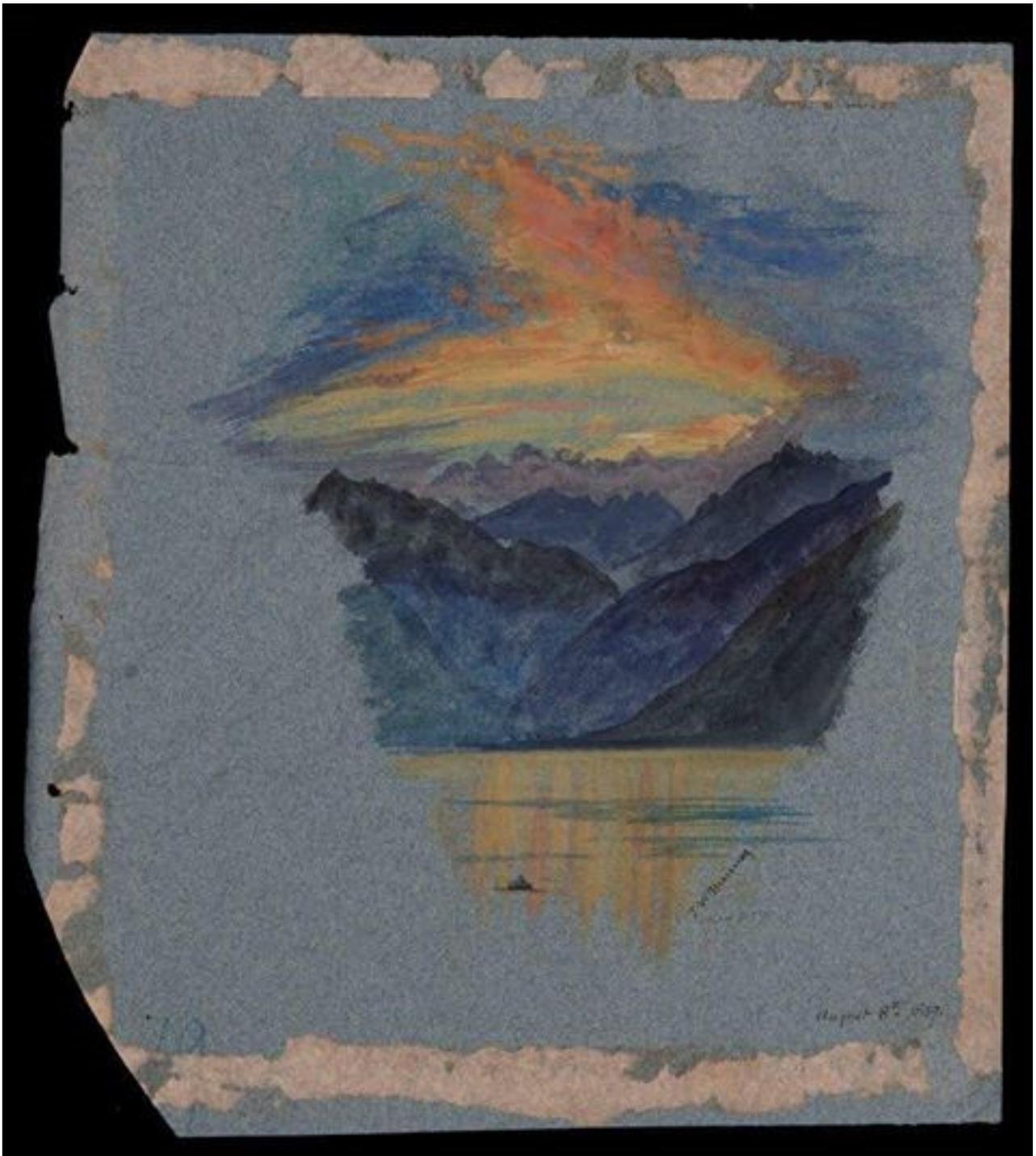
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DECEMBER 11

On This Day: International Mountain Day.

JW Bunney, "Mountains and Sunset" (1859).

