The Heraldic Imagination in German-Speaking Lands, c.1480-c.1560

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Preface

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any work that has already been submitted before for any degree or other qualification except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the History of Art and Architecture Degree Committee.

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Summary

Title: *The Heraldic Imagination in German-speaking Lands, c.1480-c.1560*
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This thesis brings to light the extraordinary artistic transformation of heraldic imagery in German-speaking lands from circa 1480 to circa 1560, tracing how artists and designers engaged with heraldry as a category of image capable of inciting visual and intellectual pleasure. Coats of arms are often viewed as a distinctly medieval and utilitarian category of image, at odds with the cultural changes associated with the 'Renaissance'. However, renowned artists and thinkers of this period dedicated much attention to heraldry as artistic subject matter, bringing it into dialogue with newly emergent genres, cultural concerns and social networks.

The first chapter brings together a disparate corpus of material and textual sources, ranging from heraldic parody to heraldic defamation, in order to probe changing critical attitudes towards coats of arms across the period under study. Causal factors behind the expansion of heraldic criticism are also examined, including the impact of print, the rise of humanist satire, the early Reformation and shifts in societal structures.

The second chapter homes in on the relationship between artistic identity and coats of arms. Renowned artists like Albrecht Dürer, Niklaus Manuel, Sebald Beham and Virgil Solis thematised their vocation as creators and authors through heraldic imagery, especially in the depiction of non-attributed, fictional coats of arms aimed at a burgeoning connoisseurial audience.

The third chapter turns to consider the interpretation of heraldic images by humanist scholars within the intellectual circles of the universities of Vienna, Ingolstadt and the imperial court. The heraldic graphic computational instruments designed by the cosmographer Peter Apian are my central visual case studies. The second half of the chapter assesses the epistemic appeal of heraldry for this scholarly milieu by examining the discourses surrounding coats of arms in poetic, cosmographic, philological and genealogical texts.

Overall, the thesis shows that heraldry was a prevailing catalyst for the artistic imagination(s) of the German Renaissance.

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Introduction

Heraldic images pervaded early modern visual culture, appeared in a myriad of different media, and were used across multiple levels of society. Despite this, heraldry has continued to be sidelined in art historical scholarship of the sixteenth century. At a basic level, this is because coats of arms appear to be extremely straightforward in their signification: they act as public signs for individuals, families, or institutions. It is understandable, therefore, that heraldry has traditionally been utilised primarily as a means for identifying patrons and contextualising objects, rather than seen as a candidate for more meaningful interpretation in its own right. In reality, the potential that heraldic formats offered for imaginative elaboration, re-contextualisation and interpretation was used to great advantage by artisans and authors in the early modern period.[1] This dissertation aims to address such oversights, by demonstrating the ways in which heraldry prompted the creative imaginations of the past.

Despite the scholarly tendency to treat heraldry as ineloquent and uninteresting, it is widely known that the shield, the object at the heart of any coat of arms, was laden with ideas about ingenuity. Homer's *ekphrasis* of Achilles' cosmic shield in the *Iliad* provided a model for masterful poetic description, but also established the armourer Vulcan as a mythological exemplar of expert craftsmanship.[2] Pliny the Elder singled out the shield of Athena Parthenos carved by the Greek sculptor Phidias for special praise; Plutarch claimed that the shield included a small portrait of the sculptor, too, providing another antique source linking artistic

[1] This has been noted by heraldic scholars, but not properly researched: Biewer and Henning, 2017, 31; Neubecker, 1971.
[2] Squire, 2013; Else, 2008, 33-34; Bram, 2006; Gee, 2000, 45; Vickers, 1985, 181.

skill to shields.[3] When Perseus defeated the Gorgon Medusa, he cleverly used his shield to deflect her dangerous gaze.[4] In heroic epic literature, the shield of a soldier could represent his martial prowess, by displaying the material wounds of combat, or symbolic honorifics granted to him by superiors, or the accoutrements of his defeated opponents. Pliny provided an authoritative account of the *imago clipeata,* a genre of portrait where the likeness of famed individuals were carved or painted on a shield or within a round, buckler-shaped frame.[5] The coat of arms provided a new context for the military shield as a status symbol in the medieval Latin West. As the professional status of artists rose in the Renaissance, they also exploited the association between shields, ingenuity and nobility.[6] Giorgio Vasari recounted an anecdote about the young Leonardo da Vinci painting such a fearsome array of illusionistic monsters on a round buckler that viewers thought they were real, not noticing the shield as an object.[7] In Jan van Eyck's *Van der Paele Virgin,* the painter depicted a small self-portrait on the reflective surface of St George's shield, in "a quasi-heraldic assertion of the painter's exceptional status and his divinely sanctioned art."[8] Shields were therefore sites for artful display. Yet scholarship, as we shall see, continues to treat heraldic images as purely utilitarian or even as a 'primitive' type of image-making. In contrast, this thesis indicates that coats of arms, like shields, were also associated with skill and status, and that this translated into the innovative treatment of heraldic images in the Renaissance.

Coats of arms are often perceived to be a distinctly medieval category of image, at odds with the cultural developments associated with the 'Renaissance': painterly naturalism, the revival

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[3] Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 36:18-19; Plutarch, *Lives: Pericles*, 31:4.
[4] Briefly, on Perseus' shield and visual representation, see Gooding, 2009, 3-9.
[5] Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 34:4. On *imagines clipeatae* in antiquity, see Winkes, 1969.
[6] Brine, 2018, 605-611; Ames-Lewis, 2000, 62-64.
[7] Vasari, 1996, I:628-630.
[8] Brine, 2018, 620.

of classicism, attention to the human body, linear perspective, increased social mobility and a newfound artistic authority based on rhetorical models. However, coats of arms proliferated well beyond the late fifteenth century, which complicates the assumption that heraldry was in tension with new cultural currents. For the first time, this dissertation analyses the diversification of heraldic visual culture from the 1480s onwards and, in so doing, suggests ways in which heraldry was part of the cultural dialogues and developments of the 'Renaissance' in German lands, rather than an outdated hangover from a bygone age. This is not an exhaustive overview of all heraldic practices during the period. Heraldry was so ubiquitous and wide-ranging in late medieval Europe that such a task would be boundless, and most of the findings would be repetitive or unremarkable, concerning 'normative' coats of arms. The diversification that the broad category of 'the heraldic' enjoyed in this period also frustrates any attempt to offer a single, tidy narrative, especially since heraldry was never properly codified as a visual genre within early modern theoretical discourse. Coats of arms therefore hovered between genres, establishing dialogues and sparking creative responses. As a result, I have focused on particularly fruitful moments of cross-fertilisation between heraldry and other cultural outputs, when historic actors paid critical attention to these commonplace visual signs and produced non-normative heraldic images in response.

In the introduction I will provide a general overview of medieval and early modern heraldry, covering key concepts that will be invoked throughout the thesis. This is followed by a brief note on the term 'heraldry' and how it is used in the thesis. The next two sections summarize the central themes in the secondary literature that have informed or prompted my research, covering tendencies in heraldic scholarship, the relationship between art historical writing and heraldic concepts and questions of periodization when discussing heraldry. I then explain the progression of my research, including the reasoning behind my choice of temporal,

geographic and cultural limits and the scholarly exemplars that guided my methodology. Finally, I provide an outline of the thesis chapters and their narrative arc.

Heraldry: A General Introduction

There are many modern misconceptions about heraldry, which need to be clarified before we can discuss 'the heraldic' in broader terms. Proto-heraldry originated as simple marks of distinction to aid identification on the battlefield, but coats of arms flourished in Europe from the twelfth century onward through the tournament tradition.[9] Standard formats for the representation of arms developed, centring on the shield bearing a distinctive, identifying pattern or combination of motifs. Extra accoutrements could be positioned around the shield, such as a helm, with crest ornament and mantling; the standard format had an anthropomorphic air, with the helm above the shield as though the helmeted soldier were kneeling behind his shield.[10] These signs were well suited to the existing practice of sealing documents in wax using pictorial devices, thereby accumulating functions beyond the battlefield, especially among urban institutions and corporations.[11] Similar to other marks of rank and status, coats of arms became hereditary, gathering pace as signs of lineage, although in practice their usage was not confined to the nobility. Princes and territorial leaders made attempts to regulate the use of heraldic bearings and thereby retain their exclusivity and usefulness as a political tool, with varying degrees of success.[12] England was the first European kingdom to implement centralised heraldic regulations, initially with the Court of

[9] Ailes, 1992, 8, 18-19.
[10] Hablot, 2017, 41-43.
[11] In brief, see Paravicini, 1998b, 15, 36. On cities, communities and seals, see Bedos-Rezak, 2011, 231-252.
[12] Huthwelker, 2013, 26-35. On the first legal texts about heraldry, see Barber, 2018, 24.

Chivalry in the fourteenth century and then by professionalising the heralds under an umbrella organisation, the Royal College of Arms, in the sixteenth century.[13] In comparison, overarching heraldic regulation within the fragmented jurisdictions and lands of the Holy Roman Empire was near impossible.[14]

Heraldic usage owed much of its apparent consistency to codes of honour and shared customs or premises established across medieval Europe, rather than effective legal frameworks.[15] One aspect of heraldic practice that bolsters the perception that it was highly regulated is the existence of blazon. Blazoning refers to a formulaic procedure for accurately describing a coat of arms, using technical terms that, in theory, remove any ambiguity about the basic design of a shield and crest.[16] Blazoning emerged in France, probably in the tournament tradition.[17] The poetic blazon flourished in German literature of the fourteenth century, where it served an encomiastic, ekphrastic purpose, rather than a technical one.[18] By the fifteenth century blazonry was used to describe coats of arms in official or legal documents, like grants of nobility. Although blazonry shared basic patterns and sometimes terms across different linguistic regions, there was still a lot of variation. Blazons were translated into vernaculars in order to communicate heraldic designs in a local context and technical terms changed across time or according to the personal style of the blazoner.[19] Like coats of arms more

[13] On the Court of Chivalry, see Caudrey, 2019, 1-22. On heralds and the Court of Chivalry, see Barber, 2018. On the development of English heraldic visitations, see Ailes, 2006.
[14] Heraldry and other insignia played important roles in the performance of the *Reich* as a collective idea, even though they were not heavily regulated: see Stollberg-Rilinger, 2008, 89 and *passim.*
[15] Stollberg-Rilinger, 2008, 89.
[16] On blazon, with examples in German, see: Biewer and Henning, 2017, 81-85.
[17] Heinrich, 1992, 297.
[18] On heraldic poetry, see Van D'Elden, 1976. On *ekphrasis* and shields, see Bram, 2006.
[19] On variation in blazonry, see the following blog post about using digital tools to compare heraldic blazon: Hiltmann, 2016.

generally, the heraldic blazon was formulaic and pan-European, but inconsistent and extremely flexible, depending on its context and function.

Despite the fragmented status of heraldic legislation and practice, in the sixteenth century heraldry was subject to increased bureaucratisation across Europe. This reflected the rising importance of centralised hubs of power surrounding monarchs in the European kingdoms. Consequently, royal insignia acquired greater prestige in the political sphere and were represented as the symbolic figureheads uniting the heraldry of their subjects.[20] Monarchs and princes were concerned to envisage their heraldic links to other powerful families across Europe, establishing a 'top tier' of coats of arms, which operated on a different level to the heraldic practices of independent cities or smaller-scale networks. Heraldic experts also became more professionalised during the first quarter of the fifteenth century: "[the herald's] status moves from that of a freelance whose skills are rewarded with the occasional gift to someone who has a definite diplomatic, legal and armorial function."[21] Essentially, by the late middle ages, heraldry was a universal and conventionalised presence in Europe, but heraldic practice varied at different societal levels, according to localised traditions and different networks of patronage.

Imperial grants of arms (*Wappenbriefe*) emerged in the fourteenth century as affirmative proof of high noble status, but many families continued to adopt their own arms or were granted arms by local authorities.[22] The use of imperial heraldic grants as a diplomatic tool

[20] On early modern royal heraldry, see Thiry, 2014, *passim.* On the shifting visualisation of the collective identity of the *Reich* through the figure of the *Kaiser* and his insignia in early modernity, see Stollberg-Rilinger, 2008, *passim.*
[21] Barber, 2018, 27.
[22] Pfeifer, 2001, 10-25; Heinrich, 1992, 300.

increased steadily during the sixteenth century, alongside attempts to introduce greater constitutional unity across the Empire.[23] However, this was not the remit of heralds, but appointed *Hofpfalzgrafen,* who had the authority to grant arms (for a fee) and legitimise children among other duties.[24] In contrast, *Herolde* were messengers, diplomatic envoys, speakers and officiators of tournament festivities.[25] The closest equivalent of 'heraldic visitations' in the German *Reich* was the monitoring and officiating of participants in tournament societies, rather than the wholesale authentication of coats of arms across the social spectrum.[26] More generally, the heraldry of the titled elites was afforded far more protection than non-noble heraldry and only highly renowned, diplomatically advantageous families received *Wappenbriefe* from the Emperor.[27] The regulation of coats of arms therefore varied across the Empire, depending on regionalised judicial structures and independently organised alliances across different territories. Although coats of arms were extremely conventionalised, they were not as rule-governed, inflexible or exclusive as many twentieth-century scholars have assumed.

Brief Notes on Terminology

The misconception of heraldry as stiff, stale and heavily regulated is reinforced by a poor understanding of the language surrounding coats of arms. In English the word 'heraldry' is used today to refer to coats of arms and knowledge about coats of arms, but the term only

[23] Kajatin, 2003, 203-204. On Maximilian I's use of noble patents to court the urban elite, see Brady, 1985, 85.
[24] Pfeifer, 2001, 12, 17; Heinrich, 1992, 300; Benecke, 1971, 363-364.
[25] Bock, 2008, *passim*; Stollberg-Rilinger, 2008, 26, 32-33; Peters, 1976.
[26] Paravicini, 1998b, 84.
[27] On heraldic documents from the Emperor in Zürich, see Kajatin, 2003. On different levels of legal protection, see Pfeifer, 2001,10, 15-17.

gained prominence in the seventeenth century.[28] Heraldry actually refers to any work performed by heralds, which could include conveying a message, ordering ranks, or conducting a ceremony, as well as monitoring the use of coats of arms.[29] Since heralds had far more regulatory power over arms in England than in other European states, the term 'heraldry' overly imbues coats of arms with an air of authority and inflexibility.

The word *heraldi* (heralds) was used in medieval Latin and neo-Latin works.[30] However, when referring specifically to coats of arms, Latin authors would opt for *insignia* (ensigns), *arma* (arms) or *clipei* (shields).[31] Even in English, in the middle ages the word 'heraldry' primarily meant the act of "proclaiming, of speaking out loud, and of giving praise to someone."[32] In German, the word *Heraldik* (heraldry) did not emerge until the eighteenth century.[33] Coats of arms were called *Wappen,* echoing *Waffen* (weapons).[34] Frequently, authors would simply use the words *Schild* (shield or sign), *Helm* (helm) and *Kleinod* (crest, jewel or ornament). The term *Herolde* (heralds) was later to emerge in the German-Romano imperial realms than in other parts of Europe.[35] In the high middle ages, those conducting duties associated with heralds were called *persewant, wapen genoiss, gazûne, crogieraere,* and for a brief period *Knappen von der Wappen.*[36] By the second half of the fifteenth century, the word *herold* was used, but broadly speaking the connection between heralds and coats of arms was not expressed semantically in German.

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[28] Hiltmann, 2015.
[29] Stevenson, 2009, 1-8.
[30] See Agrippa, 1530, sig.h[4]r; Fürbeth, 1995, 443.
[31] See, e.g. Agrippa, 1530, sig.h3^{v}. For more on Latin terms, see chapter 3, 196, 246-248.
[32] Hiltmann, 2015, 110. In Germany, the roles of heralds and spokespeople were considered interchangeable: Hiltmann, 2011, 27.
[33] Hiltmann, 2015, 113.
[34] Biewer and Henning, 2017, 15.
[35] Peters, 1976, 244-245.
[36] Bock, 2008, 148; Paravicini, 1998b, 79.

Despite the anachronism, the words 'heraldry' and 'heraldic' will be used throughout this thesis, partly for concision of expression, but also because they indicate the nebulous mesh of connotations and associations that accompany coats of arms, both now and in the past. Coats of arms are a type of visual ornament, which emerged in a culture that discussed ornament as part of rhetoric, so the word 'heraldry' recalls the proximity between verbal and visual proclamation. 'Heraldry' reminds us that coats of arms ornamented and amplified the *fama* of their bearers, just like a literary encomium.[37] Used adjectivally (heraldic), the connotations expand in much the same way as the adjective 'emblematic' diverges from the 'emblem' as a visual type. Although art historians have relied too heavily on the imprecise and even obfuscating adjective 'heraldic' to make gestural arguments, its broad encapsulation of meanings can be used carefully and effectively. After all, the word *Schild* means both shield and sign, but has no adjectival equivalent, making 'heraldic' the closest word we have. The term 'heraldic' is used in this thesis to encompass the following qualities: identificatory motifs tied to shields (*Schild*), originating in military contexts (*Wappen*), but also connoting ornamental prestige (*Kleinod*) and familial or institutional inheritance.

Tendencies in Heraldic Scholarship

The historical study of heraldry has been inhibited by two major factors: one, its categorisation as an auxiliary discipline and two, its residual existence as a living practice among certain social groups right up until the present day. The first issue is straightforward; historians of all kinds rarely feel the need to study heraldry until they are faced with an

[37] On heralds and encomia, see Bock, 2008, 143-44; Paravicini, 1998b, 80. This practice was more common in the German Empire: Van Aroonij, 1994, 55-57.

unidentified coat of arms on a crucial source. Even then, the experience can be frustrating, since pre-modern heraldic records were seldom comprehensive, leading to many fruitless searches. Studying heraldry can therefore feel like a sideshow when compared with bigger historical questions. This perception has not been assuaged by the persistence of heraldic practice and study among those who are invested in the contemporary existence of coats of arms. Heralds, officers of arms and heraldic artists have monopolised the study of heraldry in the twentieth century, but their intentions as historians are always bound up with a desire to perpetuate tradition. The genealogical and heraldic societies that accumulate around these practitioners are usually comprised of hobbyists and those with a family coat of arms, which has contributed to the conservative connotations of the heraldic. Their dedication to the subject does produce useful scholarship, but with an antiquarian flavour.

Broader studies of heraldry have been undertaken by medievalists with an interest in chivalry, material culture and warfare, such as Michel Pastoreau and Maurice Keen, but their work has undergone little revision. In the past few years, a new generation of historians have addressed this problem by rejuvenating the study of medieval and early modern heraldry (Torsten Hiltmann, Marcus Meer, Steven Thiry, Laurent Hablot), especially through the *Heraldica Nova* project.[38] Their work has been invaluable to my own, but the nuanced disciplinary differences between historians and art historians means that our research questions diverge. They situate their research in relation to the 'visual turn' in the humanities, with a particular focus on coats of arms as communicative signs, capable of bearing political and diplomatic messages. They cite art historians, but they rarely acknowledge the fraught art historical

[38] See the well-resourced website for this project: https://heraldica.hypotheses.org/. The most relevant output for my thesis is the edited volume Hiltmann and Hablot, 2018, on artistic engagements with heraldry. However, the laudably ambitious scope implied by the volume's title is not comprehensively covered by the selection of essays inside. See also Pope, 2018.

questions behind their citations. For example, Michael Baxandall and David Freedberg are invoked as authoritative and equally persuasive predecessors who engaged with visual cognition and the 'mental worlds' of the past, despite their extreme methodological differences.[39] As an art historian, I am more familiar with these disciplinary debates and with the difficulties of unpicking the complex dialogues between lived realities and fictional worlds. I want to know how the everyday experience of coats of arms impinged on the imaginative worlds of artists and viewers, rather than simply uncovering the functions of heraldry in the past.

By investigating the imaginative and artful qualities of coats of arms, I am also challenging the stereotyped perception of heraldry among art historical scholarship as a particularly stale, rigid and straightforward type of image. In fact, when historians of visual culture have engaged with heraldry or the heraldic, they have tended to use it as an exemplar of 'non-art' imagery or as a foil to the aestheticised, autonomous modern art object. This tendency is particularly prevalent within anthropological approaches to art, including proponents of *Bildwissenschaft*, a multi-faceted German tradition in art historical scholarship that (to generalise, for its proponents vary in approach) prioritises study of images over art objects, in order to challenge the hegemony of 'high art'.[40] As Keith Moxey has summised, scholars of *Bildwissenschaft* and their Anglo-American counterparts in the field of 'visual studies' are more interested in examining the presence or psychological experience induced by images and objects than in verbalising their meanings.[41] As such, they blend historical analysis with

[39] See Meer, 2019a, 2-3, where Baxandall and Freedberg appear in consecutive footnotes.
[40] For a defence of *Bildwissenschaft,* see Bredekamp, 2003.
[41] Moxey, 2008, 132-133.

more universalising theories about human image-making, drawing on anthropological, psychological or semiotic principles.[42]

One of the problems with treating heraldry within an anthropological system is that it can essentialise image making, erasing the individual agencies of makers and users. For example, among early twentieth-century anthropologists, heraldry provided a European analogy for non-Western and 'primitive' art forms. Franz Boas resorted to the use of heraldic metaphors as a way of explicating the formal and inherited qualities of abstract images among the indigenous communities of the North Pacific Coast of North America.[43] Art historian Aby Warburg, who corresponded with Boas and was invested in a psychological examination of 'primitive' visual culture, also utilised the descriptor 'heraldic' to account for the abstract imagery used by Puebloans.[44] For Warburg, the bird motif so common on Pueblo pottery was a "heraldic abstraction", transforming it into a "hieroglyph" that he believed represented an intermediary developmental point between a primitive "culture of touch" and a modern, European, mechanised "culture of thought," with mimetic imagery and fully-formed textual language.[45] The equivalence between heraldic pictorial language and pre-cultured art was reiterated as late as 1994 by Brian Ragen, who suggested that, "The relationship between some heraldic devices and their bearers is not so different from that of totemic animals and savage clans."[46] Heraldry was invoked to suggest a premodern form of symbolic, pictographic communication, implying that coats of arms are a remnant of uncorrupted human image making. In my research I have tried to avoid primitivist assumptions about

[42] On the tendencies in heraldic scholarship, including the privileging of semiotic approaches, see Hartmann, 2011, 619-624.
[43] Boas, 1927, 280.
[44] Warburg, 1995, 7-8.
[45] Warburg, 1995, 7-8, 17.
[46] Ragen, 1994, 22.

heraldry or ensigns more generally, unless these views were expressed in relevant historical sources, because I want to foreground individual intentions rather than universal principles.

As abstracted images of armour, coats of arms have also attracted interpretation as indexical signs of the body.[47] In *An Anthropology of Images,* Hans Belting sought to demonstrate that heraldic panels were the precursors of portrait panels, arguing that coats of arms legitimised the totemic idea of creating a 'second body' to conjure the presence of an absent person.[48] But, for Belting, heraldry is more direct in its reference to the body than the portrait, since the portrait is a likeness imbued with "a rhetoric of the "Self"", whereas the coat of arms represents the symbolic encasement of a body through armour and connects it to a network of other armoured bodies. Belting's scholarship is motivated by a desire to rehabilitate images with their pre-Renaissance status, before they were set apart as artistic objects, which he believes has reduced the opportunity for direct, phenomenological encounters between humans and images.[49] As a result, he tends to characterise medieval images as inherently more vital than their early modern counterparts, with an uncorrupted power or presence that had yet to be tamed by concepts such as individual artistic genius, *allegoresis* or historicisation. However, his approach often results in a lack of historicising or intellectualising analysis of those pre-modern, pre-Art images it claims to champion, like heraldry or medieval visual culture more broadly. Rather than accounting for the phenomenology of portrait panels, I try to level the playing field by drawing attention to the intellectual and artful side of heraldry.

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[47] First discussed in Seitter, 1982.
[48] Belting, 2011, 62-83. The idea of heraldry as 'second body' has been reiterated recently in Hablot, 2017.
[49] Belting, 2005, 319.

The historiography of ornament has been tightly bound up with psychological interpretations of image making. Since heraldry is a type of ornament and a sign-system, scholars have invoked coats of arms in wider examinations of the psychology of visual communication and the human impulse to adorn.[50] In his discussion of heraldry in *The Sense of Order* (1979), Ernst Gombrich stated suggestively that, "There is no tradition more suited to the study of this interaction between signs and design than that of heraldry."[51] For Gombrich, the shield acts as a highly conventionalised 'sign,' whilst the framing cartouche, mantling and crest offers an opportunity for the expressive freedom of 'design'. In this particular monograph, Gombrich was focused on the psychological perception of ornament and order, rather than the historic specifics of his heraldic examples. A fresh approach is needed, in which Gombrich's incisive identification of heraldry as both ornament and signifier is properly acknowledged, but with due attention to historic context, such as the place of heraldry in the increased theorisation of ornament in sixteenth-century Europe. Research by Alina Payne, Matt Kavalar and Claire Guest has emphasised the centrality of rhetorical concepts for the theorisation of Renaissance ornament, but heraldry only makes fleeting appearances in their publications.[52] Adornment was thought to mediate the message of a text or object in an appropriate style or manner, providing a historically grounded framework for evaluating Gombrich's interest in the boundary between signification and amplification within heraldic images. For the first time, my dissertation brings the new scholarship on rhetoric and ornament to bear on heraldry.

More recently, art historians and historians of visual culture have renewed their attention to the communicative function of images, with an emphasis on text/image relations and the

[50] Most recently, see Gut, 2000.
[51] Gombrich, 1979, 233.
[52] Payne, 1999; Guest, 2016; Kavaler, 2012 and 2019.

conveyance of knowledge. Occasionally, heraldry has been alighted upon as a useful example of a visual and textual category. In *The Domain of Images* (1999), James Elkins argued that heraldic imagery reflects the obsession in Western history with visual genres that obfuscate the boundaries between text and image, due to the relationship between arms and blazon.[53] This comment bolsters Elkins' wider project to highlight neglected images like diagrams, which he argues have been wrongly dismissed due to their proximity to writing, the assumption being that "they are incapable of the expressive eloquence [...] associated with painting and drawing."[54] Elkins' provocative defence of the aesthetics of 'non-art' images has been echoed by other scholars, who have produced sustained and illuminating studies of scientific images, diagrams and the typographic arts, but so far, the study of heraldry has hardly benefitted.[55] This may be because coats of arms were not associated with advancements in scientific knowledge, which continue to attract the majority of scholarship on 'non-art images'.[56] In the third chapter of the thesis, I address the connection between heraldry and natural philosophy in the early sixteenth century, pointing out the ways in which armorial signs provided an appealing analogue for 'natural signs' among humanist scholars.

The distinction between the visual and the verbal did not exercise late medieval and Renaissance thinkers, for whom word and image existed on an expressive continuum. Since the 'visual turn', historians of literature have been uncovering the rich expansion of the visual imagination among poets during this period, while art historians have worried about diluting the particular power of images by resorting to textual evidence. As a result, historians of

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[53] Elkins, 1999, 195–212.
[54] Elkins, 1995, 553–571, 553.
[55] For a review essay and bibliography about this trend in scholarship, see Marr, 2016.
[56] Most literature on informational imagery pertains to the history of science alongside the history of art. For a selection, see Bredekamp et al, 2015; Kusukawa, 2012; Dackerman, 2011; Smith, 2004; Daston, 2004; Freedberg, 2002; Reeves, 1997.

literature in the early modern period have been much quicker to respond to the imaginative allure of heraldry than art historians.[57] Shields were explored as an imaginative spatial screen for the projection of poetic conceits, whilst fictional coats of arms were conjured in text to accompany allegorical heroes.[58] Heraldic elaboration sparked new literary genres, such as the French *blason anatomique* (anatomical blazon).[59] This thesis attempts to build the other half of the bridge between the visual and verbal worlds of heraldry from an art historical perspective. Notably, in the sixteenth century the poetic blazons that had been so popular in medieval German declined, in sharp contrast to the innovative treatment of heraldry in French and Italian literature, as well as the extremely imaginative German heraldic outputs in the visual sphere. My research therefore takes inspiration from the work of literary scholars in acknowledging the playful intersection between the verbal and visual sides of heraldry, but I explore this through a cultural setting – the German lands – where the visual aspect took centre stage.

The current problems with heraldic scholarship may be summarised as followed: heraldry and the heraldic have been invoked by art historians, art theorists and anthropologists because they are conceptual fence-sitters, occupying too many roles at once. Heraldry provides an appealing object of study for those interested in the nexus between culture, human psychology and language formation for three reasons. First, heraldry is a codified and abstracted sign-system, which has a textual equivalent (the heraldic blazon), making it ripe for semiotic analysis. Secondly, heraldry is linked to the human body through its association with armour and social status, which are qualities prized by scholarship on performative ritual

[57] Mackenzie, 2019; Groves, 2014; Will, 2014; Scheuer, 2006; Grummitt, 2000; Vickers, 1997 and 1985; Saunders, 1981; Tomarken and Tomarken, 1975; Dennys, 1975.
[58] Wandhoff, 2005.
[59] Saunders, 1981; Tomarken and Tomarken, 1975.

and totemic images. Finally, heraldry is a type of ornament and ornamentation has long been the subject of psychological interpretations of human image-making due to its relational, mediating function. As should be evident, the communicative and corporeal mechanisms of heraldry have been thoroughly acknowledged, without consideration of the aesthetic qualities that may have been valued by people in particular historic contexts. The anthropomorphism of heraldic images could be framed as artful 'liveliness' rather than a kind of animism, and we must remember that communicative, rhetorical eloquence was highly prized in pre-modern theories of art. The key objective of my thesis is to indicate how heraldry prompted intellectual and artful lines of thought during the German Renaissance, foregrounding the imaginative responses of individuals and their worlds, rather than universal principles concerning semiotics, psychology and anthropological theories of ornament.

Between the Medieval and the Modern: the 'Crisis of Heraldry'

Heraldry has been drawn into historical debates about the Renaissance as a parenthesis between the medieval and the modern. The sixteenth century has long been viewed by heraldic scholars as a period when medieval heraldry entered a 'crisis', ceding its political effectiveness and stagnating as a cultural phenomenon.[60] In his seminal discussion of the 'crisis of heraldry', Michel Pastoureau argued that heraldry essentially became too limited as an expressive medium in a culture that emphasised individual self-presentation over hereditary status, making inventive 'paraheraldic' and allegorical devices like *imprese* preferable.[61] Clive Cheesman has modified this argument somewhat, suggesting that, "It is not that heraldry was over-endowed with arcane significance; it is that it was disappointingly

[60] Cheesman, 2010, 65–80; Heinrich, 1992, 298-299; Pastoureau, 1982, 327–334.
[61] Pastoureau, 1982, 327–334.

devoid of it" to satisfy the urges of an age fascinated by the rhetorical and narrative potential of images.[62] Yet, personalised devices had flourished alongside coats of arms before 1500, seemingly without threatening the heraldic field. The boundary between imaginative, fictive tournament devices and family coats of arms was extremely permeable. In an Italian literary context, Jennifer Mackenzie has demonstrated that writers were not concerned to differentiate between hereditary ensigns, fictionalised shields and personal devices. Strong semantic distinctions between different types of identificatory signs only emerged in the second half of the sixteenth century, as authors began to theorise *imprese.* It was this theoretical turn that prompted Renaissance authors to frame heraldry as a category distinct from inventive, literary devices like *imprese* and emblems. In German, some authors did differentiate between *wappen* (coat of arms) and *mirk* (housemark), but this distinction concerned rank and occupation, rather than relative literary merits.[63] The period covered in this thesis precedes the overt theorisation of identificatory signs, when the conception of heraldry, emblems and other devices remained in a state of flux. Heraldry was influenced by the newfound fascination with signs and semiotic interpretation, but it was not rejected as a result of these developments.[64]

Some scholars have implied that the increased regulation of coats of arms in the sixteenth century hampered creative and political possibilities by stripping heraldry of its imaginative chivalric allure and converting it into fixed symbols of statecraft.[65] Steven Thiry has convincingly argued that, actually, early modern monarchies consolidated and transformed coats of arms into potent symbols of authority, which were not received apathetically, but

[62] Cheesman, 2010, 80.
[63] Schmid, 2009, 46 and *passim.*
[64] Thiry, 2014, 32.
[65] Hablot, 2012; Weber, 2011; Heinrich, 1995, 298-299.

sparked vigorous responses from their subjects, including 'heraldoclasm'.[66] He suggests that "Fixity emphasized the timeless nature of authority, while a synergy with allegorical emblems or new textual genres evoked new meanings."[67] Thiry's research examines heraldry within the cultural history of power, whereas my thesis approaches the same scholarly problem – the proposed decline of heraldic potency – from an art historical perspective, prioritising artistic engagement with the shifting armorial landscape rather than the politicised appropriation of heraldry.

Thiry's focus on monarchical heraldry and statecraft precludes his engagement with the Holy Roman Empire's decentralised and polycentric political system.[68] It is not the concern of this thesis to examine the interconnected levels of heraldic symbolism and authority across the sprawling, complex and ever-changing networks of regional powers, princes, free cities and localities that were loosely united under the figure of the Emperor.[69] However, it is fair to say that the politically multifaceted nature of the Empire encouraged the innovative approach to insignia that forms the backdrop to my research. Shield quarterings proliferated as Prince-Electors sought to shore-up their dynastic and geographic claims, whilst alliances and leagues like the Swiss Confederacy depicted their loose communion by representing their coats of arms side by side.[70] Duncan Hardy has shown that the administration of justice and the negotiation of political disputes were conducted on local and wider levels through *Tage,* assemblies or diets involving representative powers that could be organised as and when necessary.[71] Hardy's article features an illustration of such a *Tag* from the early fifteenth

[66] Thiry, 2013 and 2014, 361-442.
[67] Thiry, 2014, 33.
[68] Thiry, 2014, 13n42.
[69] This task is initiated in Stollberg-Rilinger, 2008.
[70] On quarterings, see Werlich, 2009.
[71] Hardy, 2018. See also Stollberg-Rilinger, 2008.

century; importantly, all the interested parties are represented by their heraldic shields in the manuscript, demonstrating how a rich heraldic vocabulary could act as a shorthand for visualising these complex and flexible networks of governance between different types of authority.[72] Maximilian I and his supporters did perpetuate the image of a *Reich* united under the eagle's wings and the house of Habsburg, but the monarchical and imperial arms were necessarily complemented and strengthened by the dozens of shields that represented all the localities, cities and lords that constituted the Empire. This was a culture dense with heraldry. Political networks were often in a state of flux as allegiances and conflicts were reconfigured. This made the German-speaking lands around 1500 a particular hotbed for heraldic innovation, conforming no more to the model of a 'crisis of heraldry' in the Renaissance than to the nineteenth-century historical ideal of a nascent nation-state centralised under a monarch.

Scholars have also suggested that heraldry fell out of favour due to the growing emphasis on the individual as social and political agent that emerged during the Renaissance.[73] Yet revised studies of Renaissance conceptions of selfhood have demonstrated the plurality of ways in which historic actors related their sense of self to their collective identities.[74] Attitudes varied immensely depending on social position, occupation and location. Broadly speaking, individuals who travelled and were socially mobile were more likely to exhibit the behaviours that historians associate with a sense of independent selfhood, such as writing first-person documents, not conforming to local confessional beliefs or developing new,

[72] Hardy, 2018, 389-390.
[73] Again, see Pastoureau, 1982, 327–334.
[74] There has been a vast array of literature following Stephen Greenblatt's monograph on 'self-fashioning', but the most authoritative revision is still Martin, 2004.

small-group cultures.[75] The courts were therefore crucial locales in the evolution of the courtier as the ideal self-preserving, self-cultivating individual, competing for status and favour.[76] The fact that witty, non-hereditary devices emerged within the late medieval courtly tournament tradition has strengthened the belief that the 'rise of the individual' contributed to the decline of heraldry.[77]

However, it is not clear that non-heraldic devices gained prominence through a rejection of familial or other collective identities. For instance, non-heraldic pictorial devices were far less common in German regions and generally appeared in contexts with close Burgundian ties, indicating a desire to emulate the magnificence of courtly networks.[78] Actually, communal devices were more common in German lands, where smaller-scale, co-operative groups like tournament societies persisted.[79] Non-heraldic devices could cultivate *different* collective identities to coats of arms, exhibiting the variety of overlapping groups with which an individual might identify.[80] For example, when Hermann von Weinsberg displayed his family's 'housemark' (mercantile or artisanal marks) next to their coat of arms, he argued that it was "noch nit zu nachteil und verkleinerung des wappens" (not to the detriment and diminution of the coat of arms).[81] The powerful Fugger family of Augsburg continued using their mercantile mark long after they had been granted an 'official' coat of arms.[82] It therefore seems that social mobility did contribute to the accumulation of possible identifying

[75] Martin, 2004, 17-18, 27-28, 79-80; Amelang, 1998, 36-39, 48, 191-192.
[76] Martin, 2004, 34; Amelang, 1998, 191.
[77] Lippincott, 1990.
[78] Huthwelker, 2013, 35; Nickel, 1972. Chivalric orders, like the Order of the Golden Fleece, may also be viewed as a modification of heraldic display for the expression of new, cross-courtly political collectives, rather than a move towards individualism; see Krafft, 2018.
[79] Paravicini, 1998b, 37.
[80] Martin, 2004, 27.
[81] Schmid, 2009, 57.
[82] Meer, 2019a, 41.

signs that an individual might choose to display, but that this did not eclipse coats of arms. What interests me is how the proliferation of communal and collective identities among certain social groups changed the ways that individuals related to heraldry. Artists and humanists are of particular interest, because they are two key groups associated with the rising emphasis on individual selfhood, who therefore had to navigate the intersections between these different types of communal sign-systems.

The artists and humanists examined in this thesis had a double-sided relationship with heraldry, which complicates any direct correlation between their sense of selfhood and insignia. Many had their own coat of arms, but they were equally invested in promoting, researching and depicting their patrons' coats of arms. It can therefore be difficult to gauge the boundary between their personal and professional engagements with heraldry. Moreover, the German humanists embodied a complicated set of institutional allegiances, which were often mirrored by the artists within their milieu.[83] Both artists and humanists were closely tied to their civic identities. The writing of city chronicles blossomed in this period, providing various patronage opportunities for scribes, scholars and artists, while also encouraging cities to stake a claim on their esteemed citizens, as can be seen in Nuremberg's relationship to Dürer.[84] At the same time, Maximilian I courted the wealthy and powerful urban elites, including the humanists and artists who then "glorified him and his reign," finding ancient evidence for the Austrian claim to the translated Roman Empire.[85] On a cultural level, the circle of humanists following Conrad Celtis were promoting interest in the concept of *Germania*, using antique sources like Tacitus to promote an idealised image of a

[83] On artistic and cultural identities in central Europe during this period, see DaCosta Kaufmann, 1995, 20.
[84] Scott, 2017, 2; Hess and Eser, 2012, 26, 260, 271.
[85] Brady, 1985, 85-86.

consistent and continuous German culture.[86] Hence, the relationships between artists, humanists and communal identities were far from straightforward, meaning they had a very different and indeed more dynamic interaction with the heraldic than the older, martial nobility, who have typically dominated historical scholarship about heraldry. Humanists and artists therefore provide an ideal window onto a changing heraldic landscape, since they were a crucial conduit between overlapping institutional, cultural and social identities. In particular, the German humanists encapsulated three characteristic sets of concerns pertinent to heraldry: the philological and artistic interest in antiquity shared by their Italian counterparts; a newfound interest in German identity and history; a commitment to the deeply heraldic tastes of their patrons and communities.

In recent years, questions of periodisation have returned to the forefront of Renaissance art historical studies, with a growing interest in the persistence of medieval themes, making 'Renaissance heraldry' an extremely timely research subject. In their provocative joint monograph, *Anachronic Renaissance,* Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood argued that the Renaissance marked a period of tension between two models of artistic creation: the substitutionary and the performative.[87] In contrast to the modern idea of the authored original, Wood and Nagel argue that the temporal authority of pre-modern images followed what they term a 'substitutionary' model, in that images were understood as transmitters of pictorial information through a long chain of replicas that led back to an assumed authoritative source at an unspecified moment in the deep past. With strong echoes of Hans Belting's distinction between icons and images, Wood and Nagel suggest that a growing consciousness about the specific temporality and historicity of images can be traced in Europe

[86] Robert, 2012. On Tacitus' reception among humanists, see Krebs, 2005.
[87] Nagel and Wood, 2005; Nagel and Wood, 2010.

from the fifteenth century, in part due to the rise of early archaeology, but also connected with the introduction of the printing press, which made the idea of the copy and its opposite, the original, far more palpable. Their preeminent exemplars of substitutionary creation – icons and monuments – were increasingly accompanied by marks of individual authorial performance, like monograms and signature styles. It is surprising that heraldry barely figures in their analysis, given that coats of arms are genealogical, providing another ideal case study to test the 'substitutionary' model of image replication.

In Christopher Wood's individual monograph on conceptions of temporality in the German Renaissance, he placed a particular emphasis on etymology and genealogy as parallel patterns of thought for the substitutionary model of creation, making it all the more remarkable that he did not prioritise heraldry as a case study.[88] Coats of arms could also challenge conceptions of temporality, since their authority derives in part from a faith in their apparent timelessness and unmediated existence, like pictorial fingerprints. However, arms were authored by institutions and artists, whose mediating input became increasingly difficult to ignore through the bureaucratisation of heraldic grants and the expansion of stylistic options available to patrons. Throughout my thesis, the ascent of print culture, the rise of artistic authority and new humanist approaches to the material of the past are all considered in relation to the persistence and transformation of heraldry.

Once again, the most sensitive discussion of heraldic temporality has been produced by a literary scholar, Jennifer Mackenzie, whose recent doctoral dissertation focusses on heraldic literature within the Este estates of Ferrara. She states: "This dissertation contends that

[88] Wood, 2008, 59.

'medieval heraldry', as we know it, is a construction of certain humanist communities and techniques. 'Renaissance heraldry', in this sense, is intended as a name for this process of construction, which I hope to elucidate."[89] For Mackenzie, the humanist interest in philology and etymology helped to forge the notion that identificatory signs are tied temporally to medieval culture. My research occupies an intermediary space between Mackenzie's focussed discussion of heraldic literature and Wood's broader attempts to consider the temporal logic of German Renaissance material culture. Due to my focus on imagery, the editorial and authorial hand of the artist and the expansion of new media such as print provide a crucial backdrop to my study, just as they do in Wood's monograph. Yet, Mackenzie's nuanced handling of 'Renaissance heraldry' in relation to new philological methods confirms Stephen Campbell's proposed modification of Wood's argument about Renaissance temporality. Campbell has argued that a key characteristic of Renaissance art, the "poetic discursivity of the image," was forged through a critical attentiveness to rhetorical and philological questions as epistemological models for art making, which raised awareness of temporal distance and authorial relations.[90] My research suggests that both these factors – print culture and new critical discourses about images – contributed to a heightened consciousness about artistic processes of transmission and emulation, which artists expressed through the pertinent subject of heraldry.

Whilst a traditional art historical paradigm (which places portraiture, emblematics and *mimesis* at the centre of Renaissance visual culture) might view the diversification of heraldic design as evidence of its diminished power in the face of cultural change, the narrative that I propose shows that heraldry was certainly not perceived by contemporaries as weak or in

[89] Mackenzie, 2017, 19.
[90] Campbell, 2017, 269.

crisis, but instead continued to be used as a site for imaginative elaboration as it merged with new visual genres and ideas. This thesis sets out to ask whether historic actors were aware of the tensions and ambiguities embodied in coats of arms, and if so, why heraldry commanded their attention. The interaction between artists, scholars, viewers and heraldic images offers us an insight into how these historic actors dealt with such un-theorised, ambivalent and conceptually capacious images during a period of increased artistic theorisation. Framing the question in this manner, with sensitivity to individuals and their social environments, also avoids treating heraldry as a window onto the grand epochal shift from medieval to modern conceptions of art. Heraldry does not provide the missing key to Renaissance image making. However, many of the developments associated with the Renaissance did influence the production of heraldic images, including the authorial presence of the artist and a growing self-consciousness about image making in general. Throughout the thesis the impact of such cultural shifts on heraldic imagery will be traced while avoiding overt periodisation through overarching watershed moments.

Project Outline and Methodology

I began this study with much wider geographical and temporal parameters than those of the finished thesis. Initially, I looked at sources from across the Northern Renaissance, from circa 1500 to circa 1700. It quickly became apparent that there were simply too many contexts and ideas to be adequately investigated within the limits of a doctoral thesis. More problematic, however, was an emerging division in my source material: the most exciting images were produced right at the beginning of my time frame, mostly in Germany, whereas the richest textual sources on heraldry were linked to late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century antiquarianism, mainly in England. The gap is explicable: it reflects the subtle

difference between coats of arms as visual artefacts and 'heraldry' as a textual genre that cohered in the seventeenth century. For a while, the English texts commandeered my attention and produced fruitful research about the ongoing scuffles between heralds and Painter-Stainers, who both laid claim to heraldic knowledge.[91] However, their debates did not improve my understanding of the exquisitely designed heraldic images produced on the continent over a century earlier, which had been my route into the topic in the first place.

The relative dearth of literary engagement with ensigns in these earlier, German contexts posed a distinct challenge in my research, but it was also a reminder of the importance of the visual for the subjects that I study. Throughout my thesis, but especially in the third chapter, I consider how verbal interpretations and evocations of heraldry demonstrate comparable patterns of thought to the handling of coats of arms in images. Textual engagements with heraldry never provide direct explanations for the specifics of the heraldic images that I examine, but they do supply analogous evidence for the lines of thought and social settings that surrounded coats of arms. In particular, they demonstrate how innovative engagements with heraldic imagery were often conditioned by the artistic emulation of poetic and literary practices, even though texts specifically about coats of arms were limited.

Matt Kavaler's capacious examination of Renaissance gothic architecture provided a helpful methodological exemplar.[92] As with heraldry, the flourishing of gothic ornament in the Renaissance north of the Alps has been misinterpreted as a sign of adherence to conservative, anti-classical medieval sources. Like Kavaler's *Renaissance Gothic,* the primary contribution

[91] This early research resulted in an article, but ultimately did not fit within the bounds of the dissertation. See Hughes, 2021.
[92] Kavaler, 2012.

made by my thesis is to assemble examples of a neglected and diverse visual category for the first time, in order to build an initial map of these objects in relation to concurrent cultural trends. Kavaler's objects guided his investigation; for instance, the presence of witty caesurae in tracery patterns led him to consider comparable cultural arenas of patterning and elaboration, including puzzles, musical compositions and construction manuals, in a Baxandallian act of 'casting around'.[93] Similarly, I have had to cast a wide net to seek out relevant heraldic source material from diverse and sometimes unexpected places. A comprehensive search was impossible and much more evidence undoubtedly remains to be uncovered, but in order to keep the task manageable I chose to search for supplementary heraldic references only when the visual evidence suggested avenues for further inquiry.

