



# Leseprobe

## The Sun Source of Light in Art

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**Published in conjunction with the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Monet's 1872 painting, *Impression, Sunrise*, this unique and illuminating catalog reaches throughout history to explore how artists have incorporated the sun as a reference point and as inspiration in their art.**

For as long as humans have been making art, they have turned to the sun as the source of light, warmth and life itself. It appears as a symbol of limitless power, as the personification of gods and of Christ, and as a harbinger of change. Artists have also used the sun as a means of exploring light and color and as an entrée into discussions about climate. The first of its kind, this book investigates visual representations of the sun from antiquity to the present day. It is divided into seven roughly chronological sections that look at both epoch-spanning and period specific examples, including symbolic, allegorical representations, the iconography of mythological subjects, and mimetic qualities such as typology, phenomenology, and emotional effect. It includes more than two hundred stunning reproductions of well- and lesser-known works of art. Incisive and enlightening texts explore how solar symbolism figured in pre-Christian objects; through 17th-century depictions of the "Sun King" Louis XIV; how artists such as Rubens and Monet employed the sun in their narrative paintings; how the Impressionists first investigated the sun's effects on a landscape; how Neo-Impressionists such as Seurat experimented with color, based on the Newtonian analysis of the solar spectrum; and how 20th-century artists incorporated a broad array of abstract, surrealistic, and transformative modes of solar representation into a variety of media.

**Autor**

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# The Sun

## Source of Light in Art

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and Marianne Mathieu**

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## FOREWORD

The sun in art is a universal human theme: as the source of light and origin of life, it has been the focus of religious and mythological conceptions since the earliest documented cultures. In Central and South America as well as in Asia, Egypt, and large portions of Central Europe, the sun was considered a deity and was venerated as a symbol of inexhaustible power. In the wake of the Christianization of Europe, the sun's identification with the Roman god Sol was transmuted into the light symbolism of Christ. With the disappearance of the medieval gold background, fifteenth-century artists began integrating natural phenomena such as the sunrise or sunset into their religious images. Yet the representation of the sun in landscape painting remained the exception until well into the eighteenth century, though it occurred in the context of mythological themes such as the fall of Icarus or Phaëthon. Not until the early seventeenth century was the sun depicted more frequently as the expression of atmosphere or mood, and after 1850 it often constituted the actual, if indirect, subject matter for the Impressionists with their precise evocation of natural phenomena. From the late nineteenth century on, the intensification of color and its liberation from a purely descriptive function was based on the observations of Impressionism and knowledge gained from the prismatic study of sunlight.

The exhibition *The Sun: Source of Light in Art* explores the iconography of the sun in European art from antiquity to the present. The show was conceived in partnership with the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris, where it was presented from September 14, 2022, to January 29, 2023. This cooperative exhibition was inspired by two paintings: *Impression, Sunrise* (cat. 98), the centerpiece of the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris, and *The Port of Le Havre, Night Effect* from the Hasso Plattner Collection (fig. p. 44), which was acquired in 2016 when Hasso Plattner decided to reconstruct the Palais Barberini in Potsdam to serve as the future home of his Impressionist

collection. The pictures comprise a pair: Monet painted them in 1872 from a hotel room overlooking the port of his hometown city of Le Havre. He captured the view by night, showing it as an energy-charged site of modernity with its artificial gas illumination, and again at dawn, with the red fireball of the sun hovering over the awakening scenery. When the latter painting was shown at the first group exhibition of the Société anonyme in Paris in 1874, a critic made fun of the title *Impression*. The criticism stuck, and shortly thereafter the term "Impressionism" was born.

One of the greatest aspirations of the still-young Museum Barberini was to be able to show the painting in Potsdam. The present exhibition, mounted in honor of the 150th anniversary of Monet's famous painting, has now made it possible to fulfill this wish: *Impression, Sunrise* is the focal point of an exhibition devoted to the sun in art within the broader conceptual context of artistic and scientific ideas since antiquity. The show was curated by Marianne Mathieu in Paris and Michael Philipp, chief curator of the Museum Barberini, who expanded the exhibition in Potsdam to include numerous loans and edited the catalog as part of the publication series of the Museum Barberini. We are profoundly grateful to them. Together, we would also like to express our thanks to the lenders who generously supported our project.

In recent years, a number of scientific and historical exhibitions have been devoted to the sun, such as *The Sun: One Thousand Years of Scientific Imagery* at the Science Museum in London or the wide-ranging cultural-historical presentation *Shine on Me: The Sun and Us* at the Deutsches Hygiene-Museum in Dresden (both in 2018). *The Sun: Source of Light in Art*, however, is the first exhibition to address representations of the sun in art from antiquity to the present. The fourteenth symposium of the Museum Barberini on November 10, 2021, paved the way for the exhibition; we would like to thank the authors for their

insightful contributions. We are also grateful to Anne-Sophie Luyton and Helene von Saldern, who worked alongside the curators in the realization of the project. Thanks are also due to Jacqueline Hartwig for her editorial assistance with the catalog and to all who contributed to the success of this outstanding exhibition in Paris and Potsdam.