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



DECEMBER 12



J. W. Bunney, "Moonlit night on the Thames near Westminster Abbey, London" (1850s).

<http://www.gildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

DECEMBER 13



Charlotte C. Murray, "Study of Flowers" (1880). This study is part of a botanical series by Murray. Ruskin chose several of her flower studies in the 1870s for Sheffield's Ruskin Collection, to demonstrate her "exemplary" use of colour; she gave the rest much later. Ruskin felt that flower studies were important to art because the artist needed considerable powers of observation to perceive the colour and delicacy of the flowers accurately, and great artistic skill to capture it all correctly in paint. Ruskin felt that an artist should "day by day... draw some lovely natural form or flower ... choosing for study, in natural scenes, only what is beautiful and strong in life." That way, they would find a new sense of beauty in their surroundings. Botanical drawing was often seen as a suitable pastime for

young ladies, but Ruskin tried to encourage professional artists to paint flowers too. He thought it would engender a sense of modesty.

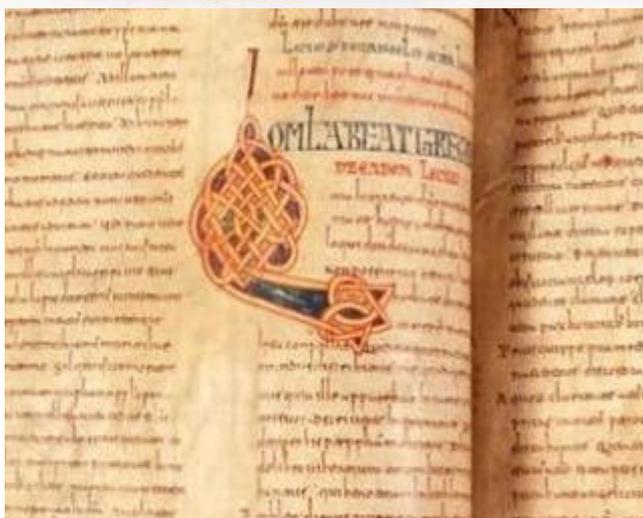
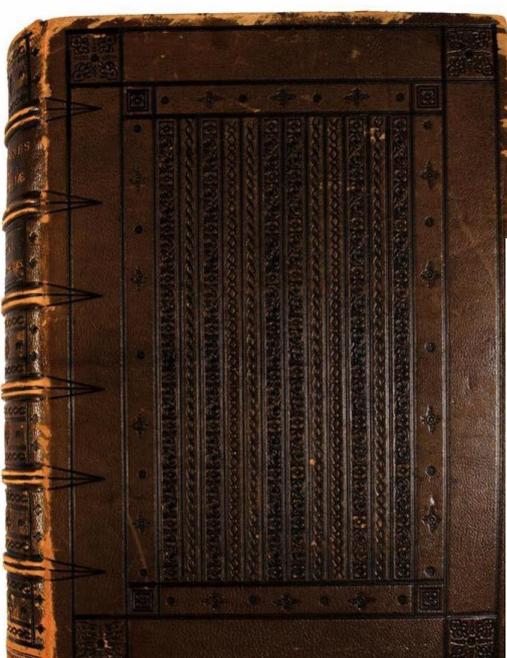
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DECEMBER 14