My decision to focus on German material followed a similar logic to *Renaissance Gothic.* The persistence of 'medieval' themes like heraldry and gothic tracery have been mobilised in scholarship to diminish the significance of the Renaissance north of the Alps, or at least as evidence of the tardy uptake of Italianate artistic standards. In her article on Jacobean portraiture, Ellen Chirelstein states that "Lady Elizabeth's body remains essentially heraldic: flat, schematised and immobile."[94] In making this analogy, Chirelstein suggests a correlation between the stylistic peculiarities of English portraiture and the social attention to hierarchy. At no point does heraldry itself receive sustained attention: it is simply a useful adjective to describe these two elements of conservatism. Yet, coats of arms were not always flat and schematic; from the exuberant sculpted heraldic beasts of Tudor England to the curlicued shields nestled among elaborate webs of German gothic tracery, heraldry could be a prompt

[93] Kavaler, 2012, 90. This phrase was used in Baxandall, 1980, 145, but see also 123-127, where Baxandall pioneered the use of musical analogies to explain artistic style.
[94] Chirelstein, 1990, 39.

for vibrant artistic production, rather than an inhibitor of Italianate stylistic reception. In any case, coats of arms continued to play a central role in Italian visual culture and were melded easily with classicising ornament.[95] I therefore want to free heraldry from its associations with an anti-illusory, medievalising, anti-classical understanding of the Northern Renaissance, by exploring the self-confident and lively visual culture surrounding coats of arms in German-speaking lands.

The term 'German-speaking' is helpful, because it accounts for a shared cultural and linguistic identity that connects my case studies, rather than demarcating them using geographical and administrative borders, which, in any case, were often arbitrary containers of visual culture. In the early sixteenth century, artistic styles were discussed using linguistic analogies, with *Deutsch* referring to an indigenous, late Gothic style and *Welsch* indicating a classicising, Italianate style.[96] Heraldic practices were pan-European and a rich heraldic tradition was fostered throughout Northern Europe. However, the imaginative subversion of coats of arms for artistic ends was largely pioneered by celebrated printmakers like the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet and Albrecht Dürer, thereby tying this particular practice (by association) to the German Renaissance, rather than to the Netherlands or France. Indeed, it was the influence of the print trade and artists like Dürer that prompted artisans like Israhel van Meckenem and Lucas van Leyden to (re)produce imaginative heraldic designs for wider geographic audiences.

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[95] See, for example, the success of the heraldic products from the Della Robbia workshop: Savorelli, 2018.
[96] Baxandall, 1980, 135-142.

Despite Matt Kavaler's sensitive engagement with gothic ornament after 1500, he still depicts the newfound artistic self-consciousness as being in tension with heraldry, arguing that "With the atrophy of stable heraldic display, improvisation became more accepted, and tracery figures might be charged informally with associations of personal identity, office, status and possession."[97] The notion that florid and complex tracery patterns were deployed as signatures of virtuosic artistic invention is convincing, but this was not necessarily in opposition to coats of arms. I would also query the suggestion that there was a golden age of "stable heraldic display," although Kavaler is right to note the late medieval diversification of the heraldic field, which was indeed accompanied by increased improvisation.[98] My thesis probes the suggestion that artists adopted virtuosic ornament as a kind of alternative insignia by examining their direct engagement with heraldry as subject matter. I suggest that artists increasingly asserted their mediating presence within heraldic designs and sometimes framed their professional identities through coats of arms. This topic is considered in most detail in the second chapter on ornament and heraldry, where I also compare the relationship between coats of arms and other artistic identifiers like monograms. As a result, the artists that predominate the thesis are those who produced heraldic images and cultivated their public identities through print, monograms, texts and self-portrayal, such as Albrecht Dürer, Hans Baldung, Niklaus Manuel, Urs Graf and Sebald Beham.

I have sought to be receptive to case studies in all media, but the majority of the images that I examine are graphic works on paper, like print and drawings. Artists exploited these two-dimensional surfaces to emphasise their command of mimetic artifice, allowing them to

[97] Kavaler, 2008, 128, repeated in Kavaler, 2012, 93-95.
[98] For example, this was a period when elite arms bearers were trying to add multiple fields to their shields, to visualise their claims to various territories: Werlich, 2009.

enliven heraldic formulae using architectonic depth, variegated textures and animated lines. Paradoxically, translation into 'flat' media resulted in virtuosic renditions of heraldic liveliness that would have been difficult to achieve in the round. The second most represented group is heraldic glass for windows, often derived from novel designs made on paper. There are a number of explanations for the biases in my material, the first being that drawings, prints and glass are more likely to have survived in museum collections when compared with their more ephemeral counterparts, including festive cloth banners, display shields for tournaments and even heraldic biscuits.[99] Other more permanent types of heraldic display like graffiti, wall murals and architectural ornament remain in situ and are therefore difficult to find, especially when compared to highly accessible online collections of graphic media, like the Albertina, the Basel Kunstmuseum, the British Museum, the Rijksmuseum and the Bayersiche Staatsbibliothek, all of which have been essential resources. However, the prevalence of case studies on paper may also reflect historical quantities, given that drawings were often precursors to works in other media and that coats of arms were tied to bureaucratic customs, a world of paper and parchment. Many of the drawings that I examine were linked to the huge expansion in private heraldic glass panels, which reflects a notable historic shift, rather than just the fortunes of survival.

There are other collectable and portable media that make a surprisingly limited appearance, particularly easel painting. Coats of arms were frequently represented on the external wings of portrait panels or alongside the donor-figure in altarpieces, but these were largely formulaic. In contrast, my case studies were selected for their non-normative uses of heraldry, in order to track innovations in the genre. When heraldic wit was embedded in a

[99] On 'sweet' heraldry, see Salzer, 2011.

painting, it was often concealed through visual or verbal puns, which are not immediately obvious when surveying potential sources.[100] Hans Holbein incorporated a visual pun on the Lovell shield when he depicted a squirrel – the family heraldic charge – in the arms of Lady Anne Lovell.[101] More subversively, Giulio Romano punned on the balls (*palle*) of the Medici arms through the marginal figure of a dwarf displaying his testicles in the *Vision of Constantine* in the Vatican Palace.[102] This phenomenon of playful heraldic dissection is invoked throughout the thesis, but usually as a parallel practice in relation to more overt instances of artistic engagement with heraldry, where the coat of arms takes centre stage.

Aside from questions of survival and historic ubiquity, my concentration on heraldic prints, drawings and small glass panels allows me to delve deeper into the status of heraldry as a 'communicative' and 'communal' type of image. These media were all circulated within different cultures of exchange. Drawings were displayed and gifted among artists and their close associates, or co-authored and edited within workshop contexts and systems of production. Prints were used in a comparable manner to drawings, but were capable of reaching more diverse and distant audiences through their multiplication. With the expansion of the book trade, printed illustrations and single sheets also participated within a new economy of knowledge. Individual heraldic glass panels were often exchanged to furnish new civic buildings, creating a material documentation of all the donors involved when the building was complete. These exchanges could forge and strengthen diplomatic ties, especially in the Swiss cantons where city authorities were frequently commissioning and requesting heraldic glass. During the period that I examine, these three media were all being

[100] Brine, 2018, 608-609.
[101] Müller and Kemperdick, 2006, 378; King, 2004.
[102] Alberti and Bodart, 2018, 35.

incorporated into novel material-cultural constructions of communal relations. A key question is whether these new relational networks fostered innovative artistic engagements with heraldry. Just as print culture helped to translate the function of monograms into signs of artistic authorship, so too may it have prompted artists to reconsider the nature of heraldic designs. Shira Brisman's work instigated my attentiveness to the communicative and relational codes embedded in images, especially when new systems of correspondence and exchange transformed established modes of address and response. Coats of arms express relationships between individuals and objects, which is perhaps why the most innovative treatments of heraldry that piqued my interest were produced in shareable, sociable media.

The communities that produced the innovative heraldic designs explored here were decidedly male. This is not to say that women were not engaged with heraldry; they definitely were, and in a legal case study which I examine in the second chapter, a female complainant argued her case with a detailed understanding of heraldic law. However, when women influenced or directed heraldic matters, it was usually within the confines of patriarchal expectations, for instance to shore up their social status (in relation to men) or the status of their children. The majority of the images explored in this thesis were intended to circulate among all-male networks or to communicate ideas to other men. When women *were* represented as a dominant presence in heraldic designs, it was to signal a dangerous or ridiculous inversion of societal norms, as illustrated in the first chapter. It would seem that exclusive masculine communities were fertile ground for this kind of subversive heraldry, including university student groups, scholarly fraternities and tournament societies. My choice of case studies therefore reflects these masculine worlds of heraldic play.

The loose chronological bounds of my project, c.1480-c.1560, were also suggested by the source material. Many of the cultural threads that I follow blossomed in the late fifteenth century, such as visual parodic heraldry, the ascent of individual artist-printmakers, the growth of the heraldic glass trade and a renewed interest in genealogy and local history. The 1560 cut-off date is slightly more gestural, but indicates that the first half of the sixteenth century was a period of intense experimentation with coats of arms that subsequently tailed off. A few other studies that engage with overlapping material to mine end their analyses earlier, prior to the significant new cultural currents unleashed by the Reformation.[103] However, I wanted to address the first period of reform and its possible impact on heraldry, which I outline in a section of the first chapter. Religious ramifications are also relevant to a number of my case studies in the second chapter, even those completed on the eve of the Reformation, making it difficult not to recognise this fundamental historic shift. Furthermore, my third chapter revolves around the figure of Peter Apian (1495-1552), who was most prolific between 1530-1540, but was inspired by the previous generation of humanists.

By 1560, the era of master printmakers overseeing the production of virtuosic single-sheet images had given way to a more divided model of print production, dominated by major publishers and their large workshops.[104] Many of my case studies were the product of a more intimate relationship between leading artists and print, epitomised by the generation of printmakers following Dürer, the so-called *Kleinmeister*, who died at various points circa 1540-1560. The upper limit of my timeline is marked by another shrewd Nuremberg printmaker, Virgil Solis (1514-1561), who specialised in the production of ornament sheets on an impressive scale. His career exemplifies the emergence of the more commercialised,

[103] Meer, 2019a, 19; Kavaler, 2012; Wood, 2008.
[104] Landau and Parshall, 1994, 300.

large publishing shops in the second half of the sixteenth century. By then, the genre of printed illustrated heraldic compilations had developed, including Virgil Solis' *Wappenbuch* (1555), marking a shift away from individual experimental heraldic images and towards the systematisation of heraldry as a kind of auxillary science. This culminated in Johann Siebmacher's *Wappenbuch* (1605), which has formed the basis of modern German heraldic scholarship up until the present day, whereby heraldry is treated more as historical source material than as a prompt for creative artistic exploration.

Thesis Outline

The thesis is divided into three thematic chapters, beginning with the most expansive theme (heraldic subversion) and ending with the most focussed (heraldic scholarship in the orbit of the imperial court). I hope that the gradual process of 'zooming in' from a broad to a narrower frame of inquiry balances the need to account for both the extraordinary ubiquity of heraldic practice across geographies and social ranks, as well as the highly regionalised, contextually specific nature of its usage. Equally, the ordering of the chapters has a narrative logic. The first chapter considers the social and cultural contexts that contributed to heightened criticism and humorous mockery of heraldic practices in the period under study, surveying the key impulses behind an increase in subversive depictions of heraldry. Against this broad sociocultural backdrop, the second chapter considers artists' engagement with heraldic images, prioritising their professional and creative relationships with heraldry as makers and influencers of visual trends. In the third chapter, the focus shifts slightly from the creation to the interpretation of heraldic images, analysing how a loose group of scholars 'read their heraldry'. The chapters therefore progress from examining the broad cultural

setting, to considering artistic intention and creation, before finally turning to questions of interpretation. Of course, interpretation and creation are always intertwined; consequently, I try to draw links between critical engagements, interpretative strategies and visual outputs throughout the thesis.

The first chapter examines critical engagements with heraldry from the late fifteenth to mid sixteenth centuries, such as mock-heraldry and defamatory practices, in order to probe changing attitudes towards coats of arms. It is therefore the most wide-ranging of the thesis chapters, bringing together a disparate corpus of visual objects and textual sources that have not been assessed in a holistic manner until now. These include renowned artistic oeuvres like the prints of the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet and drawings by Urs Graf, but also less sophisticated visual practices, like student graffiti and heraldic defamation. Smaller-scale research inquiries have engaged with some of the better-known case studies in the chapter, but they did not use heraldry as a thematic lens, which allows me to draw out wider patterns across an extremely varied set of examples. Heraldic parody is the core focus of the chapter, but parody can be humorous or socially damaging, moralising or ambivalent. The key question that my survey seeks to answer is whether the proliferation of acts of visual heraldic subversion in the period under study was motivated by an increasing distrust of coats of arms – a 'crisis of heraldry'– or whether heraldry was simply one outlet for subversion, rather than the direct target of criticism. Causal factors behind the expansion of heraldic parody are also assessed, including the impact of print, the rise of humanist satire, the early Reformation and shifts in societal structures. As well as probing differing attitudes towards heraldry during the period, this chapter provides a useful overview of the varying arenas of heraldic expression from the perspective of visual culture, setting up the context for the rest of the thesis.

The second chapter homes in on artistic engagement with heraldry beyond the parodic, paying particular attention to the relationship between artistic identity and coats of arms. I probe the ways in which artists thematised their vocation as creators and authors through heraldic imagery, particularly in the depiction of non-attributed, fictional coats of arms, which did not identify a patron or institution. Albrecht Dürer established an important precedent in this practice, which led his immediate followers to explore heraldic tropes for themselves. In particular, artists emphasised the discursive potential of heraldic images, by finding ways to make coats of arms 'speak' or by using heraldry's genealogical connotations to ponder the processes of artistic transmission and creation. As artists competed for patronage and cultivated their reputations among discerning viewers, they deployed visual identifiers like monograms, mottos or signature styles within works of art. Although monograms originated within medieval goldsmithing practices, they took on a new significance among the first generations of European master printmakers, who recognised their potential as authorial marks. At the same time, major artists were elevated to new social heights and acquired other badges of status, including coats of arms. They emulated the outward indicators of learning deployed by the educated elites, in whose circles they increasingly moved. High-profile artists therefore associated with people from a broad social spectrum, which perhaps prompted their production of so-called 'ego-documents' as they carved out their authorial identities in relation to these overlapping groups. The changing status of artists and art markets stimulated a short period of innovative engagement with heraldic imagery in the first half of the sixteenth century, which helped to transform coats of arms into topics of general cultural and aesthetic interest for a wider audience.

My third and final chapter turns to consider the interpretation of heraldic images by another community of individuals who were heavily engaged with signs, symbols and their theoretical

underpinnings: humanist scholars within the intellectual circles of the universities of Vienna, Ingolstadt and the imperial court during the first half of the sixteenth century. Across two generations of this scholarly community, a novel type of printed mathematical instrument was developed, in which graphic computational devices were produced in the shape of heraldic motifs. The heraldic instruments designed by the cosmographer Peter Apian are my central visual case studies. As with Dürer's fictive coats of arms and those of his successors, the heraldic instruments fostered group identities that were genealogical, but not familial, allowing scholars to visualise their networks of knowledge and patronage. In the second half of the chapter, I consider the epistemic appeal of heraldry for these scholars by examining the discourse surrounding coats of arms in poetic, cosmographic, philological and genealogical texts. This analysis shows that humanists did not just engage with heraldry as a means of social advancement within a system of courtly patronage. They also relished its communicative capacity as a succinct sign system, taking pleasure in the possibility of using one simple image to encompass a vast range of interpretative meanings. In a period of intense re-engagement with "verbal icons and pictorialized language," heraldry was a well-established, prestigious model for the relational, utilitarian *and* pleasure-giving capacities of images.[105]

[105] Campbell, 2017, 285.

I: Heraldic Parody, Defamation and Critique

This initial chapter surveys the entangled threads that contributed to the proliferation of pictorial heraldic subversion from the late fifteenth to the mid sixteenth century, a topic that has never been analysed comprehensively before.[106] This includes a wide range of source material, such as the literary tradition of mock-blazon, the influence of print culture, the disciplinary practice of heraldic defamation, humanist satire, the impact of the Reformation and the dynamics of (masculine) communal identities. Some of the case studies in the chapter have been considered in isolation by other scholars, but many are relatively unknown and have never been properly situated within the broader tradition of heraldic subversion. Subverted coats of arms appeared in a variety of media and genres in text and image, so they need to be approached from a thematic perspective, unhindered by disciplinary boundaries. The wide-ranging examples that I have assembled encompass a daunting array of contexts, but they also provide an advantageous starting point to the thesis, allowing me to sketch out a rough topography of heraldic culture for the period under review. The diffuse nature of 'heraldic subversion' as a category forces us to ask whether the phenomenon reflected changing cultural sentiments towards heraldry itself, as proposed in the 'crisis of heraldry' theory. On the other hand, artists could demonstrate their inventive prowess through heraldic parody or subversion, suggesting that heraldry may have been a relatively unconstrained arena for artistic experimentation, rather than a cultural phenomenon in crisis.[107]

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[106] Ulrike Heinrichs has produced the most extensive art historical discussion of heraldic satire so far, though limited to the work of Martin Schongauer: Heinrichs, 2007, 361-388.
[107] Heinrichs, 2007, 361, 366, 376. On the experimental freedom of comic imagery in the Renaissance, see the introduction and essays in Alberti and Bodart, 2018.

Acts of heraldic subversion may be sorted into two broad but deeply interrelated categories. The first encompasses humourous instances of heraldic parody, which were intended to amuse, following the comedic logic of the literary imagination. The second may be defined as defamatory imagery, in which heraldry was used as a tool for punishing or disciplining the armiger in a symbolic manner. Of course, there was not a neat division between these two camps and many amusing acts of heraldic parody also served to affirm social morals or norms. Subverted coats of arms oscillated between defamation and comedy, reflecting the dilemma at the very heart of debates in secondary literature about the extent to which early modern parody impinged on social realities.[108] On the one hand, parody and satire can be understood as autonomous artistic genres, whose concerns are primarily related to established formulae for conveying a comic mode. On the other, parodic formulae often drew upon stereotyped subjects that had some basis in reality, like peasants, the clergy, prostitution or, indeed, heraldry.[109] Equally, jokes and joking helped give shape to communal identities.[110] The same problems face the interpretation of visual heraldic subversion: the roots of this theme can be found in defamatory imagery with deep social ramifications, but also the ascendant status of artistic graphic invention, drawing on longstanding comic techniques prevalent in medieval literature.

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[108] There is an extensive literature on this topic, particularly relating to the carnivalesque. See Davis, 1971; Bakhtin, 1984; Kinser, 1986; Mezger, 1991; Humphrey, 2001; Altenburg et al, 1991.
On pictures of peasant festivities by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, see the famous exchange between Hessel Miedema and Svetlana Alpers: Alpers, 1975-76; Miedema, 1977; Alpers, 1978-79.

[109] This problem was articulated by Paul Vandenbroeck in his review of Hans-Joachim Raupp's monograph on peasant satire: Vandenbroeck, 1988. The difficulty of separating historic commentary from established formulae has also been debated in relation to Dürer's peasant monument, published as part of his *Underweysung der Messung.* See Dürer, 1525, sig.Ji^{r}-Jii^{r}; Strauss, 1977, 233; Schulz-Grobert, 1998; Hutchison, 1990, 228; Raupp, 1986, 132-133; Mittig, 1984; Greenblatt, 1983.

[110] Again, the literature is vast, but see the following on Renaissance communal identity and wit: Alberti and Bodart, 2018, 30; Simons, 2018, 266-267; Bowen, 2003; Cavallo, 2000; Könneker, 1991, 37-38; Scribner, 1978.

It is also necessary to differentiate between ritualised acts of heraldic subversion and contemporary criticism of heraldry. Often, heraldry was simply a useful tool for the expression of criticism, rather than the subject of the critique. However, sometimes the use of subverted heraldry does reveal societal concerns about aspects of heraldic display. The first half of this chapter provides a foundational introduction to these three crucial distinctions: amusing heraldic parody, heraldic defamation and criticisms of the vanity of heraldry. The late medieval tradition of heraldic parody was initially a literary genre, but found visual expression in the early flourishing of print culture. In tandem to the parodic tradition, the use of heraldic defamation as a form of disciplinary action could be found in a variety of contexts, from tournament grounds to urban governance, setting an important precedent for symbolic acts of denunciation. Longstanding anxieties about the vanity of heraldic display were connected to parodic and defamatory practices through a shared concern with morality and decorum. These three cultural threads (parody, defamation and moral critique) fed into the development of heraldic subversion in the sixteenth century, which is the focus of the second half of the chapter.

Having established the broad contours of the topic, the second half of the chapter turns to consider changing attitudes towards heraldry and parody. First, it analyses humanist responses to heraldry in satirical writing, showing that coats of arms were targeted in these works, but primarily as a tool to criticise heraldic practitioners and the misuse of noble signs. Following this, I assess the impact of humanist satire on visual heraldic subversion after circa 1500, which was actually quite indirect; arguably, new outlets for heraldic display provided ampler opportunities for parody, like broadsheet prints and secular glass panels. The Reformation had a far greater impact on heraldic subversion, as illustrated in the following section, partly because the defamation of the arms of the Pope and other church leaders was a

popular method of attack. On a subtler level, reformist discourse put pressure on the relationship between earthly and spiritual authority, which had important implications for heraldry. The final section of this chapter pulls these diverse assessments together to suggest that the period circa 1480 to circa 1560 was marked by heightened concerns about heraldic decorum, but also a proliferation of heraldic visual culture that hindered official regulation and encouraged novel ways of representing coats of arms.

Heraldic Parody and Mock-Blazon

Before the visual tradition of satirising coats of arms became established, humorous descriptions of ridiculous coats of arms were circulated in text. These textual inventions are more properly called 'mock-blazon', since they parodied the poetic blazon, a form through which heralds would describe and praise noble arms. In many of these textual sources, the stupidity of the peasantry and their lack of familiarity with chivalric conventions provided the basis for the humour.[111] In Heinrich Wittenwiler's mock-epic *Der Ring* from the early fifteenth century, a group of peasant-knights from the fictional village of Lappenhausen carry arms worthy of their rustic position, such as two pitchforks in a pile of dung and a dead hare on a field of green.[112] A similar use of the peasant tournament as a source of heraldic and chivalric humour can be noted in the mid-fifteenth-century *Turnament of Totenham.*[113] Ridiculous coats of arms also featured as part of wider satirical accounts of anti-chivalric figures, such as Peter Suchenwirt's comically lazy knight.[114] Reflecting the courtly humour

[111] On the tradition of "rustic revels" between text and image, see Geronimus, 2018, 411.
[112] Röcke, 2012, 6-9 (1:113-160).
[113] Kooper, 2006, 181-204.
[114] Van D'Elden, 1980, 69-75.

of medieval *fabliaux* and *Märe,* these textual sources invoke ignoble stock characters for comedic effect, imagining the most ludicrous substitutions for noble ensigns.[115]

The major flourishing of visual parodic heraldry occurred in the late fifteenth century and is particularly notable in the work and artistic context of the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, named after the set of drypoint prints held in the Rijksmuseum.[116] The artist is also known as the Master of the Housebook, due to the stylistic and iconographic relationship between the Amsterdam drypoints and the illustrations in the medieval housebook of Wolfegg Castle. However, it is now thought that the Housebook was completed by multiple hands, only one of which has strong links with the Amsterdam drypoints, albeit probably through an intermediary source.[117] To avoid confusion, therefore, I will refer to the printmaker as the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet. Unlike the Wolfegg Housebook, the drypoints illustrate a sustained engagement with (humorous) heraldic material. These images draw on the commonplaces of late medieval literary chivalric satire, addressing themes such as the folly of love, the power of women and the topsy-turvy world. Building on the scholarship of Renate Radbruch, Hans-Joachim Raupp found parallel subject matter in contemporary comic poems, which themselves parodied the tradition of late medieval courtly love poetry.[118] Despite equivalent examples of heraldic parody in text and image, the two traditions seem to have flourished separately, since no illustrations of specific mock-blazons have survived. That being said, they both drew on the same parodic technique of importing unvirtuous iconographies into the noble heraldic framework.

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[115] The literature on *fabliaux* and parallel medieval comic literary genres is vast, but see Schenck, 1987. For the German *Märendichtung,* see the survey text Fischer, 1983.
[116] Filedt Kok, 1985, 73–75; 178–185; Butts and Hendrix, 2000, 68-74. Martin Schongauer was also an important originator of this genre. See Radbruch, 1961, 79-80.
[117] Hess, 1994, 11-12; 16-22.
[118] Radbruch, 1961; Raupp, 1986, 103-108.

The parodic coats of arms in the Amsterdam drypoints were probably produced intermittently throughout the artist's career, rather than in a single concentrated period. One, thought to be among his earliest works from the late 1460s, depicts an older female shield-supporter holding a basket over her head and standing behind a shield displaying a sickle (fig. 1).[119] The crest atop the helm is an unruly vegetative growth. It has been suggested that she is a "Graserin" or "Grasmetze," a harlot of the pastures, who lures knights into unsuitable relationships in medieval fables.[120] The sickle can be a phallic device, whilst Jane Hutchinson has suggested that the basket might allude to lusty greed, due to the linguistic association of "Korb" or basket and a slang term for the belly.[121] The use of turnips, garlic and other ignoble vegetables as crests or mantling was an easy means of suggesting a rustic mode whilst also importing phallic iconography; these root vegetables were not just associated with the peasantry but were also employed as jokes about the male member.[122] The *Graserin* hides behind her shield and beneath her basket, in an attempt to deceive foolish young men. Her attempts at deception thus reflect the wit of the artist, who can subvert the heraldic tradition of visual puns (the vegetable mantling) and oral puns (the basket). In this respect, the artist employed the same comedic techniques as in the early mock-blazons, riffing on typical heraldic terms or formats.[123]

Concern with inappropriate, appetitive and sexual desire is the most consistent theme underpinning early burlesqued heraldic prints. In a matching pair of heraldic designs by the

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[119] The chronology of the prints was first proposed by Curt Glaser, 1910, 146. Now, see Hess, 1994, 24.
[120] Raupp, 1986, 104.
[121] Hutchison, 1979, 68.
[122] Barolsky, 1978, 48; Sohm, 2015, 78-79.
[123] There are parallels with the burlesqued poetic tradition; see Kanz, 2002, 44-50.

Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, the supporters are a fashionably dressed courtly couple, rather than peasants (figs. 2 & 3). Yet, the lady's shield and helm are adorned with radishes, the young man's with onions or garlic, potentially indicating an allusion to root vegetables and sexualised imagery.[124] A rat or mouse leaps up to reach the young man's hand, perhaps begging for food; in later images mice could serve as allusions to female genitals, but in medieval bawdy poetry a 'rat' was a euphemism for a penis.[125] The phallic vegetable charges thus reveal the true, lustful intent of the two young lovers. The style of the vegetables has been compared to the woodcut illustrations in the *Gart der Gesundheit* (Garden of Health), an incunable herbal published in Mainz in 1485.[126] In the entry for garlic, the text warns the reader that men who wish to procreate with women ought to avoid garlic.[127] Heraldic alliances like this pair were employed to celebrate marriages, signifying the union of two bloodlines. Here, however, the eroticism of the vegetal aphrodisiacs threatens to defile the nobility of their procreation.[128]

The humour of the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet's heraldic parodies utilised unexpected juxtapositions alongside visual and verbal puns. Proverbial and punning wordplay were foundational techniques in medieval manuscript marginalia, which may have helped readers to memorise figures of speech in the text. As Mary Carruthers has demonstrated, even the earliest known Western texts describe punning or homophony as appropriate techniques for remembering names, prefiguring the popularity of 'canting arms' in late medieval Europe,

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[124] Onions and garlic were thought to promote excessive lust. See McTighe, 2004, 317-318.
[125] For female genitals and mice, see Andersson, 1978, 54. For male genitals and rats, see Classen, 2008, 164-165.
[126] Hutchison, 1979, 70.
[127] Cuba and Breydenbach, 1485, sig.[avii]^{v}.
[128] On procreation, garlic and onions, see McTighe, 2004, 317-318.

which used rebus-like puns on family names as heraldic charges.[129] These images were meant to be 'sounded out', if only mentally. The same impulse towards wordplay and proverbial humour may be detected in the Amsterdam drypoint heraldic parodies. In one further example, the shield features an illustration of an old, bare-footed woman spinning at her wheel (fig. 4). On top of the helm is a haggard, vulture-like bird, its open beak conveying an inaudible shriek. Spinning had numerous connotations, from sexual promiscuity to the fabrication of stories.[130] The verb *spinnen* meant to spin, but also to be mad and to engage in sexual intercourse. Older women were particularly associated with idle gossip around the spinning wheel, as well as inappropriate levels of bodily desire. A close counterpart to the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet's iconography of the spinning old woman may be found in a later print series for a *Stammbuch*, representing the different ages of man and woman. The seventy-year-old woman, who is described as ugly or formless (*Ungestalt*), is depicted with spinning tools and a vulture-like bird. The accompanying text caricatures her as wanting more of everything, even though she is satiated and ought to be preparing for death.[131] Through puns, proverbs and genre *topoi*, the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet subverted heraldry by linking it to bodily excess and material indulgence, anticipating that viewers would 'sound out' the coats of arms as though reciting a mock-blazon. At the same time, the suspect women manning these shields remind us of the close relationship between forms of identity (heraldry) and the art of visual deception, in a manner that would have been difficult to convey in the relatively overt parodic mode of mock-blazon.[132] The verbal and visual polysemy heightens the uncertain status of the fictive heraldic image.

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[129] Carruthers, 2008, 32, 91, 274, 281-291.
[130] Owens, 2020, 266; Stewart, 2003, 130-132; 137-143; Andersson, 1980, 279.
[131] Necker, 1579, sig.Yii^{r}-Yii^{v}.
[132] On 'Ungestalt' as indicative of ugliness *and* anonymity, see Groebner, 2004, 12-16.

Late Medieval Heraldic Parody in Print

Despite the evident relationship with mock-blazon, these late medieval heraldic prints possessed a peculiarly pictorial logic, which subverted and paid homage to other visual customs. The advent of print culture contributed to the ascent of raucous, morally ambiguous imagery, especially as marginal motifs were separated from textiles, manuscripts and metalwork, to circulate independently and between media.[133] The elusive oeuvre of the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet suggests a similar interaction between ornamental repertoires and early print culture in the development of visual heraldic parody. Only a very small number of impressions were taken from his delicate drypoints, implying that their humorous contents were intended for a limited audience.[134] His light, scribal use of the medium indicates the likelihood that he had training as a painter of manuscripts and miniatures. Moreover, his entire printed output has been connected to the expansion of book illumination in the mid fifteenth century, when independent prints and pen drawings were inserted into manuscripts as ready-made illustrations.[135] Late medieval manuscript marginalia often incorporated heraldry alongside other fantastical and ridiculous creatures. Manuscript examples from the artistic network along the Rhine, for which the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet's probable middle-Rhenish milieu acted as a principle hub, attest to encounters between coats of arms and amusing drolleries in the vellum margins of elite, personalised manuscripts.[136] In the spectacular prayer book of Catherine of Cleves (Utrecht, ca. 1440), the heraldry of Catherine's lineage forms part of the ornamented border alongside spiralling

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[133] On early printed playing cards and models, see Buren and Edmunds, 1974 and Wolff, 1982. On exchanges between manuscript and early print, see Marrow, 1978. On peasant images between drolleries and early print, see Raupp, 1986, 38 and 92-99.
[134] Filedt Kok, 1985, 23-39.
[135] Hess, 1994, 26-30.
[136] On the historiography of the disputed identity of the Master, see Hutchison, 1979, 7-10.

vegetation and anthropomorphic motifs.[137] A wild man crawls through some florid tendrils after a rabbit who is about to flee; this instance of frozen drama is sandwiched between two coats of arms on folio 2r, demonstrating how amusing, fantastical scenes and heraldry shared space in late medieval marginal ornamentation (fig. 5).

The encyclopaedic nature of pre-modern ornament may explain the variety of character stereotypes that appear in these early fictive heraldic prints. In one heraldic roundel by the Master, a woman with bare feet sits next to a blank curved shield (fig. 6). Two children play across her lap, the younger offering the older an apple to bite. Aside from her poverty, she exhibits none of the traits associated with poor character. Instead, she has been identified as a Roma woman, reflecting the rising cultural interest in different cultural types. A design by Martin Schongauer for a heraldic roundel showing a wild woman with her children suggests the same attentiveness to stock characters as a way of furnishing the ornamental imagination, rather than to convey well-defined satirical messages (fig. 7).[138] Such ambiguous shield-holders were utilised in mid-Rhenish manuscript marginalia, for instance in the Simmern Missal (c.1480), which has long been connected to the stylistic milieu of the Housebook and the middle Rhine (fig. 8).[139] The Simmern shield is depicted among the exuberant, multi-coloured tendrils filling one of the lower margins of the manuscript, embraced from behind by a crouching male figure; his hat is pushed down over his eyes, as though he is playing a game or taking a nap.[140] These playful heraldic attendants provide a manuscript analogue to intaglio prints depicting blank shields accompanied by stock figures, whose meanings were

[137] On the indirect relationship between the Cleves manuscript and mid-Rhenish artisans, see Hess, 1994, 27.
[138] Heinrichs, 2007, 368, 381-382.
[139] Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78B4. Hess, 1994, 27; Knaus, 1973; Anzelewsky, 1958.
[140] Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, 78B4, fol. 8.

neither overtly subversive nor honourable. Figures who once populated the margins were becoming ever more itinerant as individualised motifs, as illuminators sought new outlets for their designs.[141]

In other heraldic prints featuring blank shields, the accompanying characters have more obvious negative connotations. In a pair of printed roundels by the Amsterdam Cabinet Master, two peasants sit behind blank shields (figs. 9 & 10).[142] The elderly female peasant is supporting a distaff behind the shield, from which she pulls a length of thread. In the other, the peasant man sprawls awkwardly behind his shield. In a similar pair of roundels by Monogrammist bxg the parodic element has been made more explicit. The male peasant sits clumsily behind the shield, one leg thrust exuberantly through the curvature intended for jousting lances (fig. 11). He is in the middle of consuming a snack of raw root vegetables, whilst his other hand is tucked into the inside of his jacket, a motif used to indicate idleness. His female counterpart raises a cup with one hand and reaches up her skirts with the other. The recipient is invited to complete the image by filling the blank shields accompanying the dishonourable pair, but the invitation is slyly ironic, forcing the viewer to consider the pictorial relationship between shield contents and shield supporter.[143] The ownership of peasants was a crucial symbol of the old rural nobility and their custody over the land, making it possible that these compositions evoke the dual symbolic status of the peasant as both attribute and opposite of the nobleman, expressed through the tension between the empty shield and its surrounding, supporting framework.[144]

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[141] On the emergence of genre scenes from the margins, see Koerner, 2016, 45.
[142] On all these pairs with blank shields, see Raupp, 1986, 106-107. On blank spaces in images as invitations to the viewer, see Brisman, 2013.
[143] For comparison, see Heinrichs, 207, 376.
[144] Pope, 2015, 84. On the legal relationship between early heraldry and territory, see Hauptmann, 1896, 40-41.

The images produced by another idiosyncratic printmaker from the upper Rhine, the Master ES, also puncture the veneer of the chivalric ideal.[145] One such design presents an ornamental shield filled with a pattern reminiscent of damask textiles supported by a young woman (fig. 12). The front of the woman's dress has been pulled up to reveal her nude pudenda by a fool stood beside her, who grasps her breast with his other hand.[146] Their moronic smiles have caused them to close their eyes in blindness to their own lust. The female genitals were viewed as a dangerous, liminal boundary, from which various pollutants threatened to contaminate and corrupt masculine potency.[147] The allusion to female pollution has been expressed pictorially within the shield itself. This kind of florid patterning was commonly used to fill large single-colour fields in heraldic compositions, often using fine strands of gold pigment to give the field a variegated appearance. However, in the engraving the patterning is devoid of colour, emphasising its unruly, organic and assymetrical qualities that contrasts with the usual geometric rigour of heraldic divisions. Since formless matter was coded as feminine in pre-modern natural philosophy, perhaps the unregulated shield ornamention further alludes to the risks associated with sexual union and procreation with women.[148]

Master ES's lewd heraldic print is closely related to another of his prints, in which the woman, now almost completely nude, holds up a mirror to the blind fool, reminding us of the importance of combination and re-combination in late medieval ornamental invention (fig. 13). The Master ES was adept at the recombination of motifs, an essential skill for the kind of small-scale works that he produced, such as playing card designs and ornamental roundels.

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[145] Moxey, 1980.
[146] Höfler, 2007, (cat. no. 225) 19, 109.
[147] Although focussing on the work of Hans Baldung, see Owens, 2020, *passim.*
[148] Zorach, 2005, 26.

Fifteenth-century German playing card packs often featured the suit of shields, providing yet another meeting place for chivalric genre scenes and heraldic designs (fig. 14).[149] In both the world of card games and in rhetorical conceptions of invention, the shuffle of things could result in successful procreation or a dramatic fall from grace. The heraldic framework provided an ideal pictorial means for exploring the interconnectedness of the ranks, and therefore the insecurity of social hierarchies.[150] Women were a necessity and a danger in sustaining familial pedigree; the peasantry underpinned the foundations of noble landownership, but also represented the complete inversion of nobility. The standard heraldic composition could expose these dangerous liaisons through ornamental tensions and frictions, which have their own pictorial logic quite separate from the punning wordplay of mock-blazon.

Print culture seems to have elicited the development of subversive heraldic designs that could function independent of the literary tradition of mock-blazon and the circulation of ornamental designs. Many of the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet's burlesqued heraldic drypoints rely more on pictorial humour than wordplay. In his most famous design, dated tentatively to c.1490, the act of subverting the heraldic composition is visually enacted through the jongleuric figure who stands on his head within the shield (fig. 15).[151] On the heraldic crest above the helm, a woman is seen riding a peasant man, who grimaces under the pain of supporting her and her distaff. The imagery is a blend of a number of iconographic tropes associated with the 'power of women' topos, in which patriarchal norms are subverted and foolish men are defeated by their female counterparts.[152] The heraldic framework, which

[149] Husband, 2015, 44, 49, 54.
[150] Heinrichs, 2007, 367.
[151] Hess, 1994, 32; Filedt Kok, 1985, 73; Andersson and Talbot, 1983, 310; Hutchison, 1979, 66-72.
[152] S. Smith, 1995.

is usually associated with chivalric glory and masculine honour, is here turned upside-down, using visual references that would be too lengthy to include in a mock-blazon. That the print retained its value as an independent image is reflected in its reproduction by the copyist Israhel van Meckenen, who spotted its potential appeal for a wider audience (fig. 16).[153] Print certainly encouraged the expansion of pictorial quotation and exchange during this period, allowing visual categories like fictive heraldic designs to develop their own themes.

We are faced with conflicting evidence as to the intended 'function' of these early single-sheet fictive heraldic prints. Typically, they have been categorised as model sheets, for future ornamental re-use. The art historian Urike Heinrichs has tried to counter such functionalist accounts of early heraldic prints, by arguing that Martin Schongauer's series of fictive heraldic prints in roundels were a crucial arena in the artist's deeply learned exploration of pictorial satire, regardless of any subsequent uses by recipients of the engravings.[154] Heinrichs argues that Schongauer's loosely united heraldic series thematises the humanist conception of satire through a decidedly graphic, pictorial lens, despite the fact that his chosen iconographies are not explicitly condemnatory, didactic, nor humorous. Instead, Schongauer's heraldic roundels combine contradictory and enigmatic motifs, challenging the viewer's ability to alight upon one single iconographic interpretation of the image. The lack of colour inherent in the print medium further undermines the communicative function of a normal heraldic image. For Heinrichs, this is evidence of Schongauer's deep engagement with the complicated nature of visual apprehension.

[153] Metzger, 2006; Landau and Parshall, 1994, ch.III.
[154] Heinrichs, 2007, 361-388.

For example, in Schongauer's version of the familiar theme of the peasant as shield-holder, the rustic man rests his head in one hand with his eyes closed (fig. 17). In a moment of respite, he leans his elbow on the top of the shield in front of him, inverting the typical function of the shield supporter, since here it is the shield that is 'bearing' him. A sword lies discarded at his feet, while two little birds chirp on a rock by his head. On the shield is the motif of two outstretched wings, which are not an incongruous heraldic motif. However, the lack of colouring makes it impossible to identify the arms. Beyond problems of colour and heraldic meaning, Heinrichs identifies the fact that all the iconographic signals in the image possess dual meanings, frustrating a learned viewer's attempts to read the print allegorically.[155] The sleeping pose of the peasant could indicate melancholy, or deep thought, rather than idleness. Meanwhile, the bird wings suggest flight, even the soaring of the spirited imagination, whilst Heinrichs proposes that the chirping wild birds are reminiscent of Virgil's claim that birdsong is not a sign of natural *ingenium,* but is rather an emotional, involuntary response to the natural world. It is not clear, therefore, whether the peasant ought to be read as a contemplative scholar, whose mind is uplifted by the spirit of *ingenium,* or whether he is an idle, impulsive simpleton, whose behaviour is instinctive, tethered to the sensory experience of the natural world like the animals that keep him company. It is, of course, entirely possible for a printed design to reveal the influence of contemporary concerns about vision, whilst also serving as a potential ornamental model for re-use. These two explanations of late medieval fictive heraldic prints are not mutually exclusive. In fact, the enigma of Schongauer's selected iconographies thematise the role of the viewer as interpretor.

[155] Heinrichs, 2007, 378-379.

Scholarship on parody has wrangled with the question of whether artistic subversion mirrors or enacts contemporaneous cultural criticism. Commentaries on parodic arms featuring peasants often refer to the expansion of heraldic usage beyond the rarefied world of the nobility in the fifteenth century, insinuating that these humorous pictures responded to anxieties about social change.[156] It is true that the earliest example of heraldic legislation trying to limit the adoption of coats of arms by the lower ranks dates to 1467, just prior to the heraldic drypoints.[157] However, parodic coats of arms mocked all kinds of bodily excesses and appetitive desires, committed by peasants, burghers and nobles, making it hard to identify peasant heraldry as a separate category with its own critical preoccupations. The stereotypes and pictorial themes that fed into fictive heraldic prints were drawn from a huge array of cultural sources, unified by a broad interest in character types and visual identity, rather than heraldry specifically. Coats of arms were an ideal forum for exploring the interplay between identification and the art of deception.

The surviving examples of mock-blazon date back to the end of the fourteenth century, making it more likely that these innovative heraldic prints responded to a well-established literary tradition, rather than a new 'crisis' of heraldry. This suggestion is further supported by a rare surviving object, which indicates one of the ways in which early prints with secular iconographies were used by viewers. The item is a manuscript compilation in the Heidelberg University Library (Cod. Pal. Germ. 4), produced by a scribe named Konrad Bolstatter (active c.1450-1482), who worked at Schloß Baldern for the Oettinger counts and later in Augsburg.[158] Bolstatter illustrated his manuscript texts with pen drawings, but also left

[156] Raupp, 1986, 103, 105; Andersson and Talbot, 1983, 310; Hutchison, 1979, 66.
[157] Biewer and Henning, 2017, 245; Pfeifer, 2001, 11-12; Hauptmann, 1896, 42, 68.
[158] Schmidt, 2003, 239-248.

spaces blank ready for the addition of further images. In one case, he pasted an intaglio print of an amorous couple onto a page, framing the illustration with an appropriate vernacular poem that included a courting vignette.[159] Other secular texts in the same manuscript include a poem by Peter Suchenwirt (the medieval heraldic poet) and a poem called 'Die Graserin' (linked by Raupp to fig. 1). Although these poems are sadly not illustrated, we might imagine that the Amsterdam Cabinet Master's heraldic prints were meant to appeal to scribes like Bolstatter, producing illustrated compilations of secular courtly literature for private patrons. This was not the first time that the Master had depicted a literary *topos* with limited pictorial precedent, suggesting that he was adept at identifying iconographies that might prove popular as speculative illustrations to manuscript texts.[160]

Whilst the cultural stereotypes that filtered into fifteenth-century heraldic prints clearly had their roots in real-world social relations, such as the perceived opposition between peasants and noblemen, or anxieties about female pollution, their main function was not to comment on a contemporary 'crisis' of heraldic purity. Rather, the prints extracted themes and motifs established through the literary tradition of mock-blazon, but quickly developed their own lineage as a loosely defined pictorial genre. Artists toyed with visual devices for indicating contradictions and incongruities, for instance by setting up enigmatic relationships between shield contents and shield supporters. Printmakers looked to other pictorial examples when they produced their new heraldic creations, departing from literary exemplars and socio-political disputes. In turn, they established tighter relations between the pictorial genre and the subversive potential of print as medium, for instance through the initial lack of identifying

[159] Schmidt, 2003, 240-242.
[160] On his localised depiction of Aristotle and Phyllis, see Hutchison, 1966.

colour, the unregulated status of print on the market, and the consequent emphasis on the recipient as interpreter.

Tournaments and Humour

Despite the independence of pictorial heraldic parody from the socio-political sphere, the kinds of visual and verbal wit evident in these early heraldic prints had parallels in contempory tournament culture. Tournament participants often bore imaginary arms and devices, rather than their familial heraldry. This is evidenced in a number of sources with strong ties to the Amsterdam drypoints, including an illustration in the Wolfegg Housebook.[161] Chivalric devices like these have been cited as the precursors of *imprese,* precipitating the 'crisis' of heraldry, as young noblemen began to express their individual character through personalised, literary compositions, rather than inherited familial arms. However, many tournament devices disguised, rather than clarified, the identities of their bearers, allowing them to adopt a new persona in the spectacle. Crucially, the pleasure of playing a different character by masking one's identity was central to the understanding of satire as a rhetorical mode.[162]

Many tournament costumes were purposefully humorous, in that the participants adopted ignoble or dishonourable *personae*. In a stained glass fragment depicting a joust (Frankfurt?, c.1475), one of the horsemen wears an oversized pair of spectacles as a device, a motif associated with folly.[163] A noted Frankfurt patrician, Bernhard Rohrbach, documented the

[161] Graf zu Waldburg Wolfegg, 1998, 55.
[162] Springer, 2010, 69.
[163] Hess, 1994, 53.

tournament devices that he and his friends wore at festive events.[164] At the May Day *Stechen* of 1464, Adolph Knoblauch displayed a figure trying to scoop water from a stream using a sieve, with the inscription "Und ich wie kann ich" (And I as I am able).[165] In 1472, Bernhard Rohrbach and Philip Katzman wore matching outfits, embroidered with silver scorpions surrounded by four silver Ms and four silver Vs, standing for "Mich Mühet Mannich Male Vnglüch Vntrew Vnd Vnfall" (I am oft troubled by sorrow, treachery, and misfortune).[166] These acronyms and riddles demonstrate the same appreciation for wordplay as in the Amsterdam drypoints, presenting the tourneyers as victims battling adversity.