In 2024 the first Impressionist exhibition of 1874 will be commemorated with an anniversary exhibition at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, as well as the international program *Destination Impressionnisme*. This anniversary is also important for Potsdam as a center of solar observation: the year 1874 marks the founding of the Astrophysical Observatory Potsdam, where researchers like Wilhelm Oswald Lohse engaged in the study of sunspots (cat. 88). The tower of the Military Orphanage in Potsdam served as an observatory before the Einstein Tower on the Telegrafenberg, designed by Erich Mendelsohn, was completed in 1922. The Einstein Tower was the site of experimental tests on Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity, and to this day it still serves for the scientific study of the sun. Our hope is that in the dialogue of art and science, this universal human theme will delight many visitors in Potsdam as well as in Paris.

Ortrud Westheider  
Director of the Museum Barberini  
Potsdam

Érik Desmazières  
Director of the Musée Marmottan Monet  
Paris

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# ESSAYS

# A STAR WITH A FACE: THE PHYSIOGNOMY OF THE SUN FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Michael Philipp

In one of his earliest paintings, the *Mond Crucifixion* from around 1502–03 (fig. 1), the twenty-year-old Raphael depicted not only human figures, but also two angels with chalices collecting the blood from Christ's wounds. They are shown as natural beings and thus, like the realistic landscape in which the scene is embedded, help establish a closer connection between the imagined events of the Crucifixion and the viewers' own world of experience. This realism is among the innovations of Italian painting around the year 1500. Yet at the same time, Raphael fancifully embellished the one element actually derived from perceived reality: above the horizontal beam of the cross to the left and the right, the sun and moon are each inscribed with a face (fig. 2).

A look at the sky by day or night immediately exposes the fictional nature of this motif. Raphael borrowed it from his teacher, Perugino, who shortly before had painted similar scenery in his *Crucifixion for the Monteripido Altarpiece* (Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia). Here, in a stylized depiction by an artist of the previous generation, the sun face seems less disconcerting. Both Perugino and Raphael stood in an iconographic tradition that for centuries had endowed the sun with a face in images of the Crucifixion.

In keeping with the aspiration to realism in Renaissance art, the motif of the sun face disappeared from religious painting soon after the creation of Raphael's *Mond Crucifixion*. In other areas, however, it long remained a pictorial convention, both in printed or drawn images of mythological,

alchemical, astronomical, or emblematic subjects and in the iconography of rulership into the period of Louis XIV, the Sun King, and Augustus II, "the Strong," elector of Saxony in the eighteenth century.

Although the motif of the sun face was ubiquitous for centuries in a variety of settings, it has never been the subject of detailed iconographic investigation. A 1945 dissertation on images of celestial bodies in painting devotes a few pages to the sun face in the context of typological aspects of representations of the sun.<sup>1</sup> Scattered references to the use of the motif in antiquity appear in archaeological literature.<sup>2</sup> Numerous publications on the sun in art reproduce images of the sun face as a matter of course, yet without any deeper exploration of the phenomenon.<sup>3</sup>

This essay will analyze the origin, use, and significance of the sun face in European art from antiquity to the eighteenth century. Here, the sun face is defined as an anthropomorphic physiognomy with eyes, nose, and mouth inscribed into a circle. Apart from certain exceptions, the face is gender-neutral, although the word for "sun" is masculine in Romance languages and feminine in German.<sup>4</sup> For the most part, the sun face is flat and frontal and shows neither the three-dimensional character of a head nor any connection to a neck. Linear, zigzag, or wave-formed rays in various thicknesses, lengths, and number emanate from the outer circle, occasionally in a mixture of different forms.

The present discussion focuses only on physiognomic representations of the sun, which—aside from the moon—was

the only celestial body distinguished with a face in religious or scientific images.<sup>5</sup> Although the pre-Christian sun cult north of the Alps did not employ the sun face and generally used the wheel as a symbol, the sun face occurs frequently in non-European religions; comparison across continents, however, would exceed the scope of this essay.<sup>6</sup> After tracing the derivation of the motif from Greek and Roman antiquity, the use of the sun face will be explored in examples from Christianity as well as from alchemy, astrology, ruler iconography, astronomy, and meteorology. As we will see, the sun face by no means functions only to identify the solar celestial body, but rather serves as a bearer of meaning. Furthermore, as a personification it is meant to address the viewer in an animated fashion and achieve a sense of pictorial immediacy. While the presence of a face per se already imbues the sun symbol with vitality, its expressive character can be further intensified through the suggestion of emotion, thereby reinforcing the content of the image.