J. W. Bunney, "Mountain Scenery, Derbyshire" (1855-59).
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



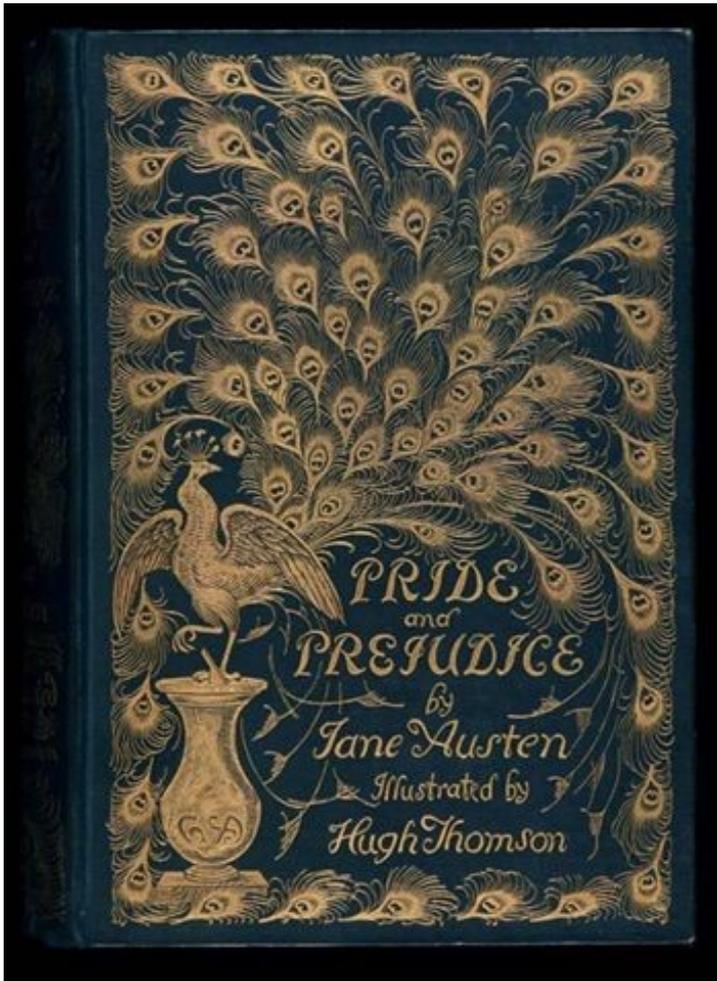
DECEMBER 15



10th-century Spanish manuscript: Sermones et Homiliae; Codex in Membrauis.

<http://www.gildofstgeorge.org.uk/the->

DECEMBER 16



On This Day in 1772: Jane Austen was born.
Jane Austen, "Pride and Prejudice" (1894)
Chiswick Press Edition.

"It is a truth universally acknowledged..."

This book cover is decorated in a style associated with the Aesthetic movement which flourished in the late 19th Century. Designers and artists of the aesthetic movement celebrated the ideal of "art for art's sake" which opposed the alternative Victorian idea that art and design should have a moral, narrative or spiritual purpose. As such, works of the Aesthetic movement are often associated with decadence or sensuality. The peacock was one of the most prominent motifs seen in works belonging to the Aesthetic movement due to its colourful tail feathers. Hugh Thomson's illustration of a peacock on the front of this volume is not a natural study of a peacock; its explosion of tail feathers is typical of Aestheticism's ostentatious display. Thomson's illustrations inside the book are rather different in style, and take on a nostalgic and romantic flavour suited to the book as a period romance.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

On This Day in 1787, Mary Russell Mitford, best known for writing "Our Village" was born. She wrote of Ruskin that he was "just what if one had a son one should have dreamt of his turning out, in mind, manner, conversation, everything." <http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



DECEMBER 17

Frank Randal, "Piazza delle Erbe, looking south, Verona, Italy" (1884).

This unfinished drawing shows the principal marketplace and administrative centre of Verona. Randal has completed the furthest two of the square's most dominant buildings: the gothic Gardello Tower, or watchtower of the Palazzo del Comunale that dates from the 1370s, and the renaissance Palazzo Maffei, which was built in the 1600s. Randal painted the work for John Ruskin, who asked him to paint each end of the marketplace. The buildings here illustrates one of Ruskin's observations about Verona's architecture: "[nowhere] is there a great medieval Gothic like the Gothic of Verona. Elsewhere, it is either less pure in type or less lovely in completion: only at Verona may you see it in the simplicity of its youthful power, and the tenderness of its accomplished beauty. And Verona possesses... the loveliest Renaissance architecture of Italy, not disturbed by pride, nor defiled by luxury, but rising in fair fulfilment of domestic service, serenity of effortless grace, and modesty."

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



DECEMBER 18

T. M. Rooke, "Sundial on Market Day, Laon, France" (1886).

In 1886, Ruskin commissioned Rooke to work in France, writing: "I am going to avail myself of your divine sympathy with the French character and your exquisite architectural drawing. I want you to go first to Laon and see how you like it..." Descriptions of Laon rarely appear in Ruskin's books, but he wrote of the town and its hilltop location with affection in his letters and diary notes. Rooke therefore painted a number of views of Laon, including the cathedral and the surrounding streets. This scene shows the towns-people of Laon on a busy market day, yet still focuses on the architecture of Laon, including a decorative sculptural frieze on the house towards the left and the window tracery and buttress of Laon cathedral at the top. The sundial from the title of the study is a plaque held by the sculpture of an angel.

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DECEMBER 19

On This Day in 1851: J. M. W. Turner died.