It is unlikely that the parodic coats of arms in the early single-sheet heraldic prints represent tournament devices, but they certainly drew on the same imaginative impulses. In contrast, heraldic prints were not made to be worn by a particular character, so the subversive imagery could be even more nonsensical and playful, since it had no bearing whatsoever on an individual behind the mask. The heraldic prints featuring blank shields functioned like costumes awaiting actors, a persona ready to be inhabited. Either the recipient could complete the empty shield with an invented charge, thereby maintaining the fictional logic of the sheet, or they could fill the shield with an actual coat of arms, establishing a dialogue between the shield holder and real world identities.

Tournament displays from Rohrbach's day have been linked to the empty, overwrought, mannered spectacle of late medieval chivalry, following Johan Huizinga's (controversial) assessment of Burgundian and Flemish court culture as the 'autumn' of the middle ages,

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[164] The Monogrammist bxg produced a print depicting the Rohrbach arms, which may well be a copy after an original by the Amsterdam Cabinet Master: Husband, 1998, 181.
[165] Froning, 1884, 210.
[166] Froning, 1884, 221; translated in Graf zu Waldburg Wolfegg, 1998, 55.

rather than the wellspring of the Renaissance.[167] Huizinga assumed, as other scholars of folk history following Michel Bakhtin have done, that visual spectacles like tournaments are empty simulacra, a "delusion," devoid of the lifeblood of real cultural generation from below.[168] Yet, if we judge these spectacles as sterile, then we are, as Michael Camille has cautioned, arguing "against representation itself, viewing art as artifice and the visual as superficial show rather than having any socially recuperative potential."[169] The overt artifice of late medieval tournament culture was not the result of hollow anachronism, but indicated a conscious acknowledgement of the distinction between rehearsed battle and real warfare.[170] During this period tournament societies became deeply self-conscious, as noblemen fought to defend their exclusive right to participate by admitting only those who could prove a lengthy, uninterrupted noble lineage.[171] As a result, tournaments were socially coded as arenas for rehearsing group identities, rather than for military practice. As Noel Malcolm has demonstrated in his assessment of the origins of English nonsense poetry, parodic traditions flourish in exclusive, small groups.[172] Such humour is generated "by an intensification of self-consciousness within the institution itself."[173] Thus, it could be argued that the heightened attention that was being paid to the ritual of tournament participation actually contributed to the kind of self-ridicule that we see in tourneyers' outfits, and which was similarly invited by the blank shields of humorous heraldic prints.

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[167] Huizinga, 1996 (translation based on the Dutch edition of 1921). On Huizinga's poor reception among art historians, see Wolfthal, 2019.
[168] Huizinga, 1996, 304. For an illustrative example, see Kinser, 1986, 6.
[169] Camille, 1998, 56.
[170] Viljoen, 2016, 226 and 235n106.
[171] Jackson, 1990.
[172] Malcolm, 1997, 117-124.
[173] Malcolm, 1997, 119.

Like tournaments, late medieval heraldry became more and more distanced from real-world warfare, and therefore demanded new definition as a mode of representation. Many scholars of heraldry associate 'true' heraldic culture with warfare and medieval knighthood, perceiving the translation of heraldry into the spheres of artistry and bureaucracy to be a mark of decline, no doubt contributing to the 'crisis of heraldry' thesis.[174] Actually, as with the tournament, the shifting emphasis on heraldry as spectacle rather than direct referent to lived societal realities – to fiefs and military obligations – elicited a greater degree of creativity and innovation. Not only does self-mockery reinforce the boundaries between members and non-members of a group, but it also deflects criticism or scrutiny by forging social identities in the guise of play. Humorous costumes emphasised the playful nature of tournament, allowing noblemen to preserve this important status-defining tradition even as it shifted further away from its original ties to medieval knighthood. Similarly, the rising popularity of humorous, ironic heraldic designs reflects the increasingly imagistic and urbane world of heraldry, offering a novel means for non-armigerous elites to engage with heraldic culture.[175] Rather than using humour to overtly criticise heraldry, printmakers used the mask of playfulness as licence to promote their heraldic expertise within an uncertain, transitional phase in the cultural history of heraldry.

Heraldry and Defamation

The subversion of heraldry was not always for comic effect. The physical inversion of a coat of arms had long been linked to public shame. To turn a shield upside down or to shatter it

[174] Hauptmann, 1896, 12; Andersson and Talbot, 1983, 29-30.
[175] Konrad Grünenberg's heraldic manuscripts reflect the rising fascination with heraldry as subject matter among urban readers: Rolker, 2015, 214.

could indicate the death of the bearer or, metaphorically, the death of their honour.[176] Whilst straightforward subversions like this cannot truly be called parody, the association between tarnished heraldry and dishonour fed into heraldic satire. Building on the work of Otto Hupp, Matthias Lentz has analysed the phenomena of defamatory letters and images in the late medieval and early modern periods, particularly in relation to financial misconduct, debt, and the breaking of contracts.[177] It was well established pseudo-legal practice for wronged creditors to shame their debtors through visual and textual rebukes. The practice of defamatory imagery was so well established that highly standardised motifs developed.[178] One common motif was the depiction of the offending recipient hanging from the gallows, often with his upended coat of arms illustrated alongside him (fig. 18). The second favourite form of visual critique was to depict the seal matrix of the debtor being pressed against the anus of a farm animal, thereby imprinting the heraldic mark into the animal's excrement, as though it were wax (fig. 19). The implication was that the debtor's seal, which had been used to officiate the original contract, had been tarnished or 'turned to shit' by his inability or refusal to honour the agreement.

The second motif developed into a highly standardised type. In one drawing of this type at the bottom of a defamatory letter, a banderole has the debtor declaring: "I set my seal to the anus of this old horse because I do not keep my promises given and sealed in a document."[179] In another drawing of a group of offenders from 1559, the association between wax and faeces is made explicit, as one of the men compliments the other: "Good Lord from Wern,

[176] Meer, 2019b, 622.
[177] Lentz, 2004; Lentz, 2000; Hupp, 1930.
[178] On defamatory imagery in Florence and its aesthetic dimensions, see Edgerton, 1985.
[179] Lentz, 2000, 152.

you have good wax."[180] The man labelled "Heinrich von d'Werna" also announces that "the wax is good," whilst holding a pile of dog excrement in his hand.[181] The negative implications of these images were not just scatological in nature; the oft-exaggerated breasts or udders of the female farm animals, as well as the act of riding backwards, carried gendered connotations of sexual perversion.[182]

In some of these images, the coat of arms of the offender was explicitly depicted in order to tarnish his heraldic identity. Yet, as defamatory images developed into a standardised form, the heraldic seals were only occasionally identified. Instead, the names of individuals were added above their portraits. The visual role that heraldry played in these images was fairly minor; instead, the seals acted as symbolic representations of contractual honour. Still, heraldry retained its metaphorical associations with the process of legal correction. Ulrich Tengler's *Laienspiegel* (1509), a layman's guide to the law, featured a poem discussing the metaphor of the 'mirror of justice', which included the following couplet: "Let him confront in his coat of arms (*wappen*), his crude folly truly annotated."[183] The coat of arms continued to be envisaged as a reflection or doubling of the self, providing a metaphorical substitute for the punishment of an unruly, armigerous body.

The relationship between heraldry, discipline and punishment was also enacted in the medieval tournament tradition. Tournament games provided a ceremonial setting for the 'policing' of the nobility and their coats of arms. For instance, tournaments could begin with

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[180] Quoted in Hupp, 1930, 65. *Reiche her von der Wern du hast gut Wax*.
[181] Hupp, 1930, 65. *das Wax ist gut das sag Ich/ ist für dir und mir wol zugericht*.
[182] Zika, 1998, 320.
[183] Tengler, 1509, fol.768^{v}. *Lass im vor sein wappen visiern/ Sein kunstloß torhayt recht glosiern.*

a *Helmschau,* in which the crests of participants were displayed and judged.[184] Heralds led the judging alongside noble women, deciding together whether a participant was worthy or not by considering his claim to noble status and any misdemeanours that may have tarnished his reputation. As a form of punishment, the crest could be publicly rejected or subjected to derisive treatment, such as being cast to the ground.[185] Criteria for punishment could include marrying a non-noble woman, insulting noble women, committing adultery, usury, or breaking an oath. From around the 1480s onwards, there was a notable drive to commemorate the history of tournaments in print, as well as various attempts to maintain the exclusivity of these events.[186] The anxiety around preserving the purity of the tournament tradition reflected contemporary concerns about the integrity of the nobility, which had implications for heraldry.[187] Whereas *Schandbilder* defiled coats of arms in order to uphold the authority of bureaucratic seals, the defamation of a heraldic crest through a tournament punishment had chivalric connotations, protecting the reputation of the old, martial nobility. Heraldry was not perceived to be in crisis, but noble families were anxious to shore-up the privileges of their rank, including the policing of the military connotations of noble coats of arms.[188]

Despite the differences, tournament was a key site in which disciplinary public humiliation merged with comic literary tropes, as German princes and members of the urban elites emulated the sporting spectacles popular in Maximilian I's court.[189] The *Thurnierbuch* of Marx Walther, who was from a wealthy mercantile family from Augsburg, records a number

[184] Bock, 2015, 82-92; Meer, 2019a, 63-64, 276-278; Sturgeon, 2015, 270-299; Endres, 2001, 264.
[185] Meer, 2019a, 276-277. See also Sturgeon, 2015, 274-285 and Pope, 2015, 14.
[186] Jackson, 1990.
[187] Morsel, 2001, 210, 216-218.
[188] Meer, 2019a, 61-63.
[189] Andersson and Talbot, 1983, 84-85.

of his tournament outfits that feature self-mocking humour: from sausages on his crest as part of a 'peasant' tournament, to the image of a woman bearing her bottom by a stove on his caparison, humour played an essential role in the production of serious personal memorials (fig. 20).[190] A book of tournaments and parades currently held in the Metropolitan Museum features watercolour illustrations of tournament participants that were held in Nuremberg between 1446 and 1561.[191] As Helmut Nickel and Dirk Breiding have suggested, the "mystique of chivalry proved irresistible [...] to the upper strata of the city burghers."[192] Yet the 'mystique' of chivalry evoked by these illustrations betrays a decidedly humourous tone. Andreas Schmidmaier von Schwarzenbruck's crest from the tournament of 1561 is from his family arms, but he is depicted bearing a shield featuring an owl on a twig; in another illustration of this same tournament outfit by Jost Amman a scroll above the owl reads "EIN NIT GVT" or "a good-for-nothing."[193] A surviving German tournament shield from c.1500 also features an owl above a coat of arms; when translated, the banderole reads "Although I am the hated bird, I rather enjoy that."[194] These comic tournament outfits reflect the reception of the self-deprecating chivalric humour of the courts among the urban elites.

The courtly tournament tradition provided an early link between heraldry and the imagery of folly. Fools were a common sight at courtly processions and tournaments, as shown in the illustrations of the Medieval Housebook.[195] The origin of fools at tournaments may be explained partially through the historic interchangeability of heralds, minstrels and court

[190] Huber, 2014.
[191] Nickel and Breiding, 2010, 126-127.
[192] Nickel and Breiding, 2010, 126.
[193] Nickel and Breiding, 2010, 153.
[194] Nickel, 1973-1974, 87. On owl iconography, see Andersson and Talbot, 1983, 291-293.
[195] Bock, 2015, 92n271; Nickel and Breiding, 2010, 144-145.

jesters.[196] Yet, the imagery of heraldic folly was also invoked outside the courts and elite tournament societies. Recently, the fascinating remains of graffiti from a student initiation ritual of 1479 have been uncovered in St Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna (fig. 21).[197] The name of the 'fresher' undergoing the initiation occurs repeatedly among the graffitied motifs: Jeronymus Kisling. His coat of arms is also represented, but his heraldic charge of three balls or spheres have been exchanged for three bells, accompanied by two fools to underpin the allusion to folly. Beneath the coat of arms is the inscription, "Jeronumis kiesling est azinus" (Jeronymus Kisling is an ass); another note reads "Jch pin ein Nar" (I am a fool). The iconography employed suggests that this was a *depositio,* a form of university ritual in which the new recruit would be mocked as the *Beanus*, an undisciplined, unlearned beast, who needed to undergo a transformation into a fully-fledged student of Latin.[198]

The deposition could include performances of medical procedures to 'refine' the victim, small acts of violence, like beatings, or the staging of Latin tests filled with rude terms, puns and comic motifs. Erasmus of Rotterdam wrote disdainfully about such initiations in *De pueris instituendis,* describing how new students would be subjected to a fake shave using urine as a lubricant and beaten "so that they may lose, as the pretence would have it, their novice's horns."[199] Kisling's subverted coat of arms mocks the chivalric function of heraldic representation as a sign of membership, but unfortunately, other surviving textual accounts of deposition ceremonies do not mention heraldry.[200] The informality of the caricatured graffiti

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[196] Hiltmann, 2011, 26-27.
[197] Kohn, 2019; Kohn, 2015; Kohn, 2013.
[198] On the *depositio* as a university tradition, see Füssel, 2005 and Klant, 1984, 18. On university initiation rituals more broadly, see Karras, 2003, 100-108.
[199] Erasmus, 1985, 26: 331. On Latin and initiation ceremonies, see Traninger, 2008 and Ong, 1959.
[200] See, for instance, *Manuale scholarium* (1480) and Johannes Schramm's *Monopolium der Schweinezunft* (1494), printed in Zarncke, 1857, 1-48 and 103-116.

hints at a longer, lost tradition of unofficial visual culture. The apparently 'novel' emergence of visual heraldic parody in print at the end of fifteenth century may well have been prefigured by a steady trickle of marginalia, graffiti and ephemera, pictures that were produced expediently in the service of small-group humour.[201]

In the *Beanus* ritual, the imagery of folly helped to articulate a pivotal, transformative moment in a young man's life, marking his entry into an exclusive, erudite community of Latin scholars. Just as fools could act as narrators in performances, so the figure of folly was used to define different stages in men's life stories. In a portrait within the celebrated 'costume book' of Matthäus Schwarz, the Augsburg accountant signalled his growing maturity in 1535 by recording his newly acquired adult beard, while resting his foot on a fool's cap, as though trampling the follies of his youth.[202] Subverted heraldic representation helped to define and affirm the codes of conduct associated with entry or approval within different societal groups. Each social arena developed its own iconographies for representing heraldic discipline, but there were some shared themes. Acts of violence were especially key, whether symbolic (depicting a coat of arms strung up on the gallows) or literal (smashing the crest of a rejected tournament participant). Faecal imagery could also be used to tarnish somebody's heraldic reputation by association, but this tactic was primarily used for administrative misdemeanours in which the wax seal was the main point of reference. The lighter imagery of folly accompanied social rituals, sometimes marking moments of transformation and self-definition (the *Beanus* ritual), at other times signalling the fictive, literary imagination (the urban tournament devices).

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[201] On graffiti as a bonding practice, with similar motivations to "officially-sanctioned wall paintings," see Schmitz-Esser, 2020, 86, 90.
[202] Rublack, 2010, 58, 76.

Parody, subversion and the cult of folly were essential tools for the ritual expression of inclusion and exclusion, as well as for the policing of social honour. The relationships between defamation, aestheticised disciplinary rituals and humourous play were, however, extremely complex and deeply intertwined. The different levels of severity that may be identified within acts of heraldic subversion were all codified to a certain degree, so they should not be interpreted as impulsive acts of heraldic critique motivated by a 'crisis' of heraldry. Rather, coats of arms acted as proxies for individuals, their reputations and positions, providing a mutually agreed, if diffuse, symbolic system for policing behaviour. Ritualistic acts of heraldic self-mockery remained popular in urban settings, but embraced the imagery of disciplinary correction with a decidedly humorous tone, merging punishment with the fictional world of play.

Heraldry and Vanity

Whilst acts of defamation were rarely motivated by a wholesale rejection of heraldry, the moral suitability of coats of arms as indicators of virtue came under more direct fire. One of the most persistent and long-standing criticisms of heraldic display was that it betrayed the vanity of arms bearers, rather than their nobility or virtue. As Marcus Meer has demonstrated, medieval preachers were anxious about the motivations of donations made to churches bearing the donor's arms.[203] In Nuremberg, where there was a strong tradition of funerary hatchments in churches, the city council was concerned to limit excessive heraldic display. In 1496, the council agreed that funerary shields in churches should be no bigger

[203] Meer, 2019a, 109-110 and 2018.

than a designated panel.[204] This was not the first time that the council had tried to stop the accumulation of heraldic displays; previously, it was ruled that memorial shields and glass panels should cost no more than three *guldens* and that all heraldic donors should seek the approval of a church custodian before displaying their coats of arms in a church.[205] These regulations were motivated by practical as well as moral concerns, since heraldic displays could quickly accumulate beyond the available space. This was not only a nuisance, but also made heraldry look ridiculous. For example, the fifteenth-century Swiss Dominican Felix Fabri was horrified by the proliferation of votive coats of arms along his pilgrimage route to the holy land, which were causing images of the saints to be obliterated by holes and hooks.[206] Heraldic excess undermined the supposed humility of the donations.

It is also possible that individuals seduced by heraldry were viewed as fools. In a tantalising woodblock in the Derschau collection, Berlin, a group of fools are pointing gormlessly at a variety of Nuremberg coats of arms displayed on a building (fig. 22).[207] Although the original woodblock survives and was reprinted in 1925, no Renaissance impressions are known (fig. 23).[208] The style of the block is commensurate with that of Nuremberg book illustrations in the 1490s and the iconography is oddly specific for an antiquarian forgery.[209] Indeed, the block is especially comparable, in both dimensions and style, to those made for the unpublished *Archetypus triumphantis Romae.*[210] The contracts (beginning in 1493) for this major printing endeavour survive, indicating that 316 woodblock illustrations were produced;

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[204] Hampe, 1904, 1:79. *Es ist in eynem rat verlassen, die leychschilt, die man in der kirchen aufhenckt, nach dem form der schwarzen tafel, die in eynem rat gezaygt ist, zu machen und nit grosser...*
[205] Meer, 2019a, 110.
[206] Kraack, 1997, 343-353, 415-418.
[207] Diederichs, 1908, I:197.
[208] My thanks to Dr Michael Roth at the Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, for kindly sending me a photograph of the woodblock. For a modern impression (limited edition), see Weil, 1925.
[209] Weil, 1925, 7-8.
[210] Compare Parshall and Schoch, 2005, 81-82.

despite the detective work of Rainer Schoch, over 200 blocks have still not been identified.[211] It certainly seems plausible that such an encyclopaedic book, which we know included highly unusual alchemical allegories, images of civic festivities drawn from Ovid's *Fasti* and one image of Dame Folly riding an ass, may well have contained this strange scene of fools gazing at coats of arms. Despite the lack of contextual information, the woodblock appears legitimate, providing evidence that heraldic obsession could be associated with folly.

Cultural concerns about the proper use of coats of arms were inflected by local and regional customs, like the Nuremberg criticisms directed at display of *Totenschilde* in churches. In the sixteenth-century Swiss cantons, the growing popularity of stained-glass panels depicting coats of arms came to be associated with the corruption of the younger generation of confederates through the influx of foreign fashions. In the *Berner Chronik*, written after the Reformation, Valerius Anshelm complained about the arrival of new customs and styles in 1503, arguing that young men were wearing slashed clothing, drinking foreign wine, gambling away their money, and favouring "large houses" with "high glass panels complete with heraldry" rather than the older Swiss custom of "smaller houses" fenestrated with *glasruten* [bullseye glass?] or flocking.[212] He also recounts changes to the city ordinances for the regulation of glasers in 1501, made necessary by the influx of "foreign customs, particularly evil and lavish" brought in by "wicked soldiers" (i.e. mercenary service): "[A]lmost nobody wants to be hidden behind small flocked windows, or to be seen through *glasruten*; but nearly everybody wants to be behind large glass panels, and seen in painted windows everywhere, particularly in churches, council rooms, inns, taverns, bathhouses and

[211] Schoch, 2001; Wilson, 1978, 243-244.
[212] Anshelm, 1886, 2:389-390.

barbers."[213] Anshelm's critical tone is obvious, but reflects inter-generational tensions prevalent in the Swiss cantons at this time.[214] The problem was not heraldry itself, but rather its association with material ostentation, inappropriate display and slipping moral standards.

Even arms-bearing families were anxious about the associations between vanity and heraldry. In a letter between two members of the Nuremberg Behaim family from 1534, the elder boy, Paul, warns his younger charge, Michael, against investing too much in their family's coat of arms. He recalls:

> "I once wrote to your late father and also asked him so sincerely to send me a painted coat of arms. He wrote back such a chapter to me, accusing me of such great pride. I could not begin to write you all that he said. He did not believe that I should be concerned that my coat of arms was lost."[215]

Friederich Behaim, Michael's father, was from an older generation that had already internalised the dangers of heraldic vanity. Actually, Friederich's other correspondence shows that he was interested in family history and heraldry, especially when it pertained to formalised social connections, but clearly he felt that his nephew's curiosity lacked the requisite humility.[216] The inappropriate use of heraldry seems to have been particularly

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[213] Anshelm, 1886, 2:340-341. *Als noch in menschen gedächtnüss vor unlangen jaren in Bern me flom und tůch, denn glas, darnach me waldglasruten, dan schibenvenster waren gsehen; und aber ieztan so uss fremden landen durchs verrůcht kriegsvolk fremd siten, besunder bös und üppig, fremd ring, flüssig gelt, fremd künst und kostbarkeit, besunder in büwen, kleidungen und tischungen, in alle Eidgenoschaft was kommen, wolt sich schier niemands me hinder kleinen flöminen vensterlin verbergen, oder durch glasruten lassen sehen; aber schier iederman hinder grossen schibenvenstren verbergen, und in gemalten venstren allenthalb, besunders in kilchen, raths-, wirts-, trink-, bad- und scherstuben lassen sehen, also dass der glasergwin můst ein mauss haben, und zůvor ein mäss zůn schiben und ruten.*
[214] See Balthasar Spross, *Das Spiel von den Alten und Jungen Eidgenossen* in Christ-Kutter, 1963.
[215] Ozment, 1990, 90.
[216] Note the presence of heraldry in Friederich's correspondence: Ozment, 1990, 76-77.

associated with young men, like the Swiss mercenaries accused of flaunting their coats of arms alongside lavish foreign fashions.

There are plenty of visual examples where heraldry was employed as a *vanitas* motif, reflecting concerns about the temporality of heraldic status. In Hieronymus Bosch's painting *Death and the Miser* (c.1485/1490), the noble miser's shield and helm lie jumbled in a heap at the bottom of the image, as useless for his soul as the money he has gathered around his death bed (fig. 24). In a printed pictorial cycle of the 'dance of death', dating no later than 1488, the *Wappenträger* (herald or arms-carrier) is accosted by a skeleton, who announces his demise by raising up a deathly coat of arms (fig. 25). In the accompanying verses, the herald laments his fate, confessing that he has served earthly masters and their heraldry rather than Christ and the *arma Christi*.[217] The text confirms that heraldic display was suspect if it was not underpinned by spiritual devotion. In Hans Holbein the Younger's woodcut version of the dance of death, produced between 1523 and 1525, the skeletal figure of death prepares to bludgeon a heavily feathered count with his own shield (fig. 26).[218] The coat of arms served as the icon of worldly vanity among the nobility. In contrast, 'heavenly' coats of arms were spiritual rather than material. The associations between heraldry, vanity and materialism go some way to explaining the emphasis on earthly matter and bodily indulgence found within subverted coats of arms. Equally, the proliferation of heraldry does seem to have provoked negative views of heraldic decorum.

[217] *Der doten dantz mit figuren,* Heidelberg, before 1488, f.12.
[218] Müller and Kemperdick, 2006, 471-477.

Humanism and Heraldic Satire

The growing humanist discourse on folly and interest in satire at the turn of the sixteenth century provided fertile ground for the subversion of heraldry.[219] Literary satire was not new, as indicated by the medieval mock-blazons referred to earlier, but in the sixteenth century the right set of cultural conditions resulted in a massive expansion of the field, both in Latin and the vernacular. Latin authors found precedents for satirical forms in the literature of antiquity, such as Lucianic dialogues and mock-encomia. However, aspiring satirists also had a rich trove of medieval and vernacular traditions to which they could turn, including *Fastnachtsspiele* (Shrovetide plays) and *Ständesatire* (satire on the estates of man), which tended to emphasise the role of death as the 'great leveller' by offering moralising jibes at the sins of stock characters. The printing press helped to spread this newly invigorated interest in satirical texts, which in turn provided opportunities for innovations in the pictorial arts through woodcut illustrations.

It is often assumed that heraldry was incompatible with humanism, given the latter's emphasis on scholarly virtue and antique culture, rather than inherited nobility and medieval chivalry. A number of select quotations from humanist texts seem to support this assumption. In his *Institutio principis christiani* or *Education of a Christian Prince* (first printed 1516), Erasmus states that one should, "Teach the young prince that nobility, statues, wax masks, family trees, and all the heraldic pomp which makes the common people swell with girlish pride, are only empty gestures, except in so far as they have been the consequence of honourable acts."[220] In contemporary codes of conduct or mirrors for princes, it was

[219] Könneker, 1991.
[220] Erasmus, 1986, 27:213.

frequently emphasised that true nobility was rooted in virtue, not external signs such as land, castles, titles, clothes, weaponry or heraldry.[221] In Erasmus's conduct book for boys, he recommended that learned young noblemen should try to display their ingenuity through devices like *imprese,* rather than empty signs like heraldic lions: "Let others paint lions, eagles, bulls, and leopards on their escutcheons; those who can display 'devices' of the intellect commensurate with their grasp of the liberal arts have a truer nobility."[222] Yet, in practice, humanist scholars did not eschew heraldic norms. In a letter to Johann Rinck in 1530, thanking him for the gift of a cup bearing the Rinck arms, Erasmus wrote that, "The symbol of the eagle, which is found on your shield, is not inappropriate to you."[223] Such unimaginative complements were fairly common in laudatory writing; Erasmus was prompted to praise Rinck's heraldry because it was depicted on the gifted cup, underlining the importance of heraldry in forging scholarly networks through gift giving.[224]

When humanist authors did attack heraldry, they often targeted heraldic practitioners, rather than coats of arms themselves. In 1451, Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini penned a letter to Johannes Hinderbach, in which he provided a false etymological explanation for the origins of heralds in an ironic send-up of contemporary etymologists and their tenuous use of antique sources to explain modern concepts, like heraldry.[225] Piccolomini also lamented that the office had declined, since heralds were no longer heroic military veterans. Copies of the letter circulated among students and scholars as an exemplar of rhetorical mastery, which

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[221] This is a well-acknowledged feature of the shifting conception of nobility during this period. See, for example, Dewald, 1996, 149-187. The battle between education and military prowess in the construction of noble virtue was a standard topic of discussion: Buck, 1992.
[222] Erasmus, 1985, 26:274.
[223] Erasmus, 2015, 16: 401 [Letter 2353A]. Erasmus received many cups as gifts from correspondents, which often bore their coat of arms.
[224] The complex relationship between humanists and heraldry is examined extensively in chapter 3.
[225] Moll, 2021, 418-422; Rundle, 2015.

must have set an authoritative precedent for the combination of heraldry and irony.[226] In his *Narrenschiff* (1494), a compendium of all kinds of worldly folly, Sebastian Brant echoed Aeneas' lament about the corruption of the heraldic office within his verse about beggars: "To humankind 'tis a disgrace/ That all men after money chase/ All sorts of heralds once could claim/ They spoke rebuke of public shame/ And earned themselves an honour so;/ Now every fool pretends to crow/ And wants to bear a herald's stave."[227] In Brant's eyes, the mutual dependence of noblemen and their heralds, whose traditional job had been to police the behaviour of tournament participants, had been undermined. The elite cannot be held accountable for their actions if the heralds themselves are corrupted into false flattery through desire for profit.[228] Brant's parody condemns heraldic misuse rather than heraldry, thereby updating an established trope for an innovative vernacular text.

Other heraldic references in the *Narrenschiff* address the problem of fake, ignoble coats of arms. As in medieval mock-blazon, Brant's description of peasant heraldry indulges in ridiculous, animalistic imagery: "Yet shield and helm he bore away/ To prove he was of knightly clay./A hawk is like a heron dressed,/And on the helmet eggs in nest,/ And on the nest a moulting cock/ He's brooding out the little flock."[229] Here the boastful 'Knight of Porrentruy' bears a hawk in the colour of a heron on his shield, but his helm also suggests he might be a cuckold, as the lusty old cock sits slyly on the nest of eggs, revealing the true pedigree of the hawk-heron's flock.[230] Later in the verse Brant included another description

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[226] Fürbeth, 1995, 444-449.
[227] Zeydal, 2012, 210. Brant may have known Aeneas' letter and there are a number of surviving copies that were owned by Basel humanists: Fürbeth, 1995, 444-446.
[228] The suspicion that heralds were greedy and motivated by monetary gain rather than the duty of upholding honour was actually a long-standing concern: Peters, 1976, 233; Wagner, 1939, 30.
[229] Zeydal, 2012, 252.
[230] The man brooding a clutch of eggs was a much loved comic figure. See Roth, 2017, 49.

of an ignoble coat of arms, featuring lion's paws, a crowned helmet and a golden field, despite the fact that the armiger is 'a knight of Bennefield.' The heraldic parody blurs the boundary between literary tropes and real-life commentary, since Bennfeldt was a parochial, insalubrious district outside Strasbourg.[231]

Erasmus also drew on personal experience for his literary critiques of heraldry. When writing about his conflict with Heinrich Eppendorf, who had been tarnishing his reputation, Erasmus fixated on describing Eppendorf's apparent attempts to fake nobility. Indignantly, Erasmus pointed out that "His coat of arms hangs in front of inns, with helmet and vizier, and a sword runs diametrically through the middle of the shield."[232] By hanging his coat of arms around the area, Erasmus saw Eppendorf as utilising heraldic display for self-propaganda. Erasmus' experience with Eppendorf inspired other descriptions of noble fakery. In his commentary on the proverb "Proterviam fecit" or "He has made a clean sweep," Erasmus discussed sudden rises in social status:

> "And this is a special plague, and by no means the least of them, in our modern Germany, especially among those who pride themselves on a title of nobility; although there are some of them who boast a fictitious nobility so that they can do this with greater impunity, who [...] pride themselves on their ancestral castles, stick feathers in their hats, get a shield painted on which is a hand brandishing a sword and cutting up an elephant, and add at the end of their letters the magic EQU."[233]

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[231] Zeydal, 2012, 381.
[232] Erasmus, 2011, 14:32 [Letter 1934].
[233] Erasmus, 1989, 32: 204-205. Erasmus not the only person to condemn the folly of aspirational social mobility; Sebastian Brant also alludes to this in the *Narrenschiff*; see Zeydal, 2012, v.82.

Here, Erasmus imagines a ridiculous coat of arms featuring an aggressive ensign, mocking the martial, animalistic tendencies of heraldic charges. Erasmus' reference to feathered hats was not purely a literary conceit, but reflected contemporary critiques of feather headdresses.[234] Despite the very real existence of this contentious fashion trend, Erasmus was surely also alluding to colloquial associations between feathered heads and foolishness; one of Holbein's marginal illustrations for *In Praise of Folly* shows a feathered fool talking to a bird (fig. 27). Thus, humanist commentaries blended the literary tropes of mock-blazon with real social observations.

The animalistic nature of heraldic beasts was a common point of attack. In Erasmus' colloquy "A marriage in name only, or the unequal match," the two speakers discuss a repulsive old knight, who clings to his ancestral glory even as he himself decays in a life of overspending, debauchery and overindulgence.[235] His estate is in ruins, "Yet all the while he prattles about castles, fiefs, and other fine-sounding names, and hangs up his coat of arms everywhere." When one speaker, Petronius, is told that the knight's shield features "Three golden elephants in a field of scarlet," he replies, "Elephant for the elephant – that's appropriate, surely." He further elaborates, "Thus his insignia proclaim a great and confirmed fool and wine-guzzler. For his colour [scarlet] isn't that of blood but of unmixed wine, and the golden elephant indicates that whatever gold he gets his hands on goes for wine."[236] Within this commentary, the heraldic golden elephants are glossed as a reflection of noble folly and the decay of an old estate, devoid of any virtue it once had.

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[234] Stewart, 2013, 420; Pinson, 2008, 50; Andersson, 1978, 21.
[235] Erasmus, 1997, 40:842-859.
[236] Erasmus, 1997, 40:848.

Many of the tropes in Erasmus' dialogue drew on real contemporary anxieties about the decline of noble, masculine virtue through excessive spending, drinking and inappropriate marriages between social ranks. However, the colloquy was also a clever Latin rendering of a common pictorial 'genre' theme, the ill-matched couple, which was a popular choice of subject for heraldic parody due to the links between marriage and pedigree. Once again, Erasmus' satirical texts reflect the mutual relationship between artistic formulae and social commentary, with heraldic criticism oscillating between the two.

The humanist disdain for a certain style of nobleman definitely propelled their parodic criticisms of heraldry. The Nuremberg humanist Willibald Pirckheimer expressed anger at the incompetence and cowardice of the old, titled nobility, borne out through bitter experience during military campaigns.[237] However, these humanist commentators were not attacking heraldry *per se.* For one thing, coats of arms were so well established and ever present that no humanist, however sceptical, could possibly have imagined a world without some form of heraldry. Instead, contemporary anxieties about changing social structures and moral decline were channelled into heraldic parody. The speakers in Erasmus' dialogue lament the fact that a young, talented and promising girl from a non-noble family has been married to such a knightly farce, "simply on account of a lying shield." Humanist anxieties about heraldry revolved around its inefficacy as a sign system, which confirmed their wider suspicion of other outward signs of noble status, like drinking, eating, hunting and fighting. In the literary realm, humanist satire added momentum to older tropes of parodic heraldry, updating mock-blazons with contemporary observations about heraldic imagery and noble elites.

[237] Brady, 1985, 67-68.

The Pictorial Impact of Satire on Heraldry

The direct impact of humanist satire on pictorial heraldic parody was surprisingly limited. The influential woodcuts of the *Narrenschiff* did not explore this imagery in any depth; in the woodcut illustrating the verse 'On Boasting', which features the mock-blazon of the 'Knight of Porrentruy,' none of the parodic elements detailed in the text were reproduced in the image.[238] Instead, the false knight, 'Ritter Peter', leans melancholically on the desk of Doctor Gryff, who chastises him (fig. 28).[239] Around the knight's neck is a golden chain, on which hangs a large heraldic shield. The shield is quartered, containing rampant lions in the two primary quarters and the *Baselstab* in the two lesser quarters, rather than a parodic coat of arms. The large coat of arms illustrates Ritter Peter's pride, targeting the urban nobility by invoking the city arms of Basel. In the *Narrenschiff,* therefore, heraldic parody retained its literary status, without leaving a strong pictorial legacy.

However, Sebastian Brant's innovative use of the figure of the fool to survey and catalogue all kinds of worldly folly did have a lasting cultural impact. In the introductory text, Brant described his satirical work as a 'mirror of folly' (*narren spiegel*) allowing all readers to see themselves within the verses and correct their faults.[240] The relationship between folly and self-introspection through the fool's mirroring potential was hugely influential.[241] In addition, the encyclopaedic nature of the book revitalised cultural interest in genre scenes featuring

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[238] On the importance of the woodcuts, see Zeydal, 2012, 19-21.
[239] Scholars have disputed the identity of Dr Gryff, who appears throughout the *Narrenschiff.* Some have argued that he is a foolish, fake doctor, whereas Zeydal proposed that he was meant to represent Brant himself, who chastises the other fools. See Zeydal, 1943, 344-345.
[240] Zeydal, 2012, 58. Brant, 1494, fol.2^{v}.
[241] On folly and mirroring, see Pinson, 2008, 9-26. On Renaissance attitudes to laughter, including self-introspection, see Screech and Calder, 1970.

humorously stereotyped societal characters. Although the woodcuts of the *Narrenschiff* did not establish a pictorial model for heraldic parody, the publication did influence one unique set of miniatures that combined Brant's sensitivity to civic caricature with heraldic tropes: the Krakow *Codex Picturatus* of Balthasar Behem, c.1505.[242] The manuscript contains a copy of the city ordinances and regulations for the various trades and guilds, produced for Balthasar Behem, the Chancellor of the city of Krakow, who donated the codex to the *Rat*.[243] It is lavishly illustrated with miniatures depicting trades and tradesmen at work, some of which are identified by fictive coats of arms that help to convey the humorous stereotypes. The illuminator had evidently seen a copy of the *Narrenschiff* or had been exposed to the woodcuts, because a number of the compositions are derived from Brant's publication.[244] The images in the *Codex Picturatus* demonstrate the influence of the *Narrenschiff* on civic ornamentation, using folly as a unifying theme for picturing the inhabitants of an early modern city.

The figure of the fool appears in some of the scenes, providing a narrative guide through the streets of Krakow. The theme of folly has been used in the *Codex Picturatus* to point out possible moral failings among the citizenry, which the Krakow *Rat* could regulate against. In some of the miniatures, the trades are presented through heraldic compositions. Some of these artisanal coats of arms are official rather than fictive, such as that of the painters' guild. In other instances, however, the miniaturist utilised the heraldic format to deliver the caricature. A miniature depicting the coats of arms of the wheelwrights and the wainwrights shows two semi-nude male shield-holders fighting each other, each bearing a shield featuring a wheel

[242] Although Krakow was beyond the bounds of the Holy Roman Empire at this point, it was still an important hub for cultural and artisanal exchange: DaCosta Kaufmann, 1995, 108.
[243] Bucher, 1889, XI.
[244] The connections are described in Hayduk, 2011, 52-55.

and a wagon respectively (fig. 29). The image indicates the rivalry between the tradesmen and subverts chivalric norms by illustrating a violent duel, which was prohibited in the city statutes. Heraldry was therefore an integral part of the visual language of civic regulation.

Another mock-heraldic composition represents the purse makers or leather workers (fig. 30). The products of their craft are depicted on three escutcheons at the bottom of the image, held by three individuals leaning over a parapet. One is a melancholic, bearded man with his head resting in his hands; opposite him is a woman who places a hand over her face, peeking out at the man between her figures, a gesture usually associated with cuckoldry.[245] Between the man and the woman is a grimacing fool, his parti-coloured tunic partially undone to reveal his stomach. The fool seems to be mocking the man for his wife's adultery. The melancholic pose recalls other depictions of chastised men, ranging from Christ as the Man of Sorrows to the woodcut of Ritter Peter in the *Narrenschiff.* The visible navel of the fool was a common motif to indicate a derisive character.[246] In Jorg Breu's depiction of the *Mocking of Christ* on the wing of the Melk Altarpiece (1502), an overweight, barely-dressed heckler kneels before the crowned Christ, his belly bursting out from his undershirt as he contorts his mouth and nose in a grotesque gesture (fig. 31). A belted satchel hangs suggestively over his genitals. This type of leather bag was frequently shown as the attribute of a fool and the same satchel type is depicted on the fool's shield in the *Codex Picturatus* miniature. The fictive shields are not parodic in themselves; sixteenth-century artisans were often commemorated using images of their wares on shields, as demonstrated on the epitaph of two Nuremberg purse makers from 1564.[247] However, here the miniaturist combined civic heraldry with humorous,

[245] Mellinkoff, 1993, I:200.
[246] Mellinkoff, 1993, I:204.
[247] Ruschel, 2016, 167.

stereotyped images of different handicrafts, reminding us that coats of arms and caricature were natural bedfellows, since both served to classify and essentialise individual bodies.[248]

Other images in the *Codex Picturatus* reflect a similar love of using heraldic formats for caricature; the depiction of the barber-surgeons features an escutcheon showing the jar of an apothecary between two shearing knives (fig. 32). Two chained monkeys clamber atop the shield, whilst the flanking shield-holders are depicted with grotesque, pudgy and bespotted faces. Blemished skin connoted the so-called 'blood taboo' of professions that dealt with flesh and dead carcasses, including executioners and barber-surgeons.[249] Overall, the heraldic format provided the perfect canvas for satirising and stereotyping the professions. Fictive heraldry was suited to the encyclopaedic nature of the *Codex,* suggesting a survey of characters and institutions with their escutcheons as one might find in a noble *Wappenbuch,* although here the tone is comic. Nonetheless, the humour had a function, providing a mirror of Krakow society to remind the city *Rat* of their duty to protect the souls of their citizens through discipline and the enforcement of regulatory standards. Like the *Narrenschiff,* the satirical tone was suffused with concern for civic virtue.

Manuscript illumination continued to have a close relationship with administrative and diplomatic papers. The production of ornate heraldic grants remained the domain of the *Briefmaler,* whose task was to illustrate all kinds of manuscripts and letters.[250] It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that an illuminator was responsible for the innovative combination

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[248] As Sara Lipton has shown, early racially stereotyped characters often appeared in medieval administrative documents, for this very reason. Lipton, 2014, 197-98.
[249] On ritual pollution, see Stuart, 2000, *passim.* On the visual repercussions, see Mellinkoff, 1993, I:LII.
[250] Eser and Grebe, 2008, 11-29.

of heraldic representation and the cult of folly seen in the *Codex Picturatus,* which was not developed in the *Narrenschiff* woodcuts. Heraldic caricatures still tended to be produced on a small scale for limited audiences, even when they did appear in print. In the early decades of the sixteenth century, pictorial heraldic parody retained its ties to small, exclusive groups and their material culture, appearing as isolated artefacts rather than a cohesive genre. However, these artefacts speak to the widespread – if fragmented – use of heraldic parody during this period, especially for the representation of comic stock figures and character series.

Stereotyped comic characters and their fictive coats of arms also provided subject matter for domestic ornamentation, as attested by the remarkable survival of a stained-glass panel, currently at Schloss Wildenstein. Tentatively dated to circa 1500, the panel depicts a shield emblazoned with a defecating pig, topped by a crest showing the bust of a pig crowned by a pile of faecal matter (fig. 33).[251] A faded banderole originally read, "I am a pig and eat filth and ingest rubbish and run away," evoking the scatological imagery of *Schandbilder,* as well as the effeminate greed and cowardice of noblemen.[252] The panel echoes tropes found within carnivalesque rituals of inversion, like the student *depositio.* In a parodied disputation in Erfurt, 1494, Johannes Scramm delivered a speech entitled *Schweinezunft* or Guild of Swine, which mocked the logical progression of university disputations using mistranslations, mixtures of Latin and the vernacular and the coarse, animalistic imagery of drunkenness and gluttony.[253] The glass panel does not mock a scholarly format, but rather the regional fashion

[251] Giesicke, 2002, 18; Gafner, 2015, 170-171. Giesicke asserts that this image refers to the heraldry of Mathis Eberler, which featured a boar's head, but there is little concrete evidence to support such an interpretation.
[252] Gafner, 2015, 171. *ich bin; ein sw vnd/ frissen dreck vnd nim yn inß/ mul/ vnd lauf hinweg*.
[253] On mock-disputations and the *Schweinezunft*, see Röcke, 2013, 133-138.

for heraldic glass panels in the Swiss cantons.[254] The workshop production of individual *Scheiben* in an extensive gift economy throughout the confederacy evidently led to this parodic response, illustrating again how parody tends to emerge from highly institutionalised formulae.

Fictive parodic heraldry continued to provide subject matter for ornamental fillers: a printed design for a circular fillet of 1534 combines *vanitas* imagery with older motifs commonly found in tournament devices (fig. 34).[255] The central shield features an owl with outstretched wings, whilst a winged globe topped with an hourglass combine to form the heraldic crest. An inscription around the edge of the roundel speaks in the first person ("I am a little lighthearted bird/fool") as in the inscription accompanying the coat of arms with the defecating swine.[256] In early Shrovetide plays actors playing stock characters like fools, peasants and knights would come forward one by one to introduce themselves in a similar manner: "Ich bin ein ritter aus Meilant."[257] Addressing the viewer in the first person was therefore closely related to dramatic comedic formulae and the representation of stock figures. These parodic ornamental designs repackaged older comic tropes for new, decorative purposes, perpetuating the humour of tournament festivities and carnivals in more speculative products.

Many artefacts bearing heraldic parody are now itinerant, separated from their original or intended context. Instances of heraldic parody, like the two discussed above, were probably

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[254] For a summary relating to the growing importance of heraldic glass cycles in secular settings, especially in the Swiss cantons, see Schaffner, 2016, 130; Giesicke and Ruoss, 2000, 43-55; Hediger, 2010, 167-179.
[255] This is an edited copy of a lost print by Gilich Kilian Proger. See Falk, 1992, 26.
[256] *ICH. BIN. EIN. KEUCLEIN. WOLGEMUT. WIE. ES. ANDERN. FOELEIN. TUT.*
[257] Pettitt, 1982, 14.

not conceived as stand-alone designs, but could be incorporated into an ornamental series. For example, in a drawing of a roundel design by Jost Amman, a bearded, cooking fool is shown behind a shield bearing a heraldic lion rampant, clumsily lifting a spoon to his mouth (fig. 35).[258] Apes clamber in the strapwork ornament behind him, and a set of bagpipes – the traditional instrument of folly – is suspended like a false trophy. Taken in isolation, the image looks like a straightforward example of mock-heraldry. However, a second heraldic roundel design by Amman, produced to exactly the same dimensions and inscribed with the same date (1563), transforms our understanding of the cooking fool (fig. 36). In the second design, a female personification in classicising dress supports a curlicued shield in one hand and raises a goblet in the other. On the shield is a depiction of a miner, carrying a pickaxe over his shoulder and a lit candle on his hat. In the strapwork behind this heraldic supporter, small putti are engaged in metalwork processes: smelting and smithing. Taken together, the two roundel designs must be identified as personifications of cooking and metalworking, belonging to a lost series of roundels representing the seven mechanical arts, a popular theme for ornamental cycles.[259] The roundel with the cooking fool is therefore not a straightforward example of heraldic parody, but rather a satirical dig at the low social status of cooks.[260] Nevertheless, the inclusion of the heraldic lion on the shield, which has nothing much to do with cooking, suggests that this animalistic charge had negative connotations. Critical contemporary perceptions of heraldry can occasionally be gleaned from satirical coats of arms, even when the heraldic composition primarily served as a pictorial framework, rather than the subject of attack.