## THE EYE OF HEAVEN

According to the biblical account, the Crucifixion of Christ was accompanied by a solar eclipse, that is, the sun was briefly obscured by the moon.<sup>7</sup> While this assumption could explain the presence of the moon in Raphael's *Mond Crucifixion*, it does not account for the physiognomic characterization of the heavenly bodies. With a certain amount of imagination, the dark patches visible to the naked eye on the

- <sup>1</sup> See Roth 1945, 144–47; the lists 27–31 (pp. 257–63) cite numerous works with a sun face.
- <sup>2</sup> See Schauenburg 1955, 11–31.
- <sup>3</sup> Herdeg 1963 presents, without commentary, numerous sun faces from contexts such as alchemy, folk art, traditional customs, and advertising; Jobé 1975 includes, without commentary, numerous text pages with vignettes of historical sun images, over fifty of which have a face; see also Cohen 2010, figs. pp. 352–53. No significant attention is paid to the sun face in Hawkes 1962, Bärnreuther 2009, or Dresden 2018.
- <sup>4</sup> Male characteristics are more common in images of the sun face. The association of a sun face with a female figure occurs in a depiction of Dante and Beatrice in an illuminated manuscript of the *Divine Comedy*: here, the moon (with a face) appears above Dante, the sun face above Beatrice. The image illustrates the first canto of the *Paradiso*, in which Dante describes the object of his adoration as a second sun. Venetian, *Dante and Beatrice*, illustration to *Paradiso*, canto 1, lines 88–90, in Dante, *Divina Commedia*, fourteenth century, fol. 53v, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice.
- <sup>5</sup> On the moon face in antiquity, see Schauenburg 1955, 14–15; on the depiction of the moon in general, see Bartels 1992 and Van Gent/Van Helden 2007. A rare exception of a celestial body distinguished with a face is found in a fourteenth-century manuscript of the *Liber Introductorius* of Michael Scot. The drawing shows Sol as a full figure standing on the quadriga, while the other six planets are shown as circles with faces; see *Michaelis Scoti Astrologia cum Figuris (Liber Introductorius)*, ca. 1320–40, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Clm 10268, fol. 37r.
- <sup>6</sup> For an example of a wheel, see Engler 1962 and Green 1991. On mythological conceptions of the sun in various cultures, see Joseph Jobé, “Mythologie der Sonne,” in Jobé 1975, 27–56; and Bärnreuther 2009. Singh 1993 offers examples of the sun face from Persia (fig. 38), Ecuador (fig. 193), India (figs. 108, 116, 159, 180), and Uzbekistan (fig. 42).
- <sup>7</sup> On the symbolic interpretation of the solar eclipse at the death of Christ, see, for example, the discussion in Reil 1930, 59, of the letter of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite to Polycarp of Smyrna, in which the former justifies his conversion to Christianity on the basis of the solar eclipse. On the possible effect of this letter on the pictorial tradition of Crucifixion images, see Wallraff 2001, 172.
- <sup>8</sup> See Plutarch 1911.
- <sup>9</sup> The physical phenomenon of sunspots, which appear only temporarily and were observed already in antiquity and described in the seventeenth century by Johann Fabricius and Christoph Scheiner, permits no association whatsoever with a face. On sunspots, see Max Waldmeier, “Die Sonne der Astronomen,” in Jobé 1975, 151–211, here 165–67; Waldmeier also speaks of the “countenance of the sun.”
- <sup>10</sup> See *Wörterbuch der deutschen Volkskunde*, 3rd ed., rev. Richard Beitz, Stuttgart 1974, col. 745.
- <sup>11</sup> Schuster 1990, 22, however, suggests that even these pictures created in early childhood are shaped by cultural standards. On children’s drawings of the sun, see Irene Rigassi, “Das Kind und die Sonne,” in Herdeg 1963, 144–49, with the drawing of a sun face by a four-year-old girl on 146.
- <sup>12</sup> See Peter von Matt, “Die grundsätzliche Unbeschreibbarkeit des menschlichen Gesichts,” in Matt 1983, 93–99; see also Lacher 2010.
- <sup>13</sup> “To the Sun,” in *The Orphic Hymns*, trans. Apostolos N. Athanassakis and Benjamin M. Wolkow, Baltimore 2013. The sun is described as the “eye of heaven” in other cultures as well, for example with respect to the Indian sun god Surya in the Rigveda; see Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. Rosemary Sheed, New York 1958, 144. A parallel in Egyptian religion is the eye of Re, likewise considered a symbol of the sun, while Zoroastrianism describes the sun as the “eye of Ahura Mazda.” In Sonnet 18, William Shakespeare writes: “Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, / And often of the sun his gold complexion dimmed”; *Shakespeare: Poems*, ed. Graham Handley, New York 1994, 27.
- <sup>14</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, “Torquato Tasso,” in *Goethes Werke*, vol. 5,3, *Dramatische Dichtungen*, ed. Josef Kunz, 4th ed., Hamburg 1960, 73–167, here 140.
- <sup>15</sup> On the ancient practice of personification, see, for example, Matz 1913; Webster 1954; Reinhardt 1960; on Helios, Hamdorf 1964, 18ff. and 85ff.; and Gombrich 1971. The presence of the sun and moon at the Crucifixion likewise goes back to antique conceptions; see Engemann 1986.
- <sup>16</sup> *Der kleine Pauly: Lexikon der Antike*, vol. 2, Stuttgart 1967, s. v. “Helios.” On the conception of the sun in the pagan culture of the Mediterranean, see Wallraff 2001, 27–39.
- <sup>17</sup> There are numerous examples of coins depicting Helios only as a head in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (fig. p. 23). For an example from Euboea, see the Greek medallion with head of Helios, fourth to first half of third century BCE, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Similar works were found in Egypt as well; see the Hellenistic *Helios* from the third to second century BCE, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg.
