

# LES ENLUMINURES

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## Album of Ornamental Frames and Borders

In German, illustrated manuscript on paper

Prussia, Silesia (Breslau, i.e. Wroclaw), 1856-1862 (dated)

*ii + 78 + i folios on paper, no watermark, modern foliation in black ink, 1-32 (including 22bis, 32bis in pencil), followed by 44 blank leaves, 34 ILLUSTRATIONS MIXING WATERCOLORS, GOUACHE, PEN-AND-INK, COLORED PENCILS AND PENCIL, three of the illustrations include nineteenth-century handwriting, a tear through the decorated border on f. 24, minor stains, some browning, in overall excellent condition. ORIGINAL CLOTH CASE BINDING over pasteboards, covers gold-stamped with a frame and blind-stamped with a foliage border, front cover stamped with the title "ALBUM," flat spine gold-stamped with bouquets of roses, gilt edges, pastedowns and endpapers lined in white silk (stained), worn and faded especially on the spine and corners, in overall good condition. Dimensions 239 x 153 mm.*

Likely the work of accomplished female artists, this enchanting album contains ornamental frames and borders made using a variety of techniques, often mixing several media in one composition. Two of the illustrations are signed, in both cases by women. Each border is realized in a different style, incorporating landscapes, animals, naturalistic flowers, geometric forms, and ornamental motifs, sourced from a range of periods, including the Middle Ages and eighteenth-century Rococo. The album was probably made by artists trained in the Düsseldorf school of painting.

## PROVENANCE

1. Most of the illustrations in this album are individually dated, with the dates falling between 1856 and 1862. Two of them, on ff. 13 and 32bis, are localized in Breslau (Wroclaw) in Prussian Silesia (today southwestern Poland). The text incorporated into the illustration on f. 13 includes the name Elsbeth Hoffmann, and the illustration on f. 32bis is signed by Luise Schulz. Stylistically the manuscript can be associated with the Düsseldorf school of painting (see below).
2. A modern bookseller's note "103" in pencil on the verso of the first front flyleaf.

## ILLUSTRATION

Thirty-four illustrated leaves, all blank on the verso; remaining leaves in the album (unnumbered) are also blank:

f. 1, Pen and ink drawing in black ink representing a border decorated with a bird nest, a cockerel, curving branches and leaves, bulrush, and a lantern containing the date "21.11.56";

f. 2, Pen drawing in black ink representing a border decorated with curving branches and leaves; an owl is perched on one of the branches;

- f. 3, Pen drawing in black ink of a border with a very fine bas-de-page scene representing a child with two goats pulling a cart with a heavy load to the battered wooden gate of an estate in the country; the rest of the border is decorated with winding stems and crossed branches; the date "11.12. 56" is incorporated in the right lower corner of the image;
- f. 4, Pen drawing in black ink of a rectangular frame flanked by a small scene in each of the four borders; in the bas-de-page a young child or putto playing a lute among flowers, butterflies and dragonfly; the date "13.12.56" is incorporated in the scroll of the music score lying on the ground; the other borders have small arrangements of roses and other flowers;
- f. 5, Pen drawing of a border in violet ink decorated with flowers, berries, leaves and a ribbon;
- f. 6, Pen ink drawing in black ink with watercolor and gouache representing an archway of medieval inspiration constructed of gnarled branches around which are twirled colorful ribbons;
- f. 7, Pen drawing of a border in black and blue inks decorated with a flowering stem against a checkered ground;
- f. 8, Pen drawing in black and brown inks representing a border divided into geometric patterns, circular forms in the corners and triangular shapes on the sides, further decorated with flowering stems;
- f. 9, Pen drawing in black ink and watercolor representing a border formed of joined and intertwined wreaths of oak leaves;
- f. 10, Watercolor and gouache painting representing a border formed of a vine branch;
- f. 11, Pen drawing in black ink and watercolor representing an oval border decorated with roundels imitating enamel brooches and enclosing roses and other flowers;
- f. 12, Pen drawing in black and brown inks of a border made of stems ending in dragon heads and bearing flowers resembling clematis or edelweiss; at the top and bottom of the page are stylized spiral ornaments; the date "28.1.57" occurs under the dragon head in the bottom right corner;
- f. 13, Watercolor and gouache painting representing a letter on a parchment scroll depicted in trompe-l'œil against a black ground, patterned in red, signed "Breslau 22/6 60. Elsbeth Hoffmann";
- f. 14, Pen drawing in dark pink ink of a border decorated with curving flower stems on which are perched birds, a monkey and a man playing a horn; above his head, attached to the stem, is a hunting horn and pan pipes;
- f. 15, Pen drawing in black ink representing a border with a very fine bas-de-page scene depicting a large barn among trees, which continue in the outer border; curving penwork in the other borders;

