LOT 8
PROPERTY OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART SOLD FOR THE ACQUISITIONS FUND
MASTER OF THE HOLY KINSHIP
ACTIVE IN COLOGNE 1480-1515 OR AFTER
THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI (INTERIOR); THE THRONE OF GRACE (EXTERIOR): A DOUBLE SIDED PANEL
oil on panel
45 3/4 by 33 5/8 in.; 116.2 by 85.4 cm.

ESTIMATE 100,000-150,000 USD
Lot Sold: 218,500 USD

PROVENANCE
Hermann Joseph Dethier, Cologne;
By whom sold to Sulpice and Melchior Boisserée, Cologne, until 1827;
By whom sold to King Ludwig I of Bavaria, from 1827;
Deposited at the Alte Pinakothek, Munich, by 1856–1923;
Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfonds, Munich, 1923–24 (inv. no. WAF 655);
Crown Prince Ruprecht of Bavaria, Munich, 1924–25;
By whom sold to A.S. Drey, Munich and New York, 1925–26;
By whom sold to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1926, inv. no. 26.52ab.

LITERATURE
Verzeichniss der Gemälde in der königlichen Pinakothek zu München, Munich 1856, p. 151, no. 26 (as by an
unknown artist in the style of Quentin Massys; does not mention the reverse; indicates that the picture was given in
payment from the royal household goods);
as in the Pinakothek, Munich, mentioning only the obverse);
R. Marggraff, Catalogue of the Pictures in the Old Royal Pinakothek at Munich, 2nd original ed., Munich 1878, p. 63,
no. 621 (as by Artist of Cologne; does not mention the reverse; notes that it comes from the collection of the brothers
Sulpice and Melchior Boisserée);
Katalog der Gemälde-Sammlung der Kgl. Älteren Pinakothek in München, Munich 1884, p. 10, no. 47 (under the
Kölner Meister der hl. Sippe und dessen Schule, without indicating which works are considered to be by the
master himself and which by his school; describes the reverse);
L Scheibler, “Schongauer und der Meister des Bartholomäus,” in Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft, 7, 1884, p. 57,
no. 18;
H. Janitschek, Geschichte der deutschen Malerei, Berlin 1890, p. 511;
J. Jacob Merlo, Kölnische Künstler in alter und neuer Zeit, Düsseldorf 1895, col. 1176 (as the Master of the Holy
Kinship);
C. Aldenhoven, Geschichte der kölnischen Malerschule, Lübeck 1902, p. 250 (as the Master of the Holy Kinship,
commenting that the features of the third magus recall those of the "Man with Pinks" by Jan van Eyck in the
Gemäldegalerie, Berlin);
H. Kehrer, Die Heiligen Drei Könige in Literatur und Kunst, 2, Leipzig 1909, pp. 238–39, fig. 278 (obverse) (as the
Master of the Holy Kinship the Elder, datable to circa 1480; relating it to a work of the same subject of circa 1490
assigned to the Master of the Holy Kinship the Younger [fig. 279; Reichsfreiherrn von Landsberg, Schloss Gemen,
Velen]; comments on the dependence of these two works on Rogier van der Weyden’s Columba altarpiece [Alte
Pinakothek, Munich]);
E. Firmenich-Richartz, "Sulpiz und Melchior Boisserée als Kunstsammler: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Romantik," in
Die Brüder Boisserée, 1, Jena 1916, pp. 469–70, no. 102 (as by the Master of the Holy Kinship; identifies it as the
wing of an altarpiece and calls it heavily restored; mistakenly notes that Aldenhoven [see Ref. 1902] attributes it to the
master’s workshop);
F. Burger, "Die Österreichisch-bayerischen Lande (2. Teil), Schwaben, Oberrhein und die Schweiz bis 1420,” in Die
Deutsche Malerei vom ausgehenden Mittelalter bis zum Ende der Renaissance, 2, part 1, Potsdam 1917, p. 449 (as
an important work by the Master of the Holy Kinship);
K. Schaefer, Geschichte der kölnischen Malerschule, Lübeck 1923, p. 29 (as the Master of the Holy Kinship);
H. Brockmann. Die Spätzeit der Kölnische Malerschule: Der Meister von St. Severin und der Meister der Ursulalegende,
Bonn 1924, pp. 81, 288, no. 144, p. 315 (as School of the Master of the Holy Kinship);
H. Reiners, Die Kölnische Malerschule, Munich 1925, p. 154, fig. 270 (obverse) (as Workshop of the Master of the Holy
Kinship; discussing the influence of Geertgen tot sint Jans and Hugo van der Goes, noting that one of the magi
derives from Hugo [see Ref. Friedländer 1926]);
LXXIX (obverse) (as the Master of the Holy Kinship, noting that the second magus as being based on the corresponding figure in Hugo van der Goes' Monforte Altarpiece [Gemäldegalerie, Berlin]; mentioning another work of this subject by the Master of the Holy Kinship [art market, Amsterdam] that also depicts the first magus kneeling to kiss the Child's foot);

G. de Térey, "The Adoration of the Magi' and the 'Holy Trinity' by the Master of the 'Heilige Sippe' (Holy Kin)," in Art in America, 14, October 1926, pp. 231–39, reproduced (obverse and reverse) (as the Master of the Holy Kinship, stating that it was probably the left wing of an altarpiece, and listing several other works of this subject by the same painter);