- <sup>18</sup> Hijmans 2009, 411–57, lists over two hundred Roman coins depicting Sol, only three of which show him frontally rather than in profile: nos. 1, 10, and 81. The latter of these shows the head above four horses, thus emulating a type also known in Greece. On Sol Invictus, see, for example, Halsberghe 1972, Claus 1990, and Hijmans 2003.
- <sup>19</sup> On the identification of Christ with the sun from the fifth century on, see Dölger 1918, 100–10; Dölger 1925, 149–56, 336–410; and Dölger 1950.
- <sup>20</sup> Wallraff 2001, 13, refers to the difficulty of constructing lines of tradition where little or no evidence is available for hundreds of years.
- <sup>21</sup> On the iconography of the manuscript, see New York 1977, no. 445.
- <sup>22</sup> On the positions of the heavenly bodies at the Crucifixion, see Engemann 1986.
- <sup>23</sup> See Herzfeld 1920, 108, fig. 14. A manuscript of the *Sächsische Weltchronik* (Saxon World Chronicle) shows the enthroned figure of Khosrow II, the grandson of Khosrow I, with a sun face outside the image to the left; see Anonymous, *The Persian King Khosrow*, in the *Sächsische Weltchronik*, ca. 1270–80, Forschungsbibliothek Gotha der Universität Erfurt, Cod. Memb. I 90, fol. 65r.
- <sup>24</sup> Roman (workshop of Florentine), *Oil Lamp with Christian Symbolism: Good Shepherd with Jonah Scenes, Sol, and Luna*, early third century, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. On the conception of the sun in late antiquity during the transition from paganism to Christianity, see Wallraff 2001, passim; on the fifth century, see Dölger 1925, 1–20, 60–103.
- <sup>25</sup> The ivory panel is integrated into the cover of the *Pericopes of Henry II* from 1007–12. On the pictorial tradition of Sol atop the quadriga in medieval manuscripts and its derivation from astronomical illustrations, see Kerscher 1988.
- <sup>26</sup> Among the few examples are pilgrim ampullae from Palestine (Monza, cathedral treasury) as well as a bronze amulet (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris); see Rademacher 1975, figs. 56–58, 73; on the ampullae, see also Reil 1930, 98. A relief of Sol in a *Clipeus*, Supported by Angels, probably from the late ninth century, is found in Santa María de Quintanilla de las Viñas in Mambrillas de Lara, Burgos.
- <sup>27</sup> Anonymous, *Crucifixion*, in the *Regensburg Sacramentary of Henry II*, ca. 1000, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Clm 4456, fol. 15r.
- <sup>28</sup> See, for example, Wallraff 2001.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.
- <sup>30</sup> Jörg Breu the Elder, *Royal Couple*, in Anonymous, *Splendor Solis oder Sonnenglanz*, 1531–32, fol. 8v, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. On the royal couple, see also Völlnagel 2012, 83.
- <sup>31</sup> On broadsheets with meteorological motifs, see Hess 1911.
- <sup>32</sup> On the theme of Sol Oriens, see Kantorowicz 1963, who also makes reference to the solar mythology of Louis XIV.
- <sup>33</sup> See Kantorowicz 1963, 167–76; Heissmeyer 1967, 90–130; Sabatier 1999, 45–240 and passim; and Ziegler 2013. See also Hendrik Ziegler’s contribution to this catalog, 34–43.
- <sup>34</sup> Joseph Werner the Younger, *Louis XIV as Apollo*, 1670, and *Louis XIV as Apollo Killing the Python*, n.d., both gouaches, both at the Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon.
- <sup>35</sup> See also Ziegler 2013, 226, fig. 151.
- <sup>36</sup> For medals, see Jean Mauger, *Nec pluribus impar: Medal of Louis XIV*, 1674, bronze, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris; François Chauveau, *Ut vidi vici: Device of Louis XIV*, in Charles Perrault, *Courses de testes et de bague, faites par le Roy et par les princes et seigneurs de sa cour, en l’année M.DC.LXII*, Paris 1670, unpaginated. For engravings, see Henry Gissey and Jacques Ier Bailly, *Le Roi, devise du roi Ut vidi vinci*, in *ibid.*, 27; the device in the colored copy of Louis XIV (Bibliothèques municipales, Versailles) is illustrated in Versailles 2009, no. 27.
- <sup>37</sup> On the “sun coiffure” of Louis XIV, see Heissmeyer 1967, 106–07.
- <sup>38</sup> See Hamburg 1989, nos. 497, 498.
- <sup>39</sup> Veit Stoss, *Angelic Salutation*, 1517–18, St. Lorenz, Nuremberg. The image in question is the painted reverse of the medallion above the Virgin. See Ostermayer 2017. I would like to thank Mechthild Haas, Darmstadt, for bringing Veit Stoss to my attention.
- <sup>40</sup> Other paintings with images of the Crucifixion were small, such as Carlo Crivelli, *Crucifixion*, 1468, part of a predella, 23 × 46 cm, Santi Lorenzo e Silvestro e Ruffino, Massa Fermana; Florentine, *Crucifixion*, ca. 1460–80, 58.6 × 59 cm, Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main.
- <sup>41</sup> The engraving *Armed Three-Master with Daedalus and Icarus in the Sky* after Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1561–65, also from the series of sailing vessels, shows the sun only as a white disk without a face (cat. 34).
- <sup>42</sup> See Nils Büttner’s contribution to this catalog, 26–33.
- <sup>43</sup> See, for example, the illustration *Astronomy: Sun and Eclipses*, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 1, Edinburgh 1771, 461, pl. XLII.
- <sup>44</sup> Eleven examples of pub signs are given in René Creux, “Gasthäuser im Zeichen der Sonne,” in Herdeg 1963, 58–63. For advertising graphics, see Willy Rotzler, “Die Sonne in der Werbegraphik und angewandten Kunst,” in *ibid.*, 74–101.
- <sup>45</sup> See Dorte Søholm, “Atomkraft? Nej tak mærket,” <https://www.museumaarhus.dk/viden/historier-om-aarhus/graesroedder-i-aarhus/atomkraft-nej-tak-maerket> (accessed on October 25, 2021).