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[258] O'Dell, 2009, 30. O'Dell does not identify this as depicting the art of cooking from the *Seven Mechanical Arts.*
[259] Jörg Breu the Elder designed a series of glass roundels featuring the Mechanical Arts. See *Coquinaria* (cooking) in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, glass roundel, ca.1520-30, Museum number 604-1872.
[260] Schuster, 1981, 29.

These sporadic appearances of heraldic parody in small-scale, ornamental and private visual contexts remind us that satirical works need a norm or a framework to subvert. The examples explored so far were all produced in media with ties to heraldic representation, such as manuscript illumination, pictorial glass and ornamental roundels. Playing cards provided another arena for the cultivation of humorous character types. Consequently, it seems that heraldic parody appeared in woodcut prints via the playing card tradition, rather than book illustration. The design of one playing card (the Ace of Hearts) by Peter Flötner features a whole range of parodic tropes within a heraldic composition (fig. 37).[261] The shield bears a frying pan on a cushion, a roasted bird and what looks a sausage. Instead of a helm there is a beehive with a pair of windows akin to the grills of a helmet. Upon the crest a man wearing a monk's habit holds up a jug in one hand and a flask in the other, while vomiting onto the head of one of the shield holders below. She is a grotesque, overweight woman who has her hand stuck up her skirt. Her opposite number clasps a long-necked wine bottle.[262] The beehive helm could represent the church, but was often linked to folly, making it a device that hints at anti-clerical humour.[263] The objects held aloft by the overindulged monk on the crest also seem to evoke Eucharistic connotations.[264] The card merges the imagery of lust, gluttony, excessive drinking, folly and clerical indulgence, appropriate for the playful world of gaming.[265]

[261] Dienst, 2002, 125.
[262] Dienst, 2002, 131-132.
[263] For a useful summary of bee-hive imagery, see Müller, 2018, 41.
[264] Parodic masses or religious processions were a product of carnival culture prior to the Reformation, as well as during. See Scribner, 1978, 317.
[265] An engraved version of Flötner's playing card design was subsequently produced with an inscription: Warncke, 1981, 200.

Woodcut prints of coats of arms were also used for ephemeral announcements and events. Heraldry appeared as part of early broadsheet illustrations, usually to denote the city of publication or the coat of arms of a regional lord.[266] Surviving examples of full-scale broadsheet prints of coats of arms are harder to locate, probably because they had more specific short-term use value. Woodcut depictions of the Papal arms, for instance, were circulated with printed indulgences and pasted on church doors, as well as inside the churches.[267] Printers of illustrated broadsides had already noticed the allegorical potential of this format, since a surviving sheet from circa 1500-1504 depicts the 'coat of arms of the truly repentant man,' with a moralising commentary.[268] As the century progressed and broadside sheets became more established, older subject matter was sometimes edited to fit the new format. For instance, a heavily reduced version of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini's fictional account of the origin of heralds was printed in 1530 in Nuremberg as an illustrated broadside.[269] The recycling and repackaging of subject matter through print was not uncommon, and provides a context for understanding the sporadic recurrence of parodic coats of arms in *Flugblätter*.

The best example of heraldic parody in the broadsheet format is a woodcut that later accompanied Hans Sachs' poem, *Das Wappen der vollen rott des Schlaraffenlandes* (c.1540). The image has been attributed to Erhard Schön and presents the arms of the glutton (fig. 38), echoing the festive, satirical mood of other printed designs like Peter Flötner's *Procession of Gluttony* (c.1545).[270] Sausages outline the frame of the shield and act as the grills on the

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[266] See, for example, Schäfer et al, 2016, 2:191, cat. no. 188.
[267] Volz, 1966, 162.
[268] Schanze, 2000, 99.
[269] Fürbeth, 1995, 458.
[270] Schäfer et al, 2016, I:310-311; Dienst, 2002, 132-135. See 132n376, in which Dienst outlines the attribution to Erhard Schön and the close similarities to the work of Peter Flötner, who is also a

helm, which is crested by a winged pile of excrement and two playing cards. A giant, circular pie crust emblazons the shield, like a round mirror. Hans Sachs' poem was probably a later addition to the design, so cannot be taken as a straightforward interpretation of the image, but alludes suggestively to the popular conceit of the Land of Cockaigne, or *Schlaraffenland,* an idyllic alternative world from literature where excessive consumption, sexual indulgence, greed and laziness were all praiseworthy activities.[271]

The trivialisation of high subject matter was intended to entertain an audience familiar with literary descriptions of excessive consumption through stock character types like the glutton, whether for moralising or purely humorous effect.[272] For example, Vincentius Obsopoeus' *Ars bibendi* (1536) was an Ovidian conduct book advising the reader how to navigate the risks associated with male drinking culture. Despite its instructive aim, the text was also meant to amuse, and Obsopoeus indulged in some lengthy descriptions of drunken misbehaviour. When discussing the corruption of noble martial glory through excessive drink culture, Obsopoeus lamented that "they're swapping shields for ladles, spears for thyruses, and instead of helmets, they're binding their hair with garlands."[273] Later in the text, when advising the reader how to play drinking games, the humanist used the same satirical conceit of swapping weaponry for winery: "A bottle shall be your breastplate, a massive wine bowl your shield, a wineglass shall serve as your trusty sword!"[274] The morally ambiguous rhetorical device of swapping noble objects for ignoble equivalents could easily be translated into visual culture, as is evident in Erhard Schön's sausage-based coat of arms. Familiar

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possible candidate.
[271] For a survey of this literary theme, see Pleij, 2001.
[272] Dienst, 2002, 133-135.
[273] Translation by Fontaine, 2020, 123.
[274] Fontaine, 2020, 195.

iconographies used to deliver social commentary, like the effeminisation of soldiers through excessive drink, sex and food, were repackaged as heraldic parody and perpetuated in print.

One surviving broadsheet from Wittenberg, dated 1530, subverts the seal-like function of the printed heraldic stamp. Titled 'Das Lied von der Narrenkapf' (The song of the fool's cap), most of the sheet is occupied by a lengthy vernacular poem, describing all kinds of masculine folly affecting various levels of society, from clergymen to noblemen, who fall for the dangerous wiles of female seduction.[275] However, at the bottom is an amusing heraldic design in a roundel, mimicking a wax seal: the head of a fool fills an ornament shield, which in turn is crowned with a row of asses' ears and fools' bells. The inscription around the roundel border is taken from Ecclesiastes 1: *Stultorum infinitus est numerus* (The number of fools is infinite).[276] This small act of heraldic parody reflects the urban use of heraldry for official announcements and approving bureaucratic processes, including grants of nobility or titles. Here, the poetic announcement grants fools' caps to all the men described, as though welcoming them to a *Gesellenschaft* or society. The printed *Flugblatt* perpetuated the carnivalesque tradition of guilds of fools or abbeys of misrule, providing a new outlet for parodic iconographies.[277]

The increased circulation of satirical trends via the printing press had an indirect impact on heraldic parody. Heraldic frameworks provided a useful pictorial mode for depicting stock characters from the popular imagination, during a period when the range of stereotyped

[275] Schäfer et al, 2016, I:304-305.
[276] A very similar 'seal of folly' features in a Netherlandish manuscript from c.1600 (The Hague, Museum Meermano, MS 10 C 26) which presents an 'armorial of fools', suggesting that the iconography became well-established. On the manuscript, see Mezger, 1991, 499-507.
[277] The classic work on these groups is Davis, 1971.

figures was expanding through encyclopaedic publications like Brant's *Narrenschiff*. The glutton, the boastful soldier and the fool replaced the effeminate knight and the rustic peasant as favoured antiheroes, reflecting a parallel shift in satirical literature. The old methods of creative subversion remained steadfast, centring on bodily functions and the follies of love, but were realised in newly popularised cultural products, from glass panels to broadside prints. The increased prevalence of pictorial heraldic humour reflects a more speculative approach to the production of parodic imagery, as artisans marketed older comedic tropes to more diverse audiences and contexts.

Heraldry and the Reformation

In comparison to the incidental and diffuse impact of sixteenth-century satire on depictions of parodic heraldry, the influence of the Reformation on heraldic subversion was transformative. Martin Luther seized upon heraldic defamation as a useful tool in his public rejection of the Papacy. On top of this, the reformist suspicion of the relationship between material wealth and spiritual status resulted in more direct criticisms of heraldry. Both Luther and Huldrych Zwingli associated heraldry with pride, especially when coats of arms were displayed in churches. The vanity of earthly regalia and ceremony provided an effective contrast to the humility of the incarnate Christ, building on older comparisons between material and spiritual heraldry.

The representation of Papal pomp next to Christ's lowliness became a popular iconographic theme in Reformist texts and images, often comparing the Papal arms with the *arma Christi*

and showing Christ on a mule with the Pope on horseback.[278] In Lucas Cranach's woodcut *Christ on an Ass confronts the Pope on a Mule,* the opposition is made explicit through heraldic counterparts. Instead of the Papal crossed keys, Christ bears the crossed rod and sponge, revealing the Pope's hypocrisy using a visual pun. At his most extreme, Luther argued that, "we may with good conscience take his [the Pope's] coat of arms, which features the keys and the crown, to the privy, use it for wiping, and then throw it into the fire."[279] For Luther, the Papal arms were an "idol," "the devil's image, which the people have vainly feared and depended on as though it were God's commandment, when it is sheer lies, blasphemy, and arch-idolatry."[280] Woodcuts and other images bearing the Papal arms were often displayed alongside the distribution of indulgences, which Luther robustly opposed, adding fuel to his critique.

Zwingli, the Swiss reformer, also connected heraldic displays with financial misconduct and idolatry, although he directed his accusations towards donors, not the Papacy. Indeed, he made specific reference to heraldry in his critique of religious images. Writing to Valentin Compar in 1525, Zwingli stated:

> "This is the answer, to those who say: "I make the images to honour the dear saints." You do it for your own sake – do we not adorn the idols with more lavish honour, than fabricated for coats of arms, the official decrees and phantasms, with which they are laden?

[278] Scribner, 1981, 158; Strauss, 1975, 1:466.
[279] Luther, 1966, 41:306.
[280] Luther, 1966, 41:306-307.

> One man makes Saint Anthony his shield bearer, another man the suffering Job; for he should not attach his shield to him [the saint], so that he does not pick up so much of the expense himself."[281]

For Zwingli, the images of the saints were being misused as shield-bearers, in order to attract donations and help pay for the commemorative coats of arms, thus deflecting money that ought to be given to the poor into vanity projects.[282]

As with other satirical and carnivalesque traditions, parodic heraldry was transformed as a useful propagandistic tool within Reformation polemics, primarily because individuals and institutions could be specifically attacked through their ensigns. The Papal arms provided an easy target.[283] A design printed in 1538 to accompany an anti-Papal text by Luther shows the shattered keys of St Peter, which fly around the frame like dice on a board (fig. 39).[284] The shield depicts a hand grabbing sacks of money. Instead of shield supporters, two hanging figures are suspended from the stubs of the broken crossed keys: Judas Iscariot on one and the Pope on the other. These satires represent a fusion of defamatory imagery with the tradition of alluding to material excess in lighter forms of heraldic parody, by combining the references to greed and hanging, making explicit the association between Judas' death by suicide and the shame of financial misconduct.[285]

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[281] Zwingli, 1927, 4:53, 108. *Damit is denen geantwurt, die da sprechend: "Ich mach die bildnussen den lieben heiligen zuo eeren." Du thost's umb dinetwillen – Zieren wir aber die götzen uß uppiger eer, als sich erfindt an den wappen, überschrybungen und gespensten, mit denen man sy beladet. Der macht sant Antonien zuo sinem schilttrager, dyser den blatrechten Job; denn solt er nit sinen schilt im anhencken, so näm er so vil kostens nit uff sich.*
[282] Michalski, 1993, 55.
[283] Coupe, 1966, 128–130; Scribner, 1981, 65-67, 78-81.
[284] Luther referred to this series of designs in a letter to Nicholas Hausmann in 1538: Luther, 1975, 50: 177.
[285] The relationship between heraldic dishonour and hanging continued for much longer, especially in relation to anti-Papal heraldic imagery: Will, 2014, 92-94.

It was not just the Papacy that was critiqued through heraldic display. An individualised attack on Cardinal Wolsey through a parody of his coat of arms was printed by Heinrich Vogtherr the Elder in Strasbourg in 1528 as a frontispiece to a text beginning "*Rede me and by nott wrothe...,"* attributed to the English Protestants William Roy and Jerome Barlow (fig. 40).[286] This derogatory satire begins with a verse description of the coat of arms. The supporting devils are listed as "two angels off Sathan," whilst the bloody axes and bulls on the shield allude to Wolsey's violent 'butchery' and his apparently lowly origins as the son of a butcher.[287] The 'bulls' also utilise the tradition of punning devices in heraldry by referring to Papal bulls. At the end of the mock-blazon, the authors threaten Wolsey that the "tyme is come of bagge and wallatt/ The temporal cheualry thus throwen downe/ Wherfor prest take hede and beware they croune."[288] Wolsey's deceptive, 'temporal' trappings of chivalry, like money and a cardinal's hat, would be revealed in all their falsity. The early date of this publication (1528) suggests that Luther's attacks on the Papal heraldry drew on established tactics, although it is difficult to assess just how novel Roy and Barlow's mock-blazon was at the time.

Luther was not opposed to heraldry. He was concerned with financial corruption in the church, which he viewed as a symptom of a wider tendency to confuse temporal and spiritual power. He supported secular, earthly hierarchies of men, arguing that kings and princes were chosen by God to rule and to maintain the peace.[289] However, he opposed excessive church powers in secular affairs, insisting that temporal and spiritual status were not equivalent. Throughout his writings, therefore, he frequently defended secular insignia as proper markers

[286] Muller, 1997, 235-236. Transcribed and annotated by Parker, 1992.
[287] Parker, 1992, 52; 161-162.
[288] Parker, 1992, 52.
[289] Luther on secular power: Carty, 2018, 299-306.

of God-given hierarchies, but condemned similar displays of authority by churchmen, especially if he felt they were falsely endowing these secular signs with sacramental power. In his tract "Against the Spiritual Estate of the Pope and the Bishops Falsely so Called" of 1522, he enumerated the vain and sinful behaviour of bishops, finishing with the accusation that they "paint and [...] attach their coats of arms everywhere with rods and crosses."[290] In 1541, Luther denounced the display of "the red indulgence-cross, bearing the papal arms" in churches as though it were "as powerful as the cross of Christ."[291] In contrast, in his lectures on Genesis he argued that "it is God's will that there be distinctions of rank," which could be expressed through ornament: "Thus the king carries a sceptre and wears a crown, the nobility has its own adornments and insignia to distinguish it from others..."[292] Luther tended to invoke heraldry whenever he was clarifying or analysing the relationship between temporal and spiritual power.

The *Chronica Zeitbuch vnnd Geschichtbibell* (1531) by the radical spiritualist Sebastian Franck shows how heraldic imagery could be drawn into Reformation debates about earthly power.[293] The publication ultimately led to Franck's expulsion from the city of Strasbourg, since it was interpreted as an attack on civic order.[294] Despite its unorthodox nature, Franck's tactic of using heraldry in the *Chronica* as a means of critiquing contemporary nobility and princely culture suggests that such images were being subjected to destabilising scrutiny. Heraldry, for Franck, had a corrupted history, since popular motifs like the eagle originated in

[290] Luther, 1970, 39:256.
[291] Luther, 1966, 41:232.
[292] Luther, 1964, 7:190.
[293] Franck's *Chronica* must be understood in relation to the huge popularity of conduct literature at the time; see Dellsperger, 2008, 70-95.
[294] This was partially because Erasmus felt that Franck had manipulated some of Erasmus' commentaries on the nobility and princes to bolster his views: Hayden-Roy, 1994, 97-98.

pagan culture and therefore ought to play no role in a Christian society. He urged noble readers to recognise that the wildness and violence of their heraldic animals betrays the heathen ungodliness of these images and the concept of worldly nobility itself. He hoped that the nobles "will see and learn to recognise themselves in their coat of arms as in a mirror, so that they wipe of the blackness that they see, and put down any heathenness identified that has laid claim to goodness [...] so that their pagan nobility of the flesh is exchanged for a Christian nobility of spirit and virtue, with a new life and nobility that is of God."[295] The metaphor of the shield-as-mirror was already established, as we have seen, but could be mobilised effectively as Reformist thinkers began to challenge their contemporaries to amend their ways through self-reflection.

Not only did Franck query why one would employ the symbol of the predatory eagle as an ensign if one truly wished to pursue a Godly nobility of the spirit, but he also ridiculed the animalistic implications of other heraldic beasts. Even "well-behaved, domestic animals in a coat of arms, like a cockerel or a dog" are made to appear aggressive and untamed, "so the dog has to bark, or to have a bone in its mouth."[296] If a good Christian nobleman or prince were to turn away from these outward signs of fleshly nobility and instead look inwards to the spiritual nobility of the soul, they would not bear such images, Franck argues, because animalistic coats of arms reveal their disgrace before God. A comparable sentiment was expressed by Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa in his *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum et*

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[295] Franck, 1536, fol. clvi^{r}. [...]*und noch bey wilen sey damit sie sich irem wappen/ als in einen spiegel ersehen/ und erkennen lernen/ damit sie ihr gesehen schwertz abwischen/ und die erkante Heydenschafft ablgen/ das güt anmassen/ und in summa lernen thon gericht vii gerechtigkeit/ damit sie iren Heydnischen Adel des fleischs in ein Christlichen Adel des geists und tugent/ mit einem newen leben und adel/ so aus Got ist/ verwechßlen und abtauschen.*

[296] Franck, 1536, fol. clix^{v}. *Un so etwan ein sitsam heimisch tier in ein wappen gerhat/ als hanen/ hund/ zc. so müß doch der hundt murren/ oder ein bein im maul haben.*

artium (first published 1527), where he mocked heraldic lore for preferring "cruel monsters and rapacious beasts" as signs of nobility rather than animals that are useful to mankind.[297] In his Lectures on *Habakkuk* (1526), Luther also stated that "it is not without meaning that noblemen commonly show a lion, a bear, wolves, and other wild beasts in their coats of arms: this reflects their nature."[298] Luther would go on to condemn Franck, despite the overlaps in their worldviews. Nevertheless, it is notable that as the Reformation sparked more radical considerations of the role and nature of earthly rule, long-standing critiques of heraldry were amplified by different voices, channelling the generic association between coats of arms, vanity and violence into more specific issues of confessional disagreement.

Woodcut was not the only medium in which heraldry was linked to confessional polemic. Stained-glass panels were a second notable form used to express reformist sympathies.[299] It is not entirely clear why this was the case. Rolf Hasler has suggested that these windows were mostly installed in private spaces, where confessionalised imagery was perhaps more acceptable.[300] Windows and household furnishings were commonly ornamented with moralising inscriptions and imagery, both during and after the Reformations, meaning that they were an obvious arena for expressing confessionally inflected moral viewpoints. Even Zwingli, with his strong opposition to religious imagery, did not disapprove of stained-glass windows in churches and permitted 'historical' images in domestic settings.[301] Through a combination of these factors, stained-glass panels became an appropriate means for

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[297] Agrippa, 1530, sig.h3^{v}. [...] *aliquot horum animantium quae hominibus servitute vel usui necessaria sunt, in armis gestare nefas est et infame, sed o[mn]es a crudelibus beluis et rapacibus feris nobilitatis suae insignia auspicari oportebit.*
[298] Luther, 1974, 19:170.
[299] Hasler, 2019; Rahn, 1903.
[300] Hasler, 2019, 96-97.
[301] Michalski, 1993, 56-57.

representing pro-reformist iconographies. Due to the frequent inclusion of heraldry in these panels, there was an overlap between the media favoured by reformers and those used for heraldic display.

The earliest known instance of a design for a *Scheibenriss* representing reformist sentiments was produced by the Swiss artist, Niklaus Manuel of Bern, where a thriving trade in figural glass was well established.[302] Manuel's drawing centres around a dramatic representation of the Old Testament story of King Josiah and the destruction of the idols (fig. 41). Josiah became a popular Biblical model for Reformation rulership and iconoclastic practices. By 1527, the date inscribed on the drawing, Manuel was politically involved in the Reformation of Bern. The confessional nature of this image is further underscored by Manuel's depiction of one of the false idols with cat ears, a clear reference to the anti-Lutheran author Thomas Murner, who was portrayed as a cat both in his own publication and by opponents.[303] Manuel framed the Biblical narrative with two fictive stone tablets, ready to bear inscriptions. The bottom part of the frame also features a simple, uncoloured heraldic shield. In subsequent copies of Manuel's design, this heraldic shield was replaced by the personalised coats of arms of patrons, realised in a drawing and one surviving glass panel.[304] Thus, heraldic identities continued to be expressed in the medium of stained glass, despite anxieties about vanity and idolatry that accelerated during the Reformation.

There are a handful of other known examples of Reformist stained-glass panels, which also feature heraldry. The panel of Sebastian Ramsperger (1520-1530) in Reding-Haus, Schwyz,

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[302] This is one of very few works in Manuel's pictorial oeuvre depicting an iconography associated with the Reformed theology. Egli, 2019, 34-35; Von Tavel, 1983, 223-225.
[303] Egli, 2019, 34-35.
[304] Hasler, 2019, 76-77.

depicts an allegory of the power of God's word (fig. 42). Two coats of arms flank a depiction of the parable of the sower in the upper frame above the central allegory, reminding the viewer to be an open and fruitful recipient of the Gospel message. The emphasis on scripture was essential in Zwinglian theology; Ramsperger was killed in the Kappel Wars, while fighting on Zwingli's side. There are also references in scholarship to a now missing stained-glass panel featuring Niklaus Manuel's own coat of arms. His shield was apparently flanked by two snarling wolves dressed as priests with rosaries, accompanied by an inscription from Matthew 7:15, warning against false prophets: "...inwardly they are ravening wolves."[305] This Biblical image was frequently directed against the Catholic clergy during the Reformation. Although the glass panel is now lost, a drawing by Manuel features a blank heraldic shield flanked by two snarling wolves, echoing the subject matter of the missing panel.[306] These examples of pro-reformist, anti-clerical stained-glass images were followed by even more explicitly anti-Papal *Scheibenriss* designs in the 1540s-60s.[307] By association with the medium and with violent beasts, heraldic images were repeatedly implicated in Reformation polemic.

In some instances, however, the confessional use of heraldry was not merely a coincidence of medium or genre. Heraldic furnishings continued to be an important means for visualising and commemorating communal identities, as seen in the tradition of round heraldic tables for guild houses. Certain religious groups chose to represent their community using this heraldic tradition. For example, a number of designs for *Scheibe* represent the Parable of the Good Shepherd, in which Christ is shown leading his flock to the door of a church, while monks

[305] Rahn, 1903, 356.
[306] Egli and Von Tavel, 2017, cat.no. 21. The wolves may well be legitimate heraldic supporters, but this illustrates the ease with which heraldic beasts could be mobilised for polemical purposes.
[307] Hasler, 2019, 82-93.

scramble hopelessly up onto the roof of the building, missing the entrance completely. In a working drawing for a glass panel attributed to Thomas Schmid, the parable is surrounded by a frame of heraldic shields, representing the lay readers of Schaffhausen.[308] Thus, the non-familial heraldic group image could serve to visualise confessional communities, in opposition to Catholic church hierarchies.

One particularly pressing issue in Reformation discourse about appearance and essence concerned the Eucharistic sacrament. Surprisingly, Huldrych Zwingli, the key Swiss reformer in Zürich and Bern, invoked heraldry in relation to his controversial views about the Eucharist. Zwingli argued that the bread and wine signified Christ's salvation, but did not literally become his body and blood at the point of consecration. He instead advocated that the Eucharist had a symbolic status, which was sanctioned by Christ at the Last Supper in order to memorialise his sacrifice and to foster community among Christians united by their faith.[309] To make this argument, Zwingli suggested that the word "is" in the Bible would be better translated as "signifies," thereby changing the emphasis in Christ's ambiguous statement, "this is my body." When preaching a sermon in the city of Bern in January 1528, Zwingli bolstered the case for such a translation by referring to heraldry:

> "...we name the sign after what it signifies. Thus, we name the coats of arms of the lords and say, "that is the duke of Zähringen, that is Zürich, Bern, Augsburg, Nuremberg," etc. So, the circumcision is called "the covenant" in Genesis 17, although it is only a sign of the covenant. And

[308] Hasler, 2019, 79.
[309] Euler, 2014, 57-63.

> here the cup in the Lord's supper is called "the covenant," but it is only a testament and sign of the covenant."[310]

Zwingli compared the linguistic use of the phrase "that is" when naming coats of arms to Christ's use of the phrase "this is" (*id est*) when referring to the cup. In both cases, Zwingli argued, the meaning should be interpreted as "this represents," since it was colloquial to substitute the verb "to be" for the verb "to represent." Just as the viewer of a coat of arms would know that the shield did not literally contain the presence of an absent lord, so Zwingli argued we should not interpret the Eucharistic wine as a literal embodiment of Christ's blood.

The reference to heraldry in Zwingli's sermon is brief, but revealing. It suggests that these coats of arms were extremely familiar to his congregation, for one thing. However, it also nuances the widespread scholarly assumption that coats of arms were seen as substitutes for absent bodies.[311] As Bob Scribner writes, "Coats of arms had a particular totem-like significance for men of the later middle ages, since they were regarded as a substitute for the person they signified."[312] Scribner related the 'totemic' status of heraldry to Luther's visual attacks on the Papal Arms. Zwingli's reference to heraldry, however, shows that not everybody endowed coats of arms with totemic significance. He evidently did not feel that it was necessary to persuade his audience that a coat of arms is simply a sign, with no connection to the bodily presence of its prototype. Heraldry provided a common point of reference for discussing the nature of signs, including the complex theology of the

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[310] Zwingli, 1961, 6.1(116), 482-483. [...] *da wir das zeichen dem nachnennen, deß es ein zeychen ist. Also nennend wir das waappen dem herren nach, unnd sprechend: "Das ist der hertzog von Zäringen, das ist Zürich, Bern, Ougspurg, Nürenberg" etc. Also wirt ouch Genesis 17. die bschnydung "der pundt" genennet, wiewol sy nun ein zeychen des pundts ist. Und hie wirt das tranck im nachtmal des herren "das testament" genennet, und ist aber nun ein äffrung und bedütnus des testaments.*
[311] Hablot, 2017; Belting, 2011, 62–83; Wandhoff, 2009, 70-87; Seitter, 1982, 299–312.
[312] Scribner, 1981, 80.

Eucharist.[313] A similar question of sign versus content underpinned Sebastian Franck's engagement with heraldry, summarised neatly when he asked, "what is nobility without virtue? It's a name without content, like a bishop without a Bible."[314] Although for very different reasons, both Franck and Zwingli wished to emphasise the authority of Scripture over unsubstantiated cultural symbols, drawing heraldry into Reformation discourse as a convenient case study in both instances.

There is one unique example of a stained-glass heraldic panel that makes reference to the Reformation, but does not express a clear confessional mood. This is the glass panel of Balthasar Spentziger, 1533 (fig. 43).[315] In the image, Spentziger's coat of arms is accompanied by a fool, dressed in parti-colours with characteristic bells and belt-purse. Spentziger was the last provost of the monastery at Zofingen before its dissolution. His heraldic crest features a mitre and a crosier, which has snapped; the fool gestures towards the broken sceptre. Above the heraldic ensemble is a banderole, reading "NAR. DIE. BISTVM. IST. ZERBROCH[EN]," (Fool, the diocese is broken). The exact purpose of the panel is unclear. Spentziger's career was not entirely straightforward, since just prior to the fall of the Zofingen monastery he had spent time in prison, having been convicted of communication with the devil and concubinage. He accepted financial compensation after the Reformation prevented his return to the monastery, converted to the new faith and married. The stained-glass panel commemorates his prestigious position as provost, but also represents the destruction of his clerical insignia, which in chivalric language was a form of defamatory

[313] Similarly, in the middle ages seals were invoked to explain complex Trinitarian theological ideas: Bedos-Rezak, 2011, 109-160. Zwingli's analogy may represent the continuity of this tradition.
[314] Hayden-Roy, 2008, 952.
[315] Hasler, 2019, 77-78; Mezger, 1991, 453-455; Schneider, 1971, I:79-80 (no. 200).

punishment or an indication of the death of a noble line.[316] The self-mocking content of the glass panel therefore seems to allude to the vanity of earthly status and insignia, while also commemorating Spentziger's late prestige.

The status of heraldry did not become an urgent topic of debate during the confessional facturing of the Reformation. It is more accurate to state that due to the ubiquity of heraldry, coats of arms were drawn in to Reformation discourse and transformed by the resultant societal change. Heraldic imagery provided an extremely rich arena for any exploration of the relationship between external appearance and internal essence. Luther detested the treatment of coats of arms as though they were sacraments, capable of granting salvation. Zwingli, on the other hand, found the commemorative, communal and sign-like qualities of coats of arms to be a pertinent analogy for his deflated view of the sacraments. A radical outlier like Sebastian Franck also turned to heraldry in order to discuss the relationship between the external accoutrements of nobility and true, spiritual nobility. Coats of arms could be used as analogous evidence for differing theological points of view, due to their familiarity in the urban sphere, rather than the certainty of their ontological status.

The relationship between heraldry and legal defamation made subverted coats of arms a powerful weapon in the embattled exchanges on paper between theologians and politicians. Moreover, heraldic imagery was particularly suited to reformed appropriation due to its established role in the representation of civic communities and its association with domestic furnishings, meaning that coats of arms were largely exempt from contemporary concerns about religious imagery or ornament. Anxieties about heraldic pomp and vanity were already

[316] Heinrich, 1995, 302.

ingrained in society and were by no means a product of Reformation thought, but were certainly heightened in reformist discourse. Reformist theologies scrutinised the status of secular rulers and church leaders, which necessitated discussion of temporal *insignia.* In addition, the function of heraldic display in late medieval Catholicism was tightly bound up with the sale of indulgences, saintly intercession and prayers for the dead, which encouraged reformers to defame and critique coats of arms. In the wake of this upheaval, heraldry was adapted to serve new purposes and to envisage newly confessionalised communities. Heraldic remembrance took on a more reflective role, aiding self-introspection among the living. This had long been a function of coats of arms, but the climate of reform placed even greater emphasis on heraldry as a mirror for spiritual improvement prior to death, rather than a votive or totemic sign-system.

Heraldry as *Speculum*

Heraldic display was put under pressure by a variety of cultural forces, including the Reformation scrutiny of outward signs of authority, concerns about the pride and vanity of unchecked enthusiasm for coats of arms, and the proliferation of heraldry in civic settings. The uncertainty surrounding the cultural codes of heraldry was compounded by the spread of new contexts and media for heraldic display, such as prints and glass panels. As we have seen, parodic coats of arms followed like a shadow behind these new outlets. However, tropes found in heraldic parody also crept into the display of 'real' coats of arms, as though armigers were internalising the comic or critical within their heraldic identities. Semi-parodic, foreboding and moralising frames became more popular, reflecting new artistic trends, but also indicating a desire to qualify acts of heraldic self-promotion. As a result, the visual culture of heraldry took on a more reflexive tone. Artists contributed to the new mood

by designing frameworks that added context to mute coats of arms, placing greater emphasis on the visual artist as heraldic mediator, the traditional role of the herald.[317]

The ascent of literary satire cultivated the language of self-introspection that seeped into heraldic displays. Satire was understood to be a critical mirror of society, absorbing and subverting the longstanding metaphor of the conduct book as *speculum.*[318] The figure of the fool was also thought of as a mirroring device, often depicted in imagery holding up a mirror to another character or to the viewer, revealing that they, too, are fools. In his letter to Marten van Dorp in defence of the *Moriae encomium,* Erasmus explained, "If [...] I see myself in the mirror [of folly] [...] I shall take the hint, and see to it that in the future no fault can be laid by name at my door like the one I see before me pilloried anonymously."[319] For learned men, the satirical mode allowed them to adopt a *persona,* speaking the raw truth unhindered by social mores. Similarly, artists began to utilise the varied pictorial registers of heraldic compositions to introduce crude, critical or parodic commentaries, but from a safe distance, since it is never entirely clear how the surrounding vignettes are narratively related to the central heraldic achievement.[320] Certain patrons sought out ignoble imagery to accompany their heraldry, allowing themselves to be "pilloried anonymously" through their armorial bearings. The reflexive, paradoxical figure of the fool was closely related to the figure of death, since death, too, could be depicted holding up a mirror to his victim, peeling back the veneer of their living visage to reveal the skull underneath.[321]

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[317] For discussion of changing role of the 'herald,' see Hiltmann, 2011 and Stevenson, 2009.
[318] On the *speculum* metaphor in literature, see Grabes, 1973, *passim.*
[319] Erasmus, 1976, 3:119 [Letter 337].
[320] On the artist as rhetorician, see Nuechterlein, 2011, 8, 47-84.
[321] Mezger, 1991, 31, 111.

Undoubtedly, the most innovative and influential pictorialisation of the coat of arms as a reflexive, revelatory pictorial device was Albrecht Dürer's famous engraving of a maiden and the devil, accompanied by a deathly shield and helm (fig. 44).[322] The young woman is fashionably dressed like a bride, as a wild man-come-devil embraces her from behind. The wild man in turn holds a shield bearing a skull, whose tilt matches the tilt of the maiden's head, suggesting that this heraldic image refers to her. The woman cannot see the image of the skull on the shield, which is instead presented to the viewer. The shield, as an allegorical and narratival device, can reveal the past and the future, a *mise-en-scene* in which one's inheritance and destiny is underwritten. Once again, Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* provides a textual counterpart to this heraldic image, in a section on preparing for death: "Souls need no costly cenotaph,/ A marble stone they never have,/ No shield hangs here, no helmet, banner,/ No coat-of-arms in lordly manner/ And no inscription writ on stone,/ The best shield is a skull-and-bone/ For worms and snakes and toads to gnaw,/ A shield that kaiser, peasant bore."[323] The motif of the skull as the universal, natural heraldry of humanity reflected growing anxieties about heraldic splendour and worldly status.

However, Dürer's print is far more than an illustrative counterpart to Brant's rhyme. His use of the shield as a pictorial device for revealing iconographic keys to the viewer demonstrates the artist's sophisticated contemplation of heraldic compositions, which may contain different registers of address.[324] In Dürer's print, the viewer is implicated through the clever conceit of the artist's design, completely transforming the inter-subjective possibilities of the coat of arms as a *vanitas* motif. Not only did Dürer blend a popular type of genre image – the 'ill-

[322] Schoch et al, 2001, I: 105-106.
[323] Zeydal, 2012, 282-283.
[324] Heinrichs, 2007, 387-388.

matched couple' – with the coat of arms, he also played with the interpretative ambiguity of heraldic structures. The enormous skull that fills the parameters of the shield is only visible to the privileged eye of the beholder, whereas the young maiden is oblivious to the stark warning that it contains. Shira Brisman has suggested that the print exemplifies Dürer's fascination with pictorial address by challenging the beholder's purchase on the meaning of the image: "...which portion of the picture, the shield or the figures, communicates to the viewer the interpretive manner in which the picture is to be received?"[325] The pioneering influence of Dürer's exploration of the narratival ambiguity of coats of arms encouraged other artists to design their own interventions within heraldic compositions.[326]

Following Dürer, Hans Holbein the Younger designed a heraldic composition for his Dance of Death series, featuring a shattered shield bearing a skull, surrounded by ragged mantling that alludes to a funerary shroud (fig. 45). The crest upon the helm bears an hourglass and two raised skeletal arms, poised with rock in hand ready to strike whenever the arms-bearers' time is up. Although not quite as pictorially sophisticated as Dürer's stand-alone design, Holbein also implicated the viewer with the threatening stone, providing a fitting conclusion to the series. The idea of a heraldic *memento mori* may have been drawn from older painted triptychs with donor portraits; when closed, the outer wings would often depict a skull alongside the armorial bearings of a patron or dedicatee, using the hinged wings to emphasise the process of revelation. The appearance of a deathly coat of arms when turning the pages of a book could have a similar effect, like the watercolour version of Holbein's macabre heraldry that features in a German or Swiss *Wappenbuch* currently in the Society of

[325] Brisman, 2016, here 36, but see also 36-42.
[326] This is explored in more detail in chapter 2, 170-176.

Antiquaries, c.1531-1550 (fig. 46).[327] Another 'coat of arms of death' was added to the 1573 manuscript copy of Martin Luther's *Eyn bett buchlin* for Dionysius Schiltl, providing a closing counterpart to his own coat of arms which introduces the manuscript.[328]

The Swiss artist Niklaus Manuel quoted the female heraldic supporter from Dürer's *The Coat of Arms of Death* as part of a *Scheibenriss*-style drawing from circa 1514 (fig. 47).[329] Her costume has been edited so that she wears slashed sleeves in a Swiss pattern, but she retains her distinctive pose. Manuel's drawing does not contain the same explicit references to death as in Dürer's heraldic print; the skull is no longer present and the young woman is not embraced by a demonic wild man. Yet the sexual imagery of the fruiting capitals in the architectural frame and the feathered bonnet of the goat on the crest, both used elsewhere as symbols of lustful, bodily excess, suggests that Manuel did not translate Dürer's maiden purely for stylistic reasons.[330] It has been suggested that the shield, charged with the upper body of a rampant goat, may have referred to the familial arms of Manuel's wife, Katharina Frisching, but this is far from a secure attribution.[331] A motto is inscribed above the feathered headdress, "WILS WOL SO GRACZ [or GRATZ]", meaning "Fate willing, it will come to pass."[332] As with Dürer's *Coat of Arms of Death,* the heraldic image aids contemplation about the whims of fortune and the certainty of death, reflected in the warring mercenary soldiers in the spandrels of Manuel's imagery.[333] A similar saying, 'Wies Gott Will,' was so popular that it was often shortened to 'WGW' in graffitied or engraved mottos on the walls of

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[327] Franks Bequest, 'German Arms', SAL/MS/373, after 1531. London: Society of Antiquaries, fol.v.
[328] MS 108, 1573. New York Public Library, Spencer Collection, fol.144^{r}.
[329] Egli and von Tavel, 2017, 322-324.
[330] On the goat as a heraldic charge associated with pride and lust, see Agrippa, 1530, sig.h3^{v}. On the goat and artistic caprice, see Kanz, 2002, 11, 35-36.
[331] Egli and von Tavel, 2017, 322.
[332] Translation from Butts and Hendrix, 2000, 264.
[333] Fortune was a common subject in military imagery. See Hale, 1989, 57-59, on "a specifically military Fortuna."

churches alongside the names of individuals.[334] Coats of arms were also engraved in significant locations along travel routes, as commemorative marks or even prayerful petitions. It seems that Manuel was translating Dürer's deathly coat of arms into the Swiss idiom of the *Wappenscheibe*, echoing the culture of foreign mercenary service that was so controversial and prevalent in the cantons.

The Basel-based artist, Urs Graf, also incorporated mercenary imagery, lust and the dangers of fate into a heraldic design, dated tentatively to 1512 (fig. 48).[335] The shield remains empty, but is held by a nude woman wearing only a hat, necklaces and a Swiss dagger, casually presenting an apple to the viewer at stomach height, a motif associated with female fallibility, from Eve to Venus.[336] She is accompanied by a Swiss mercenary soldier (*Reisläufer*), whose lavish clothing is tattered below the waist, leaving him bare-footed. The inscription in a banderole, from Seneca, reads 'ROTAT: FATVM OMNE': fate turns everything. The fortunes of warfare and love provided consistent inspiration for Manuel and Graf, updating the older mock-heraldic iconography of the fool and the prostitute with the mercenary soldier and his mistress.

The renewed interest in *memento mori* coats of arms infiltrated the depiction of real coats of arms, too. In an unattributed heraldic drawing in Berlin, a young soldier stands to the right of the coat of arms, raising a celebratory stein; his gesture of goodwill is reciprocated by an emaciated corpse on the left, who raises his hourglass (fig. 49). More integrated designs can

[334] Schmitz-Esser, 2020, 96. Alternative forms of the same motto appeared on tournament shields: Nickel, 1995, 41.
[335] Müller, 2001, 89; Hale, 1989, 58-59.
[336] The faint outline of a heraldic charge is visible in the shield, although it is not clear when this was added.

also be found, usually where the arms-bearer has chosen to replace the helm with a skull and the crest with an hourglass (fig. 50). In a lost *Scheibenriss* by Niklaus Manuel, depicting the coat of arms of Jakob May (dated 1526), the visor of his helm is open, revealing a skull within (fig. 51).[337] The figure of death could be replaced by the figure of the fool, since both provided a subversive counterpart to earthly ceremony. A glass panel from 1525 shows the arms of Wattenwyl supported by a grinning fool, whose dual role as a personification of death is alluded to in the banderole phrase "Ich wartt der zitt" or "I await the time."[338]

Sometimes, the surrounding frameworks were more explicitly moralising. In an anonymous Swiss *Scheibenriss* design, the shield has been left blank, as though anticipating its reuse for a proper heraldic panel. The fashionably dressed shield holder is not paying much attention to her task, as she is engrossed by her reflection in a mirror, encouraged by two skeletal courtiers (fig. 52). An entourage of putti cavort at her feet and around the base of the shield. The references to earthly transience are laid on thickly in this drawing, connecting heraldic display to other forms of stately vanity; the shield-supporter is seated beneath a type of fantastical baldachin that echoes contemporary representations of idols.[339] Although the shield remains empty, the artist evidently predicted that there might be interest in such a self-deprecating design for a heraldic panel, raising important questions about the role of self-mockery in heraldic display.

These moralising frameworks may have indicated the specific purpose of the heraldic commission. In a stained-glass panel that was in the Swiss *Landesmuseum* in Zürich in 1914,

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[337] Egli and von Tavel, 2017, II:432-434, cat. no. 77.
[338] Mezger, 1991, 453.
[339] See the sculpted idol depicted in the background of Niklaus Manuel's *Death and the Maiden,* 1517, Basel: Kunstmuseum.

a man is depicted resting his head in one hand in a melancholic or reflective pose (fig. 53). He is accompanied by a maiden with loose hair, who holds up a pair of scales; the balance on the left contains a feather, which weighs more than two clasped hands in the right-hand balance.[340] This same motif appeared in Guillaume La Perrière's French emblem book (composed in the mid-1530s), with a verse commentary about true friendship, suggesting that fair-weather friendship falls at the slightest hint of misfortune, however insignificant, (like the weight of a feather).[341] True friendship, on the other hand, can withstand these trifles and is strengthened by adversity. Andersson identifies the heraldic pair as an ill-matched couple, making the panel a commentary on marriage, but the woman could equally be a personification of fortune, as in the emblem. In his survey of Renaissance glass painters from Bern, Hans Lehmann described the shield as unattributed, but identical to the municipal heraldry of Lenzburg.[342] Cycles of heraldic windows were often solicited as gifts to adorn civic buildings from political networks, making the iconography of true friendship especially pertinent as a reminder of the allegiance signified by the heraldry. Moralising frameworks could help to articulate or clarify the intended function of a mute shield, especially as the range of heraldic uses diversified.

Heraldic images embodied a peculiar nexus of social relations, since they were frequently exchanged as gifts and when displayed in groups could exhibit political or familial alliances. They were also open to co-authorship, between artisan and client, as well as between multiple clients and different artistic hands. Humour could help to facilitate these relations or could be forged in the collaborative making process.[343] In a design for a heraldic glass panel for the

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[340] Lehmann, 1914, 322-323; Andersson, 1980, 282.
[341] La Perrière, 1544, sig.C3^{v}. My thanks to Alex Marr for directing me towards this emblem.
[342] Lehmann, 1914, 323.
[343] On collaboration and humour in heraldic drawings, see Andersson and Talbot, 1983, 54, 62.

Prechter family (fig. 54), the artist responsible for drafting the coat of arms left instructions for the surrounding imagery, reading "In the frame something with lovemaking."[344] The second artist, Hans Baldung, obliged: in the scene above the central heraldic field are a selection of young lovers, two of whom are being forced together by a scheming cleric, whose villainy is revealed by the donkey ears on his hood. Hence, Baldung interpreted a broad theme through the popular stereotype of the lusty cleric.[345] In another unattributed heraldic drawing, a blank shield is held by a slightly older woman, who looks over her shoulder with a furrowed brow to address a cleric-come-fool behind her, his cowl with ass ears pulled down to reveal his shaved head and caricatured physiognomy (fig. 55).[346] The pairing of an older matron with a foolish cleric could indicate ill-intent, especially in relation to prostitution or match-making. The drawing invokes inappropriate sexual relations as a framework for an image that commemorates real social relations, indicating how crucial such negative or humorous stereotypes were for self-definition.

Heraldic subversion incorporated many satirical *topoi,* but the most prominent theme was male corruptibility or the masculine antihero. He falls for female seduction or wears sumptuous, effeminate clothes. In Carla Roth's analysis of a book full of jokes from sixteenth-century St Gallen, she notes that "inadequate men" are the target of most of the punchlines, implying that the jokers, "in contrast, satisfied the expectations early modern society placed on men."[347] However, as Lyndal Roper's scholarship has shown, the more condemnation there was of excessive masculinity in the sixteenth century, the more

[344] Butts and Hendrix, 2000, 236; Andersson and Talbot, 1983, 64-65; Koch, 1941, 112-113.
[345] On the lusty clergyman, see Tanner, 2005, *passim.*
[346] The drawing was previously attributed to Niklaus Manuel, but this has been rejected: Egli and von Tavel, 2017, II:576-577.
[347] Roth, 2017, 70.

powerfully society associated masculine identity with outlandish, violent behaviour, even 'drawing energy' from the idea of the transgressive man.[348] Similarly, heraldic parody helped to create an imaginary world populated by offensive characters and inappropriate marriages just as much as it was used as a moralising tool to condemn such behaviour. The knowing mockery of heraldic norms through parody became so popular that it was incorporated into the depiction of heraldry proper, as a means of underpinning – through opposition – the convivial sociability of heraldic display.

One of the starkest examples of the integration of visual mockery into personal heraldic compositions is a pen and ink design by Urs Graf for the marital coat of arms of Hieronymous Stehelin and his wife, from the Bischoff family, dated 1515 (fig. 56).[349] The alliance panel features many commonplace elements. Hieronymous Stehelin's arms, featuring oxen on both shield and crest, stand on the heraldic right, leaning towards his wife's arms on the heraldic left, indicating allegiance. The framework of the design features two flanking columns, upon which two mercenaries stand, swords raised. Between the coats of arms is a nude female shield-holder, who appears from between the lively heraldic mantling. Sitting at her feet is a fool, identified by his classic fool's cap. With one hand the fool tugs on a slender drape, the only thing protecting the woman's modesty, in order to reveal her pudenda. With the other hand, he reaches behind him towards his satchel, reminding us of the associations between this type of fool's bag, genitals and sexual or financial deviancy, as seen in the *Codex Picturatus.* The nude woman slyly grasps one of the donkey ears on the fool's head and half-heartedly tugs back on her drape.