William Parrott (1813-1869), "Turner on Varnishing Day" (c. 1840). Oil on panel. Varnishing Day was a special event that took place at the Royal Academy of Art in London. Officially it was the day on which artists could varnish their paintings before the official opening of the Summer Exhibition. In practice, it was also a private viewing of the exhibition, at which artists, journalists and celebrities could meet and discuss the paintings before the exhibition opened to the public. According to reports, Turner not

only used Varnishing Day to varnish or put finishing touches to his works, but also to significantly alter or even finish incomplete paintings. It has been suggested that Turner was working on his painting "Mercury and Argus" (also pictured) in this portrait of him. There are few portraits of Turner, and this one by Parrott, supposedly painted from life (from sketches made in front of Turner), provides a rare glimpse of him towards the end of his life.

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DECEMBER 20

JMW Turner. "London from Greenwich" from "Liber Studiorum" (1811).
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



DECEMBER 21

Late 19th-century photograph: Palazzo Ducale, Venezia.
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



DECEMBER 22



William Hackstoun, "Interior of St Riquier, Abbeville, France" (1883).
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

DECEMBER 23

Edward Lear, "Sarkidiornis africanus" [Swan Goose] (1836).

Lear painted this for naturalist Thomas Campbell Eyton, towards his book, "A Monograph of the Anatidae or Duck Tribe", published in 1838. In 1837, Eyton employed Lear to make bird studies from life, or, where necessary, used stuffed birds as the first step in producing the illustrations. Six of Lear's duck drawings were later developed for the book, and unused ones were kept in Eyton's private collection. Interestingly, the Royal Academy of Arts has some almost identical drawings by John Halphead Smith (1826-1896), painted in 1840. These too were painted for Eyton. It's possible that Smith copied Lear's work, and that Eyton allowed his collection or specimen drawings to be used by other artists and authors. Certainly, one of Lear's drawings from Eyton's collection was reproduced for Sir William Jardine's book, "Illustrations of the Duck Tribe" of 1839, showing that natural scientists of the time collaborated. There is some confusion over what species these studies show. It is most probable they are African swan geese or female comb ducks.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



DECEMBER 24



T. M. Rooke, "Study of Mosaics, 'The Madonna and Rinceaux', Eastern Dome, San Marco, Venice, Italy" (1879). This is a study of one of the most eye-catching in San Marco's mosaic scheme. John Ruskin commented particularly on the colours: 'The decorative power of the colour... is entirely admirable, --more especially the dark purple of the Virgin's robe, with lines of gold for its folds..' Rooke used gold paint to emphasise the light from San Marco's high windows shining off the mosaics. Ruskin drew particular attention to the vivid stories told in San Marco's mosaics because they would have been the only illustrations available to Venetian citizens 900 years ago. He also felt that the style defining them, known as Byzantine, was the important

stepping-stone from ancient classical art to that of the modern period. By 1879, Venice's authorities were restoring and replacing the Byzantine mosaics. Together with the artist, Edward Burne-Jones, Ruskin made a public plea to request funding for a project to record the mosaics before unsympathetic restoration destroyed them.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

DECEMBER 25

Charles Fairfax Murray, "The Madonna and Child", after Lippi (1876-80).

Lippi's "Madonna and Child" was commissioned in the mid fifteenth century by Florence's ruling Medici family for their private chapel. Ruskin thought that it was "one of the greatest works ever produced by hand of man." He admired the "deceptive reality" of the figures set against the window and was interested by the figures' rather ugly faces, which he felt asked the viewer to "consider [the] dignity and simplicity of expression more than beauty of feature." Ruskin suggested that artists would learn by copying the painting, but this copy failed to impress him. He wrote that Murray "has been quite unable to do justice to the exquisite fineness of draughtsmanship... or to give to colours... the



charm ... they receive in the original." Ruskin recommended looking at it alongside a photograph. That way, Lippi's draughtsmanship could be admired in the photograph, whilst Murray's copy would give some idea of the colour, light and shadow.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

DECEMBER 26

On This Day: St Stephen.

Angelo Alessandri, "The Martyrdom of St Stephen" after Tintoretto (1891).

Tintoretto, or more probably his assistants, painted the Martyrdom of St Stephen as an altarpiece for the church of San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice in 1593.

This watercolour shows the death of St Stephen, who was one of the first biblical martyrs. His story is told in the Book of Acts. Stephen was a preacher, sent out to work in Jerusalem by Christ's disciples, and he was able to perform miracles. One group of Jews put Stephen on trial for his beliefs, and when he stated that he had seen a vision of God with Christ at his side, they dragged him out of the city and stoned him to death. This work shows men stoning St Stephen, who is looking up at figures of God and Christ above him. His attribute, or identifying object, is the book of Gospels, which is in the lower left of this painting, and the martyr's palm in his arms.