# BRIGHT LIGHT ON THE HORIZON: IMAGES OF THE SUN IN LANDSCAPE PAINTING FROM ALTDORFER TO TURNER

Nils Büttner

The sky in Albrecht Altdorfer's painting *The Battle of Alexander at Issus* from 1529 (fig. 1) immediately draws attention to itself.<sup>1</sup> Never before had the sun and moon been staged so dramatically in a picture. Two armies of knights clash beneath the vast expanse of the heavens; to the right, the setting sun appears amid spectacular clouds, while on the left the moon has already risen high in the sky. The cosmic spheres mirror the conflict beneath them, which is identified on the plaque suspended in the upper zone. The literary source for the battle scene was not so much the ancient reports of Arrian or Curtius Rufus as it was the treatise on the causes of the Turkish wars, written since 1526 by Bavarian court historiographer Johannes Turmair, who called himself Aventinus and published the first map of Bavaria in 1523. The precise chorography of the Mediterranean in Altdorfer's painting similarly catered to the interest in cartography at the Bavarian court.

*The Battle of Alexander at Issus* was part of a cycle of historical images painted for Duke Wilhelm IV of Bavaria and his wife, Jacobaea of Baden, between 1528 and 1540.<sup>2</sup> The works were conceived as a coordinated series; the surviving vertical images resemble one another not only in their compositional structure, with broad panoramas and detailed visual narratives, but also in the use of landscape motifs to reinforce the iconographic content.<sup>3</sup> Thus Altdorfer's rendering of the sky served to present *The Battle of Alexander at Issus* as a prefiguration of the conflict between the Orient and the Occident, while Abraham Schöpfer conflated the antique story of *Mucius Scaevola*

*before King Porsena*, depicted under the bright expanse of the heavens, with the siege of Vienna by the Turks (fig. 2).<sup>4</sup>

The symbolism of light, already well developed in the art of the Middle Ages, continued into the age of confessionalization, since the Bible—which was authoritative for all Christians—suggested the comparison of Christ with the sun.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, in Christian iconography the sun was frequently associated with the Resurrection of Christ.<sup>6</sup> From 1500 on, this connection increasingly came to the fore in works by German artists such as the devotional images of Altdorfer and especially Wolf Huber (fig. 3).<sup>7</sup> The visual parallel between the sun and the hope of salvation embodied in Christ also enabled the sun to function as a clear pictorial symbol in images of the Creation that contained no allusion to human affairs—such as the landscape drawings of Altdorfer, created for princely collectors as demonstrations of virtuosic skill.<sup>8</sup> Expressive drawings and prints in which the rays of the sun were translated into eloquent lines called attention to the artist's hand, which emerged as the primary object of interest. Depictions of the natural environment surrounding human activity were apparently especially valued as vehicles of artistic virtuosity and encountered an audience increasingly sensitized to artistic invention and production.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, landscapes without human figures could be read and interpreted in a variety of ways, given the receptivity to the pictures' messages as well as their specific form. In keeping with its affinity to rhetoric, the art theory of the period assumed a close

connection between form and content, rather than the dichotomy that characterized aesthetic philosophy based on the Kantian concept of beauty. For an audience accustomed to applying the rules of rhetoric to pictures, the lexis of motifs could no more be separated from the aesthetic grammar and syntax than from considerations of style and appropriateness. This notion of *aptum* or *decorum* was one of the fundamental requirements of rhetoric. The concern was to carefully consider all elements and aspects relevant to the work of art and its context of presentation, in order to create a harmonious—and only then truly effective—whole.