[348] Roper, 1994, 107-125.
[349] Müller, 2001, 145-146; Major and Gradmann, 1947, 27.

A very similar subject was rendered in print by the artist Hans Brosamer in circa 1530, which shows a fool lying at the feet of a nude woman wearing an ostentatiously feathered hat. An accompanying poem by Hans Sachs identifies the woman as a temptress, who traps male fools with the offer of drink and flattery: "With sweet and flattering words/ I trap fools in many places/ If they drink the poison from my chalice/They must pay the price/ For I have them under my feet."[350] The fool in the Stehelin-Bischoff arms seems to be about to pay the price, as he reaches towards his satchel. He is even wearing a round mirror on his sleeve, reminding the viewer of the reflexive function of folly. A design which ought to have celebrated the marital allegiance of the Stehelin and Bischoff families has been edited by Graf to comment on the folly of love and the dangers of seductive women. The foreboding criticism of mismatched couples seen in earlier parodic heraldic images is instead transformed into a paper commemoration of a real married couple.

The motif of foolish men seduced by fallen women is not at all unusual in Urs Graf's pictorial *oeuvre.* As Christiane Andersson has shown, many of Graf's drawings involved the layering of traditional pictorial motifs related to the battle of the sexes or the folly of love.[351] In some cases, the aggressive humour of sexual deviancy was employed by Graf for inter-personal jest and self-mockery. For example, one chiaroscuro drawing of a woman shows her lifting up her dress to reveal a leg to the viewer, although Graf's monogram at her feet is granted a more explicit peek up her skirts.[352] A banderole of text above her head addresses an individual ("you") with an obscene sexual threat (fig. 57).[353] Christiane Andersson has suggested that the name embroidered on the dress of the woman may identify a specific

[350] Kaulbach, 2015, 43-44; Schuster, 1995, 281. Translation from Moxey, 1980, 139.
[351] Andersson, 1978, 21.
[352] Pfisterer, 2019, 319-322.
[353] Müller, 2001, 163.

person, Magdalena Truchsessin von Wohlhus, who had married into the Wolhusen family in 1514 following the death of her first husband. Her previous name appears in the Basel city archives in association with a sexual scandal.[354] Urs Graf's chiaroscuro drawings were influenced by the work of Hans Baldung Grien, who also relished the imagery of female delinquency and seduction.[355] A pen and ink drawing by Baldung from 1514 features three sexualised, cavorting nude witches, with the inscription "DER COR CAPEN EIN GUT JAR" or "to the cleric a good year," perhaps intended as a new year's gift to a friend.[356] Such misogynistic humour was not necessarily targeted directly at real women, but instead served to bolster the bonds of exclusive masculine networks. Even if Graf's Stehelin-Bischoff drawing was meant to be reproduced in glass, it must also have served as an autonomous drawing. Many of Graf's drawings were not preparatory and probably circulated tightly within a select milieu, given that the vast majority of them remained together after the artist's death.[357] The intimate nature of the paper-bound design partly explains the unparalleled bawdiness of the shield supporters. The imagery of dangerous women clearly found a ready audience in Urs Graf's close circles, which seem to have comprised a similar social profile to Hans Baldung's network, ranging from fellow artisans to jurists.[358] Given these comparisons, it is likely that Graf's obscene drawing was intended for the eyes of like-minded Basel men, rather than as a threat to Magdalena herself.

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[354] Andersson, 1988, 29. This same woman was once identified as the courtesan in Hans Holbein the Younger's *Laïs of Corinth,* but this is highly unlikely. Mamerow, 2006, 428-430, 431n33.
[355] Owens, 2020, *passim.*
[356] Sullivan, 2000, 376n200.
[357] Müller, 2001, 61.
[358] Müller, 2001, 67. For antifeminist motifs in Baldung's circles, see Owens, 2020. On coarse humour and masculine friendship in sixteenth-century Switzerland, see Roth, 2017.

Despite the presence of Ottilia Bischoff's coat of arms, she may in fact be incidental to the drawing as a whole. As Helmut Puff has demonstrated with regard to the explicit, erotic language used by Dürer and Willibald Pirckheimer in their correspondence, sexualised drawings and writings could provide a social lubricant for homosociability, conducted in masculine networks quite separate from marital and other cross-sex relations.[359] An *Ex libris* designed by Dürer for Pirckheimer features the arms of the humanist and his wife, but the inscription reads "for him and friends" (*sibi et amicis*), clearly excluding or diminishing Crescentia Pirckheimer's relevance to the function of the print.[360] In their letters, Dürer and Pirckheimer even joked about allowing Pirckheimer to screw Agnes Dürer to death. Puff suggests convincingly that the artist's wife "served the epistolary expression of homosocial immediacy."[361] Arguably, Graf's heraldic drawing had a similar mode of address, intended as a stylishly lewd jibe towards Stehelin using the imagery of vulgar eroticism, rather than a wounding attack on his marriage or his wife's reputation. Graf was happy to represent himself in the guise of the lustful man in his drawings through the suggestive positioning of his monogram, indicating that the male addressees of his drawings may also self-identified with masculine folly.[362] As a further comparison, Hans Baldung thematised the subjugation of his own masculinity in his much-discussed print *The Bewitched Groom* (1544/45), in which the artist (as groom) lies in an unflattering stupor on the floor of a stable, surveyed by his adversaries: an aged witch and a wild, lustful mare. The identity of the artist is signalled by the presence of his coat of arms on the stable wall, his heraldic unicorn's horn drooping "as if pulled by some powerful, debased magnet."[363] In these drawings, heraldic and

[359] Puff, 2014.
[360] Puff, 2014, 56n20.
[361] Puff, 2014, 60.
[362] Christadler, 2011, 256-260.
[363] Owens, 2020, 211.

masculine authority are at risk of corruption through exposure to dangerous femininity. The drawings are warnings to fellow men, rather than defamatory commentaries on specific women.

Urs Graf was frequently in trouble with the Basel authorities for overstepping the marks of civic decency, usually through acts of violence and the public defamation of fellow citizens. It is difficult to avoid adjudicating Graf's character through the records of his misdemeanours and reading his artworks through the lens of these limited accounts, such as relating the physical abuse of his wife to his penchant for misogynistic imagery. Aside from the acts of violence, which are indefensible from a modern perspective, Graf was also arrested a number of times for mischievous pranks and hot-headed insults, some of which seem fairly innocent, but clearly struck a nerve among his contemporaries.[364] For example, he was banned from a hostel in 1523 after saying repeatedly, "Ooof, it is so cold in here," perhaps alluding to his military escapades in the balmier climes of Italy.[365] If anything, Graf's varied encounters with the law remind us of the difficulty of judging historical transgressions. What may be noted, however, is that Graf's caustic humour frequently upset his fellow citizens, suggesting that his dalliance with vulgar subject matter in his drawings may have been considered equally obscene in the public eye, but was acceptable and fashionable among amiable contacts on a comparatively private piece of paper.[366]

In terms of Hieronymus Stehelin's biography, the date on the drawing (1515) adds a further level of complexity. Genealogists have stated that Ottilia Bischoff, the wife represented in

[364] Rott, 1936, 111-113.
[365] The account is transcribed in Rott, 1936, 113. The Italian reference was suggested by Major and Gradmann, 1947, 10.
[366] On obscenity and private images, see Owens, 2020, 31-32, 68.

the heraldic composition, died in 1515, although they did not give a specific date or source for this event.[367] Stehelin was killed in the Battle of Marignano on 14th September 1515. Before his death, he was remarried to a widow also named Ottilia.[368] Presumably, the heraldic drawing was completed before his second marriage. Stehelin's role as a quartermaster and soldier in the Italian campaigns must have placed him within similar social circles to Graf. They were members of different guilds, making the military connection more secure. Mercenaries had a reputation for corrupting upright, Swiss society by importing effeminate and vulgar Italianate fashions, as well as for selling their services in exchange for foreign money. Graf's mocking depictions of mercenary soldiers shows that he was well aware of their poor reputation, but like his unwelcome banter about the warmth of Italy in the Swiss pub, he was happy to self-identify as one of these corrupted soldiers. Perhaps, therefore, Graf's heraldic jibe at Stehelin reflects the particular language of soldierly comradery, toying with the eroticised reputation of their military exploits. Heraldic parody could therefore be used as a form of sociable sparring, a kind of carefully calibrated defamation that helped to seal allegiances through a shared joke.[369]

The self-mocking mottos worn by participants in tournaments suggest that defamation and parody were actually a crucial part of performative competition. We ought to note that in Erasmus' colloquy, "The Knight Without a Horse, or Faked Nobility," in which the character Herpalus is taught by the second character Nestor how to fake his nobility, Nestor advises that Herpalus ought to start a feud with a wealthy enemy.[370] When Herpalus asks how he might justify such violence, Nestor suggests that, "One of them scorned your coat of arms or spat on

[367] Staehelin, 1948, 105.
[368] Again, no date is given for this: Staehelin, 1948,105.
[369] On obscenity and sociability, see Simons, 2018, 266-267.
[370] Erasmus, 1997, 40: 880-890.

it."[371] Hence, presenting the imagery of defamation alongside a coat of arms could paradoxically distance an arms-bearer from the negative associations between the old, hot-headed nobility and excessive sensitivity to heraldic honour. Being able to 'take the joke' signalled mutual understanding and trust between friends.

Artists and armigers found new ways to integrate humourous and moralising iconographies into heraldic commissions, blurring the boundaries between 'official' heraldry and parodic or fictive heraldry. This was partly a result of a new visual emphasis on the framework of heraldic displays, which could provide a qualifying commentary to mute coats of arms. The popularity of critical frameworks for arms was no doubt fuelled by the disputed connotations of heraldry and the reframing of heraldry as yet another metaphorical *speculum.* The accompanying figures or scenes allowed the central heraldry to speak, a tactic employed most decisively by Swiss artists working alongside the burgeoning trade in heraldic glass panels.[372] As Christine Hediger has summised, these glass panels symbolised a mutual exchange between donor and recipient, with donors usually anticipating a service or loyalty in return.[373] The surrounding framework could hint towards the nature of the exchange, like the emblem of true friendship accompanying the Lenzburg arms.

The discursive function of individual heraldic glass panes and printed or drawn sheets provides a crucial means for understanding the humourous and self-effacing iconographies that accompanied some shields. Associating oneself with folly or rustic crudity was a way of signalling one's honesty, someone who could be trusted to prioritise truth over flattery.

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[371] Erasmus, 1997, 40: 886.
[372] Comparatively, Alina Payne has described the rhetorical role of figurative architectural sculpture as "gesturing the structure": Payne, 2002, 113.
[373] Hediger, 2010, 174-176.

Careful self-humiliation could also be a useful tool for humouring social superiors and bridging differences in status.[374] By presenting a coat of arms alongside lustful fools, crude peasants and wild men, clients and artists could signal the honesty and reliability of their character, service and friendship. These heraldic designs, which mock as well as aggrandise, ought to be viewed as a means of protecting against criticisms of heraldry found in the writings of Desiderius Erasmus, Sebastian Brant and Sebastian Franck. However, they also reflect the rising status of artists, who modelled their public identity on the ideals of literary authorship.[375] When writing satire, humanists employed various devices to present themselves as plain-speaking truth-tellers.[376] Similarly, artists like Urs Graf and Albrecht Dürer inserted their mediating presence as 'truth-tellers' into the social exchanges embedded in heraldic gift culture.

Conclusion

Acts of heraldic parody, subversion and critique proliferated in tandem with the expansion of heraldic functions during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The diversity of these scattered objects attests to the diffuse, unsystematised nature of heraldic display more broadly. Although practices of heraldic subversion and defamation were utilised in disciplinary procedures and to affirm social distinctions, they were never properly codified and never cohered into a consistent visual genre. Heraldic parody must have been at its most lively and innovative in the context of small, exclusive groups, as attested by the remarkable survival of the Viennese student graffiti. The instances of comically subverted coats of arms

[374] Michelangelo employed this device: Burke, 2016. For Dürer and Pirckheimer, see Puff, 2014.
[375] Ames-Lewis, 2000, 163-176, 271-279.
[376] Waddington, 2003, 91-114 and *passim.*

that made their way into print and even stained glass reflects the expansion of small-group humour into new, pictorial outputs. The widespread nature of this motley collection evidences the familiarity of coats of arms among a broad range of audiences, making it very difficult to offer an overarching assessment of the diverse motivations behind heraldic parody. This 'inflation of heraldry' prompted some people to critique coats of arms as objects of vanity or to circumscribe their use, but for others it was liberating, allowing them to explore the bounds of heraldic visual culture outside any official regulatory system.

Some broad trends may be described, albeit tentatively. First, heraldic parody and critique were greatly influenced by changing fashions in material culture. Print culture was hugely instrumental in providing an experimental new medium and for distributing images of mock-heraldry to a wider audience, for whom fictive, subverted coats of arms were an accessible source of humour. The emergence of heraldic stained-glass panels from the 1480s onwards roughly coincides with the earliest examples of burlesqued coats of arms, suggesting that parody followed popularity, rather than indicating a rejection of heraldry. Similarly, when moral critics attacked heraldry, usually it was by association with new or widespread fashions, such as when Valerius Anshelm connected stained-glass panels with the foreign influences of mercenary culture. Heraldry was a victim of its own popularity, since the proliferation of coats of arms tended to attract negative attention.

Secondly, heraldic parody was adapted to incorporate new cult figures, especially the anonymous stereotypes that populated early genre scenes like the fool, the peasant, the drunkard and the glutton. Heraldry provided yet another outlet for these fictive characters to be fleshed-out and customised. Rather than the physiognomic caricature of individuals, coats of arms elicited the caricature of societal types and ranks. As a result, heraldry was

enthusiastically re-interpreted as a 'mirror' of the self and of society at large, which complemented the explosion of satirical literature in the sixteenth century. The threatening, seductive power of women, which became such a popular theme among artists following Dürer, like Hans Baldung, Urs Graf and Niklaus Manuel, also erupted into the heraldic sphere. The folly of love had been associated with parodic coats of arms since the Master ES, due to the close relationship between heraldry, marital relations and pedigree. However, this theme was revived by a new generation of artists and their networks, whose masculine identities were increasingly forged in opposition and fascination with the deficiency of women. As such, the imagery of female power was lifted from the parodic realm and re-envisaged as part of heraldic self-representation.

An element of heraldic distaste did underpin these parodic images, however. People worried over the appropriateness of heraldry, with its violent and animalistic iconographies. As an indicator of honour, it was remarkably easy to mimic or to undermine. It was vulnerable to attack whenever any habitual practice involving heraldic display attracted criticism, such as the granting of indulgences or leaving votive coats of arms along pilgrimage routes. Through its association with pride and pretension, heraldic decorum was carefully monitored, even though the specific rules of armorial etiquette were never clear. Additionally, the Reformation had a transformative effect on coats of arms, by literally and metaphorically disrupting aspects of societal structure. The animalistic imagery commonly seen on coats of arms had already attracted criticism, but within reformist visual culture this became a useful tool of attack. The defamation of Papal and clerical heraldry, as well as the challenge to votive practices, unsettled the established function of coats of arms in religious contexts. Heraldic culture was adapted to suit the new circumstances, as may be noted in the growing preference for moralising, secular iconographies to accompany coats of arms. Newly

formulated confessional groups also used heraldry to build their shared identity, again distancing heraldic display from penitential or sacramental practices and instead emphasising its communal function.

The sociocultural changes that influenced heraldic discourses were, however, interpreted and manipulated by individual artists, who were increasingly confident about envisaging their presence through depictions of coats of arms. The fashionable self-deprecation and mockery that permeated late medieval tournament devices became a useful tool for artistic self-promotion. Douglas Brine has already suggested that Jan van Eyck's use of the signatory motto 'Als ich kann' ('as I am able') copied the noble practice of heraldic mottos.[377] Although the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet did not sign his prints, he clearly sought to carve out an audience who appreciated similar chivalric jokes. By the time artists like Urs Graf were practising, mottos, signatures and devices were a crucial part of artistic self-representation. Graf, with his caustic mercenary humour, clearly traded on his martial reputation as a rude, libidinous and tricky character in his artworks. The established humour of late medieval noble tournament culture, including parodic heraldry, provided the perfect model for artists to cultivate their unabashed capacity for a combative, macho form of visual truth-telling.

[377] Brine, 2018, 608.

II: Heraldry and the Ornamental Imagination

The previous chapter illustrated how the elision of fictional and 'official' practices of heraldic display paralleled the inflation of the cultural roles played by heraldry, especially below the level of the titled elites, which opened it up to moral debate and artistic innovation. This chapter focusses on artists as heraldic innovators and users, especially in relation to their rising status as skilled figureheads in society. Indeed, the emergence of the celebrity artist is often cited as an indicator of the development of the self-aware, self-performing individual in the Renaissance.[378] Given that scholars of heraldry have viewed modern individualism and the Renaissance model of 'high' art as two of the death knells for heraldic efficacy, it is imperative that we assess the ways in which artists actually engaged with heraldry. In particular, this chapter considers how artists framed their professional identities in relation to coats of arms.

The title of the chapter indicates the importance of ornament for understanding artistic engagements with heraldry. Heraldry is, first and foremost, a codified type of ornament, intended to clothe, identify and perhaps rank a particular bearer or owner, be they an individual or an institution.[379] Ornament was central to pre-modern ideas about artistic practice. Ornamental theory derived from the classical rhetorical tradition, pertaining to the appropriate use of verbal devices such as metaphors, quotations, foreign words and styles of address, carefully selected for the purpose of a speech.[380] The orator was also the exemplary

[378] Biow, 2010; Woods-Marsden, 1998; Amelang, 1998; Wittkower, 1961.
[379] Gombrich properly noted the ornamental status of heraldry, but explored it through a psychological lens. See Gombrich, 1979, 231-242 and my discussion in the introduction, 14.
[380] On Renaissance conceptions of ornament, see Kavaler, 2019; Guest, 2016; Payne, 1999.

model for conceptions of a skilled, socially-important author, which was why visual artists and their associates framed artistic practice using rhetorical ideals. As such, the expert management of ornament was a crucial part of any aspiring artist's practice. Since coats of arms are ornamental, the appropriate, decorous and eloquent mediation of heraldry was a necessary artistic skill, just as the expertise of a herald was required to order and conduct ceremonial events.

However, competency was just one mark of artistic brilliance. Innovation and controlled novelty were also highly valued; as such, this chapter explores the rising authority of artists as mediators of heraldic information, but also their inventive, sometimes subversive relationship with heraldic tradition. I will argue that heraldry did foster the display of artistic skill from the late fifteenth century onward and that it was borne along – not swept away – by the rising tide of ornamental theory, the circulation of print culture and the shifting conception of invention.

Ornament in the Renaissance

It is very difficult to write about the meaning of ornament using traditional iconographical methods. In its pre-modern conception, ornament aids communication by clarifying, amplifying or embellishing a message. As Claire Guest has eloquently put it, ornament "created conditions for narrative rather than having its own narrative" and "is at best a starting point for contemplation, not an end in itself."[381] Heraldry, by itself, is non-narrival, and simply names, labels, or identifies a body to which it is attached. However, during the sixteenth century, ornamental motifs began to be treated as artistic subjects in their own right,

[381] Guest, 2016, 14.

no longer wholly contingent upon their attachment to other bodies. Heraldry underwent a similar transformation, and although coats of arms never entirely rescinded their socio-political role as images of identification and authority, they also began to be treated as aesthetically appealing ornamental motifs. In particular, the development of speculative, fictive coats of arms, with no implied armiger or subject, transformed heraldry into an untethered, open-ended artefact of the artist's imagination.

The gradual emergence of ornament as a subject in its own right was the result of a matrix of cultural shifts, which exerted a similar influence on the development of heraldic imagery. First, the circulation of individual printed sheets allowed the same or repeated ornamental motifs to be viewed by a much wider audience. Prised from the margins of luxurious illuminated manuscripts or workshop 'housebooks', printed ornamental designs no longer relied on attachment to a subject or context to convey cultural meaning, allowing them to circulate more readily as objects of aesthetic interest. As ornamental designs began to be viewed by a much wider audience and applied to a far greater range of contexts, so viewers became more attuned to aesthetic differences, exercising their personal preferences and contributing to the transmission of particular motifs. Discerning viewers were interested in stylistic options and alternatives, a development that paralleled the rise of collections of individual sheets, both printed and drawn. Artists responded to this growing demand by seeking novel new forms or ways of expanding their ornamental repertoire. Heraldry followed the same developmental pattern: as patrons became more attuned to the stylistic variables possible in depictions of coats of arms, so aspirational artisans sought different shield shapes, helm forms or ways of animating crests and mantling.

This chapter will focus on a period of intense experimentation with the independent, fictional heraldic image in the first half of the sixteenth century, tracking the cultural changes that allowed heraldry to become an ornamental motif of general, cultural interest by the second half of the sixteenth century. By then, individuals with no official links to heraldic regulation were assembling *Wappenbücher* for the market. In his *Wappen-Buch* (1567), Zacharias Bartsch simply identified himself as a *Formschneider* and *Buchdrucker,* who brought together the insignia and coats of arms normally found painted in noble houses into the medium of the book, "all cut in a particular style" (*jedes in einen sondern moden geschnitten*).[382] The selection and collation of a variety of visual motifs and styles echoes the language used in German 'art primers', promoting "the acquisition of a wide visual vocabulary, visible in the countless variations on a limited set of topics, but in different idioms."[383] Like its close ornamental cousin, the cartouche, coats of arms became commonplace in collected volumes of artistic motifs. In a later printed image of a shield by Jost Amman, published in his model book *Enchiridion Artis* (1578), a rampant lion acts as a generic charge; its billowing mane, tail and fur are mimicked by the heavily curled, *Rollwerk* shield, as natural liveliness becomes translated into a geometric, abstracted energy (fig. 58). Heraldic arrangements were firmly integrated into architectural vocabularies, too, such as in Wendel Dietterlin's fantastic treatise of prints.[384] Sculptural heraldic arrangements feature in each group of Dietterlin's designs, based loosely on the different classical orders, as though shields could also be rendered in an 'Ionic' or 'Doric' mode (fig. 59). By the late sixteenth century, heraldry had become just

[382] Bartsch, 1567, sig.biii^{r}.
[383] Remond, 2015, 54.
[384] Although she does not discuss his use of heraldry, see the brilliant analysis of Dietterlin's architectural designs in Petcu, 2018.

another type of ornamental artefact, which could be collected, analysed, replicated and recycled.[385]

A more acute antiquarian interest in heraldry also developed during the sixteenth century, which contributed to a heightened awareness of the temporal and geographical contingency of heraldic meanings and styles. This paralleled the aestheticisation of coats of arms.[386] Attributed coats of arms entered into print circulation with little acknowledgement of the families to whom they belonged, presented instead as curiosities of general, cultural interest. This is revealed in the 1579 *Wapen-und-Stammbuch* printed by Sigmund Feyerabend, which collated a random selection of coats of arms of the nobility alongside poetic commentaries. In his introduction, Feyerabend explains that the German rhymes might help to elucidate the "often curious (*seltzame*) meaning of the arms," which arguably are not even understood by those who bear them.[387] Zacharias Bartsch also implied in his introduction that heraldry was the stuff of material history, akin to other monuments and material remains. He argued that books and chronicles were written to memorialise ancestral knightly glories with wonderful imagery, "and in addition to this, the most delightful *Columnas, Statuas* and *Insignia* were erected."[388] Separated from their social contexts and reconfigured as curiosities, coats of arms had become collectable artefacts.

As collectable and aestheticised images, coats of arms were treated as an ornamental category that could be mined by artists in their designs or appreciated by viewers for their stylistic qualities, rather than their identificatory capacity. Artists were increasingly trusted as

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[385] On the recycling of heraldic designs, see O'Dell, 1997.
[386] On the relationship between early archaeology and aesthetic discourse, see Barkan, 1999.
[387] Feyerabend, 1579, sig.[A4]^{r}.
[388] Bartsch, 1567, sig.b[i]^{r}.

authorities on heraldic design and they clearly found the subject a productive arena to test new pictorial ideas. A written response from Albrecht Dürer relating to a woodcut heraldic bookplate for Michael Behaim (1518/20) counters the patron's request that the foliate mantling be edited (fig. 60), saying, "Please leave it as it is, no one is going to improve on it, for I've made it with all skill and art."[389] This survival shows that patrons were concerned about stylistic details in their armorial representation, but also that Dürer felt confident in his artistic authority to defend the design. Artists began to assert their presence in the representation of coats of arms, as transmitters and innovators of traditional forms, rather than as silent stewards. So, as was the case with ornamental motifs more broadly, coats of arms were increasingly treated as images of aesthetic interest, due to the interwoven influences of print culture, collecting practices, artistic self-consciousness and the demands of discerning viewers.

The Fictive Coat of Arms

The most concrete result of these cultural changes was the emergence of the independent heraldic image, untethered from its requirement to represent particular families or institutions. The design of fictive coats of arms had a longstanding pedigree in medieval armorials, but usually these imaginary arms were produced for pre-heraldic and mythical figures, such as King David or Herod (fig. 61).[390] It is possible that these fictive coats of arms may have been more prevalent in commercial armorials produced as speculative products.[391] From the fifteenth century onward, artists also began to design imaginary arms without a specific,

[389] Ashcroft, 2017, 1:499.
[390] For a summary account of fictive coats of arms, see Augustyn, 2005.
[391] Clemmensen, 2018.

intended bearer. Separated from the need to identify a particular person, institution or even idea, the coat of arms could become an exercise in ornamental design, emphasising the authorial role of the artist rather than the authority of a patron. The most renowned of these early imaginary coats of arms were the delicate prints by the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, discussed in the previous chapter.[392] The ambiguous status of unattributed, invented coats of arms prompted artists to think through the process of authorial creation, playing with the inherent tension of a form of visual identification made to identify nobody in particular, other than perhaps the author themselves.

The tension between concepts of 'stewardship' and 'authorship' is especially important, because coats of arms were not authored in the same way as other images. They were inherited, endowed, adopted or transmitted, but were rarely thought of as 'authored' works. This is one of the reasons why art historical scholarship has struggled with the status of post-medieval heraldry, because it seems to represent the antithesis of a new-found consciousness of the individual self, of authorial and artistic status, of the classical past and of aesthetic liberation. In the following case studies, it will be demonstrated that heraldic imagery did in fact interact with these developments, rather than simply providing a foil to novelty. Coats of arms still conveyed social and legal authority, but they could also act as aestheticised, open-ended images and 'blind' ornamental motifs. Some artists relished this ambiguity, choosing to draw attention to the contested nature of heraldry; these moments of artistic free-play are the focus of this chapter. The case studies will explore the relationship between authorial expression, artistic innovation and heraldic display during the fertile period between c.1490 and c.1560. Each case study introduces a different innovative strategy developed by artists in

[392] Filedt Kok, 1985, 73–75, 178–185; Butts and Hendrix, 2000, 73–74.

the depiction of coats of arms, particularly in relation to the 'independent' or unattributed, fictive heraldic image. Following the pioneering influence of the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet and his more famous follower, Albrecht Dürer, artists experimented with heraldic compositions, treating them with the same attention that they would pay to other, more renowned visual motifs, such as the classical nude or the architectural perspective.

Due to Dürer's pivotal role in the development of the fictive heraldic image in the German Renaissance, the first two sections will concentrate on coats of arms produced by the artist, his workshop and/or circle. By looking at Dürer's output, we can establish two loose poles or categories of fictive heraldry. The first pole marks the use of heraldic drawing as a site for ornamental invention. Due to the direct manual link between the intellect, the hand and the drawn line, drawings were thought to capture the process of design, or *disegno,* more evidently than in a mediated or polished reproduction of the image.[393] The first case study therefore investigates a drawing attributed to Dürer or his circle, in which the heraldic format has been used as a framework for examining the process of ornamental invention. The immediate, brisk nature of the drawn lines, the lack of a more finished counterpart to the drawing, and the subject matter depicted, all suggest that the coat of arms was being used as an exercise in swift invention for an intimate audience.

The second pole of Dürer's heraldic influence was his development of the open-ended, virtuosic heraldic print. Dürer's masterful heraldic prints established the coat of arms as a purely aestheticised object, intended to appeal to a much wider audience of discerning viewers. In Dürer's fictive heraldic prints, he established an important precedent for the

[393] Keizer, 2016; Andersson and Silver, 2012, 12-34.

representation of an 'Ur-heraldry,' treating coats of arms as untethered ornamental fragments for artistic exploration and re-use, rather than authoritative identificatory signs. Dürer's interest in heraldic design fostered subsequent attention to heraldic 'assemblage', as his followers experimented with new ways of asserting their artistic presence or style through heraldic images, both attributed and unattributed, printed and drawn. The third section, entitled 'Heraldic Assemblage,' will explore such innovations in heraldic design, produced by followers of Dürer such Hans Baldung and Urs Graf, as well as suggesting how the formal properties of heraldic compositions appealed to these artists.

Next, the chapter changes tack in order to consider more direct artistic responses to Dürer's pioneering influence. A lengthy section is dedicated to interpreting an understudied chiaroscuro heraldic drawing by the Swiss artist Niklaus Manuel. Manuel explicitly quoted Dürer's fictive heraldic prints, but then transformed these quotations into a completely fresh exploration of the coat of arms as an artistic subject. Manuel's heraldic drawing effectively combines the two 'poles' established by Dürer's legacy, since the Swiss artist translated the iconography of the virtuosic, open-ended heraldic print into a highly finished, collectable drawing, probably intended for an intimate audience of connoisseurs. Manuel's drawing demonstrates how coats of arms entered into an artistic dialogue of citation and exchange, separated from the legal worlds of identificatory signs, armigerous patrons and pedigrees. Indeed, Manuel's drawing prompts us to consider how Dürer's reputation through his images – particularly his prints – established new types of artistic self-representation.

Much scholarly attention has been paid to Dürer's monogram in the construction of his artistic identity, but the relationship between heraldic identificatory signs and artistic monograms has not been explored. The final section of the chapter considers this

relationship, demonstrating that the two were closely linked in the sixteenth century. Moreover, by exploring the humorous interpretation of Dürer's heraldic legacy by Sebald Beham, this section will show that artists were fully aware of the contradictory tensions involved in producing open-ended, unattributed heraldic prints for the market, particularly when they themselves were wrangling over the visual representations of authorship and trying to protect their inventions from deceitful copyists. The proximity between artistic imitation and deliberate falsification was especially evident in heraldic images, as artists inherited the heraldic designs of their masters and re-packaged them for new audiences and contexts, thus proliferating coats of arms like illegitimate, ignoble children. The inscriptions added to fictive heraldic designs suggest that artists like Beham were fully aware of the irony of their 'coats of arms for everybody'.

The chapter therefore covers a period of intense ornamental experimentation with the heraldic mode in the first half of the sixteenth century. By the second half of the sixteenth century, open-ended heraldic designs had become commonplace on the print market. Although artists like Jost Amman continued to produce a multitude of heraldic print designs that were adapted and re-used by other artisans and publishers, the depth of artistic engagement with the pictorial parameters of heraldry had been greatly reduced. In contrast, from circa 1480 to circa 1560, heraldry was treated as a subject worthy of serious artistic experimentation by influential artists like Albrecht Dürer. Their attentive engagement with heraldry demonstrates the compelling nature of coats of arms within the Renaissance cultural imagination.

Visualising Ornamental Invention in Heraldic Design

Freed from a specific framework, and treated as an aesthetically engaging subject, ornamental designs could indicate the freeplay of the artist's imagination, separated from the need to fulfil a brief.[394] Since freedom also implied licence, such expressions of imaginative generation could be morally suspect, indicating disorder and unbridled fantasy. Hence, subversive or circumspect imagery was seen as particularly apt for expressing the alluring, but dangerous qualities of imaginative freeplay. Recent scholarship on Northern Renaissance ornament, particularly in the work of Matt Kavaler and Rebecca Zorach, has drawn attention to the darker, ignoble undertones that suffused sixteenth-century conceptions of creativity.[395] The same visual themes – vegetal reproduction, illegitimate procreation, patriarchal imbalance, and evocations of lust – appear in the earliest examples of independent, fictive heraldic images. In order to convey their fictive status, these coats of arms displayed their illegitimacy by breaching the noble decorum associated with heraldry. We have already seen how the heraldic drypoints by the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet upended heraldic norms using stock-figures like foolish peasants, wily women and lusty noblemen. The heraldic framework was not just formally appealing as a subject for exploring the ornamental imagination; as an honourable, respected category of image, heraldry allowed artists to enact the breaks in decorum that were associated with free, ornamental generation. The Master's prints provide the first point of departure for understanding the development of the independent, fictive coat of arms.

The iconography of an understudied heraldic drawing, which must have been inspired by the

[394] Kavaler, 2019, 1278.
[395] Zorach, 2005; Kavaler, 2011.

Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, utilises the armorial framework quite explicitly as a site for pictorial exploration of the ornamental imagination (fig. 62).[396] In the drawing, a shield is topped by an oversized pelican, whose rampant foot is raised up so far that he appears about to topple over, making a mockery of this common heraldic pose. Luscious mantling sprawls from both sides of the crest. On one side, the mantling is spindly, wild and naturalistic, like the gatherings from a hedgerow, whilst on the other side this has been transformed into a rich acanthus-like ornament. In the shield, perhaps in a slightly sketchier mode, a boy or young man is seen leaning against a stove, his mouth open and his bare feet stretched across the floor. A small inscription reads either "Hicze oho" (Hot! oho!) or "Fricze oho" (Fritz, oho!).[397] An unmanned pair of bellows pumps air into his ear. The drawing provides important evidence that the heraldic framework could be pushed as an exercise in artistic licence.

Some scholars have attributed the drawing to Albrecht Dürer, although Panofsky argued that the image ought not to be attributed to Dürer, refuting the claim that the inscription is in the artist's handwriting.[398] The unknown author of this image must have been influenced by the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, not just in terms of the decision to utilise heraldry as an appropriate framework for imaginative ornament, but also due to the stylistic similarity notable in the fine, quivering handling of line in the drawing. Dürer did indeed emulate the work of the Master during his lifetime.[399] Given the iconographic similarity to other images by Dürer, including *The Dream of the Doctor,* which will be discussed below, an attribution

[396] Strauss, 1974, 178; Panofsky, 1943, 2:143; Hartlaub, 1991, 202-203; Winkler, 1936, 32-33; Marr, 2018.
[397] Based on the recent edition and translation of Dürer's documentary biography: Ashcroft, 2017, 1:56.
[398] Panofsky, 1943, 2:143.
[399] Panofsky, 1943, 1:22-24.

to Dürer or to his circle seems likely (fig. 63). The spindly vegetative mantling on the left side of the shield has also been identified as *Sternkraut,* a herb associated with celestial portent that "connoted something peculiar to Dürer," appearing in a variety of his early images.[400]

The implication that this heraldic design was intended as a work of fantasy is indicated by the toppling pelican, signalling a lack of decorum that would be unusual in heraldry proper. The shifting register of the mantling on either side of the shield was also never utilised by armorial bearers. A comparison may be found in a much later heraldic print (1570-1612), designed as a meditative Christian coat of arms, featuring a condensed iconography of Christ's passion (fig. 64). The helm is replaced by a skull, above which stands the risen Christ framed by eaves of corn. The mantling on the left-hand side is composed of a tangle of thorny branches, while the mantling on the right is rendered as writhing snakes. Just as the risen Christ stands above the skull of Adam, symbolising his conquest of death and the redemption of all mankind, so the mantling also suggests a transformation: the golden serpent raised by Moses has been replaced by the crown of thorns. Although the golden serpent is usually seen as the antetype of the cross, both snakes and thorny brambles are pictorially suited to replicate heraldic mantling, which explains their unusual opposition. It is a reasonable presumption that a comparable act of transformation or opposition was intended by the varied mantling found on either side of the *Coat of Arms with the Pelican*.

Another point of comparison for the *Coat of Arms with a Pelican* are contemporaneous designs for ornament around a centralised axis. Artists often presented different options for

[400] Brisman, 2012, 203-204. Heinrich Müller accepts the attribution of the drawing to Dürer: Müller, 2002, 121-122.

the rendering of the ornamental pattern on either side of a central axis, utilising the symmetrical nature of the design as a means of demonstrating their ability to generate multiple versions of a similar form.[401] Whether ornamental or allegorical, the shifting register of the heraldic mantling speaks of translation. In particular, the transformation from natural to artificial forms of mantling reflects pre-modern concepts about artistic creation, in which Nature provided the ultimate sourcebook for the selection of visual motifs, ready to be rekindled through the artist's hand. An influential textual anecdote for this kind of ornamental emulation was to be found in Vitruvius' *De architectura* (30-15 BC), concerning the mythical origins of the elaborate acanthus ornament of the Corinthian order.[402] Stumbling across a grave of a young girl, the artist Callimachus was struck by the acanthus leaves flowing around the woven basket and stone used to mark the burial. He then transformed the arrangement into a coherent design, ready to be translated into stone. The *Coat of Arms with a Pelican* reflects a similar creative process, from a natural model to an artistic replication.

Bellows, when positioned like this beside the ear, were often used to represent the influx of *spiritus* into the mind, a gaseous substance responsible for sense perception and both voluntary and involuntary movements, encouraging fantastical imaginings, visions and dreams by moving images from the storehouse of the imagination to the rational part of the brain.[403] Indeed, if this image is by Dürer, then his print known as *The Dream of the Doctor* is an important comparison, showing a sleeping scholar by a stove having airs pumped into

[401] Griffiths, 2013, 117; Parshall, 1997.
[402] On Callimachus, see Payne, 1998, 29-30. The earliest records we have showing Dürer's knowledge of Vitruvius' text are some of the artist's notes on *De architectura* from c.1503/4, (Ashcroft, 2017, 1:108-112) but it is possible he knew about the work earlier.
[403] Pender, 2014, 90-98; Klemm, 2013, 229-231; Corrias, 2012; Kanz, 2002, 161-170.

his ear through some bellows by a winged devil.[404] The nude woman who beckons to him and the little putto on stilts have been interpreted as representing the sleeper's dream-like visions as he slips between waking and sleeping, his drowsiness induced by the heat from the stove. In the heraldic drawing, however, there are no obvious dream visions, at least not in the shield itself. Yet the mantling on either side, which seems to transition from the world of nature to the world of artifice, could be understood as the outcome of fantasies induced by heat and air. Madeleine Viljoen has demonstrated that bellows were also associated with the goldsmith's craft, ornamental invention and caprice.[405] In later grotesque ornament prints, this was made quite explicit, with excessive, splurging ornamental design used to represent airiness on the page (fig. 65). The swirling transition of the heraldic mantling certainly seems to reflect these airy, dream-like forms, mimicking the artistic process of viewing natural forms before digesting and distilling them into new, artificial compositions. The heraldic image is quite literally 'puffed up' – hinting, perhaps, at the dangers of letting the fantasy run wild. As Viljoen has stated, "By the late fifteenth century [...] the creation of ornament was linked both to exhalations and to breaches in decorum."[406]

The tattered clothing worn by the sleeping boy suggests the poverty of the Amsterdam Cabinet Master's peasants, perhaps indicating that his heraldic dreams are beyond his rank. When the authors of the *Zimmern Chronicle* (begun c.1560) wanted to cast doubt on the authenticity of another book of noble, family history, the *Swabian Chronicle* (published 1486), they wrote that the historical evidence came from "oral legends and possibly a dream," suggesting that overly imaginative, glittering chivalric self-promotion was associated with

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[404] Schoch et al, 2001, 1:65-67; Panofsky, 1943, 1:71-72. For a somewhat forced alchemical reading of the image based on the similarity with the 'Dream of the Doctor', see Hartlaub, 1991, 202-203.
[405] Viljoen, 2014, 124-126.
[406] Viljoen, 2014, 124. See also Kanz, 2002, 164-166.

fantasy and hearsay.[407] Indeed, if the inscription on the heraldic drawing was meant to read "Fricze oho" rather than "Hicze oho", then the identification of the sleeping boy as a generic underdog or everyman is more likely. Ashcroft has suggested that if the text reads 'Fricze' the image was meant to mock a specific person called 'Fritz' or similar.[408] However, the nickname Fritz could also be used to refer to an unidentified, ordinary man. Martin Luther employed the nickname in his text against the Papacy and against Augustine Alveld, his Franciscan opponent in Leipzig, writing "aber er lässt sich dünken, er sei nicht ein schlechter Fritzsch," or "but in his own imagination he is no poor man."[409] If the inscription does read "Fricze oho," then it probably identified the drawing as a representation of a coat of arms for the everyman.

Although in the medieval bestiary tradition, pelicans are most commonly represented in their piety, there was also a long tradition linking the pelican to gluttony due to the size of their beaks and throats, an anatomical detail emphasised in this drawing. Pliny described the pelican as an 'insatiable creature,' a theme picked up subsequently by Andrea Alciato in one of his emblems about gluttony (*In garrulum et gulosum*): "The pelican bird, when painted, will indicate an ugly ranter, enslaved to lust and belly" (fig. 66).[410] In contemporary medical theory, it was thought that over-eating could induce the animal spirits to cause dreams.[411] Moreover, the act of digestion was another common metaphor for artistic invention, due to the idea that one must distil what one takes in from the surrounding world.[412] This image

[407] Bastress-Dukehart, 2002, 23.
[408] Ashcroft, 2017, 1:56.
[409] Luther, 1970, 39:104n74.
[410] Pliny, Natural History, 10:131. Alciato translation from 'Alciato at Glasgow': http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/emblem.php?id=A46a083.
[411] Klemm, 2013, 228.
[412] de la Verpillière, 2018, 31-43.

appears to address the process of ornamental invention; the coat of arms not only provides an ideal framework for structuring this 'allegory', but also makes explicit the connection to ornament and the relationship between decorum and artistic license.

The iconographic motifs found in this beautiful drawing are highly reminiscent of contemporary tournament devices, which were often subversive or self-mocking.[413] In one tournament image, the rider and owner of the album is shown wearing an image of a woman warming her bare buttocks on a stove, an image which in other contexts alluded to sexual appetite (fig. 20).[414] In another tournament image, a rider wears bellows on his helm (fig. 67). In a print by Lucas Cranach the Elder of a tournament scene, one horse bears the image of a nude woman fanning the flames of a fire with a pair of bellows, recalling Hans Baldung's images of witches and their smoking cauldrons (fig. 68). Of interest here is the relationship between caprice, aeration, heat and tournament participation. The expressive, curling mantling that was such a staple of heraldic images reflected the real mantling displayed about the helms of armoured riders, which would only billow when the horse was in movement, such as during a tournament charge. There are other indications that burgeoning, billowing mantling was associated with liveliness. In Heinrich Aldegrever's personifications of the Virtues and Vices from the 1550s, all of the allegorical coats of arms accompanying the female personifications display perky, flamboyant mantling, whereas the coat of arms of Idleness bears limp and tattered mantling, reflecting the inertia of this vice (fig. 69). It seems plausible that the imagery of rejuvenation through heat, aeration and motion that was so popular in tournament devices reflected notions of virulent, bellicose energy.[415] Madeleine

[413] See chapter 1, 56-59.
[414] Huber, 2014, 24. Stewart, 2003, 131.
[415] For interpretation of the animals in Aldegrever's fictive arms, see Murphy, 2017.

Viljoen has suggested that the popularity of fantastic mounted opponents in ornamental drolleries was due to the association between tournament and simulacra, as an imitation of battle through play.[416] The dreamer in the shield is transitioning from reality to fantasy, perhaps imagining himself elevated in status and valour as he slips idly into a drowsy rehearsal of martial glory.

It is difficult to contextualise historically how artists and viewers perceived the tension between control and fantasy, especially when minimal textual or theoretical evidence remains. Some scholars have chosen to focus on trying to understand individual artists' theorisation of their imaginative process in order to ground the discussion. Peter Parshall has noted that Albrecht Dürer did not use the terms *imaginatio, einbilden* or *phantasie* in his writings, suggesting that the artist was anxious about the randomness that might be associated with the free-play of the intellect.[417] Dürer emphasised that these invented images do not enter the brain by chance, but derive from conscientious study; the artist's imaginative powers ought to be a reflection of his knowledge of nature, not merely some kind of accident. Given enough time, the diligent artist could render manually all of the possible combinations and views of the forms stored in his head.[418] As Parshall notes, Dürer's pictorial explorations also provide suggestive evidence of his thinking about imagination and fantasy, filling in the gaps that his theoretical writings left out.[419] The heraldic drawing, whether by Dürer or his circle, may be thought of as an image that displays the process of its own creation, thinking through the translation of pictures in the imagination.[420]

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[416] Viljoen, 2016, 226-227.
[417] Parshall, 2013.
[418] Ashcroft, 2017, 2:873.
[419] Parshall, 2013, 402-403.
[420] On the idea of the 'self-aware' image in easel paintings, see Stoichita, 1997.

The drawing was executed with fairly swift lines, suggesting that it was created in a moment of exploration, perhaps among friends. The use of pen and ink also indicates an experimental mode, since this was Dürer's preferred medium for the "[q]uick jottings of an idea (*primo pensiero*)."[421] The iconographic richness of the heraldic image, with its multiple references to artistic creativity and generation, suggests that the author(s) behind its conception were highly attuned to the role of drawings in the formation of ideas.[422] Given that Dürer took the role of drawing extremely seriously and executed some of his most innovative images in the medium, the attribution of the heraldic drawing to the artist or his workshop is very plausible. Even though it may have been the product of a jovial conversation, intended as a whimsical amusement, the drawing still interrogates the process of visual generation, from observation to mental fermentation and fantastic elaboration.

We know of other examples where Dürer and/or his workshop toyed with the discursive potential of drawings. The 'Angel's Mass' of circa 1500 depicts a church service, in which the idle thoughts of the church congregants are made visible around their heads, while an angel records these deviant imaginings in preparation for the Day of Judgement.[423] At the front of the drawing, a group of angels are leaning over a tablet, which is empty, aside from some calligraphic flourishes and a handwritten note: "here write what you wish."[424] The note is an invitation for collaboration, either to a viewer, a patron, or perhaps to a fellow artisan

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[421] Andersson and Silver, 2010, 13.
[422] Peter Parshall, Friedrich Teja Bach and Alexander Nagel argue (to varying degrees) that when an image draws attention to the process of its own making by being open-ended, it enacts an allegorical exchange between the maker and the beholder, transforming the 'invention' of the image into subject matter or content. See Nagel, 2014; Parshall, 2013; Bach, 1996 and 1999.
[423] Museé des Beaux-Arts, Rennes; Brisman, 2013; Winkler, 1936, 181.
[424] *Do schreibt hrein, was Ir wollt.* See Brisman, 2013.

working on the project. The handwritten note encourages the viewer or collaborator to participate in the airy fantasies of the congregation, while at the same time reminding them that they may well be writing their own fate.