- f. 16, Pen drawing in black ink with pencil, watercolor and gouache, consisting of two oval medallions containing hilly landscapes; the medallions are framed by simple foliage borders and placed at the top and bottom of the page, which itself is framed by a simple band border;
- f. 17, Pen drawing in black ink and watercolor representing a floral garland with hanging ribbons that embowers the top and sides of a religious text in German;
- f. 18, Monochrome brown watercolor representing a border made of a continuous ivy branch, dated "22.7.58";
- f. 19, Pen drawing in black ink of a border of flowers and leaves curving into stylized arabesques;
- f. 20, Watercolor in the upper half of the page representing a young woman seated on the ground, leaning on a stone, reading a book, dated "8/2.60";
- f. 21, Pen drawing in black ink and colored pencils representing a lattice-work border of half circles overlapping a continuous branch with leaves;
- f. 22, Colored pencil drawing representing a border formed of wispy leaves and small pink buds, accented at intervals by short crossed branches;
- f. 22bis, Colored pencil drawing representing a border decorated with leafy branches and flowers, dated "7.4/60";
- f. 23, Colored pencil and black ink drawing of two superimposed borders, the uppermost decorated with small wispy leaves, the lower one having a blue center ground framed by a continuous floral stem, dated "4.4.60";
- f. 24, Colored pencil drawing representing a border decorated with roses and pansies in the outer margin, stems with seed pods in the inner margin;
- f. 25, Colored pencil, gouache and ink drawing representing an oval border with various stylized seed pods resembling beads, and leaves curving into dancing arabesques in imaginative colors, dated "5.8.1860";
- f. 26, Colored pencils and gouache painting representing a border decorated with a fascinating organic pattern based on a petal motif;
- f. 27, Colored pencil, watercolor and ink drawing representing a border with a simple stylized foliage motif;
- f. 28, Pen drawing in black ink representing a border decorated with intertwined arabesque forms, dated "28.8.60";
- f. 29, Pen and black ink drawing with pencil representing a border imitating a rocaille frame in the Louis XV style decorated with leaves;

f. 30, Colored pencils and watercolor representing a border decorated with delicate intertwining stems with pink flowers;

f. 31, Pen and ink drawing in black ink, watercolor and gouache painting representing a "cartouche," a rococo ornament especially popular in the eighteenth century, dated "17.1.61";

f. 32, Watercolor representing an oak branch with acorns forming a border in the upper and inner margins;

f. 32bis, Watercolor and gouache painting representing a branch from an apple tree in flower, dated "Breslau 6 May 1862" and signed "Luise Schulz"; a poem is written next to the painting: "Die Blüthe spricht von Mai/ Von Lenz, von neuem Leben,/ Und weiset hin auf Den,/ Der Blüth' und Lenz gegeben" (The blossom speaks of May, Of spring, of new life, And points to Him, Who gave blossom and spring).

The two illustrations that are signed in this album are both sby women, Elsbeth Hoffmann and Luise Schulz. Stylistically, the work in this manuscript suggests it was made by artists trained in the Düsseldorf School of painting. It may have been made in preparation for illustrations of a particular published work or as a collection of ornament to be drawn on as occasions arose. Numerous collections of ornament were published in the nineteenth century, including *Spécimens de la décoration et de l'ornementation au XIXe siècle* of Michel Liénard (1866), *Ornements tirés ou imités des quatre écoles* (1855), *Ornementation usuelle de toutes les époques dans les arts industriels et en architecture* of Rodolphe Pfnor (1866-1868), and *Connaissance des styles de l'ornementation* of Désiré Guilnard (1853). A comparison between our manuscript and contemporary published collections of ornaments would be an interesting path for further research. It is also possible that this was intended as a very deluxe album, similar to a modern illustrated blank-book, to be used for poems or other texts, or even as an *album amicorum* (friendship album). However, we should note that this album was never used in this way, since only one page includes a poem (see f. 32bis), and another includes a religious text (p. 17), and the illustrated pages are followed by numerous blank leaves.