The degree to which the enrichment of iconographical meaning fulfilled the expectations of audiences is illustrated by a series of engravings produced in 1555–56 by the Antwerp publishing house of Hieronymus Cock. The series, known as *Large Landscapes* after Pieter Bruegel the Elder, holds an important place in the still-unwritten history of picture titles.<sup>10</sup> In the print *Christ and His Disciples on the Road to Emmaus* (fig. 4), for example, the title at the bottom does not refer to the content of the image as a whole, but is intentionally employed as a means of directing the gaze.<sup>11</sup> Only after reading the title does the viewer recognize the delicate halo around the head of the middle figure, who transforms the landscape with three pilgrims into an image of the biblical encounter between two disciples and the risen Christ.<sup>12</sup> As comparison with the surviving preliminary drawing by Bruegel shows, the halo, like the setting sun beyond the river, was probably added by the publisher.<sup>13</sup> The sun, which in the

antinomy.<sup>37</sup> The aesthetic effect of a work of art, which was now conceived as an irreducible whole, thus came to occupy the center of attention. The artist as “genius” now set the standard for the work of art, which was evaluated from his perspective and no longer from that of the recipient.

This increasing rejection of allegorical significance by the classical aesthetics of autonomy prompted Romantics such as Caspar David Friedrich (cats. 66–68) and Philipp Otto Runge, who sensed a disconnect and a loss of meaning, to strive for a new, subjectively motivated allegorical language in their pictures.<sup>38</sup> The desire of the Romantics to express allegorical ideas in their works, however, was not easy to fulfill, and they found themselves confronted with the problem that the pictorial language embraced by the early modern Netherlandish painters was no longer comprehensible to the viewers of their time.

For the painters of Romanticism, sentiment was the most important basis for an artistic activity that found its fullest expression in the new, anti-academic landscape painting. For them, painting was no longer merely a question of artistic practice, but of the inner moral and religious disposition of the artist. As Caspar David Friedrich famously stated: “The artist should paint not only what he sees in the world but also what he sees within himself. However, if he sees nothing in himself, then he should stop painting what he sees in front of him.”<sup>39</sup> This new, subjective view of art and the artist, together with an increasing appreciation for the aesthetic potential of such images, opened up new perspectives for the depiction of landscape. Only at this point in time did landscape become both an established subject for painting and one that enjoyed widespread acclaim. Such recognition, however, represented the result not only of artistic invention, but also of the development of a free art market.

The nineteenth century saw the emergence of the market that we take for granted today, where any picture can be sold to any customer. While this development gave artists considerable freedom in the creation of their pictures, it also brought with it certain pressures. On the one hand, artists had to satisfy the audience’s expectation in order to sell their work; on the other, they

had to assert their own artistic position in order to find and keep their place in the freely developing market. Landscape pictures, in particular, seemed well suited for this purpose. During those years, landscape painting began to proliferate even in the official Salons, and the genre that had formerly enjoyed so little respect came to represent well over a third of the paintings submitted. This situation was not unique to France, but could be observed everywhere in Europe—including in England, where the landscapes of Joseph Mallord William Turner attracted attention and elicited amazement (cats. 94, 95).

Turner’s approach to color was in equal measure admired and dismissed as extravagant. Beneath his brush, the paint—preferably in various tones of yellow—was transformed into mist, steam, clouds, and an atmosphere that enveloped all the objects in the picture to the same degree. In 1836, not without admiration for his fellow artist’s virtuosic handling of color, John Constable observed that Turner had surpassed himself, that he “seems to paint with colored steam.”<sup>40</sup> These effects were the result of a technique Turner had spent years developing. Since 1795, when he had begun painting not only in watercolor but also in oil, he had experimented with combining the specific processes associated with each technique. In his watercolors, for example, he had abandoned the customary white ground and application of glazes and begun painting in a mixture of watercolor and gouache on blue or earth-toned paper. Conversely, when working in oil, where color was traditionally built up from dark to light, he chose ever lighter tones and applied the paint in glazes, sometimes even leaving the background white to imitate the transparency of watercolor.