Shira Brisman has compared the discursive wit of the 'Angel's Mass' to patterns of exchange found in letters between Dürer and his closest correspondents, like Lazarus Spengler, since, "[t]he interpersonal realm [...] could provide a place to provoke the laws of convention."[425] The pen-and-ink drawing conveys a very similar mood to the heraldic sketch with the pelican, which was also likely intended for a limited, intimate audience.[426] Both drawings allude to wider, sociable dialogues that may have prompted their creation. Similarly, they both engage with the imagery of fantasy and the creative imagination, while also warning of its potential dangers. In the pelican drawing, the jocular tradition of burlesqued coats of arms was tailored for viewers with an interest in the processes of artistic invention and the risks of self-elevation. Taking inspiration from the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, the author(s) subverted heraldic convention in order to signal the transgressive potential of fantasy.

Broader Ornamental Invention in Dürer's Circles

There is further evidence that Dürer and his circle were deeply engaged with developing novel, ornamental forms, including depictions of coats of arms. Dürer designed a woodcut depicting the coat of arms of his close friend, the humanist Willibald Pirckheimer. In the frame he introduced two Italianate, classicising putti, engaged in a mock-tournament. The little boys are wielding a whirligig and a radish, thus embedding two common attributes of

[425] Brisman, 2013, 285.
[426] Sketched and graffitied coats of arms were produced during private japes. See Kohn, 2013.

child's play into a fashionable Italianate manner. Dürer's engagement with cutting-edge humanist publishing projects had a profound influence on subsequent German book ornament, particularly in his use of putti as heraldic supporters, which became extremely popular. Yet Dürer's woodcut design of Pirckheimer's heraldry actually developed in a manuscript context, since very similar Italianate devices were employed by the so-called 'Pirckheimer Master' in the illumination of some of Willibald's books. The Pirckheimer Master's familiarity with Italianate forms – such as playful putti and slender shield types – has strengthened the argument that he was within Dürer's circle.

These delicate marginal borders illustrate how heraldry was deeply embedded in the tradition of manuscript illumination, which had long been an important outlet for ornamental free play. Moreover, most illuminators supported their livelihoods by illustrating grants of arms.[427] Dürer would go on to demonstrate his intimate familiarity with the tradition of manuscript marginalia in his work illuminating Maximilian I's prayerbook. Embracing the central text, the artist's free-flowing, calligraphic flourishes open up into full-bodied illustrations of figures and scenes, before ebbing back to their slender, linear curls, like trails of smoke. Thomas Schauerte has argued that Dürer's work on Maximilian's prayerbook coincided with the artist's growing interest in the boundary between the iconographic and the ornamental, which revealed itself in the nonconformity of spatial conventions in certain images.[428] For instance, the gourd in his print of St Jerome works both as an object in the imagined room and as an ornamental framing device, moving between the three-dimensional vegetable and the flat, flourishing lines of its stem (fig. 70). For Schauerte, this marks the gradual integration of marginal illustration, usually relegated to the frame, into the central fictive space of the

[427] On book illuminators in the sixteenth century, see Eser and Grebe, 2008, 11-29.
[428] Schauerte, 2013.

image. Heraldry naturally cultivates this ornamental integration, because it is itself an ornament that could be adorned with further ornament, appearing alongside vines and tendrils in the margins of medieval manuscripts. The attribution of the heraldic drawing with the pelican to Dürer's atelier, as well as the probable involvement of the Pirckheimer Master in the same circle, demonstrates that Dürer's concentrated engagement with the ornamental imagination began much earlier than Maximilian's prayerbook.

The marginal illuminations of the so-called Pirckheimer Master reveal how the heraldic tradition and medieval drolleries could be rendered in a new ornamental mode, drawing on elements from modish Italianate grotesque decoration.[429] The assortment of re-assembled fragments that constituted grotesque ornament implied an accidental spillage of ideas from the storehouse of the imagination, but was nonetheless governed by "certain conventions of visual metamorphosis" such as symmetry and "metaphor based in reciprocity."[430] At the lower margin of some of Pirckheimer's manuscripts, the illuminator has illustrated his patron's shield (circa 1505), but has largely refrained from supplying the traditional framework of helm and mantling. Instead, the shield is surrounded by grotesque-like ornament. On one page, a strange bud fruits from the top of the shield, unmistakably suggesting the shape of a helm, even to the extent that it is grey in colour (fig. 71). This is a helm metamorphosing into a plant, translating the heraldic centre into the surrounding grotesque ornament. On another page, the 'mantling' surrounding the shield has been rendered more like an organic cartouche, topped with a grotesque head and an acanthus-moustache, which envelops and partially consumes another plant-come-helm beneath (fig. 72). This vegetal metamorphosis demonstrates the artist's ability to draw novel connections

[429] Eser and Grebe, 2008, 80-84.
[430] Guest, 2016, 570.

between forms by identifying surprising visual correspondences, in a manner very similar to grotesque ornament.

The capacity for spotting likeness in unlike things was held up as an indicator of artistic genius.[431] In Dürer's draft introduction to his *Manuel on Painting*, the artist used the phrase "Es ist ein grosse vergleichung zw finde jn vngeleichen dingen" (There is great comparability to be found in dissimilar things).[432] The German term *Vergleichung* was also used by the medieval mystical theologian Meister Eckart to refer to the conjunction between an abstract, divine idea and its realisation in God's creation.[433] The broad meaning of Dürer's phrase, however, had already been used by the Italian Coluccio Salutati in his discussion of poetic allegory, in which the author adopts a God's-eye view of earthly order, able to recognise the commonalities between things.[434] The Pirckheimer Master's playful heraldic drolleries do not necessarily reveal grand instances of divine correspondence, but they do demonstrate the artist's use of heraldry as a starting point for the design of these metamorphosing forms.[435] The longstanding relationship between coats of arms and manuscript illumination provides a clear lineage for Pirckheimer's vegetal heraldry. However, these small-scale instances of heraldic playfulness also strengthen the connection between the drawn *Coat of Arms with the Pelican* and Dürer's circle, since both examples place heraldry at the centre of ornamental *capricci.* Clearly, coats of arms were not considered an ornamental backwater, but were a

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[431] Kanz, 2002, 40.
[432] Here I am following Ashford's recent translation: Ashcroft, 2017, 1:253. Rupprich, 1966, 100.
[433] In this particular section of Dürer's writing, he was particularly concerned with the abstract concept of divine Beauty and its scattered, compromised appearance on earth. See Rupprich, 1966, 102n18. This is largely reiterated in Ashcroft, 2017, 1:255n6.
[434] For a discussion of Dürer's understanding of allegory and *ingenium*, see Keizer, 2016, 132-138.
[435] Making connections between "otherwise distinct entities" was a key activity of combinatory *phantasia.* See Swan, 2003, 571.

central component in the development of cutting-edge ornamental designs in Dürer's circle around the year 1500.

Imagining the Heraldic Print: Dürer's *Coat of Arms with a Lion and a Cock*

Marginal ornamentation allowed heraldry to become a site for exploring the process of artistic invention and elaboration for fairly intimate audiences, but Dürer also excelled in the production of printed heraldic designs destined for wider viewership. His learned patrons wanted prints of their heraldic designs, either for sharing with correspondents or pasting into their books as *ex libris* plates. The heraldic prints produced by Dürer for his patrons tended to be woodcuts, but he also produced two virtuosic, fictive heraldic engravings, which envisioned a place for heraldry beyond the world of books: *The Coat of Arms with a Lion and a Cock* (fig. 73) and *The Coat of Arms with a Skull* (fig. 44). With these two prints, Dürer endowed heraldry with an elevated, artistic status, championing the newly-conceived genre of the independent, printed heraldic sheet by elevating it to new technical heights.[436]

The *Coat of Arms with a Lion and Cock* provides the focal case study here, although it tends to be overshadowed in scholarship by its sister print, *The Coat of Arms of with a Skull.*[437] Despite the simplicity of its iconography, *The Coat of Arms with a Lion and a Cock* marks an important step in the development of the independent heraldic sheet, since it presents heraldry as a connoisseurial curiosity. The flourishing mantling, the screeching rooster atop the helm and the shining detail of the *Stechhelm* all demonstrate the artist's immense ornamental

[436] On prints and heraldic bookplates, see Schmidt, 2011, 46-47.
[437] Schoch et al, 2001, 1:101-103; Panofsky, 1943, 2:29; Anzelewsky, 1983, 78; Rupprich, 1956, 1:176, 201n741; Smith and Guenter, 1995, 26. See also chapter 1, 103-104.

vocabulary and his ability to render textures in the crisp and precise material of metal plate. Given the relationship between printmaking techniques and metalworking, as well as Dürer's own training as a goldsmith, this image should perhaps simply be read as a virtuosic rendition of an appropriately metallic subject.[438] The over-sized, animated rooster sways precipitously on the helm, recalling the towering, gravity-defying, overloaded candelabra structures that Dürer produced elsewhere as ornamental *capricci*. Yet the iconographic combination of a lion and a cock has not yielded a satisfactory reading. All of the interpretations offered by scholars so far emphasise the unusual fact that a cockerel, not the noblest of creatures, is hierarchically privileged over the rampant lion, an archetypally noble heraldic charge.

Due to the fact that this print was designed during a similar period to Dürer's *Coat of Arms of Death*, many scholars have sought an allegorical interpretation of the animals. Panofsky connected the image to a common tale, found in Aesop, that the rooster was the only animal capable of frightening a lion.[439] Anzelewsky linked it to a quote from the humanist Ficino, who said that in the ranks of Apollo the rooster is superior to the lion.[440] The interpretation has also been put forward that the rooster could represent the rural community, the helm the burgher community and the lion the aristocracy, suggesting that the coat of arms subverts the normalised hierarchy by placing the rooster on the helm.[441] Rather than offering a specific textual meaning behind this inversion or arguing that it was deliberately politically subversive, it is possible that the print was simply intentionally unfixed. Breaking the social and ornamental codes by combining two motifs in an unconventional manner may have been a tactical means of declaring the print as a work of fantasy. The incoherence could have

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[438] Talbot, 1971, 130-131.
[439] Panofsky, 1943, 2:29.
[440] Anzelewsky, 1983, 78.
[441] Schoch et al, 2001, 1:101-103; Smith and Guenter, 1995, 26.

ensured that the coat of arms was open-ended, rather than advancing any other allegory or agenda.

The rampant lion or leopard had noble connotations, but along with the eagle it was also the most commonly used generic heraldic filler. In the first two decades of the sixteenth century, devices employing heraldic lions seem to have been especially popular as political tools. Jill Burke has found evidence that Leonardo da Vinci designed a number of leonine automata for patrons in Italy and France, which proved a flexible allegorical conceit, given the lion's association with both Florence and Venice.[442] The rooster was not an uncommon heraldic charge for real armigers, but it was also interpreted as a sign of pride or lust.[443] Whilst in the early sixteenth century the *Turnierhelm* was considered of higher rank than the *Stechhelm,* since heraldic patents with a *Turnierhelm* cost more than one with a *Stechhelm,* it was not a stable indicator of nobility.[444] The suggestion that Dürer's invented coat of arms may have been intentionally hierarchically 'inverted' is therefore not certain. The artist's choice of motifs was perhaps more straightforward. The crowing rooster could be viewed as a very simple pun, playing on the link between crests and cockscombs. In a Nuremberg dictionary from 1482 (*Vocabularius Teutonico-Latinus*), a "Hanenkamp" (modern German *Hahnenkamm,* a cockscomb) is related to a "crista oder ein kleinot auff einem helm," (a crest or ornament on a helm).[445] It is notable, for instance, that the Helmschmied family of armourers from Augsburg adopted the heraldic charge of a rooster wearing a helmet, perhaps also riffing on this particular pun (fig. 74).

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[442] Burke, 2006, 79-84.
[443] Agrippa, 1530, sig.h3^{v}; Moll, 2021, 421-422.
[444] Pfeifer, 2001, 25.
[445] "han", *Frühneuhochdeutsches Wörterbuch,* http://fwb-online.de/go/han.s.0m_1573722162. (October 2019).

Rather than conveying an allegorical meaning, Dürer's choice of the lion and the rooster suggested something akin to an 'Ur-heraldry', the most generic and non-specific coat of arms. In a 1527 publication, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa singled out lions, bears, roosters and goats as 'typical' heraldic beasts, indicating that Dürer's choice of animals reflected the contemporary heraldic imagination.[446] The crowing rooster atop a column appeared in some depictions of the *arma Christi* (Instruments of the Passion), recalling St Peter's denial of Christ. The *arma Christi* were often represented in a traditional heraldic format, recalling the suffering endured by Christ during the passion, which ultimately became symbols of his victory over death (fig. 75). Depictions of the *arma Christi* were used to echo patron's coats of arms, in order to encourage them to visually contemplate their own endeavours in comparison to the burdens borne by Christ for the redemption of their soul.[447] Rather than specifically evoking the *arma Christi,* however, it seems possible that Dürer intended to endow the engraving with a pseudo-antique, relic-like feel. Indeed, some precious reliquaries were produced in the shape of a cockerel, not only due to its Christological references, but also since the various layers of feathers and textures allowed goldsmiths to demonstrate their skill. Two cockerel reliquaries are depicted in the *Wiener Heiltumsbuch* (1502), a printed collection of the relics in Vienna, designed to inform pilgrims of these treasures (fig. 76).

The rampant lion also conveyed an air of historicism and tradition. Elizabeth Rice Mattison has recently argued that the heraldic rampant lion was linked to a particularly "Germanic" visual vocabulary in late medieval Nuremberg.[448] Printed depictions of the relics and ancient

[446] Agrippa, 1530, sig.h3^{v}.
[447] Cooper and Denny-Brown, 2016, 14-18.
[448] Mattison, 2019, 89-90.

insignia of the Holy Roman Empire kept in Nuremberg often re-rendered the Sicilian lions embroidered on the imperial mantle in the style of heraldic lions (fig. 77). Since the regalia were (falsely) believed to have belonged to Charlemagne, these 'Germanic' lions visually affirmed the supposed provenance of the relics. Given Dürer's concurrent involvement in humanist projects to promote Nuremberg's history, it is possible that he was contemplating motifs associated with the antiquity of the city.[449] In the large-scale heraldic and genealogical projects of Friedrich III and Maximilian I, the heraldic lion also asserted a visual link between the house of Habsburg and their claims to Trojan lineage.[450] In Dürer's circles, therefore, leonine motifs were mobilised to suggest ancient inheritance. The Habsburgs were especially keen to emphasise their ties to the French monarchy, in order to shore-up their claim to Burgundian lands, which perhaps adds further significance to the rooster, the namesake of the ancient Gauls. The cockerel and the lion were not only 'generic' motifs, but they were also tied to a cultural set of enduring visual signs linked to precious objects and the material past. In this engraving Dürer effectively established the coat of arms as a virtuosic ornamental fragment, a pseudo-relic of a shared history that was as legitimate as a classical nude or a Vitruvian order.

The rooster on the helm is silently screeching, just like the image as a whole is charged with energy but conveys no specific, iconographic message. This lead one scholar to write that, "In effect, [Dürer] is speaking a language in which the sounds have floated free of their meanings."[451] The connection to sound deserves further scrutiny, especially since Dürer's screaming rooster appears to mock the extremely popular, Horatian notion of paintings as

[449] Hess and Eser, 2012, 260; Schauerte, 2012, 10; Wilson, 1978, 193-205.
[450] Schadek and Schmid, 1986, 110-113.
[451] Smith and Guenter, 1995, 4.

mute poetry. In contemporary humanist praise of portraits, it was common to say that the image appeared on the brink of speech.[452] In one of four epigrams dedicated to Dürer from 1500, Conrad Celtis used this very conceit, suggesting that Dürer's art outstripped the wondrous reflections of mirrors and water, "[w]hen [he] paints such human bodies with his art/ that I should think them alive, if they were to address words to me."[453] The open beak of the rooster atop the helm speaks of a similar energy, on the verge of 'speaking' to the viewer, albeit with an animalistic screech.

The cockerel was a perfect choice of motif to demonstrate this, since its crowing was associated with speech. This could be positive, reflecting the eloquence and wisdom of the cockerel, or negative, linked to self-aggrandisement, uncontrolled verbosity and a failure to act upon one's words.[454] Edgar Wind argued that Dürer's image of *Hercules* (ca. 1498) alluded to the battle between eloquence and action, between the nobility of words and the weakness of empty rhetoric, by drawing on the imagery of *Hercules Gallicus* or the Gallic Hercules, who accomplished his multiple achievements through the powers of verbal persuasion rather than physical strength.[455] The crowing rooster on the Mercurial helm of the hero provides the iconographic lynch-pin in Wind's interpretation (fig. 78). The silent cockcrow in Dürer's virtuosic heraldic print may well enact a similar adaptation of physical heroism, since he has transformed the chivalric motifs of military prowess into an expressive, luxurious representation of artistic eloquence or mute rhetoric.

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[452] Vredeveld, 2013.
[453] Ashcroft, 2017, 1:77.
[454] Roes, 1958, 197.
[455] Wind, 1939, 208; 211-213.

I also wish to return to the possibility that the chivalric tournament was an arena that could stimulate the ornamental imagination. When Willibald Pirckheimer recounted a conversation with Dürer in a letter to Ulrich Varnbühler concerning the artist's imagined fantasies (1522), Pirckheimer specified the occasion, during which they "were watching the military display (*bellicos ludos*) from my house, and the whole place was a din of trumpets, arms, shouting and the crashing of spears."[456] As Jean-Michel Massing has argued, Pirckheimer emphasised the setting because he was thinking of a dream vision in Lucian, in which the soundscape of battle also features prominently.[457] Yet it is also possible that repetitive noise was associated with the imaginative space of the tournament. In a later pen and ink drawing by Dürer, dated 1513, a crane with outstretched wings is depicted in a similar state of exclamation as the heraldic rooster (fig. 79). It has been suggested that the drawing was intended as an emblem for a jousting tournament.[458] Above the crane, a banderole of text seems to imitate the call of the crane: "GI GI GIG."[459] Whether the text also provided an allusion to a personal motto is unknown, but in the medieval bestiary tradition the call of the crane was thought to help direct the flock, suggesting a degree of discipline also surrounding the imagery of cockerels. Broadly speaking, in medieval musical and grammatical theory the repetitive call of birds was associated with empty, meaningless *vox* as opposed to the communicative, rational speech of humans (*verbum*).[460] Bird calls and military cacophonies are both repetitive, irrational sounds, associated with the sensorial animal spirits linked both to warfare, appetite and the imagination.[461] It is possible that Dürer's coat of arms evoked the imaginative sphere of the

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[456] Ashcroft, 2017, 2:678.
[457] Massing, 1986, 238-239.
[458] Anzelewsky and Mielke, 1984, 76-78.
[459] Ashcroft, 2018, 1:391.
[460] Leach, 2007, 36-39. Irrational blabbering was also associated with sinful chatter and the devil; see Brisman, 2013, 280-281.
[461] For a discussion on the humanist view of war as linked to the 'Belly' and folly, as well as the idea that eloquence and rationality might quell the passions of war, see Chilton, 1989, 123-130. On repetitive noise and phantasms, see Koerner, 2016, 100-104.

chivalric tournament and heraldic displays more broadly, rendering the noisy, bellicose, animalistic atmosphere as an ornamental flourish.

The sensorial excesses delineated in Dürer's coat of arms may also have echoed an anachronistic vision of warfare that was now confined largely to the tournament and to the pages of chivalric epics. In the *Germania,* Tacitus described how the ancient Germans had performed a noisy cry prior to battles, which they called the *barritus.*[462] The warriors would create "a crashing roar, their shields being brought up to their lips, that the voice may swell to a fuller and deeper note by means of the echo."[463] Humanists like Beatus Rhenanus would dedicate much study to determining the exact meaning of the word *barritus* in their commentaries.[464] Similarly, in Johannes Aventinus' commentaries on the histories of the Germanic tribes, he honed in on a detail about the *Ingaevones,* who apparently treasured roosters "as warbirds" (*die kriegsvögel*).[465] Both the war cry of the *barritus* and the rooster were associated with prognostication; Tacitus wrote that the warriors "divine the fortunes of the coming battle from the circumstances of the cry," while Aventinus connected the staging of symbolic cockfights with ancient divining practices. The exuberance of Dürer's heraldic print swells in all directions, rousing anticipation in the viewer of past endeavours on the battlefield, here translated into heroic artistry.

Dürer's *Coat of Arms with the Lion and the Cock* was not intended to express one straightforward allegorical reading. The individual elements were purposefully selected to resonate with a wide variety of cultural touchstones without identifying a specific individual

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[462] Tacitus, *Germania,* 3:1-3.
[463] Translation from Tacitus, 1914, 135.
[464] Hirstein, 1995, 200-203.
[465] Aventinus, 1881, 1:366.

or place. The heraldic lion, especially as rendered by Dürer with a double tail, had been employed by both Friedrich and Maximilian as a compelling visual link between the Habsburg dynasty and their desired Trojan lineage. Its replication in a wide variety of contexts meant that it was associated more broadly with a Germanic strain of antiquity. The rooster is somewhat more difficult to place, but had a number of links to an imagined chivalric and heraldic past, ranging from the Gallic Hercules to the *arma Christi.* In this context, it ought not to be interpreted as a subversively rustic bird, but as a symbol of ancient practices and bellicose energy, intended to alert all the senses, like a visual call to action. Importantly, Dürer's print established heraldry as an aesthetically pleasing subject for a wide audience, rather than a type of sign that could only convey meaning in tightly regulated, politically-specific contexts. This was an important step in translating the intimacy of a mock-heraldic sketch into the more public medium of print. Dürer masterfully concocted a potent image of general interest, alighting upon heraldic motifs that would appeal to a multitude of clients, rather than bolstering the genealogy of one particular patron.

Heraldic Assemblage

When authors theorised ornament in the Renaissance, they appealed to ideal types and rules, which could be absorbed, reused and recombined. The ultimate norm in Vitruvian architectural theory was the load-bearing logic of the structure, whilst the idealised human body acted as the *prima forma* in the figural arts.[466] Nobody wrote an equivalent aesthetic or rhetorical theory of heraldry, but in early German printed geometrical treatises following Dürer's *Unterweissung der Messung*, heraldry appeared alongside the human body to

[466] Payne, 1999, 129-130; Guest, 2016, 290-291.

illustrate principles of measurement, construction and proportion.[467] In Erhard Schön's *Kunstbuchlein*, for instance, simple constructions are introduced as the basis for subsequent designs, which demonstrate the variegation made possible once one has mastered these foundational rules. Although Schön followed Dürer in prioritising the human body as the main site for mastering geometric excellence, he also dedicated a few of pages to the construction of heraldic images, including shields, helms and the generic charges of the eagle and the rampant lion (figs. 80, 81, 82). The gridded format of the shield offered fantastic opportunities to demonstrate one's command of three-dimensional transmutation, just like the human body. Once Schön had demonstrated the basic proportions of a standard shield, he offered ways that one might alter this frame, adding notches, curls and crests, until the final, Italianate shield appears to defy all geometric rules.[468] When an artist had internalised all the rules, they were then free to demonstrate their ornamental dexterity. Schön's treatise and Dürer's fictive coats of arms show how the rehearsal of heraldic forms was a key fixture in artistic training, enabling artists to translate shields, charges and helms between different states.

Ornamental compositions frequently blend figurative and naturalistic elements, mediating between these two pictorial realms in a way that can imply metaphorical layering. In this regard, the most proximate early modern art form to heraldry is architecture, both in theory and practice.[469] They both had a structural logic that was theorised in relation to the human body. They were also aligned to a figurative mode by being populated with sculpted, printed, drawn and painted bodies, who inhabited and adorned their basic structure. In an

[467] Schön, 1538; Rodler, 1531; Vogtherr, 1538.
[468] Schön, 1538, n.p.
[469] Hart, 1993.

architectural context, Alina Payne has described the rhetorical role that figurative sculpture played as "gesturing the structure," providing a pertinent parallel to sixteenth-century heraldic designs.[470] Human heraldic supporters were an increasingly common element in the design of coats of arms. These figures could mediate between the abstracted heraldry and its pictorial surroundings, establishing a kind of internal logic within the scene and perhaps even beckoning to a physical observer. The choice of supportive heraldic figures certainly mattered to sixteenth-century patrons: instructions on one drawing for a stained glass panel specify the direction in which the female heraldic supporter should be looking, perhaps to accord with the spatial setting of the finalised window (fig. 54).[471] As in architectural sculpture, the figures articulated the structure and mediated between differing visual, physical or metaphorical registers.

Figural supporters could also imbue heraldic designs with the appearance of an allegory. Shields had long served the construction of literary and pictorial allegory, because they could act as "screens" to introduce more information about the character bearing them, thus clarifying their identity and perhaps framing them as a personification.[472] Although most 'proper' heraldic designs were not conceived as allegories, some artists in the early sixteenth-century relished the opportunity to mimic allegorical structures by introducing surprising juxtapositions of motifs, forms or scales. In a drawing by Hans Baldung Grien, one cannot ignore the humorous interaction between the demure female shield holder and the monstrous, toothy male head atop the helm that she lovingly caresses (fig. 83).[473] The image has been

[470] Payne, 2002, 113.
[471] Butts and Hendrix, 2000, 326. Koch, 1941, 112-113.
[472] For the idea of heraldry as a 'screen' that establishes an allegorical structure in literary contexts, see Wandhoff, 2005, 56.
[473] Andersson and Talbot, 1983, 62-63; Koch, 1941, 111-112.

interpreted in relation to the 'power of women' *topos,* which was a common theme running through humorous heraldic images.[474] Yet this 'allegorising' was made possible by an inherent property in heraldic compositions: the interaction between the ornamental and the naturalistic, the artificial and the mimetic. The artist clearly savoured the opportunity to play with the possibilities of the grotesque humanoid crest, who mediates between the inanimate shield and the apparently animate female heraldic supporter. This serendipitous compositional 'accident' is also a result of confusions in scale, an aesthetic opportunity common in heraldic formulae.

In Baldung's playful heraldic image, the jarring opposition between heraldic supporter and crest is enhanced by the lack of any cohering visual scale. In Urs Graf's print of his personal *Allianzwappen* (1518), depicting his own heraldry with that of his wife, Sibylla von Brunn, the entire composition is dissonant (fig. 84).[475] The two shields lean in together so far that they appear to recoil, rolling back to such an extent that some scholars have interpreted this as a joke about the disharmony of the couple's marriage.[476] In medieval armorials, it was formulaic to have shields tilted to indicate deference, but in Urs Graf's print we see this language of ornamental gesture being pushed much further, evoking the 'power of women' *topos* that was so popular in parodic arms. The apparent tension between the anthropomorphic arms implicates the viewer's interpretation rather than the artist's intent. Graf frequently played visual tricks like this in his images. In one drawing of a mother holding a baby, with strong overtones of the Virgin and child, an ornamental line supposedly denoting a stem of grass on the floor reaches right up to the figures, strongly insinuating that

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[474] Butts and Hendrix, 2000, 245.
[475] Müller, 2001, 175-176; Major and Gradmann, 1947, 27. Major and Gradmann identify the female figure as a portrait of Sibylla, but she is probably just a figural shield supporter.
[476] Butts and Hendrix, 2000, 289.

the child is urinating (fig. 85).[477] The line can be read as stream of urine or an innocent stem of grass, toying with a polysemy that verges on the indecent. The same visual humour is employed in the design of his coat of arms, by playing with the interactions between the different heraldic motifs. Graf utilised the heraldic format to promote his artistic persona, demonstrating his particular handling of the female figure, his attention to calligraphic, energetic lines and his characteristically misogynistic brand of wit.

Many armorial designs were a collaborative affair, which could lead to interesting oppositions, such as in a design for stained-glass panel with the coat of arms of Nikolaus Ziegler (1515), where the heraldic artist depicted an excessively serpentine shield, with cusped edges and an exuberant rampant lion on the crest (fig. 86).[478] Hans Baldung depicted the heraldic supporter, a *Landsknecht,* whose sombre, downward gaze seems almost mournful as the outstretched claws of the lion come dangerously close to his face. The sense of competition or even 'power play' between the elements reflects the joint authorship of the sheet, which presumably followed some instructions set by the patron.[479] Yet the serendipitous joy of bizarre heraldic interactions also appealed to artists in full control of the overall compositions, who chose to emphasise such pictorial conflicts.

The rising popularity of the heraldic supporter offered artists the opportunity to demonstrate their command of the human figure. The fact that respected artists such as Hans Baldung might be asked to supply the figural imagery, but not the design of the coat of arms, suggests a shifting hierarchy within heraldic images, in which the surrounding frame began to take

[477] Andersson, 1978, 21.
[478] Butts and Hendrix, 2000, 238-240; Andersson and Talbot, 1983, 68-69; Koch, 1941, 115.
[479] On glass painting and collaboration, see Mensger, 2019.

stylistic precedence over the central insignia.[480] The growing interest in the depiction of heraldic supporters paralleled the flourishing of the costume book or book of customs, in which viewers poured over the variations in dress and comportment found in different cities. Albrecht Dürer's watercolour depictions of various women in Nuremberg-style dress may well have been conceived as inspirational models for supporting figures.[481] The fashionably dressed women and strapping mercenary soldiers who commonly accompanied coats of arms were representations of generic types, rather than personifications or depictions of specific individuals. In this regard, they took on the nature of the supernumerary, meta-figure (*Nebenfigur*), demonstrably non-narratival, but capable of referencing broader stylistic and aesthetic vocabularies.[482]

The artistic function of the ornamental *Nebenfigur* is particularly evident in a stained glass panel by Christoph Stimmer (c.1490-c.1562) depicting the artist's own coat of arms, made to accompany a series of heraldic panels for the Pfullendorf *Rathaus* (fig. 87).[483] The female figure supporting Stimmer's arms is the only nude in the entire series. Her elegant contrapposto, loose hair, voluptuous figure and exuberant feathered hat places her firmly within the tradition of the artistic, non-specific female nude. Stimmer also had an inscription in Latin and Greek added below his armorial panel, which reads, "I, Christoph Stimmer, have painted these pictures and coats of arms of my own accord, even if they are more than a far cry from the art of one Parrhasius and Apelles. Farewell, readers! In the year of our Lord

[480] On Baldung supplying figural imagery, see Koch, 1941, 109-110. The hierarchy of elements seems to confirm Gombrich's understanding of the heraldic 'flourish': Gombrich, 1979, 231-242
[481] Ashcroft, 2017, 1:91-93. Hans Baldung's figural designs were also copied as heraldic compositions: Mensger, 2019, 178-179.
[482] Barkan, 1999, 155-156; Guest, 2016, 285.
[483] Butts and Hendrix, 2000, 50-51.

1525."[484] The reference to Apelles and Parrhasius echoes the female nude, in that Stimmer locates his artistic practice within a classicising tradition. He also used his heraldic panel to act as a signature or conclusion to the entire series, levelling the coat of arms to the status of an artistic monogram.[485] The nude figure is integral to the artist's heraldic identity in this composition. No longer a simple ornamental motif, the representation of the female body binds Christoph Stimmer into a pedigree of artists, from Apelles to Dürer.[486] As with Urs Graf's highly-wrought, personalised *Allianzwappen,* the coat of arms had become an open arena for the display of artistic identity, not just as passive stewards transmitting heraldic information, but as the inheritors of pictorial traditions with their own identifying *insignia.*

Niklaus Manuel and Turning Heraldry Swiss

Christoph Stimmer's stained glass series reflects the huge popularity of heraldic glass panels in the Swiss cantons during this period.[487] As discussed in the first chapter, *Wappenscheibe* conditioned artistic engagement with heraldry in the confederacy, including the reception of other ornamental trends. We have already seen how the Bernese artist Niklaus Manuel, called 'Deutsch' (1484-1530), re-interpreted Dürer's *Coat of Arms with a Skull* in a *Scheibenriss* format. But Manuel's heraldic oeuvre reveals a more extensive and sustained engagement with coats of arms through a regional lens. The phrase 'to turn Swiss' (*sweytzer werden*) was a contemporary one, although it was actually used when a city or region removed itself from

[484] Following the translation in Butts and Hendrix.
[485] Interestingly, in Valentin Boltz's *Illuminierbuch* (1549), about the art of using colours in painting, a woodcut illustration depicts an artist at an easel, painting the Basel coat of arms; he is labelled as 'Apelles', again connecting civic heraldry to this classical model. I was unable to check this publication in person due to COVID-19.
[486] Dürer was promoted as an 'alter Apelles' by his humanist circle; see Hess, 1990 and Hutchison, 2000, 1-3.
[487] Butts and Hendrix, 2000, 13, 45; Matile, 1979, 67-74.

the direct jurisdiction of the emperor and imperial *Tage*.[488] Manuel did not turn Dürer's heraldry Swiss in this political sense, but rather re-imagined Dürer's designs in an idiom characteristic of his city, Bern.

Little is known about Manuel's early artistic training, but it is probable that he began working within a stained glass workshop in Bern. Drawings and paintings make up the majority of his oeuvre, reflecting Bern's lack of a printing press.[489] However, he was certainly in touch with external artistic developments. Stylistically and iconographically, Manuel's work is comparable to that of Urs Graf, based in Basel. Like Graf, he entered into mercenary service in the Italian campaigns, possibly due to financial insecurity as an artist.[490] After experiencing some traumatic defeats on the battlefield, he returned to Bern, becoming an important politician and playwright during the Bernese Reformation. Amongst his artworks, he is best known now for his large mural cycle depicting the dance of death, which survives in a seventeenth-century copy.[491] The cycle represents citizens of Bern from all walks of life being surprised by the skeletal figure of death; the coats of arms of prominent individuals are represented above their painted portraits. As in Stimmer's heraldic cycle, the pictorial identity of the artist concludes the series. The figure of Manuel stands below his coat of arms, adding the final touches to the mural; from behind, death gently wraps his knuckles around the artist's brush. Both Stimmer and Manuel bore their own coats of arms and commanded enough social standing as artists to represent themselves alongside the other citizens. Their status as both armigers and artists allowed them to emphasise their role as

[488] See Brady, 1985, 37 and *passim*
[489] Ehrstine, 2002, 62.
[490] Manuel's letter to Bern city council is reproduced in Zinsli and Hengartner, 1999, 649.
[491] Egli and von Tavel, 2017, no. 19.01-19.24; Marti, 2016, 116-121.

heraldic mediators and civic figures, illustrating the rising status of artists within urban communities.[492]

Like Dürer, Manuel probed the nature of pictorial heraldry through fictive coats of arms. A mysterious drawing by Manuel reinterprets the heraldic format in a rich chiaroscuro, intended to appeal to appreciative collectors (fig. 88).[493] The drawing emulates Dürer's *Coat of Arms with a Lion and a Cock,* but reinterprets the ideal of fictive heraldry in a Swiss idiom, adopting the format of a *Scheibenriss* by depicting an ornamental frame around the coat of arms, where playful putti clamber up a bower to participate in a triumphal procession in the spandrels. Manuel's use of white chalk on red-grounded paper, picked out with spindly black ink in a sculptural chiaroscuro, ties the sheet to a group of red-grounded drawings produced by the artist in 1513/1514. Stylistically, the rendering of the clouds in white and the highly ornamental design of the border is closest to a trio of red-grounded chiaroscuro paintings on panel, which Manuel made in 1517 (*Death and the Maiden*, *Bathsheba at her Bath*, and *Lucretia*). Although the composition and format of the drawing suggests that it is a design for a glass panel, the decision to render the image in such a finished chiaroscuro shows that it was intended as a piece in its own right, rather than a working drawing.[494] It is undated, but due to the apparent influence of works by Hans Baldung and Urs Graf dating from 1510-1514, scholarship has dated Manuel's heraldic composition to circa 1515.[495]

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[492] A comparable case is Hans Baldung, whose coat of arms with a unicorn purposefully echoed the civic heraldry of his family's hometown, Schwäbisch-Gmünd: Bumiller, 2019, 36.
[493] Egli and von Tavel, 2017, 327-329; Wagner, 1979, 335-337.
[494] Egli and von Tavel, 2017, 20.
[495] This follows the reasoning of Egli and von Tavel, 2017, 327-329. For Baldung comparisons, see Mende, 1978, 327, 401, 402.

The content of the image appears straightforward, but resists easy allegorical interpretation. A female heraldic supporter is depicted seated in an outdoor setting with a light smattering of foliage around the bottom of her skirts. Her gaze is diverted demurely downwards, while she clasps the strap of a shield in one hand and the base of a helm in the other, as though these pieces of armour weighed very little. The shield is charged with a rampant lion, bordered with a scalloped frame, echoing Dürer's use of the lion as a prestigious but also generic heraldic filler. Unlike Dürer's design, the helm is barred (a *Turnierhelm*) and crowned, which usually indicated that an armiger was of a higher status. The female heraldic supporter appears to raise up the helm, on top of which is an intriguing crest: a small man, dressed like a pilgrim, clasps the bottom of his tunic and gazes up to the top right-hand corner of the frame. Out from the edge of the frame, a heavenly, disembodied hand reaches down, offering the pilgrim a rounded object, which is probably a loaf of bread (fig. 89). Hugo Wagner proposed that the object is the philosopher's stone, but there is little to link pilgrimage to alchemy.[496] Depictions of pilgrims receiving bread from charitable figures, such as in a drawing by Sebald Beham, suggests that bread is more likely (fig. 90).

In the framework behind the triumphal procession of putti, just beyond the point from which the heavenly hand appears, there is a representation of a tablet bearing lettering in white chalk, which is badly faded and extremely difficult to interpret. The text has been transcribed as, "NMD [or O] ... IV / W ... KNV / ANW S W / MRV AO."[497] Although Manuel's monogram (NMD) also appears at the bottom of the image, if the first letters in the longer inscription stand for his name 'Niklaus Manuel Deutsch/Dolch' then the rest of the inscription

[496] Wagner, 1979, 336. Manuel used alchemical references in his painting of St Eligius; however, the saint was a metalworker, a practice which had more direct links to alchemy.
[497] According to Egli and von Tavel, 2017, 335.

is presumably a long acronym.[498] Manuel and his contemporaries, notably Urs Graf, often used acronyms to embed half-encrypted mottos within their imagery.[499] Some of Manuel's more common acronyms, such as N.K.A.W (*Nieman kann als wüssen*, or 'no-one can know everything'), were repeated so frequently in different guises that they took on the nature of a personal motto. Joseph Koerner has argued that the artist occasionally played with the monogram 'NM' to mean both 'Nieman' and 'Niklaus Manuel'.[500] Manuel's oeuvre reveals his preoccupation with textual and pictorial ambiguity. He experimented with embedding idiosyncratic symbols within images, such as his motif of a Swiss dagger, which is often depicted beside his monogram. The lengthier abbreviated inscriptions in many of Manuel and Graf's drawings remain uninterpreted. Rather than clarifying the imagery, these textual inserts required a level of interpersonal knowledge to decipher. The motto "no-one can know everything" is in itself a self-reflexively ambiguous inscription, which recalls the humble, self-defeatist language of contemporary tournament devices. Manuel and Graf were not the first artists to import the connotations of elite mottos into their artworks: Jan van Eyck adopted the signature phrase "Als ich can" (As [best] I can) in his paintings, which may also have been a pun on the proximity between *ich* and Eyck.[501] The tradition of disguised signatures strengthens Koerner's claim that Manuel associated himself (Niklaus) with the 'N' (Nieman) of his motto.

No armiger has been identified for the coat of arms. It is probable that none existed and that this was always intended as a fictive design. If this was meant to depict a specific patron's

[498] The 'D' may refer to his father's surname, *Alleman,* translated to 'Deutsch', or to Manuel's device, a Swiss dagger called a *Dolch.*
[499] Müller, 2001, 101, 22; Ehrstine, 2002, 209-211; Andersson, 1980, 276-288.
[500] On Manuel's love of wordplay, see Koerner, 1993, 525n24.
[501] Brine, 2018, 601, 608-609.

heraldry, then the crest ornament is certainly highly unusual, although it may be an animated representation of a crest that was normally far simpler in format, such as the torso of a pilgrim.[502] Given Manuel's subtle quotation of Dürer's maiden from the *Coat of Arms of Death* in another fictive heraldic drawing, the lion was probably inspired by the *Coat of Arms with a Lion and a Cock*. If the rampant lion evoked an image of Herculean antiquity that was current in Dürer's Nuremberg, then it certainly would have reminded Manuel of Bern's founding father, Berchtold V von Zähringen.[503] Berchtold was a central part of the civic community's sense of a shared past; in a manuscript illumination accompanying a copy of the *Speizer Chronik* (1484/85), the heraldic bear of Bern is represented in alliance with Berchtold's arms, a rampant lion facing the viewer (fig. 91).[504] From the 1490s onwards, the Bern city council reinvigorated the commemoration of the Duke of Zähringen at his annual *Jahrzeit*, which involved processions and the extensive display of the Zähringer heraldry.[505] Furthermore, as quoted in the first chapter, Zwingli referred to the Zähringer arms in a sermon delivered in Bern, illustrating the prevalence of the founder's heraldry as well as the proximity between religion and the city's administration.[506] However, the Zähringer crest was usually depicted as a snowball-like object and not a small pilgrim, refuting a straightforward link with Manuel's heraldic drawing.

Heraldry and pilgrimage were intimately linked in the late medieval spiritual imaginary. Crusading ideologies permeated heraldic histories and motivated some pilgrims to journey to

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[502] As seen, for example, in the coat of arms of the Dunzenheim line of the Zorn dynasty: Koch, 1941, 154-155.
[503] Schadek and Schmid, 1986, 110-113. The visual culture of Bernese civic heraldry is discussed in Weber, 1999. For Berchtold's life and legacy, see Geunenich, 1986.
[504] Schilling, 1484/85, 39.
[505] Hugener, 2014, 171-188. Most prominent artists in Bern were tasked with representing Berchtold V or his heraldry at some point in their careers; see Schadek and Schmid, 1986, 332.
[506] See 93-98, n310.

Jerusalem.[507] Materially, it was common practice for arms-bearing pilgrims to leave depictions of their heraldry at the holy sites along their journey, often with accompanying inscriptions, as a spiritual donation and as a record for future descendants who might follow the same route.[508] Accounts demonstrate that pilgrims would pay for their coat of arms to be assembled in some form by artisans working in the locality of the holy sites, who presumably targeted this steady trickle of passing trade.[509] It was also quite common for visual records of pilgrimages to be embedded within heraldic artworks once the travellers had returned home. Tombs and portraits frequently bear the various symbols associated with major pilgrimage destinations (Compostello, Rome and Jerusalem) next to the pilgrim's coat of arms.[510] Niklaus Manuel's *Dance of Death* in Bern (circa 1515-1519) featured three instances where pilgrimage markers were represented beside a patron's coat of arms. Even if Manuel's chiaroscuro heraldic drawing was not strictly intended to advertise an innovative new compositional design for the representation of a pilgrim's heraldry, he certainly took inspiration from this genre of imagery.

It is difficult to assess the confessional status of Manuel's artistic output at this particular point in his career.[511] The artist went on to play a decisive cultural role in the Reformation in Bern, due to the anti-Papal sentiments of his *Fastnacht* plays written in the 1520s, but his earlier theological leanings are not so clear.[512] In his play *Vom Papst und seiner Priesterschaft* (1523/24), a peasant named Nickli Zettmist laments to his neighbour that he

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[507] Holterman, 2013, 17-19. On crusading and heraldic myths, see Mennel, 1518, II, fol. 51r.
[508] For a full account of Germanic votive offerings on the route to Jerusalem, see Kraack, 1997, 65 and *passim.*
[509] Kraack, 1997, 62-64; for prices of various heraldic offerings along pilgrim routes, see 322-324.
[510] See Holterman, 2013, Appendix A, for a table of portraits of Jerusalem pilgrims. The rest of the thesis provides the context for these images.
[511] Egli and von Tavel, 2017, 13-15.
[512] For an account of Manuel's subsequent involvement in Reformation thought, see Gordon, 1996.

had bought a letter of indulgence, even though he desperately needed the money for bread; Manuel thereby presents the indulgence trade as an exploitative racket that exacerbated poverty.[513] Martin Luther's views on the corruption of the church were circulating in Bern by 1518.[514] In this year a controversial indulgence for the funding of the rebuilding of St Peter's in Rome was critiqued by some Bernese figures using comparable language to Luther. However, Bern had already faced a number of proto-Reformation controversies earlier in the sixteenth century, the most notable involving a falsified miracle-working image, which fuelled anti-clerical sentiments and suspicions about idolatry in the community. It is possible that pilgrimage was drawn into the criticism, due to its connection with the selling of indulgences, the cult of saints and the idea of salvation through good works.[515] Yet, Manuel's patrons were clearly happy to represent their status as pilgrims on the *Dance of Death* mural, painted over a similar date-range to the probable production of the heraldic drawing. We have to be careful not to project Manuel's subsequent views onto his earlier artworks, but the contrast between the receiving of bread – both spiritual and literal – and the earthly pomp of heraldry is suggestive, given the relationship between pilgrimage, heraldry and votive practices.

Travelling saints and hermits remained extremely popular before and after the Reformation, and were often represented wearing the same travelling outfit as Manuel's little pilgrim. Many legends surrounding these hermits included the delivery of heavenly sustenance. Saints Paul and Anthony received bread in the wilderness from a raven, St Sebald received bread on

[513] Zinsli and Hengartner, 1999, 158.
[514] Sallmann, 2016, 137.
[515] Reformist rhetoric was broadly anti-pilgrimage: Holterman, 2013, 21-24; Simpson, 2010, 102-108; Weiß, 2007.

pilgrimage to Rome and St Roch's dog brought him bread.[516] St Onuphrius, another hermit saint often depicted receiving bread from heaven, was popular among the Basel humanists, including Sebastian Brant, who named his son Onuphrius.[517] Manuel also produced an altarpiece depicting scenes from the life of St Anthony, in which the reception of the bread has strong Eucharistic overtones (1518-1520).[518] Moreover, an unsigned drawing attributed to Manuel (c.1520) depicts two peasants gifting a rooster and a wheel of cheese to the most famous pilgrim-saint, St James the Great.[519] At this point, the artist does not seem to have been openly opposed to pilgrimage or the cult of saints in his artworks.

It has been proposed, however, that Manuel's chiaroscuro heraldic drawing professes a paradoxical edge, like Dürer's *Coat of Arms with a Lion and a Cock*.[520] In subsequent imagery, there is evidence that the heraldic lion rampant was associated with pride or folly. The heraldic lion appears in Heinrich Aldegrever's personification of *Pride* (fig. 92) and was also selected by Jost Amman for his representation of the mechanical art of cookery, personified by a fool (fig. 35).[521] In the 1480s the Swiss Dominican Felix Fabri wrote a scathing report in his travelogue about the habit of leaving heraldry in churches on the way to Palestine. He also argued that the animalistic imagery on heraldry was often pagan in origin and not at all pleasing to God.[522] It is possible that Manuel's image does profess a critical stance towards armigerous pilgrims echoing Fabri's sentiments, but the exact nature of the critique is not obvious.