Ruskin said that Tintoretto was "the most powerful painter whom the world has seen" and admired his paintings for his use of colour in its symbolic and emotional meaning. The symbolic use of colour has become conventional in art; in this work, for example, St Stephen wears a traditional red gown. Ruskin felt that Tintoretto had original ideas

about how to transmit messages through colour and knew also how to use chiaroscuro, or bright light and dark tones, to create an emotional scene. In this painting, St Stephen's halo and the light of God shine out of the work, and are more powerful because of the darkness that surrounds them. Ruskin noticed the figure of Saul (later St Paul) in the background of the work. He is not an important figure in this story but Tintoretto has placed him here to acknowledge Saul's later importance as a saint by dressing him in the same colours--black and red--as God. Ruskin explained that most artists would have painted St Paul in a more reverent manner, but for Tintoretto, "colour is enough".

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



DECEMBER 27



On This Day: St John's Day.

Charles Fairfax Murray, "The Virgin and Child with St John" after Botticelli (1880).

Not the result of a direct commission from Ruskin, Murray copied this work from the Palatina Gallery, in Florence's Pitti Palace, hoping that Ruskin would later accept it for the Ruskin Collection. Ruskin had, in fact, never seen the original painting and wrote to Murray, "Your Madonna and roses and little St John are glorious.--but tell me exactly where the picture is and what size? How could I have missed it!" Botticelli had been trained firstly as a goldsmith and then as a painter. Ruskin believed that this double training had given him creative insights into design and the use of colour and light. Botticelli was also doubly educated in religion: by the artist Filippo Lippi who was a monk; and by means

of his personal interest in classical literature. Ruskin judged that Botticelli "was the most universal of painters; and, take him all and all, the greatest Florentine workman".