The style of our album recalls illustrations made for the *Düsseldorfer Künstleralbum*, published in sixteen volumes in 1851-1866, in years corresponding with the period when our manuscript was made (see Online Resources for the volumes, all digitized). One may compare our manuscript, for instance, with the illustrations by Theodor Mintrop (1814-1870) framing the poem *Herbstfeier* (Autumn party) in the first volume of 1851, or with the numerous illustrations by Caspar Scheuren (1810-1887). See for example the fir tree with a ribbon wrapped around its trunk on p. 81 in the 1866 volume of the *Düsseldorfer Künstleralbum*, and the illustration on f. 16 in our manuscript (Online resources). The Düsseldorf school of painting also included the artists Robert Reinick (1805-1852) and Adolph Schroedter (1805-1875), whose illustrations are similar to those found in our manuscript, including the illustrations by Schroedter in *Till Eulenspiegels auserlesene Schwänke*, published in 1857, or those in Friedrich Rückert's *Liebesfrühling*, published in 1861-1874 (Online Resources).

The sources of inspiration for the bas-de-page scenes, flowers, plants, ornaments, and other decorative elements in our manuscript can be found in manuscripts and printed collections of

ornaments from the preceding centuries. The large flowers decorating the border on f. 12, for instance, are very similar to those engraved by Jean-Louis Durant after designs by the goldsmith Jean Mussard, published in 1673 in the *Livre de Divers Ornaments D'orfevrerie fait par Jean Mussard Orfevre*, f. 4, or those invented in the previous century, around 1535-1536, by the engraver Agostino Veneziano in his ornament panels (see Bibliothèque de INHA, MS 4 Est. 396, f. 16; Fléjou 2014, pp. 48, 51, figs. 5, 9). The delicate flower stems and branches, as on ff. 30, 32 and 32bis in our manuscript, are similar in aspect to the flowers invented and drawn by Jean Pillement (1728-1808), the official painter of Stanislas II, King of Poland, and later, on his return to Paris, of Marie-Antoinette. The vast œuvre of Pillement, including numerous figures, flowers, ornaments and other decorative elements was diffused widely in engravings done after his drawings, such as *Fleurs idéalles inventées et dessinées par Jean Pillement*, engraved by Edouard Gautier-Dagoty and published in Paris in 1770. The asymmetrical convex cartouche on f. 31 is reminiscent of the cartouches designed by Louis Van Nerock, published by Pierre François Tardieu in *Nouveau livre de cartouches utile aux peintres, sculpteurs et autres* in Paris c. 1745-50 (Smentek, 2014, p. 221, fig. 4). The scallops that are transformed into waves, waterfalls, leaves, branches, asymmetrical architectural forms, and so forth, represent the essence of rococo ornamentation in vogue in the eighteenth century. The boundaries between natural and artificial, and between image and frame were deliberately blurred.

Our manuscript offers a valuable contribution to understanding the history of ornament, still relevant today. In the opening words of the fundamental work on ornament by Désiré Guilmarc, published in 1880, the taste for ornament is described as part of human nature, almost like an instinct, or a need that declares itself in a person even before he knows the benefit of the civilization: "Le goût de l'ornement est dans la nature humaine; c'est un instinct, on pourrait presque dire un besoin, qui se manifeste chez l'homme avant même qu'il connaisse les premiers bienfaits de la civilisation." (Guilmarc, 1880, p. ix).

## LITERATURE

Fléjou, L. "La collection de recueil d'ornements de la Bibliothèque de l'INHA," *Ornements: XVe-XIXe siècles: Chefs-d'œuvre de la Bibliothèque de l'INHA collections Jacques Doucet*, ed. by L. Fléjou and M. Decrossas, Paris, 2014, pp. 42-55.

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Guilmarc, D. *Les maîtres ornemanistes*, Paris, 1880.

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Smentek, K. "Les transformations du rococo," *Ornements: XVe-XIXe siècles: Chefs-d'œuvre de la Bibliothèque de l'INHA collections Jacques Doucet*, ed. by L. Fléjou and M. Decrossas, Paris, 2014, pp. 216-227.

Thomas, E. *Vocabulaire illustré de l'ornement*, Paris, 2012.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Düsseldorf School of painting

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C3%BCsseldorf\\_School\\_of\\_painting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C3%BCsseldorf_School_of_painting)

*Düsseldorfer Künstleralbum*, 1851-1866

<http://digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/dfg/periodical/structure/1080103>

*Till Eulenspiegels auserlesene Schwänke*. Nach den ältesten Drucken hergestellt von Karl Simrock,  
Düsseldorf, 1857

<http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:hbz:061:2-1216>

*Friedrich Rückert's Liebesfrühling*, Frankfurt, 1861-1874

<http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:hbz:061:2-1574>

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