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[516] According to Meisterlin's *Vita,* Saint Sebald received 'bread from heaven' on his pilgrimage to Rome. See Collins, 2008, 59.
[517] Stieglecker, 2001.
[518] Egli and von Tavel, 2017, nos.14.01-14.04.
[519] Egli and von Tavel, 2017, no. 71; Wagner, 1979, 379-380.
[520] Egli and von Tavel, 2017, 327.
[521] For further discussion of the image, see chapter 1, 83. For Amman, see O'Dell, 2009, 30.
[522] Kraack, 1997, 343-353, 415-418.

The status of heraldry in contemporary Bern requires a bit of scrutiny. On the one hand, heraldic display was extremely prevalent, bolstered by the glass industry, and arms played a central role in the construction of communal, confederate identity. On the other hand, the mythology of rural Swiss identity was deeply rooted in the rejection of a tyrannical nobility by the heroic peasant, William Tell.[523] Swiss authors valorised simple clothing and lowly food, arguing that true nobility originated from virtuous humility.[524] The founding mythology of Bern was also tied up with anti-aristocratic sentiments, since Berchtold V von Zähringen had freed the city of Bern from future noble dominion after his death.[525] The commemoration of this Zähringen legacy allowed the Bernese city council to present itself as the heir to just lordship, adopting the imagery of noble rule in order to promote civic self-governance.[526] Lordly benevolence was closely associated with providing citizens with basic necessities, which was symbolically performed through the charitable distributions that accompanied ceremonies like Berchtold's *Jahrzeit*.[527]

Manuel's use of the heraldic lion in his drawing must have invited comparison with exemplars of 'good' and 'bad' noble conduct, which were so central to Bern's civic identity, especially given its similarity to the Zähringer lion. The loaf of bread may also have been bound up with ideals about administrative duty. In Luther's commentaries on the Catechism, he encouraged congregants to pray for good governance and for peace, without which there would be no daily bread, suggesting that "It would therefore be fitting if the coat of arms of

[523] Head, 1995, 532-539.
[524] Christ-Kutter, 1963, 942-949.
[525] Head, 1995, 539.
[526] Hugener, 2014, 181.
[527] The positive side of Berchtold's legacy was in tension with other accounts that held him to be an evil tyrant: Geunenich, 1986, 101-102.

every upright prince were emblazoned with a loaf of bread instead of a lion or a wreath of rue."[528] Manuel's drawing may evoke a similar sentiment, by contrasting the lowly pilgrim receiving bread with the combative, prestigious lion, recalling the Swiss ideal of humble nobility, epitomised in Bern through the figure of Berchtold V von Zähringen.[529]

If we are to assume that Manuel's little pilgrim was meant to remain unidentified, then the drawing also resonates with the imagery of the generic 'wayfarer', in which the viewer is encouraged to self-identify with a pictured traveller and virtually map a possible route through the contents of the image.[530] Mitchell Merback has interpreted a circular table depicting a wayfarer (1488) as a diagrammatic form of image that encourages self-reflection and self-recognition (fig. 93).[531] In the centre of the table, the traveller steps towards an "improbable structure" consisting of the tablets of the law topped by a crucifix. A devil pursues him from behind and ahead a skeleton readies his bow to release a deadly arrow at the traveller. The inscriptions around the central image ask questions of the pilgrim and his counterpart, the viewer, such as "whoever you are and however you live,/ I will inquire/ Where are you going and where will you remain for eternity."[532] One angel urges the pilgrim to look behind him and consider what he has done wrong in the past, a second urges him to look to the road ahead and contemplate his death, while two others remind him of his possible afterlife in heaven and hell respectively. The anonymous pilgrim in Manuel's drawing also suggests spiritual navigation on earth and spiritual reward.

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[528] Quotation from the Large Catechism, translated in *The Annotated Luther,* Stjerna, 2015, 380. See also: Luther, 1959, 51:177n30.
[529] There was also a myth that the Zähringer were descended from a poor *Köhler*, who found a silver mine and rose up the ranks: Schadek and Schmid, 1986, 375-376. Many noble lines made claim to similarly humble origins.
[530] For this idea in relation to landscape imagery, see Falkenburg, 1988.
[531] Merback, 2017b.
[532] Translations are printed in Gibson, 1973, 226n27.

Mitchell Merback has placed the image of the wayfarer within a visual category that he calls "allegorical-speculative," in which the *process* of reading the image acts as a remedial aid for curing spiritual and physical trials.[533] These ambiguous or irresolvable images foster "an open-ended *kinesis,* not a closed *allegoresis.*"[534] Manuel's image displays very similar traits to Merback's descriptions of 'allegorical-speculative images', including contradictions in scale, the unreality of location and the dislocation between different elements in the image. There are not enough iconographic clues to argue that Manuel's drawing was intended to 'remedy' a particular ailment or that it was perceived medically, but the notion of the heraldic image as prompting self-contemplation was certainly current. Coats of arms were described in Zacharias Bartsch's *Wappen-Buch* (1567) as a Socratic mirror, in which the youth might see their personalities reflected and hence learn to improve themselves.[535] Manuel's reformulation of the visual function of the basic heraldic composition suggests that he was considering how to foster a prolonged viewing procedure.

At around the same time as Manuel was producing his drawing, it seems that the popularity of the lion as a heraldic badge was causing interpretative problems for the creation of political allegories, since it was a badge employed by so many different European powers. Jill Burke has shown that three allegorical lion automata designed by Leonardo da Vinci for different ceremonial entries between 1509 and 1517 were interpreted in contradictory ways by contemporary observers. She argues that their uncertainty about how to read these heraldic allegories is indicative of "a culture imaginatively gripped by the elusiveness of meaning,

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[533] The fullest expression of his definition can be found in Merback, 2017a, but is drawn originally from Falkenberg, 2006.
[534] Merback, 2017a, 51.
[535] Bartsch, 1567, sig.bij^{r}; sig.biij^{r}.

which betrayed itself in a near fetishisation of symbolic ambiguity, its creative possibilities and its potential dangers."[536] Manuel's drawn animation of the generic lion suggests the same attentiveness to the slipperiness of heraldic allegory, as the anonymous wayfarer, the disembodied heavenly hand, the amorphous gift and the fictive landscape of the female supporter resist any straightforward resolution. In a period of political, religious and personal uncertainty, perhaps Manuel was also contemplating 'symbolic ambiguity' of heraldic signs.

Manuel in Dialogue with Dürer's Heraldic Prints

Manuel may well have been prompted to explore the peculiarities of heraldic imagery by studying Dürer's heraldic prints, like the *Coat of Arms of Death,* where Dürer toyed with the interpretative ambiguity of heraldic structures. Heraldic designs provided a particularly fertile framework for exploring the boundaries between narratival and ornamental pictorial registers, especially as background settings for coats of arms became more complex, with landscapes, fictive architectural frames and populated spandrels. Manuel was considering the possibilities of inter-pictorial address between frames and central panels throughout his artistic career.[537] In an earlier exploration of the heraldic *Scheibenriss* format, depicting the coat of arms of the Hattstatt family (circa 1507), the armless male herm which acts as a crest stares solemnly across the pictorial field at a semi-nude man in the framing spandrel (fig. 94).[538] The little man partially kneels on top of an architectural capital and appears to address the anthropomorphic heraldic crest, mediating between the coat of arms and the hinterland of wild folk in the spandrels above. These ornamental figures, like the little pilgrim, reflect

[536] Burke, 2006, 87.
[537] On Manuel's use of pictorial structure, see Huggler, 1980.
[538] Egli and von Tavel, 2017, 258-259.

Manuel's interest in using figural sculpture within fictive architectural frames as a form of visual commentary.[539] His *Death and the Maiden* of 1517, also rendered in a black, red and white chiaroscuro, but in oil on panel, features two figural sculptures on top of heavily-ornamented columns (fig. 95). The closest sculptural figure is a nude woman, who violently shoves a sword through her abdomen, identifying her with the character of Thisbe or the other love-mad women driven to self-harm that populate Manuel's imagery. Her scale and relationship to the architectonic column suggests that she represents a sculpture, but her delicate billowing hair undermines this reading. She is at once ornamental, animated and iconographic, blurring the boundary between frame and content, in just the same manner as the pilgrim.

Manuel repeatedly utilised juxtapositions of scale to complicate the internal logic of his pictures. In another *Scheibenriss* known as 'the mercenary soldier transformed into a beggar' (1520), the usual heraldic centre-piece has been replaced by the figure of a man, half dressed in the slashed clothing of a Swiss mercenary and half in the tattered weeds of a beggar, with arrows piercing his soldierly body (fig. 96).[540] Just above the column on the left, a female figure proffers a flask of drink and a flower into the central space, while her natural counterpart, a smartly-dressed mercenary soldier, sits opposite her on the right. Another pairing occurs on the next level up in this architectural frame. On the right is the dead body of St Sebastian, the patron saint of soldiers, echoing the arrows piercing the central soldier's body. On the left hand side, the enthroned Virgin Mary balances the Christ child on her lap, who holds out an apple, mirroring the offer of a drink from the youthful maiden below. The contrasts between the various figures are evident, as exemplars of temptation and virtue,

[539] Egli and von Tavel, 2017, 327-329.
[540] Egli and von Tavel, 2017, no. 70.

bodily indulgence and spiritual sacrifice, but what is not entirely clear is how one ought to puzzle out these pictorial exchanges.

Manuel probably produced his heraldic chiaroscuro drawing in the period between the *Hattstatt Arms* and the *Soldier-Beggar,* showing that it was part of a series of images in which he explored the opportunity to allow frames and central images to interact within the traditional *Scheibenriss* format. These drawings depict unresolved transactions, which implicate the beholder's interpretative agency. Manuel's drawings did prompt alternative responses, such as the poem written in an unknown hand on the back of the *Soldier-Beggar* sheet, which expounds upon the fickleness of fortune.[541] It is interesting that the drawings recall the format of glass panels, given the importance of gift culture to this artisanal trade and the fame of Bernese glass production. As noted by Christine Hediger, the gift of a glass panel usually presupposed some kind of service in return, like diplomatic loyalty or a reciprocal material gift.[542] It is as though this culture of exchange influenced Manuel's pictorial designs, including the heraldic chiaroscuro drawing, which depicts a puzzlingly provocative sequence of incomplete transactions. The female heraldic supporter raises the helm as though presenting it for judgement during a *Helmschau,* while the little pilgrim is offered a heavenly reward, which he has not (yet) accepted.

Manuel's imaginative explorations of heraldic compositions were clearly initiated through his knowledge of Dürer's two fictive heraldic prints, which raises the possibility that Niklaus was thinking through his role as an artist in the transmission and mediation of coats of arms. As

[541] Paul Zinsli argues that the hand is not Manuel's, but that the verse was probably written within his immediate circle: Zinsli, 1980. On the theme of the poem, see Menz, 1980, 245-246.
[542] Hediger, 2010, 168, 174-176. See also Schaffner, 2016, 125-130.

discussed above, he toyed with the interchangeability of his initials, *NM,* which could represent an acronym of *Niemand* or of Niklaus Manuel. The inscription in the chiaroscuro drawing, albeit faded, does seem to begin with the letters "NM" and then "D" or "O", suggesting that it could well involve a comparable pun. Nobody or *Nemo* was a well-established popular character type by the early sixteenth century, appearing in broadsheet imagery as well as in humanist, Latin texts.[543] In broadsheet images and verses Nobody was represented as a put-upon, impoverished wayfarer, who was blamed for everybody else's mistakes and sins. The image published by Georg Schan in Nuremberg (c.1510) shows the typical iconography of *Niemand,* dressed as a scruffy, ragged traveller, surrounded by a clutter of sinful, unruly objects, representing the kinds of activities and misbehaviours for which he must take the blame (fig. 97). *Niemand* is framed as a fool who must shoulder the burdens of the world, making him a figure of ridicule, but also Christ-like in his folly, as he selflessly accepts the blame for everybody's wrongs.[544] In Manuel's heraldic drawing, the pilgrim is not impoverished like the typical figure of *Niemand* and there are no obvious trappings associated with folly. However, the heraldic lion was occasionally linked to folly, probably due to its generic status, which effectively made it the heraldry of 'nobody' and 'everybody' at the same time.[545] Niklaus Manuel's personal interest in the character of *Niemand* makes these resonances a plausible fit for understanding his heraldic drawing. Dürer's *Coat of Arms with a Lion and a Cock* presented a German heraldic archetype, which prompted Manuel to envisage an everyman's coat of arms in a personal, Bernese idiom.

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[543] For an iconographic study, see Calmann, 1960 and Schuster, 1981. For a literary survey, see Fricke, 1998. For the humanist obsession with paradox and negation, see Merback, 2010, 1064-1065.
[544] Schuster, 1981, 30-35.
[545] See Fricke, 1998, 455 for a sixteenth-century manuscript text concerning *Niemand* claiming that he is descended from knightly stock and from royalty.

Manuel's self-identification with the character of *Niemand* transforms the generic heraldic lion into a motif connected to the artist. By making his artistic prowess the subject of a subjectless coat of arms, Manuel enacted a combination of self-promotion and self-erasure.[546] In this manner, the chiaroscuro heraldic drawing echoes many of Manuel's other images where the identity of the artist is purposefully erased or merged with the identity of Nobody. Most explicitly, in his transformative rendering of Dürer's famed *Nemesis* print, Manuel re-envisaged the goddess of fortune as a debased, witchy, sexualised deviant, riding on her spherical, unstable throne above an Alpine landscape (fig. 98). The bejewelled nude gazes at an hourglass in one hand, while jauntily raising a feathered skull in the other. A small tablet hangs from its jawbone bearing the initials "NM/D," thus identifying the skull with the artist. The feathered cap recalls Manuel's depictions of mercenary soldiers; he himself had served in the Italian campaigns. Interestingly, Manuel's monogram appears twice in this drawing, since he also signed his initials on the glassy surface of the lake at the bottom edge, along with his personal device of a Swiss dagger. Maybe the chiaroscuro heraldic drawing also features two references to the artist's nominal identity, similarly prompting the contemplation of vanity and death. In both drawings, a female figure nonchalantly raises the representation of a male head like a trophy, a reminder of the mutability of earth-bound fate.

Joseph Koerner has pitted the self-erasing, self-mocking authorial practices of Hans Baldung and Niklaus Manuel against what he saw as the quasi-divine self-construction of Dürer's artistic persona.[547] Yet Manuel's subtle nods to *The Coat of Arms with a Lion and a Cock* and *The Coat of Arms of Death,* as with his other emulations of Dürer, do not seem to enact an 'anti-Dürerian' form of 'self-mortification,' since his images build on the same latent

[546] For the idea of authorial erasure and the character of Nobody, see Fricke, 1998, 73-76.
[547] Koerner, 1993, 416-422.

implications found in Dürer's engravings, namely, the ambiguous, fugitive status of earthly heraldry. These were not necessarily critiques of Dürer's claims to immortality, as Koerner would assert, but personal reflections on the nature of artistic identity and mortality. Manuel's imagery is replete with references to his devastating experiences on the battlefield, particularly emphasising the debasement of soldierly bodies and the proximity of death. The little traveller on the precariously-raised helm, awaiting his heavenly revelation, must have evoked the artist's own journeys, both literal and spiritual. If his heraldic images do profess a critical edge, it is to warn the viewer of the instability of earthly insignia and status, particularly in contrast to the certain prospect of death and divine judgement.

The *Coat of Arms with a Pilgrim* seems to encourage the viewer to reflect on the 'pilgrimage of life' and the relationship between outward expressions of hierarchy and the path to salvation.[548] The generic heraldic format of the image, with its associated mixing of different scales and ornamental registers, served as a useful framework and a common point of reference for such pictorial innovations. Dürer began the self-reflexive exploration of coats of arms in his prints and Manuel responded to the challenge in his personal idiom. Dürer's *Coat of Arms of Death* and his *Coat of Arms with a Lion and a Cock* were two possible representations of an 'Everyman's heraldry', which, to varying degrees, were pictorially subversive. Manuel was prompted by Dürer's example to re-envisage the local tradition of heraldic glass panels in a generic mode, creating an 'Everyman's *Scheibenriss*'. Manuel also translated Dürer's virtuosic engravings into his personal equivalent: a rich, single-sheet chiaroscuro drawing for a connoisseurial audience. By localising Dürer's open-ended prints, Manuel was able to impart his own artistic preoccupations and specific Bernese resonances,

[548] For a comparative use of a patron's heraldry to pose a choice between virtue and vice, see the following painting by Lorenzo Lotto: Aikema and Brown, 1999, 400-401, cat. no. 99.

including ambiguous mottos, proverbial iconographies, the moral challenge of mercenary service, the ubiquity of heraldic visual culture and an aversion to noble despotism and pomp. Following Dürer's lead, Manuel explored the paradoxical instability of visual identity.[549] In doing so, they established an artistic pedigree, a dialogue between coats of arms that mimicked heraldic inheritance.

Artistic Identity, Monograms and the Heraldic Print

The wide circulation of his prints ensured Dürer's fame and allowed generations of artistic followers to translate his printed images into new drawings and paintings. Their translations often included re-interpretations of Dürer's monogram, a visual identifier that was tied to the medium of print, drawing on the older tradition of goldsmiths' marks.[550] For Joseph Koerner, Dürer's use of the monogram transformed the artistic signature into a sign that communicated "originality and ownership," in contrast to the more traditional, pragmatic uses of monograms.[551] In Christopher Wood's analysis, the relationship between the printed replica and the emergence of authorial identifiers, like monograms, reflects the generative tension that always exists between technologies of reproduction and the notion of the work of art as a unique, temporally-grounded product.[552] Both Koerner and Wood assume that the monogram reflects a typically 'modern' conception of the artist as author, which appears accurate in relation to an artist like Dürer and his self-conscious followers. However, this assumption contrasts sharply with the widespread prejudice in art historical scholarship towards heraldry,

[549] The rise of material strategies of identification broadly paralleled economic growth and social diversification; see Boes, 2013, 56-61. On the development of identifying signs and documents, see Groebner, 2007.
[550] Weekes, 2004, 31-32.
[551] Koerner, 1993, 416.
[552] Wood, 2008, 346-358.

where coats of arms are viewed as outdated and typically 'pre-modern'. In fact, there was much cross-fertilisation between personal artisanal marks and traditional coats of arms. If we are to accept that Dürer's monogram and its imitators signalled a new attitude towards the authorial identity of the artist, then we also have to consider whether heraldry was implicated within emergent visualisations of artistic identity and inheritance.

Although heraldry is associated with the nobility, it came to be utilised across a far broader social spectrum very soon after its initial cohesion into a recognisable sign system.[553] Legal attempts to control heraldic use were generally more concerned with regulating the rights of the nobility than with systematising the use of heraldry. This was similar for artisanal marks and trademarks; where legal regulation existed, it was rarely concerned with the actual visual appearance of a mark, but instead with monitoring the products or institutions to which the mark was attached. Trademarks and heraldic motifs thus had comparable functions and both could be displayed on shields to indicate property, goods and lineage. It seems that wealthy non-noble families liked to have a housemark *and* a coat of arms, simultaneously indicating the heritage of their trade and their status among the elites. In the mid-sixteenth century, the wealthy Cologne merchant Hermann Weinsberg granted a coat of arms to his brother-in-law, because the new jurist did not have a suitable heraldic motif for his seal, bearing only "ein sclecht mirk" (a poor mark).[554] However, Hermann was equally invested in reviving his grandfathers' heraldry and the old family housemark, suggesting that he valued both for different reasons.[555] Even after the powerful Fugger family of Augsburg had been granted a coat of arms bearing the noble charge of the lily in 1473, they continued to display their old

[553] Hauptmann, 1896, 41.
[554] Schmid, 2009, 46. Non-armigers who were admitted to official positions in local governance were often granted arms: Hauptmann, 1896, 77.
[555] Schmid, 2009, 56-57.

housemark on a shield. Marcus Meer writes that "the unproblematic co-presence of heraldic signs and marks suggests that they were of equal importance as a means of identification and an expression of identity, with no regard for the personal preferences and legal opinions of heraldic experts such as heralds."[556] The use of housemarks alongside heraldry provides a pertinent comparison for the relationship between artistic monograms and coats of arms.

In the first few decades of the sixteenth century, the relationship between non-noble heraldry, artisanal trademarks and the status of renowned artists became increasingly intertwined, both visually and legally. It has been claimed that Lucas Cranach the Elder was the first imperial artist to receive a heraldic patent, which was connected to his privileged status as a court artist and was primarily symbolic.[557] Cranach used his winged heraldic snake in a manner more akin to a trademark, in any case, as he often removed it from the shield when marking paintings. Niklaus Manuel possessed a coat of arms, but it was much easier to tuck his monogram and his personal device – a Swiss dagger – into his individual drawings.[558] From around 1516, Hans Burgkmair also began to use a heraldic sign, but was granted an official patent from Maximilian I in 1518.[559] The design of his charge is particularly clever and suggests an attempt to acknowledge Burgkmair's status as a visual artist. The shield features two counterchanged bears' heads (fig. 99). They are counterchanged not only in colour, but also geometrically, as the bear on the heraldic right is upside-down. This allows their open mouths to intersect one another perfectly, creating an organic heraldic division. It is possible that Burgkmair assisted in the design of this shield, which toys so artfully with the conventions of heraldic pattern.

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[556] Meer, 2019a, 41.
[557] Müller et al, 2010, 278.
[558] Wagner, 1979, 480; Rahn, 1903, 356.
[559] Müller et al, 2010, 278-280; Falk et al, 1973, 51.

Artists were perfectly content to develop a variety of personal identifiers simultaneously, deploying them in different contexts, or even together, when appropriate. As his career developed, Albrecht Dürer utilised his familial coat of arms, although his monogram remained his primary shorthand identifier within works of art. For instance, he signed the Arch of Honour and the Celestial Map with his heraldic shield, probably to match the armorial signatures of his co-authors and the high status of the imperial commissions.[560] In 1523 he produced a large scale woodcut of his arms, at around the same time that he concluded his family chronicle (fig. 100).[561] At this point his reputation was well established, and he had recently returned from his Netherlandish journey back to Nuremberg. The woodcut may have been intended to mark his property or lodgings when travelling, but its production also recognises the older artist's secure foothold among the urban elite both at home and abroad in the last decade of his life.[562] At the same time, Dürer included a little cartellino positioned above the crest of his family arms, bearing his renowned monogram, thereby acknowledging the foundations of his reputation in his craft. Dürer's woodcut declares that he is both artist and armiger, the author of his own heraldic *fama.* Dürer's sporadic use of his heraldry through his career also indicates the importance of social decorum and precedent when it came to selecting which identifying sign to use, rather than legal stipulation.

In order to explain the status of authorial markers of identity, cultural historians have frequently turned to the legal contexts surrounding early copyright and grants of privilege.

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[560] Schoch et al, 2002, II: 484.
[561] Schoch et al, 2002, II: 484-485. A charcoal sketch for the block is currently in the British Museum: Rowlands, 1988, 109-110.
[562] Neubecker, 1971, 207.

Broadly speaking, this research has demonstrated that authorial marks and grants of privilege afforded makers limited legal protection over their novel inventions. Most early modern authorial disputes were not focused on image designs as intellectual property, but were instead concerned with the ownership of the 'original' *material* manifestation of an object or artwork.[563] Privileges and patents were largely granted in order to attract risky entrepreneurial projects and to tether the project to a centre of governance, rather than to protect the rights of the author. They were also used to regulate competition within that jurisdiction, but had little effect outside the legal boundaries.

However, the recovery of the legal status of authors can only partially help us to understand historical concepts about authorship. As Marcus Meer has suggested in his analysis of the Fugger's heraldry, the opinions of experts like heralds were not necessarily in agreement with the emotional or intellectual understanding of these signs.[564] Similarly, it is likely that legal protections lagged behind artists' personal conceptions of their own authorship. Matt Kavalar has hinted that the boundary between legal marks of ownership and aesthetic conceptions of authorial mastery were more blurred than has generally been assumed.[565] He has argued that the abstract tracery flourishes so beloved in Renaissance Gothic ornament were used as personal expressions of the artist, akin to signatures or even coats of arms. Indeed, the early sixteenth century was a period when all kinds of identifying markers were undergoing rapid change. Socio-cultural developments ranging from increasing populations to the expansion of print all contributed to a proliferation of sign systems. None of these systems were entirely comprehensive, nor completely stable. This section will argue that artists began to use

[563] Cashion, 2010, 16-20; Witcombe, 2004, 57-58.
[564] Meer, 2019, 41.
[565] Kavaler, 2012, 91-95.

heraldic imagery as appropriate subject matter for exploring the precarious nature of identifying signs, in a period when other authorial markers, such as monograms and signatures, were taking on new cultural and legal significance.[566]

One particularly illuminating legal-case from early sixteenth-century Schwäbisch-Gmünd (in Baden-Württemberg) is worth introducing in full, since it provides a rare insight into the blurred legal boundaries that could exist between non-noble heraldry, commercial trademarks and the early forms of 'copyright'.[567] The case ultimately lasted from 1503-1522, but this included long intermissions between different hearings. The complainant was a widow named Katharina des Konrad Lemelin, who accused Peter Holl, known as Astlin, of falsely using her family's sign of the lily during the selling of his metalwork. Astlin responded to her initial complaint by presenting an imperial *Wappenbrief* from 1463 to the local court, which gave permission for his ancestor, called Astlin von Biberach, to bear a coat of arms charged with a lily.[568] Katharina pointed out that the lily on the *Wappenbrief* was slightly different to the design that Astlin was using to sell his goods, which was clearly meant to emulate her coat of arms. She requested that he should change his trading sign to match his family's *Wappenbrief.*

The sheriff responded in the next session, arguing that Katharina's complaint was unfair, because the sign of the lily that Astlin was using was not quite the same as her lily, since it was accompanied by a much larger sign of a crown. Katharina returned fire by invoking an earlier legal case, in which her late husband, Konrad, was one of the complainants. Konrad

[566] Weekes, 2004, 31-32.
[567] A detailed account of the legal proceedings can be found in Müller, 1935.
[568] Müller, 1935, 247.

had used Katharina's coat of arms with the lily as his trade symbol. In the earlier legal case, Konrad and Hans Herwart the cooper made a complaint against the blacksmith Hans Mayer, who was using the sign of the lily accompanied by two stars. At that time, the court had ruled in favour of Konrad, because it was clear that Hans Mayer was trying to use Konrad's well-respected sign of the lily to sell his goods by varying it slightly with the addition of the two stars.[569] The sheriff responded to Katharina's invocation of this previous case by referring to another court case in which the addition of cadency marks to a sign were permitted. Katharina argued, clearly with a good knowledge of heraldic lore, that this was different, because the two merchants were a father and a son, so they had the right to bear the same sign, provided it was differentiated with marks of cadency.

At the end of the first hearing, the court ruled that in the future Astlin ought to use the sign of the lily exactly as it was represented in his family's heraldic privilege, but also noted that even if he did not have a *Wappenbrief* certifying his family's use of the lily, there was nothing that the *Stadtgericht* could do for Katharina, because the law stated that anyone may adopt any trading sign.[570] The only exception to this rule was if the person wanted to adopt the sign of an illustrious (*erleichten*) or respected (*hochgeachten*) person, who occupied a recognised office. Since Katharina's family did not belong to these ranks, she counted as a *persona privata* and the law could not protect the use of her coat of arms.[571] Subsequently, Katharina appealed this ruling at the *Reichskammergericht,* the court representing imperial law. With the help of an advocate, the court was persuaded that Astlin had only recently adopted the

[569] Müller, 1935, 248.
[570] This follows the legal arguments found in Bartolo da Sassoferrato's heraldic text. For an edited translation of the tract, see Cavallar et al, 1994.
[571] Müller, 1935, 252-253.

sign of the lily in order to promote his goods, because Katharina's goods and her trademark were well respected. They eventually ruled in favour of Katharina.[572]

The case reveals a number of key issues pertaining to the relationship between copyright and heraldry. The first is that there was a fluid relationship between trademarks and coats of arms, particularly for non-nobles. Katharina's husband was clearly happy to adopt his wife's coat of arms as a trading sign and both Astlin and Katharina attempted to fight their legal cases based on heraldic evidence, such as the *Wappenbrief* and the rule of cadency. The second is that heraldic regulations were only really enforced to protect members of the nobility. Any non-noble with a coat of arms counted as a *persona privata* and so Katharina effectively had to argue her case in terms of early privilege laws, rather than heraldic protections. Katharina's case was won by showing that Astlin intended to deceive potential consumers, rather than by arguing that she had a particular claim to the visual symbol of the lily. The case is a perfect example of how coats of arms were deeply entangled with the emergent questions about patenting, privileges and authorial rights, the very issues that Christopher Wood identified as being 'in tension' with an older, substitutionary and genealogical model of authorship.[573]

Katharina argued that her coat of arms had originated "from time immemorial" (*von alter* [sic] *her*), showing that historical precedent and the vagaries of temporality did indeed carry some kind of authoritative and persuasive weight.[574] However, her case was finally won by invoking similar legal terms to other early modern disputes about artisanal copying or

[572] Müller, 1935, 255-262.
[573] Wood, 2008, 346-358.
[574] Müller, 1935, 246.

counterfeiting. Attempts to deceive viewers by copying a work in the same medium, style and with the same authorial markers such as monograms were viewed as deceitful, in comparison to the respectful quotation of other artistic designs, which was largely accepted.[575] With Katharina's case, her concern was not that she had exclusive rights to the heraldic sign of the lily, but that Astlin's adoption of the lily was done purposefully to deceive clients in other jurisdictions, since their workshops produced similar goods. The relationship between trademarks and non-noble heraldry was confusingly fluid, at least in the eyes of the law. Katharina's and Astlin's appeals to heraldic law show too that they believed heraldic patents provided similar legal protection to a printer's *privilegio*. In the early decades of the sixteenth century, anxieties about the security of one's commercial identifiers were coming under increasing scrutiny and heraldic patents provided an important precedent.[576]

Katharina's legal case dealt with metalwork, in which hallmarking had a lengthy history that pertained to material quality rather than pictorial designs. In contrast, art historians have tended to emphasise the role of print in the development of early copyright law surrounding the authorship of images and iconographies. The printing press allowed images to be manufactured in multiples at a much faster rate, which required new attentiveness to questions of artistic control over their products. It also meant that pictorial ideas developed in individual drawings could be distributed far beyond their initial context, increasing the distance between the authorial act of creation and the reception of the imagery. Shira Brisman has argued that this elevated the role of the recipient or beholder as interpreter. In Brisman's analysis of printed model books for copying and their role in the Renaissance conception of

[575] On Dürer's legal battle with Marcantonio Raimondi in the context of broader practices of reproduction, see Pon, 2004; Witcombe, 2004, 82-86 and Vogt, 2008.
[576] On the *privilegio* in the Holy Roman Empire, see Witcombe, 2004, 332-333.

artistic creativity, she proposes that the "proffering of choice" was in itself an artistic act.[577] The viewer or recipient could participate in the same interpretative process, by continuing a creative chain in which motifs were selected, discarded and re-contextualised.[578] Since the reproductive growth of the natural world provided the ultimate reference point for the conceptualisation of artisanal production, artists themselves understood the act of presenting designs to one another for re-use as akin to offering fruits to be selected and processed. For Brisman, this transmission of designs helped to establish the workshop as a pseudo-familial site, as though the sharing of particular motifs was akin to the passing on of physiognomic details from father to child.

Brisman is not the only author to draw attention to the association between natural reproduction and the late medieval to Renaissance conception of ornamental design. Rebecca Zorach has linked the excessive, mannerist ornamentation of Fontainebleau with illicit procreation, pointing to the erotic imagery embedded within these abundant frames as a reflection of the idea that ornament begets ornament, constantly threatening to flow out of control by favouring *licenza* over *regola,* matter over form and design over narrative.[579] Matt Kavaler has similarly argued that the popularity of natural motifs in the Gothic architecture of the Northern Renaissance was due to an association between creative potency and the natural world, in which the tension between controlled reproduction and deviant, unbounded wilderness provided a particularly fruitful metaphor for the thin line between good and bad artistic production.[580] In the work of all these scholars, print culture has been framed as a primary catalyst in the rising popularity of subject matter associated with reproduction, as

[577] Brisman, 2018, 121.
[578] On cutting and pasting prints at a geographical distance, see also Rudy, 2019, 38-39, 165.
[579] Zorach, 2005.
[580] Kavaler, 2011, 297-312.

though the artists themselves were thematising the accelerated rate of replication in print. Heraldry was both the ornament of social hierarchy and of familial transmission, meaning that like the natural motifs explored by Brisman and Kavaler or the erotic motifs analysed by Zorach, it could be used by artists to toy with the relationship between invention and emulation. Artists like Niklaus Manuel treated heraldry alongside other authorial marks, like monograms and devices, all of which were inspired by older artists like Dürer. Their 'individualistic' devices were inflected by the visual language of genealogy, as artists sought to position themselves within an artistic pedigree.

There is evidence that artists acknowledged the humorous contradiction of producing prints depicting fictional, open-ended coats of arms for a wide audience. In order to advertise the design as reusable, some artists used humour to purposefully draw attention to the act of turning the highly specific language of heraldry into a generic form of ornament. In two heraldic designs by Sebald Beham, for instance, the banderoles that could carry an individual's personal motto when the designs were re-used were filled with stand-in text that specifically joked about the genericness of the design. One banderole may be translated as, "Who wants to have me, take me," allowing the print itself to declare its status as a model (fig. 101).[581] The inscription around the frame of another roundel may be translated roughly as reading, "By God's Grace, Lord of I don't know, sown over there in a fine village."[582] The flippancy of the inscription is humorous, joking about its nature as a generic ornamental design that may be adopted by anybody (fig. 102). The humour proclaims its nature as ornament without a specific character to clothe; it is an authored work of design, not of identification. However, the banderoles also show off Beham's familiarity with heraldic

[581] *WER MICH WILL HON DER NEM MICH ON.*
[582] *VON GOTTES GNADEN HER VON WEISS NIT WEER DORT GESSET IN GENEM DORF.*

conventions. A surviving tournament shield in the Metropolitan Museum bore the inscription "hab mych als [i]ch [b]in...[a]lsche w...," which may be interpreted as reading "Take me as I am, thou false world."[583] Beham's inscription "Who wants to have me, take me" echoes this melodramatic chivalric declaration, but also encourages a viewer to literally 'take' the print.

Beham purposefully chose to populate his open heraldic designs with the two most generic charges – the lion and the eagle. Beham's brother-in-law, the radical reformist Sebastian Franck, used the eagle as an example of a pagan image that had unwittingly been adopted by the nobility without acknowledging its historic links to tyrannical rulers.[584] Franck compared the pagan violence of the eagle and other bellicose heraldic animals to the bloodthirsty legacies of the nobility, arguing that some pedigrees had survived through theft and military oppression; only through self-introspection could armigers realise the folly of their heraldry. Beham's heraldic prints are in no way as damning as Franck's text, but they do seem to comment on the arbitrary nature of noble signs, which have no intrinsic stability of meaning and may be used or abused by anyone.

Like Hans Baldung and Niklaus Manuel, Sebald Beham is associated with a group of Dürer's artistic followers who 'subverted' many of the renowned artist's images, probably to appeal to a learned audience of collectors who would recognise and appreciate these citations.[585] In his heraldic prints, Beham built on Dürer's legacy in a similar manner to Manuel, by exploring the status of the open-ended coat of arms. In one other printed heraldic design,

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[583] Nickel, 1995, 44.
[584] Franck, 1536, fol. 159^{r}.
[585] For two surveys of the different scholarly approaches to the subversive content of the 'little masters' see Knauer, 2013, 23-27, who favours the connoisseurial reading linked to their collectability and market appeal, alongside the essays in Müller and Schauerte, 2011, which reviews the Beham brothers and their intellectual context.

Beham introduced his own name into the framing text, writing "Sebald Beham, painter from Nuremberg, now resident citizen of Frankfurt."[586] The central coat of arms depicts the heraldry used by painting guilds across Europe, featuring three individual escutcheons (fig. 103). The artist thus used his own heraldic identity as the subject-matter for a generic, open-ended print design, demonstrating how a non-noble coat of arms might be depicted. Importantly, this little heraldic roundel provides a counterpart to the coat of arms of "HER VON WEISS NIT" (Lord of I don't know), both in size and format. Placed together, the two would lean in towards each other in a manner akin to an *Allianzwappen.* As in Niklaus Manuel's heraldic drawing with the pilgrim, the heraldic rampant lion is connected to the paradoxical identity of 'nobody', mirrored in the figure of the artist or author. The character of *Nevim* (I know not) was used by Georg Pencz as another version of *Niemand* (Nobody) in a broadsheet from circa 1533; Pencz and Beham would have known one another from their trial in Nuremberg. The humorous inscription on Beham's print not only offers the design up as a model for other designs, but it also jokes about the instability of identity.

Both of these designs by Beham are dated to the 1540s, which was also the period when the artist was producing patents of nobility, complete with painted coats of arms, for patrons in Frankfurt.[587] This suggests that he would have been particularly sensitive to the difference between an official heraldic patent and an open-ended printed design, explaining the humorous nature of his inscriptions. In the *Strafenbuch* from the Frankfurt *Stadtarchiv,* a legal case from June 1556 notes that the basket weaver and typefounder Thomas Altkirch was to be punished for attempting to falsely adopt the *Wappenbrief* of a recently deceased printer,

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[586] *SEBOLDT BEHAM VON NVREMBERG MALER IECZ WONHAFTER BVRGER ZV FRANCKFVRT.*
[587] Stewart, 2008, 16-17.

Daniel Rasch, by replacing Rasch's name on the patent with his own.[588] Beham may well have been familiar with similar legal battles over falsified heraldic documents, adding a further layer of humour to his printed inscriptions that may be replaced by anybody's name. Alison Stewart has emphasised Beham's entrepreneurial approach to the print market, arguing that his printed depictions of peasant scenes helped to popularise 'genre' imagery, laying the foundation for the reception of genre paintings by artists like Pieter Breugel the Elder.[589] In Landau and Parshall's survey *The Renaissance Print,* they specifically highlight the association between deliberate 'open-endedness' and the rise of the genre image in the medium of print: "The empty banderole is a device that tells us something important about the early development of "subjectless" art, or genre imagery as it eventually came to be termed." The banderole allowed an ambiguous printed image to offer itself up for re-use or re-interpretation by implying dialogue, "providing [the prints] with the means for their own interpretation."[590] Sebald Beham was especially fond of utilising banderoles to add speech to his prints of coarse peasant behaviour. Similarly, in his open-ended heraldic designs, the banderoles declare their subjectless status. Beham's printed coats of arms hint at their own illegitimacy by joking about their generic status, a heraldry to be adopted by other artisans and learned viewers, rather than by hereditary sons.[591]

In some cases, Beham's heraldic prints were recycled or emulated by other artisans, for example in a miniature by one of the illuminators in the Glockendon family, either Georg or

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[588] Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Frankfurt am Main: Criminalia: Akten: 86; Strafenbuch 1566, Juni 26. http://www.ifaust.de/isg/rech.FAU?sid=DB5F53999&dm=1&auft=0 .
[589] Stewart, 2008 and Stewart, 2012.
[590] Landau and Parshall, 1994, 62. See also Brisman, 2013 and 2018.
[591] For an extensive discussion about inscriptions within imagery as a marker of friendship, collaboration and the role of the beholder in constructing meaning, see Brisman, 2013.

Gabriel, in 1553.[592] Yet part of the appeal of ornamental prints was how flexibly they could be reused, applied and recycled in a multitude of other media. In a more enigmatic open-ended heraldic print of 1543 by Sebald Beham the banderole reads "EIN WAPEN ZU EINEM SIGEL" or "A coat of arms for a seal." The heraldry features a rampant cockerel on the shield and another cockerel with wings outstretched above a crown as a crest (fig. 104). The inscription in the banderole is suitably vague, indicating that this was not a patron's personal motto. Instead, it presents the design as a free ornament. Beham chose to illustrate this print of a coat of arms with a heraldic cockerel, no doubt alluding to Dürer's *Coat of Arms with a Lion and a Cock.* The form of the helm, as well as the decision to have the crested rooster's wings outstretched in flight, are very close to Dürer's design. Through the influence of printed heraldic designs by revered masters such as Dürer, the coat of arms was elevated as a vital ornamental motif, capable of exploring questions about visual inheritance.

Transformed through the emergent market for collectors of prints, the question of heraldic discernment shifted from identifying the armiger to identifying the artist, leading to these humorously paradoxical open-ended coats of arms. The small format of Beham's prints also appealed to print collectors, both for their subtlety and their convenient size, which made them particularly amenable to being pasted into albums or posted inside letters. We know that heraldic images were sent through the post to acquaintances in order to confirm or establish a relationship between the two correspondents. In 1533 the guardian of Paul Behaim informed Paul's father, Friederich, that the search for a potential employer for Paul in Krakow was going well and that he would "send you his [the employer's] coat of arms with the first messenger."[593] Sebald Beham's small and humorous coats of arms may have

[592] Eser and Grebe, 2008, 152.
[593] Ozment, 1990, 76.

imitated this cultural practice, but with a non-identifiable armiger.

Heraldry had been transformed through the print market into a category of ornament to be deployed by artists when they wanted. Virgil Solis – or the Solis workshop – designed a series of eight fantasy coats of arms to provide models for this purpose (figs. 105 and 106).[594] The shields and crests feature various species of animal in differing poses; the mantling, helm types and shield forms are also varied between each print. Despite the fact that the combinations of multiple elements seem to invite allegorical readings, they do not yield any obvious answers. Perhaps the combination of a fox, owl and leopard on a shield, with a ram atop the helm, could be seen as generally connoting negative qualities, seemingly corroborated by the shroud-like mantling. But for an exacting reader, these suggestions are too vague and speculative. The artist seems to have simply relished the compositional challenge of bringing multiple elements into dialogue with one another. The sweeping curve of one shield has been used to emphasise the leaping horse and stag which ornament its surface. Owls and eagles with outstretched wings are positioned to fill their triangular quarter perfectly, uniting the symmetry of the shield. These prints flirt with the mechanisms of compositional allegory, but are not amenable to allegorical interpretation. Nor do they foster the same depth of attentive viewing as the heraldic designs by Dürer, Manuel and Beham. Instead, the coats of arms act as containers for a miniature menagerie of animals, a framework for demonstrating ornamental variety.

Another heraldic print by Solis is related to the other fantasy coats of arms, but rather than showing an individual armorial composition it depicts eight coats of arms aligned together, as

[594] Bartrum and Beaujean, 2005, 3:227-254.

one might find a 'Quaternion' represented in a manuscript armorial (fig. 107).[595] Each shield form and helmet is varied slightly and bears a different animal or motif as charge and crest. The upper row of four achievements is wrapped in draped mantling, while the lower row is encased in foliate mantling. The fact that this is intentionally a 'nonsense' heraldic print, intended to offer up a multiplicity of design options rather than an allegorical meaning, is reflected by the fact that the third crest from the left on the upper row features two conflicting motifs: a single horn and a single outstretched wing. Such a combination of two contradictory crests is never found in heraldry proper, recalling instead the form of a grotesque hybrid. The print utilises the formal principles of the armorial composition to demonstrate multiple possibilities for variety within a set of rules, akin to lining up the architectural orders. Four types of helms are represented, each depicted from the side and frontally, to aid an artisan's command of the heraldic vocabulary. Solis frequently represented the design of three-dimensional objects from multiple angles in his other ornament prints, so it is no surprise to find him performing the same acts of translation with heraldic formats.[596]

Balthasar Jenichen, who took over Solis' workshop after his death and was essentially a copyist throughout his career, made an edited version of the print dated to 1565 (fig. 108). Jenichen added his monogram alongside Solis' and a border displaying sixteen further heraldic motifs. He also added an inscription, reading "Der diß Stück hat gebeßert und thun vermehren / Der thut das iars gar viel Kunstücke verzehren" (Whoever has improved and multiplied this piece, ornaments many artworks through the year).[597] The notion of

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[595] On the Quaternionen, see Schubert, 1993.
[596] O'Dell-Franke, 1977, 43.
[597] Bartrum and Beaujean, 2005, 3:254. My thanks to Dr Anne-Katrin Sors and Katharina Anna Haase at the University of Göttingen for supplying me with a photograph of the print.

multiplication and improvement is thus embedded in this version of the print, suggesting a continuation of the initial act of trying to display all the possibilities of *varietas* within a set of heraldic rules.

Jenichen refers to his own act of multiplying the coats of arms within the border, offering the new version as an aid and a challenge to future artisans. Various inscriptions on Renaissance ornament prints hint at the notion of continuous artistic selection, improvement and multiplication. On a design for a goblet by Sebald Beham from 1530, an inscription reads "Hie oben magst auch ein Fuus machen," or "Above here a foot may also be made" suggesting to the viewer that they could extend the design above the terminus of the page, to make it into a double-goblet.[598] The act of copying and reproducing designs by another author was not considered to constitute forgery. Rather, emulating or reproducing the work of a previous artist, especially if slight modifications could be made, was considered perfectly good workshop practice. Artists sometimes drew attention to the act of selection and re-setting by adding their own framing devices, utilising *mise-en-scene* to indicate the various stages of artistic authorship.[599] The passing down of an image from artisan to artisan, through various mutations, was therefore a key part of the development of ornamental repertoires. In this manner, it is akin to passing down a familial coat of arms. Jenichen married Solis' widow as well as taking over the workshop, therefore adopting the master's familial and artistic lineage, adding further significance to the inscription on the copied armorial print.

The ascent of print culture transformed the fictive coat of arms into the ideal subject for exploring authorial identity. Print lifted heraldic designs from localised, manuscript settings

[598] O'Dell-Franke, 1977, 43, 46-47.
[599] Brisman, 2014.

like armorials and artisanal workshop model books. This meant that designs could reach much wider audiences and needed to serve a variety of possible relocations. Prior to the advent of print, heraldic images had typically served regional political needs. However, in the case of printed, fictional heraldry, it was advantageous for images to be as politically neutral as possible, so as to serve a plurality of uses. Paradoxically, this resulted in a number of open-ended heraldic designs that seem to subvert the authority of heraldry as a hereditary, exclusive type of image. Some artists, like Sebald Beham, acknowledged this paradox through humourous mottos in banderoles. In other instances, as with Balthasar Jenichen, artists sought to demonstrate the fecundity of their output by drawing on the visual language of armorials and pedigrees, equating artistic lineage with heraldic community. Many printmakers were already trying to tie their authorial identity to their prints by embedding monograms into designs. The boundaries between non-noble coats of arms and artisanal marks were so slim that artists recognised the opportunity to express their authorial presence in their heraldic designs too. When printmakers turned their attention to the production of novel, fictive heraldic designs, they frequently chose to frame their professional identity through the language of heraldry, either by explicitly evoking the heraldic design of a master or by using a communal coat of arms, such as that of a guild. Just like bountiful images of foliage and nude goddesses, heraldic motifs could be used as markers of artisanal reclamation and reproduction.