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

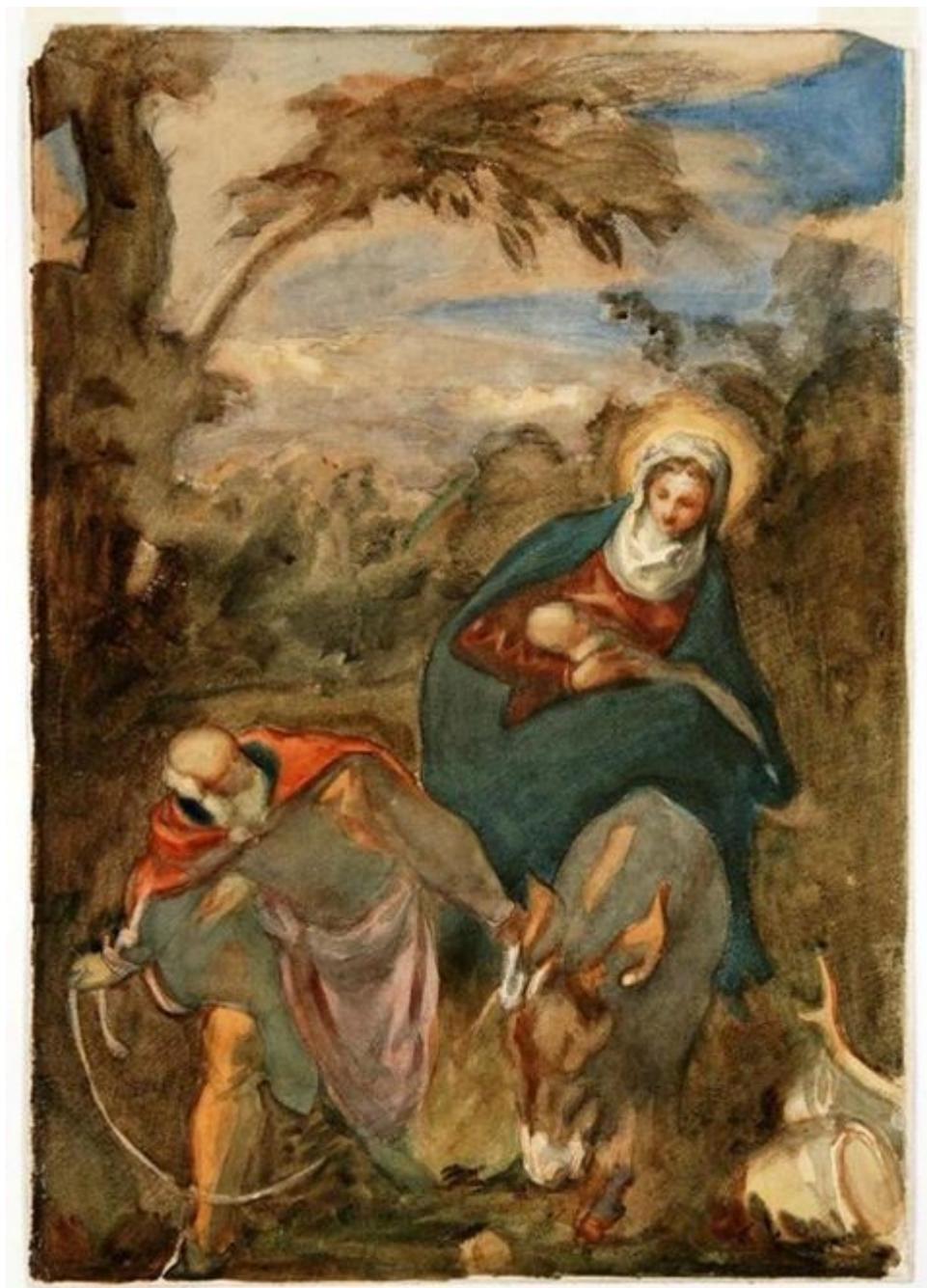
DECEMBER 28

On This Day: The Holy Innocents. Angelo Alessandri, "The Flight into Egypt" after Tintoretto (1885).

Tintoretto's original work was commissioned as part of a cycle of biblical paintings to decorate the Lower Hall of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco in Venice, a powerful religious and charitable organisation. Ruskin hugely admired Tintoretto's paintings at the Scuola and wrote a critique of them in his "Venetian Index" of 1852. In the "Flight into Egypt", Ruskin particularly admired the head of the donkey, describing it as "sublime". Of the head of the Virgin Mary, he wrote that Tintoretto "seems to have intended that everything should be subordinate to the beauty of this single head."

Interestingly, Ruskin's comments to Alessandri on his finished copy also concern these two aspects of the painting. Ruskin asked him to paint a larger version of the donkey "expressing more the grand brush execution of it," but said the "Madonna is so absolutely like it makes me think I'm in San Rocco".

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



DECEMBER 29

"Virgin and Child with Angels" from the School of Cosimo Rosselli (1439 - 1507). This painting depicts very traditional representation of the Madonna worshipping Christ, her son. The angels not only support the Infant Christ, but also emphasise the holiness of the scene.



Rosselli has painted according to principles followed in many paintings of this type and period. The Madonna and the angels, for example, wear their traditional colours of red and blue. The red of the gowns symbolise humanity. The blue cloaks and robes reflect spirituality, since blue is the symbolic colour of heaven. On the ground are white flowers with red centres. The white symbolises the purity of the Madonna, and the red centres look ahead to the blood of her son's crucifixion. The painting came into the Ruskin Collection in the 1930s. It was probably meant as a comparison piece to Verrocchio's "Madonna Adoring the Infant Christ", which Ruskin said was "a priceless painting, exemplary for all time." (Now in the National Gallery of Scotland, though a modern copy remains in the Ruskin Collection.)

DECEMBER 30

Late 13th-century manuscript: Ottobeuren Lectionary (Abbey of Saints Alexander and Theodore, Ottobeuren, Bavaria).

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



DECEMBER 31

F. T. Underhill, "Totnes on the Dart, Devon" after Turner (1891).

Turner made his original watercolour of Totnes and the River Dart in about 1824, to be engraved for a set of prints, "The Rivers of England", published in 1827. In writing about this series, Ruskin drew attention to Turner's ability to capture the reflection of the sky in the water through watercolour, commenting that "it brings the truth of his water-painting up to the last degree of perfection". Ruskin tried to teach his students about art through the dual use of Turner's watercolours, and the more readily available prints. He therefore commissioned copies of Turner's original watercolours, so that Turner's use of colour could be compared with the work's structure, as evidenced in the engraved version. He did not write specifically about this watercolour, nor did he commission Underhill's copy. Instead, the Guild of St George commissioned the work in the 1890s, as a result of the enthusiasm of the Ruskin Collection's curator, William White.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