On the basis of these luminous, delicately colored works, Turner also began using more color in his oil paintings to evoke the impression of light (fig. 8). Color increasingly became a means of dissolving objective forms in light, bringing the painting closer to the experience of gazing at a landscape. For when we observe a distant point in nature, the foreground and middle ground appear blurry, and when we concentrate on the foreground, the background shifts out of focus. It is precisely this phenomenon

that Turner captures in his paintings. He enables our eyes to involuntarily glide past the blurred portions of the foreground; we look into the distance or observe an object or phenomenon we have never before seen in this way. In his paintings, he succeeded not only in translating fleeting moments into atmospheric images, but also in documenting the act of perception as a process, an achievement in which he was ahead of his time. When Turner died in 1851, landscape painting continued to embrace both the classical ideal and this new empiricism, oriented toward a mimetically faithful rendering of nature. The influence of his painting continues, and the impact of his style lives on in the world of contemporary art, where the light of the sun and the world it illuminates constitute important themes to this day.

*Translated from German by Melissa M. Thorson*

- <sup>1</sup> Heinz Kähne, *Die Alexanderschlacht*, Munich 1998; Gisela Goldberg, *Die Alexanderschlacht und die Historienbilder des bayerischen Herzogs Wilhelm IV. und seiner Gemahlin Jacobaea für die Münchner Residenz*, Munich 1983.
- <sup>2</sup> Volkmar Greiselmayer, *Kunst und Geschichte: Die Historienbilder Herzog Wilhelms IV. von Bayern und seiner Gemahlin Jacobaea; Versuch einer Interpretation*, Berlin 1996; Reinhart Koselleck, "Vergangene Zukunft der frühen Neuzeit," in Volkmar Greiselmayer, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, Frankfurt am Main 1979, 17–37.
- <sup>3</sup> Larry Silver, "Nature and Nature's God: Landscape and Cosmos of Albrecht Altdorfer," in *The Art Bulletin* 81 (1999), 194–212.
- <sup>4</sup> Greiselmayer 1996 (see note 2), 73–79, 189.
- <sup>5</sup> See, for example, John 1:4–5 and 9, 3:19, 8:12, and 9:5. Christ is the "dayspring from on high" (Luke 1:78). The transfigured Christ (Matt. 17:2) and the glorified Son of Man (Rev. 1:16) shine like the sun. God is the sun of the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:23 and 22:5).
- <sup>6</sup> See Vlachos 2018, 125; Ingrid Schulze, *Lucas Cranach d. J. und die protestantische Bildkunst in Sachsen und Thüringen: Frömmigkeit, Theologie, Fürstenreformation*, Bucha 2004, 156.
- <sup>7</sup> Koepplin 1967, 106; on Wolf Huber, see Franz Winzinger, *Wolf Huber: Das Gesamtwerk*, 2 vols., Munich 1979, vol. 1, 71.
- <sup>8</sup> Nils Büttner, "'Gut in kleinen Bildern': Albrecht Altdorfer als Landschaftsmaler?," in *Albrecht Altdorfer: Kunst als zweite Natur*, ed. Christoph Wagner and Oliver Jehle, Regensburg 2012, 71–80; Thomas Noll, *Albrecht Altdorfer in seiner Zeit: Religiöse und profane Themen in der Kunst um 1500*, Munich 2004, XXIII–XXIV; Thomas Noll, "Spielräume der Stilbildung bei Albrecht Altdorfer," in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 72 (2009), 329–50. Thomas Noll has compellingly characterized the resulting stylistic attitudes and "ranges of artistic design"; see Thomas Noll, "Gestaltungsmodi im Werk von Albrecht Altdorfer," in *Berthold Furtmeyr: Meisterwerke der Buchmalerei und die Regensburger Kunst in Spätgotik und Renaissance*, ed. Christoph Wagner and Klemens Unger, Regensburg 2010, 167–76, esp. 174–75.
- <sup>9</sup> See Katrin Achilles-Syndram, "'... und sonderlich von grossen stuckhen nichts bey mir vorhanden ist': Die Sammlung Praun als kunst- und kulturgeschichtliches Dokument," in *Das Praunsche Kabinett: Kunst des Sammelns*, ed. Bernd Mayer, Nuremberg 1994, 35–55.
- <sup>10</sup> Frank Büttner, "Das Bild und seine Paratexte: Bemerkungen zur Entwicklung der Bildbeschriftung in der Druckgraphik der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Die Pluralisierung des Paratextes in der Frühen Neuzeit: Theorie, Formen, Funktionen*, ed. Frieder von Ammon and Herfried Vögel, Berlin 2008, 125–28.
- <sup>11</sup> See Nils Büttner, *Bruegel: De schilder van boeren en heiligen*, Amsterdam 2019, 33–34.
- <sup>12</sup> Luke 24:13–33.
