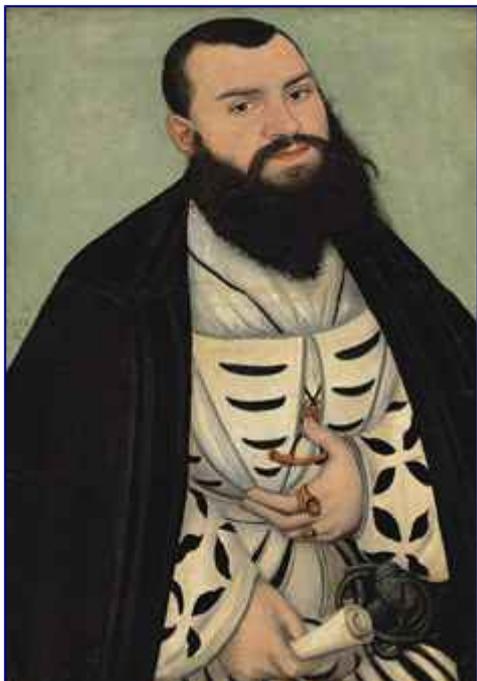


Lucas Cranach I (Kronach 1472-1553 Weimar)

Portrait of Dr. Johann Scheiring¹ (1505-1555), half-length, in a white slashed doublet and black cape, holding a scroll in his right hand



Estimate

- £500,000 – £800,000
- (\$849,000 - \$1,358,400)

Sale Information

- Sale 1537 —
- Old Master & British Paintings
- Evening Sale
- 8 July 2014
- London, King Street
- Contact the Department

Lot Description

Lucas Cranach I (Kronach 1472-1553 Weimar)

Portrait of Dr. Johann Scheiring (1505-1555), half-length, in a white slashed doublet and black cape, holding a scroll in his right hand

signed with the artist's serpent device and dated '1534' (centre left), with a later device and date added on top

¹ Aus Verkaufskatalog Christie's: Catalogue, Christie's: Old Master & British Paintings Evening Sale, Sale Number 1537 – 8 July 2014, London, King Street. Lot 50 (<http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/paintings/lucas-cranach-i-portrait-of-dr-johann-5813586-details.aspx>; herunter geladen 27.06.2014)

oil on panel, laid down on panel
19¾ x 14 in. (50.2 x 35.6 cm.)

Provenance

with Galerie Bourgeois Frères, Paris, before 1932.

Anonymous sale; Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 29 January 1957, lot 8.

with Eric Turquin, Paris, from whom acquired on 4 March 1993 by a private collector.

Anonymous sale; Sotheby's, London, 6 July 2000, lot 18 (£388,500), when acquired by the present owner.

Pre-Lot Text

PROPERTY OF A GENTLEMAN (LOTS 8, 9, 11, 49 & 50)

Literature

M.J. Friedländer and J. Rosenberg, *Die Gemälde von Lucas Cranach*, Berlin, 1932, p. 80, no. 278, illustrated.

M.J. Friedländer and J. Rosenberg, *The Paintings of Lucas Cranach*, London, 1978, p. 137, no. 344, illustrated.

D. Koeplin, T. Falk, *Lucas Cranach, Gemälde, Zeichnungen, Druckgraphik*, exhibition catalogue, Basel, Stuttgart, 1974, I, p. 251, under no. 161.

Lot Notes

This striking portrait of Dr. Johannes Scheiring (1504-1555) is a characteristic work of Lucas Cranach's maturity and shows the German Renaissance master in full command of his skills. The sitter is identified by the coat-of-arms that he proudly displays on a ring on his left hand. This crest conforms with that found in a woodcut, also by Cranach, dated to 1534 (fig. 1). A second woodcut of 1537, also the work of Cranach or his studio, features the same sitter (fig. 2). Despite a differently styled beard and a more elaborate costume, the composition remains close to the painted portrait and may have been loosely based on it, or indeed after a lost painting.

This portrait was executed in 1534, three years before the second print, when the sitter had just returned from Italy, where he had studied law at the prestigious University of Padua near Venice. Laudatory Latin epigrams below the two engravings refer to the sitter's humanist training, for instance the 1537 print is inscribed: '*Hanc prae se faciem fert, stans, oransque, Scheyringus / Divini iuris Caesareique decus / Launger hunc phoebus cum Pallide iactet alumnum*' ('Scheyring offers this face in front [of you], standing, and speaking / worthy of the divine right of the Caesars / Phoebus with Pallas bestow laurel on this protégé'). The young jurist later enjoyed a varied career, serving as burgomaster or mayor of his native city of Magdeburg from 1539 to 1542, and entering the service of two German princes: appointed advisor to the Duke of Braunschweig in 1535; and chancellor to the Duke of Mecklenburg in Schwerin in 1555. Having embraced the ideals of the Reformation, like Cranach himself and many of his other patrons, Scheiring was part of the

Protestant delegation sent to Emperor Charles V in 1540.

The sitter's supreme self-confidence along with the various attributes he displays are unmistakable references to his status and accomplishments: the scroll alludes to his legal training and humanist learning; the elaborate sword evokes his noble extraction and knighthood; and his lavish costume reinforces his elite status and excellent taste. The sitter sports a bright white slashed doublet and has matching breeches with a fashionable codpiece, emphasising his youthfulness and virility. His voluminous sleeves are partly covered by a dark cape. The sitter prominently displays his bejewelled hand against his chest, calling the viewer's attention to the elaborate pendant emerging from his doublet. This attire is particularly extravagant at a time when even the highest-ranking members of society wore predominantly sombre attire. However, like many of his contemporaries, including the Augsburg banker Matthäus Schwarz, who devoted an entire book to the subject (the *Kleidungsbuch* or *Book of Clothes*), Johannes Scheiring understood the importance of fashion and outward appearance as a complement to, rather than a distraction from, his intellectual and spiritual ambitions. It is no coincidence then that Scheiring chose the most fashionable artist of the day to paint his portrait.

The hallmarks of Cranach's highly stylized yet lifelike approach to portraiture are immediately recognisable in this portrait. For instance, the smooth, subtle modelling of the sitter's face is combined with an almost miniaturistic approach in describing the individual strands of his beard. Cranach also deploys his celebrated emphasis on line, using a single virtuosic black contour stroke to describe the junction between the sitter's lips, and the shape of his eyelids and nostrils. This wonderfully economical technique allows the artist to fully exploit the expressive power of the drawn line. Another characteristic feature is the stark colour contrasts between the rich black and brilliant white of the sitter's costume, set off against a uniform blue background. Such audacious juxtapositions of patterns and colours results in a strikingly modern image and helps account for the enduring appeal the artist's work.