H. Wehle. "A Late-Gothic Rhenish Painting," in Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, 21 May 1926, pp. 120–23, reproduced (obverse) (as part of a dismembered altarpiece, attributing the obverse to the Master of the Holy Kinship and the reverse to the master or his workshop; states that the sea creature carved into the stone below the seated Virgin derives from an engraving by Mantegna; discusses the provenance; finds that the picture's chief distinction is its color);

J. Meier-Graefe, "The Contribution of Germany to European Art—Part II," in Creative Art, 8, May 1931, reproduced, p. 350 (as by the Master of the Holy Kinship);

C.L. Kuhn, A Catalogue of German Paintings of the Middle Ages and Renaissance in American Collections, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1936, p. 25, no. 13 (as the Master of the Holy Kinship and dates it about 1490, finding it closely related to the artist's Last Judgment in Nuremberg; identifying it as "The Holy Trinity," with the "Adoration of the Magi" on the reverse);

E. Waldmann, "Deutsche Kunst in amerikanischen Museen," in Der Türmer: Deutsche Monatshefte, 39, January 1937, p. 300;

H.B. Wehle and M. Salinger, The Metropolitan Museum of Art: A Catalogue of Early Flemish, Dutch and German Paintings, New York 1947, pp. 177–78, reproduced (identifying it as the right wing of an altarpiece; call it typical of the artist's work, "especially in his later years when he could have profited from the study of Quentin Massys's work");

Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler, 37, Leipzig 1950, p. 313 (as the Master of the Holy Kinship the Younger, calling it probably the left wing of a lost altarpiece; dates it after 1490, following a presumed trip to the Netherlands);

A. Stange, "Köln in der Zeit von 1450 bis 1515," in Deutsche Malerei der Gotik, 5, Munich 1952, pp. 81, 86, reproduced, figs. 159-160 (mistakenly referring to the panel as split; dates it about 1490 and believes that although its condition has suffered it must originally have been one of the artist's strongest works from that period; mentions that the bearded magus recalls apostles by Hugo van der Goes; compares it with a stained-glass window depicting Saints Bernhard and Columba in the Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Berlin);

F. Winkler, Das Werk des Hugo van der Goes, Berlin 1964, p. 21 no. 1, p. 198, reproduced, fig. 11 (obverse) (as the Master of the Holy Kinship and comparing the second magus with the same figure in Hugo's Monforte Altarpiece [see Ref. Friedländer 1926]; stating that both the MMA painting and a drawing by Hans Holbein the Elder in Basel [fig. 9] are based on a lost work by Hugo);


A. Markham Schulz, "The Columba Altarpiece and Roger van der Weyden's Stylistic Development," in Münchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst, 3rd ser., 22, 1971, p. 106 no. 15 (includes it in a list of pictures by Cologne painters that show the influence of Rogier van der Weyden's Columba Altarpiece [Alte Pinakothek, Munich]);


M. Faries, "The Technical Investigation of Some Panels in the Master of the Holy Kinship Group: A Progress Report," in Le dessin sous-jacent dans la peinture. Colloque 6, Louvain-la-Neuve 1987, pp. 64, 66, 67, nn. 4, 7 (noting that examination has revealed that the reverse of the panel—in addition to other works in the group—exhibits inscribed color details, possibly made as instructions to workshop assistants; also mentions that the panel—together with the
CATALOGUE NOTE

This double-sided panel once formed the wing of a now lost altarpiece, with the Adoration of the Magi originally serving as the interior panel and the Throne of Grace as the exterior. The eponymous work of this anonymous German artist is in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne. The Master of the Holy Kinship, along with his workshop, emerged as a distinct hand among a group of artists in and around Cologne who produced works such as the present panel, along with more specialized pictures on stained glass. Their style was greatly influenced by Flemish painters, in particular, Hugo van der Goes, whose Monforte Altarpiece (Berlin SMPK) may be seen as a direct inspiration for the individual figures in this work (particularly the second kneeling King in the Adoration). Furthermore, the picture is indicative of the influence which Rogier van der Weyden had on the group of Cologne painters working at the turn of the 16th century (see Literature, Schulz 1971, p. 106, note 15). Such influence on the present work can be seen in Rogier's Columba Altarpiece, which utilizes a similar spatial construction and figural arrangement found in the Adoration here.

Ludwig Scheibler was the first to propose The Master of the Holy Kinship as the author of this panel (see Literature, Scheibler 1884, p.57, note 18), after which time it has been almost universally accepted as by the hand of this rare and anonymous master. Wehle and Salinger (see Literature) both proposed that this painting probably dated to the latter part of the artist's career.

The activity within the Adoration of the Magi is focused within the central foreground of the composition, with the main character heads in strict planar alignment. Angels fly above the Madonna and Child as they carry a richly embroidered piece of drapery which serves as a canopy. The Magi present their gifts to the Christ child, as onlookers fill the remainder of the foreground. A detailed cityscape with soldiers and civilians completes this realistic Gothic interpretation of the Adoration. The composition depicting The Throne of Grace presents The Holy Trinity - God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Christ - in a tightly arranged unit. Angels kneel and pray beside the throne, while the female donor of the panel prays at the bottom of the scene. The embroidery of the canopy in this scene is of the same richly delineated pattern found in the canopy in the Adoration.

1. Wehle and Salinger (see Literature) argued that it was the right wing, while others (see Térey 1926 under...
Literature and Thieme-Becker 1950) identify it as the left wing.

2. See Reiners 1925 under Literature, p. 154, fig. 270.