- <sup>13</sup> Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Landscape with Three Pilgrims*, ca. 1555, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp. Hans Mielke, *Pieter Bruegel: Die Zeichnungen*, Turnhout 1996, 44, no. 23.
- <sup>14</sup> Nils Büttner, *Einführung in die frühneuzeitliche Ikonographie*, Darmstadt 2014, 83–89.
- <sup>15</sup> Marguerite of Valois, *Geschichte der Margaretha von Valois, Gemahlin Heinrichs des Vierten, von ihr selbst beschrieben*, trans. and ed. Friedrich Schlegel, Zurich 1996, 122. All translations by Melissa M. Thorson unless otherwise indicated.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.
- <sup>17</sup> Carsten-Peter Warncke, *Sprechende Bilder—Sichtbare Worte: Das Bildverständnis in der frühen Neuzeit*, Wiesbaden 1987; Ulrich Heinen, "Argument—Kunst—Affekt: Bildverständnisse einer Kunstgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Die Frühe Neuzeit als Epoche*, ed. Helmut Neuhaus, *Historische Zeitschrift*, suppl. n. s., 49, Munich 2009, 165–234.
- <sup>18</sup> Vienna 2018, 214–41, nos. 72–75.
- <sup>19</sup> Karel van Mander, *Het Schilder-Boeck*, Haarlem 1604.
- <sup>20</sup> Karel van Mander, *Den grondt der edel vrij schilderconst* [1618], ed. Hessel Miedema, 2 vols., Utrecht 1973, vol. 1, 27.
- <sup>21</sup> Van Mander 1604 (see note 19), fol. 35v; Van Mander 1973 (see note 20), vol. 1, 208: "De Sonne te schilderen, maer dat men haer schoonhey niet kan naevolgen."
- <sup>22</sup> Van Mander 1604 (see note 19), fol. 34v; Van Mander 1973 (see note 20), vol. 1, 204.
- <sup>23</sup> Peter Paul Rubens, *Trees Reflected in Water at Sunset*, ca. 1635–38, British Museum, London. Inscribed by the artist on the right: "de boomen wederschy[n] in het Water bruynder / ende veel perfecter in het Water als de boomen selvde." *Peter Paul Rubens*, exh. cat., Albertina, Vienna 2004, 484–85, no. 130; Corina Kleinert, *Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) and His Landscapes: Ideas on Nature and Art*, Turnhout 2014, 29, 171, no. 50.
- <sup>24</sup> Kleinert 2014 (see note 23), 47, 83–86, 122–23, 169, no. 29.
- <sup>25</sup> Jacob Adolf Worp, "Fragment eener Autobiographie van Constantin Huygens," in *Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van het Historisch Genootschap* 18 (1897), 1–122, here 118–19.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.
- <sup>27</sup> On this phenomenon, see Boudewijn Bakker, *Landschap en wereldbeeld, van Eyck tot Rembrandt*, Bussum 2004, 262–98, with additional bibliography.
- <sup>28</sup> See Nils Büttner, "'Een veerdige handeling op de nieuw manier': Das Neue und die Kategorie des Neuen in Haarlem um 1600," in *Novità: Neuheitskonzepte in den Bildkünsten um 1600*, ed. Ulrich Pfisterer and Gabriele Wimböck, Berlin 2011, 92–93.
- <sup>29</sup> Ho Geun Kim, *Die Kunden der Landschaften*, Heidelberg 2013.
- <sup>30</sup> Hanns Floerke, *Studien zur niederländischen Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte*, Munich 1905, 87.
- <sup>31</sup> Büttner 2006, 188.
- <sup>32</sup> Patrizia Cavazzini, "Claude's Apprenticeship in Rome: The Market for Copies and the Invention of the Liber veritatis," in *Konsthistorisk tidskrift* 73 (2004), 133–46.
- <sup>33</sup> Joachim von Sandrart, *L'Academia todesca della architectura, scultura & pittura: Oder Teutsche Academie der Edlen Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste*, Nuremberg 1675, book 1, 3 (on painting), 71. See also cat. 92.
- <sup>34</sup> On the reception of Claude Lorraine, see Munich 1983.
- <sup>35</sup> Heinz J. Drügh, *Ästhetik der Beschreibung: Poetische und kulturelle Energie deskriptiver Texte (1700–2000)*, Tübingen 2006, 124.
- <sup>36</sup> Johanna Scherb, "Ut pictura visio": *Naturstudium und Landschaftsbild in Frankreich von 1760 bis 1820*, Petersberg 2001; Arnaud Mailet, *The Claude Glass: Use and Meaning of the Black Mirror in Western Art*, New York 2004.
- <sup>37</sup> Warncke 1987 (see note 17), 19.
- <sup>38</sup> See the detailed discussion in Scholl 2007; Leander Büsing, *Vom Versuch, Kunstwerke zweckmässig zusammenzustellen: Malerei und Kunstdiskurs im Dresden der Romantik*, Dortmund 2011.
- <sup>39</sup> Caspar David Friedrich, *Äusserungen bei Betrachtung einer Sammlung von Gemälden von grösstentheils noch lebenden und unlängst verstorbenen Künstlern*, ed. Gerhard Eimer, Frankfurt am Main 1999, 116, lines 28–29. English translation quoted in Lynn Gamwell, *Exploring the Invisible: Art, Science and the Spiritual*, rev. ed., Princeton 2020, 54.
- <sup>40</sup> Hind 2020, 152.