Conclusion

Heraldry played a distinctive role in the artistic imagination of the German Renaissance. The images brought to light in this chapter have previously commanded limited art historical attention, partly due to the widespread neglect of heraldry in scholarship, but also because

they are difficult to interpret from a traditional, iconographic perspective. The conglomerate nature of heraldic compositions invites a viewer to rationalise the different elements and make them cohere into an allegorical reading, but very rarely do coats of arms conceal one, conclusive and static allegorical conceit. Instead, fictional, unattributed coats of arms were an exercise in ornamental invention. By transforming heraldry into pure ornament, artists could rehearse the parameters and features of heraldry as a pictorial genre. The case studies developed in this chapter evidence a period of intense artistic experimentation with heraldry as a genre of ornament in the first half of the sixteenth century. Artists responded differently to the challenge of producing 'generic' coats of arms, reflecting the lack of contemporary critical writing on the definition of heraldry, whether pictorial, legal or literary. As an ill-defined category of image that was nonetheless an essential element in any artisan's arsenal, the coat of arms provided ample opportunity for artistic experimentation and imaginative freeplay.

As with other ornamental types popular in the sixteenth century, heraldic images were exploited to display the generative powers of an artist's imagination. Vegetal motifs conveying fruitfulness were popular indications of artistic invention, as may be noted in the *Coat of Arms with a Pelican.* Other iconographies associated with sensorial indulgence were easily incorporated into the heraldic field, such as exuberant beasts, libidinous peasants and sexually charged maidens. Since animalistic imagery was already a mainstay of heraldic representation, these elements could be amplified, tipping the scales of noble decorum in order to signal that artistic licence was at work. The subversive element that underpins many of these designs was often not intended as an attack on heraldry as a pictorial institution, but rather used the heraldic framework to indicate the breaks in decorum associated with artistic fantasy.

The influence of print culture looms large in the development of fictional heraldry. Notably, the earlier case studies discussed in this thesis – the *Coat of Arms with a Pelican* and the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet's drypoints – illustrate more overt instances of heraldic subversion, but they also had a more limited circulation. Dürer's two heraldic prints re-imagined fictional heraldry for a much wider audience and ensured that virtuosic depictions of coats of arms could be treated seriously as artistic subject matter. They both explore the iconography of a 'generic' coat of arms, while also putting pressure on the pictorial logic of heraldry as a genre. Dürer's *Coat of Arms with a Lion and a Cock* can be read as an attempt to treat heraldry as a form of relic-like object, at once familiar and unidentifiable. Following his influential lead, the heraldic lion was used by multiple artists as a placeholder. Niklaus Manuel translated Dürer's prints back into the more intimate medium of drawing, taking up the challenge of the open-ended coat of arms and reinterpreting it for an intimate audience familiar with local, Swiss iconographies. However, Manuel's innovative heraldic drawings would not have been possible without the precedent set by Dürer's heraldic prints. Other artists like Sebald Beham emulated Dürer's prints through the same medium, continuing to explore the paradox of heraldic reproduction through humourous mottos about artistic recycling. Just as print had a huge influence on the rise of ornament as a subject in its own right, so it invigorated the development of the fictive heraldic image.

Heraldic imagery also developed an artisanal pedigree, encouraging individuals to imitate, transform and amplify the motifs used in earlier fictive heraldic prints. Shira Brisman's compelling arguments about the importance of choice, artistic transmission and epistolic address are highly relevant to this argument. Since heraldry was always a communal form of visual motif, it served as a particularly useful format to think through artistic inheritance,

generation and the discursive potential of imagery. Sebald Beham, Niklaus Manuel and Christoph Stimmer toyed with the idea of the artist as armiger. This occurred in parallel with the rising professional status of some artists, who were deeply invested in the representation of their authorial identity, whether through favourite motifs, monograms or signatures. Indeed, for non-noble armigers who did not have the same legal protection over their devices as noble armigers, the coat of arms and the monogram held similar levels of authority and were almost interchangeable in the eyes of the law. It would be wrong to argue that the former represents a medieval form of identity whereas the latter can be considered a hallmark of early modernity; the two were deeply intertwined. The lack of distinct boundaries between heraldry and artisanal marks allowed artists to explore both as representations of their professional and familial identities. In doing so, German artists of the sixteenth century produced heraldic images that were at least as self-reflexive as monograms, demonstrating that heraldry was not at odds with the rise of 'modern' artistic sensibilities. Heraldry may not have been new or overtly classicising, but that did not prevent its imaginative re-invention during the Renaissance.

III: Heraldry and the Production of Knowledge

The previous two chapters have addressed how changing artistic, cultural and social contexts transformed the depiction of coats of arms. This chapter will now switch focus to consider how heraldry was used in the production of scholarly knowledge, foregrounding the interpretative practices of scholars within the intellectual circles of the imperial court, in order to better understand how this particular subset of society read the coats of arms surrounding them. By considering the reception of coats of arms, we can gain further insight into the appeal of heraldic aesthetics to such an audience, rather than the political motivations behind the courtly projects themselves. Cultural historians have long intuited a fundamental rift between humanism and heraldry, without acknowledging the extent to which humanists actively engaged with heraldic images in their scholarship. This chapter will demonstrate that heraldry was a fundamental part of the humanist worldview.

Renaissance rhetoricians may not have dedicated lengthy treatises to the art of heraldry, but this was partially because it was so embedded within the material culture around them that it could slot into other genres with ease or even pass without comment. Yet this apparent lack of literary attentiveness did not reflect a rejection of heraldry. In fact, the ubiquity of heraldic images, along with their resultant lack of definition as a genre, rendered them a particularly 'free' and open type of image, which could be blended seamlessly with other genres or mined as a source of inspiration. Humanists drew inspiration from heraldry when they produced completely novel types of images, including mathematical instruments in the shape of heraldic motifs, which form the core visual case studies in this chapter. Furthermore, coats of arms were used as a familiar and widespread type of source for scholars writing histories,

descriptive geographies, cosmographies or genealogies. These citations might seem less worthy of note than novel genres, like the emblem book, but they also show that humanists were not actively opposed to heraldry.

In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, humanists cultivated new approaches to the use and analysis of source material, whether in the service of historiography, cosmography or poetics. Although their interests were primarily textual, their methods also led to the increased scrutiny of visual and material sources, especially in relation to objects that bore a close relationship to text, such as monumental epigraphs and hieroglyphs. Since heraldry may be considered one such linguistic visual sign system, the interpretation of heraldic motifs was also transformed by humanist pens.[600] The fact that heraldry was particularly vulnerable to the historiographical shift initiated by humanist practices has recently been shown by Jennifer Mackenzie in her analysis of Lorenzo Valla's critique of jurisprudence.[601] Although writing in fifteenth-century Italy, many of Valla's principles prefigured debates among German Reformers; his work had a notable influence on Martin Luther after 1520, for instance.[602] Mackenzie has indicated that it was not a coincidence that Valla chose to attack a legal treatise on heraldry – *De insigniis et armis* (1358), by Bartolo da Sassoferrata – as opposed to any other legal tract, since, "[t]hese engagements help to reveal underappreciated connections between humanist philological practices and several early modern discourses around images, including fifteenth-century antiquarian conversations about how Roman insignia related to the signs of distinction displayed by contemporary families and eventually

[600] On heraldry and language, see Robertson and Lindfield, 2016.
[601] Mackenzie, 2019.
[602] For Valla's influence on Luther, see Whitford, 2008. For Valla's possible influence on Celtis' poetry, see Casonova-Robin, 2013. In the same volume, see the articles by Goswami and Scatizzi on aspects of Valla's influence north of the Alps.

called heraldry."[603] Valla was particularly infuriated by the lack of well-defined terminology used for discussing heraldry in legal cases, since interchangeable words like *arma, insignia* and *signa* allowed for plenty of slippage between categories and hence a lack of clarity. Using his sensitivity to the historical contingency of material and textual culture alike, Valla famously proved that the document known as the *Donation of Constantine* was a forgery. His case rested on the historical anachronisms present in the text, covering not only the use of atypical language for a fourth-century document, but also the forger's ignorance of fourth-century ceremonial symbols and their Latin names. Valla's familiarity with the historical mutability of language ultimately led him to understand images – especially legally authoritative images like ensigns – as culturally contingent.

It was not that humanists were opposed to the existence or aesthetics of heraldry, but rather that they were troubled by the obfuscating language often used to discuss coats of arms in medieval documents. Due to the interrelationships between heraldry, antiquarianism, language and the practice of law, humanists could not avoid encountering and questioning coats of arms in their scholarship.[604] The humanist Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, who served Emperor Frederick III and had a more pronounced influence on humanism in the empire than Valla, wrote a letter in 1451 containing a fake account of the origin of heralds, purposefully citing the wrong antique source.[605] In doing so, Aeneas subtly mocked the humanist obsession with etymological practice while comparing it to the work of heralds, whose occupation also involved seeking antique origin myths for arms or pedigrees, however tenuous. The letter circulated among humanists and students as an epistolic exemplar.[606]

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[603] Mackenzie, 2019, 1186.
[604] For just a few examples, see Mertens, 1986, 158-160.
[605] Moll, 2021, 418-422; Rundle, 2015; Fürbeth, 1995.
[606] Fürbeth, 1995, 447-449.

Amusingly, some copies of the letter were diligently included in armorial collations, suggesting that the ironic side of the letter was lost on later recipients, who trusted it as an authoritative account about the origins of the heraldic office.[607] Aeneas' letter demonstrates how humanist philological and genealogical pursuits forced them to evaluate the historiographical legitimacy of established heraldic practices. That the letter was misunderstood by some later readers also reveals the sorts of intellectual differences that may have led humanists to mock heraldic enthusiasts. The Bavarian and Austrian scholars examined in this chapter were heavily involved in the production of genealogies and chronicles, which meant that, like Valla and Aeneas, they had to negotiate the instability of heraldic meaning.

The scholars and artists who assembled around the court of Maximilian I created a veritable hothouse for heraldic research, making it the obvious context in which to examine the epistemic uses of heraldry during an important, transitional period. Maximilian's courtly pursuits combined imperial dynastic ambition with humanist scholarship and the latest artistic developments. The ideas and projects that were generated within the court were circulated in novel ways, particularly by exploiting the possibilities of print.[608] The emperor was closely allied to important intellectual figures at the Universities of Ingolstadt and Vienna, such as the poet Conrad Celtis and the astronomer Johannes Stabius, around whom an orbit of like-minded scholars was formed. The court also provided patronage for leading artists like Albrecht Dürer and Hans Burgkmair, whose pioneering heraldic designs have already been discussed. The main channel of heraldic outputs from the court was a series of ambitious genealogical projects, intended to shore-up Habsburg claims to the imperial throne. The

[607] Moll, 2021, 421-422; Fürbeth, 1995, 453.
[608] Schauerte, 2011b; Silver, 2008; Schauerte, 2001.

emperor employed various members of the court *literati* to conduct research into his family tree and the results of this research were transformed into innovative pictorial cycles that appeared in manuscript, print and sculpture. Heraldry played a central role in these genealogical visualisations.

Maximilian's genealogical projects fostered disputes among his historiographers about the correct methodological approach to historical analysis, especially between Johannes Stabius, Abbot Trithemius, Ladislaus Synthaym and Jakob Mennel.[609] Most of the criticism came from Stabius' pen, but nevertheless the scholars were all engaged in this emergent critical discourse about the correct use of source material. High medieval genealogical traditions clashed with humanist theories of historiography, which in turn influenced the function of heraldic images.[610] The conflict between interpretative strategies shone an unflattering light on the ambiguity of genealogical evidence, including heraldic evidence, leading to a period of intense innovation and negotiation.

At the same time, court intellectuals were enthusiastically engaging with the analysis of other sign-systems, including the interpretation of astronomical signs for prognostication and the reclamation of Egyptian hieroglyphs. Maximilian vaunted his own interest in these scholarly pursuits. In *Der Weisskunig* (1514-16), a semi-autobiographical illustrated life of Maximilian, the emperor was depicted receiving information on heraldic matters, learning the secrets of astrology as a young boy (fig. 109), and instructing a painter who is shown drawing a panoply of free-floating symbols, which may allude to hieroglyphics (fig. 110). Johannes Stabius composed a complex hieroglyphic arrangement featuring Maximilian for the *Triumphal Arch*,

[609] Kellner and Webers, 2007, 125; Madar, 2003, 30-31; Lhotsky, 1971; Eheim, 1959, 60.
[610] Kellner and Webers, 2007, 127; 148.

accompanied by a textual commentary (fig. 111). This *misterium* drew heavily on Horapollo's *Hieroglyphica,* which had been translated into Latin by Willibald Pirckheimer and illustrated by Dürer. The hieroglyphic section of the *Triumphal Arch* demonstrates the cross-over between heraldry and the study of these ancient symbols, since heraldic animals like the Gallic rooster and the Imperial eagle were deployed as new additions to the hieroglyphic corpus. Karl Gielhow, the first scholar to recognise the centrality of hieroglyphs in Maximilian's *Triumphal Arch,* even proposed that the enthusiasm for hieroglyphs may have "directly influenced the revival of heraldry," due to the Egyptian custom of representing symbolic animals on helmets.[611]

The same interest in animal symbolism extended into the realm of astronomy. In a lecture on the almanac given by Andreas Perlach at the University of Vienna in 1519, he advised students to note that "each planet and each zodiacal sign as a certain resemblance of likeness to its symbol, which denotes that actual planet, and therefore those symbols are not assigned by chance or accident."[612] Students were therefore taught to perceive visual links between constellations, symbolic motifs and real-life animals. In the woodcut illustration to a prophetic poem *De corrupto* by Sebastian Brant, the zodiacal sign of Cancer, a crab, was depicted within a heraldic shield, signalling the conjunction of three "extremely cruel stars" that Brant predicted indicated the future downfall of the empire (fig. 112).[613] Below, the four beasts from the prophetic dream in the Book of Daniel were also depicted on four shields, emphasising their symbolic status in this complex image. Hence, within courtly circles,

[611] Giehlow, 2015, 22.
[612] Quoted in Hayton, 2010, 125.
[613] Hayton, 2015, 41-42.

heraldic images were constantly being gathered, processed and brought into dialogue with other visual sign systems.

The cumulative effect was to "render heraldry a privileged site for invention."[614] Indeed, astronomers and cosmologers within Viennese circles developed an entirely novel form of heraldic depiction: mathematical instruments that echoed the form of heraldic motifs.[615] These were paper instruments, which were portable, practical and beautiful.[616] They could be used in calculations for time measurement, surveying, the prediction of astronomical motions and prognostication. The earliest of the heraldic instruments also acted as easily transportable, replicable monuments of imperial might, like the *Triumphal Arch* composite print. The first in a series of heraldic instruments is unfortunately no longer extant, but was designed by Andreas Stiborious, dedicated to Maximilian and called the *Clipeus Austrie,* the shield of Austria (1506).[617] The *Clipeus Austrie* was an astronomical instrument that probably circulated in manuscript form, used to calculate the motions of the heavens and to keep time. Such calculations could be sought to predict the most appropriate timings for political actions, especially military decisions, which partially explicates the armorial nature of its name. Stiborious' preface to the instrument still survives, however, in which he compared his astronomical instrument to the shields of Achilles, Heracles and Aeneas.[618] As well as the obvious connection between heraldic shields and familial inheritance, in classical literature battle shields were associated with instances of translation between fate-bound luminaries. Shields could be acquired by defeating their illustrious owner in battle or by

[614] Marr, 2018, 65.
[615] Marr, 2018.
[616] On paper instruments more broadly, see Schmidt, 2017, 205-289; Biagioli, 2006, 159-161.
[617] A description survives in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 19689, fol. 286r. Hayton, 2015, 99-103; Schöner, 1994, 261; Grössing, 1983, 176-177.
[618] Hayton, 2015, 100; Marr, 2018, 68-69.

otherwise proving oneself to be a worthy successor. However, the astronomical function of the *Clipeus Austrie* shifted the concept of armorial heredity onto a surer, cosmic footing. Rather than depending on the contingent whims of history for the inheritance of armorial status, the *Clipeus Austrie* proclaims Maximilian's imperial rule as a foregone conclusion, inscribed in the heavens. The *Clipeus Austrie,* like the *Triumphal Arch,* transformed medieval chivalric ideals into a palimpsest of humanist, authoritative references.

The immediate successors of Stiborius' *Clipeus Austrie* were two astronomical instruments designed by Johannes Stabius, produced to their exacting, graphic standard through drawings by Albrecht Dürer and cut as woodblocks in Dürer's workshop. One, the *Horoscopion Universale* (1512), was also dedicated to Maximilian (fig. 113). The delineation of the instrument forms a large circular network of lines, accumulating around a central, ellipse-like grid containing another, latticed circle. The overall effect gives the instrument the appearance of a monstrous eye or an antique shield with a central boss. The grids are functional, pertaining to the various scales that allow the viewer to read calculations from the instrument. However, if the instrument is read in its entirety as an image, then the lattice looks like a bulging perspectival grid, since the lines are all derived from a curved axis. Stabius' *Horoscopion Universale* gives us a glimpse of the aesthetic experience evoked in Stiborius' preface to the *Clipeus Austrie*: a cosmic shield, in which the viewer may discern the endless progress of eternity with immaculate precision. The two shield-like instruments present Maximilian's imperial rule as preordained, whilst also suggesting that the emperor has all-encompassing vision over his affairs.

The heraldic undertones of Stabius' *Horoscopion Universale* might have been overlooked, were it not for a further woodcut instrument that he designed for Cardinal Matthäus Lang,

which explicitly evoked the dedicatee's coat of arms (fig. 114).[619] Lang's heraldry featured a double lily and the symmetrical curvatures of Stabius' 'double horoscope' were designed so as to look like two naturalistic lily flowers. The illusion is not at all obvious, but is explained in the accompanying dedication by Stabius, who states that the form of the instrument "reveals the image of two lilies, if their cups, being mirror images of each other, are joined together."[620] If the instrument print was coloured, as in some surviving impressions, then the undulating form of the double-headed lily could be emphasised with subtle shading. In the hands of Stabius, heraldic imagery was blended seamlessly with practical, geometrical design. He and Stiborius abstracted the pictorial, literary and magisterial qualities of coats of arms in order to elevate the heraldic to a cosmic level, far above the material realm of helms, shields and banners. Given Stabius' involvement in Maximilian's genealogical research and the study of hieroglyphics, his innovative amalgamation of heraldry with the graphic, geometric forms of practical mathematics should be understood as the result of sustained engagement with heraldic aesthetics.

The aesthetic quality of the masterful instrument prints by Stabius and Dürer has been persuasively emphasised in the recent work of Alexander Marr, who has argued that their visual appeal was crucial to their epistemic function: "the prints aimed to provoke a particular kind of aesthesis, in which the conventional marriage of form and function has been mobilised in especially forceful and novel ways."[621] In particular, he has identified the delightful oscillation between ornament and naturalism as a key aesthetic principle governing the design of the instrument prints as well as heraldic images more broadly. Both types of

[619] This was identified by Alexander Marr: Marr, 2018, 64-69.
[620] Quoted in Marr, 2018, 64.
[621] Marr, 2018, 49.

image exude a kind of useful beauty, in that their aesthetic qualities are integral to their communicative function.[622] This chapter will focus on the intellectual engagement with coats of arms, which fostered such an appreciation of heraldic aesthetics. First, I will analyse the successors to Stabius' heraldic instruments, produced by the cosmologer Peter Apian in the 1530s. Historians of science have long been aware of Apian's use of heraldry in his instrument designs, but none have noted that this was a conscious emulation of Stabius' instrument prints, nor have they attempted to explain the allure of the heraldic within Apian's intellectual community. I will argue that the heraldic instruments embody aesthetic qualities that were also highly valued in poetry at the time. The close proximity between poetics at the imperial court and other areas of intellectual inquiry, such as genealogy, philology, astronomy and cosmography, meant that heraldic evidence might be mobilised to serve any one of these disciplines. Hence, the second part of the chapter is dedicated to the interpretative strategies used by scholars when viewing coats of arms. Scholars used coats of arms as prompts for poetic commentary, as subjects of antiquarian interest, as supplementary evidence for genealogical arguments and as a way of formulating philosophical ideas diagrammatically. By considering how these men 'thought through' coats of arms in their intellectual pursuits, we may better understand why the heraldic mode was treated as such an effective (and affective) method for delighting and persuading attentive viewers.

Peter Apian's Heraldic Instruments

The intersection between heraldry, antiquarian scholarship and the design of mathematical instruments did not stop with Stabius. The tradition continued within the next generation of

[622] See the collected essays around the theme of early modern "visual acuity" in Smith, 2017.

imperial astronomers, championed in particular by Peter Apian (1495-1552). Apian was a student at the University of Leipzig from 1516 to 1519, after which he moved to Vienna, where he was exposed to Stiborius' astrological curriculum with its heavy focus on instruments.[623] After moving to Regensburg and Landshut, he settled in Ingolstadt as a mathematician at the university, living there from 1527 until his death. At Ingolstadt he set up a printing press, which allowed him to print his own publications and to develop novel ways of representing mathematical ideas in graphic form.[624] In Apian's publications the latest mathematical ideas were presented with appealing diagrammatic illustrations and functional paper instruments, aimed at a growing audience of mathematical amateurs.[625] He is now best known for his role as a pioneer of printed cosmographic books, especially his *Astronomicum Caesaerum* (1540), which he dedicated to Emperor Charles V and his brother, King Ferdinand. This earned him ennoblement and a grant to improve his coat of arms by transforming his one-headed heraldic eagle into a two-headed, imperial eagle.[626] In 1544 he was given further legal privileges, which included the authority to grant arms as a representative of the emperor.

In October 1533, Apian published his *Folium populi,* a text including a novel and elaborate paper sundial, designed to look like the shape of a poplar leaf (fig. 115).[627] This was a clever conceit, as three poplar leaves ornamented the coat of arms of Johann Wilhelm von Laubenburg, a potential patron of Apian's projects (fig. 116). Consequently, Apian dedicated the text to Laubenburg. It seems that Apian's courting of the young nobleman was successful

[623] Hayton, 2015, 96.
[624] Schottenloher, 1930.
[625] Gaida, 2016, 278-279; Vanden Broecke, 2000.
[626] Gingerich, 1997, 121; Kock, 1997.
[627] Bennett and Meli, 1994, 85; Scheuerer, 1997, 87-88. The woodcut is attributed to Hans Brosamer: Kaulback, 2015, 114-117.

and ongoing, because slightly earlier in the same year he dedicated a more substantial text, his *Instrument Buch* (August 1533), to Johann Wilhelm.[628] Apian was very shrewd when it came to promoting his work, but his decision to design a heraldic instrument for Laubenburg was not purely cynical. Although little is known about Johann Wilhelm, he was clearly a key member of a group of noblemen and scholars in the intellectual circles around Ingolstadt and Vienna. For example, Apian's printing press produced a novel antiquarian publication with the poet Bartholomeaus Amantius, featuring descriptions and images of historical monuments of interest, entitled *Inscriptiones sacrosanctae vetustatus* (1534). The production of the book had involved a glittering cast of the brightest scholars in the region, including Konrad Peutinger, Willibald Pirckheimer, Conrad Celtis, Cardinal Matthäus Lang and Johannes Aventinus. Johann Wilhelm von Laubenburg wrote a short message of support at the beginning of the publication.[629] We also know that Laubenburg had a small collection of antiquities and that he attracted a further book dedication in Sebastian Münster's *Organum Uranicum* (1536).[630] Despite his youth, Laubenburg was evidently known as an important patron of scholarly projects. His familiarity with Matthäus Lang, the dedicatee of one of Stabius' heraldic instruments, also suggests that these particular designs were highly favoured within a tight-knit scholarly group.

Apian's introductory dedication to Laubenburg emphasises the pedigree of these heraldic instruments: "Already at this time, Johannes Stabius, a man most educated in mathematical matters, has not unfavourably illuminated the Austrian coat of arms by his ingenuity."[631] This

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[628] Apian, 1533a, sig.A[1]^{r}-A[1]^{v}.
[629] Apian and Amantius, 1534, sig.Bbii^{v}-Bbiii^{r}.
[630] Diemer, 2010.
[631] *Non infoeliciter eodem ingenio insignia Austriaca iam olim illustrauit vir in rebus Mathematicis doctissimus Io[h]a[nnes] Stabius.* Apian, 1533c, sig.Aii^{r}.

may refer to the universal horoscope, which does not strictly represent Maximillian's heraldry, but does invoke a shield. Alternatively, Apian might have confused Stiborius' *Clipeus Austrie* with Stabius' heraldic instruments. Nevertheless, Apian was clearly keen to emphasise his intellectual precedents to convey authority upon his instrument. The text also suggests that there was another heraldic instrument that is no longer identifiable, as he writes, "And we have set forth in this way the coats of arms of the most illustrious leaders, the Dukes of Saxony, in preceding years, in order that from it the oppositions and true conjunctions of the [heavenly] lights, and the potential for eclipses, might be easily grasped."[632] Apian did serve the Dukes of Saxony; in 1521 he published an introduction to cosmography, indicating in the title that it had been produced under the patronage of the 'illustrious Duke of Saxony.'[633] In 1532 he visited George 'the Bearded' in Dresden, probably to conduct a topographical survey.[634] Sadly, the particular instrument to which he refers in the dedication of the *Folium populi* cannot be located. In the dedication, he then goes on to thank another patron to whom he had dedicated a further heraldic instrument, Christoph von Stadion, Bishop of Augsburg. The text concludes by justifying this tradition, stating that "so the coats of arms of the great, illustrious and lively, and most honest families, are truly rendered ever more distinguished, and simultaneously become known profitably to many."[635] By publishing this instrument, Apian implies that he has promoted the von Laubenburg heraldry, spreading its image to a much wider audience and thus amplifying the *fama* of the family.

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[632] *Nos quoq[ue] superioribus annis Illustrissimorum Principum, Saxonieq[ue] Ducum Insignia ita edidimus, vt ex eisluminarium oppositiones, & coniunctiones verae, & Eclypsium possibilitates facilime deprehendantur.* Apian, 1533c, sig.Aii^{r}.
[633] Apian, 1521.
[634] Schöner, 1994, 394, 415-416. A letter indicating that Apian was permitted to visit George is printed in Günther, 1882, 77-8. Schottenloher, 1930, 54 lists a woodcut publication by Apian entitled *Lunae vicissitudo,* that was dedicated to the Saxon duke and took the form of the coats of arms of Saxony. The title is no longer traceable: Hofmann, 1997, 31.
[635] *[...] sic enim magnorum illustriumq[ue] virorum & honestissimarum familiarum insignia commendatiora redduntur, simulq[ue] cum aliquo fructu pluribus innotescunt.* Apian, 1533c, sig.Aii^{r}.

The precise measurement of time made possible by these heraldic instruments was an important element in prognostication. Stefan Hanß has drawn attention to the extraordinary precision of temporal references in sixteenth-century German 'ego-documents.'[636] These examples counter the historical assumption that extremely precise time measurement is a product of modernity, not pre-modernity. In fact, when it came to naming the time of specific moments, early moderns were often more interested in fine-grained precision than their modern counterparts. Authors knew – or desired to know – the time of their birth down to the minute, which allowed them to make calculations and predictions based on their natal horoscope. Parental genitures were also of interest, so that individuals could contemplate their cosmological lineage. The exact timing of key moments in a lifetime were imbued with a familial and cosmological significance, thus aiding the association between heraldic insignia and prognostication. A prudent head of a household was expected to record and monitor important familial events, for example in order to predict the characters of his children or to demonstrate the ability to take action at appropriate moments. Similarly, sixteenth-century family chronicles often record details about the family's insignia.[637] Coats of arms and astrological readings were used to emphasise natal continuity and to demonstrate the honourable paternal guardianship of a household. This made their visual interaction in the form of heraldic, cosmological instruments especially appropriate. Indeed, the dedicatory text highlights the confusing semantic relationship between coats of arms (*insignia*) and 'signs' more broadly (*signa*), which could include astronomical symbols and their interpretation.

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[636] Hanß, 2019 and 2017.
[637] See, for example, the housebooks of Hermann von Weinsberg, latest editions at http://www.weinsberg.uni-bonn.de. For commentary on heraldry in Weinsberg's housebook, see Schmid, 2009.

Catalogue entries for the *Folium populi* point out that the dial was designed more as an "artwork" than a useful instrument.[638] Clearly the complex net of intersecting, curvaceous lines exuded aesthetic appeal for contemporary viewers. Moreover, the instrument was perfectly functional and was probably derived from another universal altitude dial designed by Apian, the *Horoscopion generalis,* which he printed alone and as part of his *Instrument buch* in the same year as the *Folium populi* (fig. 117).[639] The *Horoscopion generalis* is essentially a more compact version of the *Folium populi* and could also double as a quadrant. It seems likely that once Apian had realised the general form of the *Horoscopion generalis,* he would not have needed to take many geometric steps to transform the design into the shape of a poplar leaf. The main change that Apian made was to split the grid at the top of the dial into two sides, one relating to the half of the solar year when the days were lengthening, the other relating to the half of the year with shrinking day lengths. These grids allow the user to position the plumbline according to the time of year (marked by the signs of the Zodiac) and the latitude. In the *Horoscopion generalis*, the grid was simply overlaid, with the opposite signs of the Zodiac positioned together on the y-axis. By splitting the grid into two halves, Apian caused the curvaceous projection of the *Horoscopion generalis* to be mirrored, forming the point of the poplar leaf. To create the stem of the leaf, Apian simply extended the central meridional calibration line, against which a user would calibrate a bead on the plumbline to match their latitude. By extending the scale to 77 degrees, Apian could create the form of a 'stem' below the leaf. Technically, this was a functioning extension of the dial, but it was also a bit artificial, akin to extending the axis of a graph for the sake of it.

[638] Scheuerer, 1997, 88.
[639] Apian, 1533a, sig. Jii^{v} and 1533b.

The vertical lines running through the entire instrument mark the equal or common hours, just as they do on the *Horoscopion generalis.* The only other change that Apian had to make was to mark the semi-circular bottom edge of the leaf, which was the form of a construction line used to project the equal hours. The rest of the lines on the dial are a graphic representation of mathematical relationships between different kinds of time, allowing the user to work out the day length, times of sunrise and sunset, hours since sunrise or sunset and the 'Jewish hours' or Biblical hours, without laborious calculation. The same grid was used on the *Horoscopion generalis;* the only difference with the *Folium populi* was that Apian made the lower edge of the grid semi-circular rather than straight. Apian was so attuned to geometric construction that he presumably spent a lot of time thinking about how one design of a dial projection might be transformed to fit another form. Given that there was already a tradition of identifying figurative forms in abstract, graphic designs within the Viennese circles, Apian was especially alert to spotting possible projections that might look like heraldic motifs.

The relationship between Apian's compact *Horoscopion generalis* and the elaborated *Folium populi* is highly comparable to the way that Johannes Stabius produced two versions of a single universal horoscope design, one a multi-block heraldic instrument and the other a single-block, compact instrument. Stabius dedicated his single-block *Horoscopion omni generaliter congruens climati* to Maximilian's secretary, Jakob Banninsius (fig. 118), and specified in the dedication text that this horoscope was developed from the *Double Horoscope,* the heraldic instrument dedicated to Matthäus Lang.[640] Banninsius' smaller horoscope is a condensed version of Lang's heraldic instrument print, probably intended to appeal to a broader audience with its smaller size and less elaborate form. By printing two

[640] Marr, 2018, 64.

instruments based on the same foundational arrangement, Stabius was able to profit twice from the same idea and to target two different dedicatees. Similarly, Apian's *Horoscopion generalis* was a condensed, single-page instrument print that could be manipulated to form the more elaborate *Folium populi.* It is worth noting that the projection used in Apian's *Horoscopion generalis* is close to that used by Stabius for his *Horoscopion omni generaliter congruens climati,* the only real difference being that Apian used a diagonal, split grid for setting the latitude and time of the year. [641]

During the same industrious period, Apian sought a further heraldic analogy between geometrical form and a patronal coat of arms. His 1534 publication *Instrumentum primi mobilis* provided an introduction to trigonometric calculations, including tables of sines and extensive examples of instances when the calculations might prove useful.[642] However, at the beginning of the text he also printed a design for an instrument that would make finding the sine of an angle much quicker than scanning the lengthy tables (fig. 119). The instrument was not essential to the text, nor was it an original design. It represents a typical device for the graphic computation of the sines and versines of angles between 0 and 90 degrees. A user would attach a string to point A, pull the string taught and line it up with the value of the angle in question. The user could then read the sine and versine values from the scale on the two curved lines, looking at the point where the string crossed these scales. The device is fairly simple, but would have made the text more appealing to potential buyers, while also providing an opportunity for Apian to flatter another potential patron. The patron in question this time was Christoph von Stadion, bishop of Augsburg.

[641] On the construction of universal altitude grids, see Bennett, 2012, 255-258.
[642] On Apian's trigonometric work, see Folkerts, 1997.

The form of Apian's instrument is modelled on a particular motif found on von Stadion's coat of arms, which is a type of axe-head (fig. 120). Apian drew attention to this visual rhyme in an introductory dedication to von Stadion, making very similar claims as in the introduction to the *Folium populi.* He writes:

> "Since this monument had long appeared to be dedicated to your honour, I finally began to ponder on the form of the instrument, when the coat of arms of your dignity opportunely presented itself [to me]. As its lines, it seemed to me, formed an instrument well suited to the *primum mobile,* little by little I began to consider more carefully whether it might be possible somehow for me to apply the coat of arms of your illustrious pedigree to the heavens in a clear, beautiful concept, not unlike the example of that [instrument], whereby we have already made famous the coat of arms of the illustrious George, Duke of Saxony, with astronomical discoveries, and now the young, most noble adolescent Johannes Wilhelm of Loubemberg..."[643]

Here, Apian makes further reference to the heraldic instrument for George, Duke of Saxony, which cannot be located. He also discusses the drafting of the *Instrumentum primi mobilis,* implying that he was struggling to define the shape of the instrument until he saw or remembered Christoph von Stadion's coat of arms, which prompted him to complete the form of the instrument.

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[643] *Monume[n]tum hoc quum iamdiu Celsitudini tuae dedicare uisum esset, coepi ad extremum de instrumenti forma cogitare, ubi co[m]modum se nobis Amplitudinis tuae obtuleru[n]t insignia, [...] ea quando suis lineamentis accommodate mihi primi mobilis instrumentum conficere uidebantur, coepi paulatim rem considerare diligentius, si quomodo fieri posset, ut Amplissimi stemmatis insignia ad illa[m] coelestem planeq[ue] pulcherrima[m] speculationem tra[n]sferrem, no[n] dissimili exemplo ab eo, quo iam antea illustrissimi Principis Georgij Saxonum ducis, & nunc recens nobilissimi adolescentis Io[hanni] Guilielmi à Loubemberg insignia Astronomicis inuentis illustrauimus...* Apian, 1534, sig.a3^{r}.

This is very much a rhetorical flourish, because Apian's instrument is not particularly novel, even though the heraldic conceit is clever. The form of the *Instrumentum primi mobilis* is simply a set of graphic curves that naturally arises from this kind of computational device. Apian must have already been familiar with these intersecting curves, because the same pattern was inscribed on many contemporary quadrants as a means for calculating sines and cosines of angles (fig. 121). The form is peculiar to the relationship between the sine and cosine functions of angles between 0 and 90 degrees, because they are proportional to one another. Apian's ingenuity, however, was in his decision to cut away the other elements of a standard quadrant and to project the scale onto the curves themselves, thus allowing him to exaggerate the similarity between the heraldic axe-head and the form of the instrument. This included adding a functionless hole to the instrument design, complete with perspectival depth, which helps make the computational device look more like the axe-head. For the publication, he also inserted an illustration of Stadion's coat of arms, which rendered the shape of the heraldic axe-heads more fully than in other depictions, thus aligning them more with the shape of the instrument.

Students of astrology at the University of Vienna were taught the requisite skills for serving local princes or other noblemen, should they wish to pursue the practice as a viable career.[644] Peter Apian's printed instruments illustrate the reciprocal relationship between pedagogy and patronage, since paper instruments were essential tools in the lecture theatre, but could also propagate the reputation of a learned patron. Throughout the text accompanying his *Instrumentum primi mobilis,* Apian explains to the reader how to use the instrument to solve

[644] Hayton, 2010, 130-131.

various mathematical problems, all of which feature Christoph von Stadion as the imaginary character for whom the reader might perform a calculation. The entire pedagogic experience is suffused with the reputation of Christoph von Stadion, as the reader learns to solve trigonometric problems on behalf of Stadion using an instrument in the form of Stadion's heraldic charge. A good mathematician still needed to be an obedient courtly servant and this included being attentive to the personal iconography of their patron. This is especially significant given Peter Apian's elevation in 1544 to the position of *Pfalzgraf* by Charles V, which gave him the legal power to issue heraldic patents, some of which survive.[645] Fittingly, Apian's courtship of powerful patrons was so successful that he ultimately became the imperial equivalent of a herald, administering grants for new or updated coats of arms.

The heraldic instruments demonstrate the contemporary fascination with visual co-incidences. Natural philosophical frameworks were governed by the belief that a hierarchical and reciprocal relationship existed between macrocosms and microcosms, which meant that the search for correspondences was already an integral part of the intellectual world-view.[646] Apian's ability to spot the similarity between Stadion's heraldic axehead and the geometric form of the sine quadrant promoted both his ingenuity and also the cosmic connection between his patrons' insignia and the signs of nature. Indeed, on the title page for Apian's *Instrumentum primi mobilis,* he actually emphasised the semantic overlap between "*signa*" (signs) and "*insignia*" (identifying signs or coats of arms) (fig. 122). In the abstract cube at the centre of the illustration is written the part of Genesis where God creates the heavenly spheres: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day

[645] On the role of *Hofpfalzgrafen,* see Benecke, 1971. For grants of arms officiated by Apian, see Röttel, 1997, 54-58.
[646] This conceptual framework was particularly pronounced in early modern collections. See Daston and Park, 1998, 272, 280-290; Grote, 1994; Findlen, 1994, 84-85; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, 34-39.

from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years."[647] The phrase "*in signa*" – "for signs" – has been capitalised, playing up the semantic slippage between *insignia* and *signa*, as well as pointing out the multivalence of the term 'signs', which could refer to the constellations, or to the use of the stars for prognostication, or indeed to signs of identification, like heraldry. Apian implies that it is not a coincidence that these semantic and visual forms seem to echo one another, but rather that it was evidence of an organic, cosmic relationship between words and things. This kind of playful exegesis was already deeply ingrained in heraldic origin myths. Jakob Mennel, court historian to Maximilian I, reiterated the legendary story behind the Austrian 'red shield,' which was apparently prefigured in the blood-soaked coat of crusader Duke Leopold when he removed his belt after battle, revealing a perfect white band in a field of red.[648] Apian's instruments were essentially an updated, cosmographic version of these visual correspondences so popular in heraldic folklore.

There are other moments in the dedicatory text where Apian appears to indulge in verbal overlaps. Near the end he writes, "To be sure, with full confidence, we return your prestigious coat of arms, and our hard-won labours, and this ancient author, to you most reverend father, all together as one bundle."[649] He uses the noun '*fasces*' to mean 'bundle,' but there is some ambiguity, because in antiquity a *fascis* was also a classical symbol of office consisting of a bundle of rods surrounding an axe. A sketch of this ancient insignia with the label "FASCES" features in a Latin manuscript containing transcriptions and sketches of

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[647] Genesis 1:14.
[648] Mennel, 1518, II: fol.51^{r}.
[649] *Nos certe magna fiducia concepta, insignia Amplitudinis tuae, nostrasq[ue] lucabrationes, & autorem hunc uetustissimum uelut uno fasce, ad Reuerendissimam paternitatem tuam remittimus, [...].* Apian, 1534, sig.a3^{v}. The 'ancient author' refers to the Latin translation of Ptolemy's *Almagest* by Gerard of Cremona, which was printed as part of Apian's publication.

monuments and inscriptions that was owned by Apian.[650] Given that Stadion's heraldic ensign was an axehead, the overlapping meaning was appropriate, since the instrument itself represents a neat little package or bundle combining trigonometric calculations, astronomy, judgement and the heraldic axehead. As well as giving Stadion's heraldic charge a classicising gloss, Apian's use of a word with a double meaning echoes the graphic concision and neatness of the instrument itself.[651]

Polysemy and the Poet as *Vates*

Practical mathematical instruments reduced the amount of time needed to perform calculations or look up figures in pages of tables. Designers of instrument prints boasted about the miraculous concision of their products, as they sought new ways to reduce large amounts of information into a tightly wrought, streamlined device. Some authors boasted that their designs allowed the viewer to comprehend complex ideas in 'one glance', reducing lengthy calculations to a mere adjustment of a thread.[652] Similarly, Apian's use of words and graphic forms with double meanings reflects a stylistic appreciation of condensed, layered information. The principle of reducing extensive content to a concise format was a trope closely related to shields in classical literature. Andreas Stiborius purposefully compared his *Clipeus Austriae* with Homer's *ekphrasis* of the Shield of Achilles, which famously provides a literary excursion from the lengthy, epic narrative of the *Iliad,* as the reader is permitted to survey the contents of the circular shield, which seems to contain the entire cosmos within its perimeter.[653] The condensed nature of the *ekphrasis* contrasts with the enormity of detail on

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[650] *Lateinische Handschrift,* BSB Clm 394, fol.15r.
[651] On concision as the 'best style' in rhetoric, see Erasmus, 1978, 23:227-228.
[652] Marr, 2018, 69; Vanden Broecke, 2000, 138.
[653] Hayton, 2015, 100.

the shield and within the epic itself. Abundance of meaning and succinctness of form were interrelated qualities particularly associated with poetic and epistemic motifs.

A tradition of heraldic poetry had flourished in medieval German literature, fostering the exegesis of real and imagined coats of arms.[654] However, the Shield of Achilles provided humanists with an antique model of heraldic *ekphrasis*, which elevated the medieval coat of arms to a cosmic status. Stiborius' citation of Homer, like Apian's references to Genesis 1:14 and the *fasces*, purposefully tied their heraldic instruments to ancient authority and the tradition of literary exegesis. The instruments might therefore be understood as a new form of *visual* exegesis, which was appealing because it encompassed a vast array of information within a neat, concise form – in one bundle. Alexander Marr has described the aesthetics of Stabius and Dürer's instrument prints as "[o]scillating between representation and abstraction," in a similar manner to Dürer's trademark ornamental flourishes.[655] More broadly, it may be observed that all the heraldic instruments toy with the relational nature of signs, which may be thought of as a means of communication *and* subjects in need of interpretation. In this sense, too, the instrument designs function like an allegory, which may be a mode of composition, as well as a method for interpreting a text (*allegoresis*).

The comparison with poetic exegesis is particularly pertinent to the Viennese intellectual tradition centering on the arch-humanist and first poet laureate Conrad Celtis. Celtis had founded the *Collegium Poetarum et Mathematicorum* in Vienna in 1502, with the aim of revitalising the poetic and mathematical arts within the court of Maximilian I. Celtis advanced the idea of the poet as *vates* or a seer, who was capable of elucidating universal

[654] Wandhoff, 2005; Van Aroonij, 1994; Van D'Elden, 1976.
[655] Marr, 2018, 65.

principles rather than simply describing particulars.[656] Broadly conceived, a *vates* was an interpreter of signs, able to abstract universal truths from his insight into the past (through the study of antiquities) and his foresight (through the study of the heavens). This theoretical elevation of the poet to the level of a divinely inspired philosopher or prophet had originated earlier among Italian thinkers, but Celtis wanted to foster the same ideal in order to herald a new 'Augustan age' in the Holy Roman Empire.[657] For Celtis, poets were an essential counterpart to the Emperor, just as Augustine had worked closely with Virgil and Horace. Importantly, Celtis advocated the attentive study of the natural world, in order that the poet might draw proper observations of the cosmos into his verse, thus enhancing the universal nature of his insight.

Scholars like Celtis, Stiborius, Stabius and Apian were both astrologers and men of letters, able to advise noble patrons on historical precedent and future decisions. An idealised realisation of their role in the court is epitomised in the character of Ernhold in Maximilian's semi-autobiographical *Theuerdank* (first published 1517), one of three illustrated chivalric epics starring the emperor as the main character.[658] In *Theuerdank,* Ernhold acts as a herald, squire and chronicler, recording acts for the judgement of posterity, warning Theuerdank of impending danger and accompanying him on his quest. Similarly, the *vates* embodied the roles of court historian, speaker of universal truths, and discerner of destiny. This was effectively a re-casting of the medieval herald as a divinely inspired messenger, echoing the

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[656] Orbán, 2017, 21-72; West, 2006, 23; Luh, 2001, 266, 266n90; Koepplin, 1973, 130-131.
[657] Luh, 2001, 60, 342. Dante referred to Virgil as *vates* (*De Monarchia* 2.3 12). Celtis employed the phrase "pii vates" in his memorial portrait, produced as a woodcut by Hans Burgkmair. Joachim Vadianus used the term *vates* to refer to divinely-inspired poets. Isidore of Seville discussed the term *vates* in his etymologies (*Etymologiae*, VIII:7.3), relying on the explanation given by Varro (*De Lingua Latina,* 7:36). Servius, in his commentary on Virgil's Aeneid, connected the term *vates* to poetic madness: *Aeneid,* III:443. Boccaccio connected the *vates* to the Biblical prophets (*Genealogy,* XIV:8).
[658] Darin Hayton argues that Ernhold would have been viewed as a court astronomer by contemporary readers: Hayton, 2015, 11-13.

mythological figure of Mercury.[659] The new, elevated model of the court herald may be viewed as a response to more negative stereotypes about heraldic scholarship, such as that expressed by Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, who complained that "it is a marvel to see with what foolish wisdom these heralds of arms dress up as astronomers, philosophers and even theologians in these matters."[660] Agrippa objected to endowing heraldic colours with planetary significance or attempts to discern the destiny of an armiger through the symbolism of their arms. The textually and mathematically rooted heraldic discourse of Maximilian's *literati* overhauled the poor perception of heralds and their misguided scholarship.[661]

The analogy between the design of heraldic instruments and poetic exegesis can be furthered by comparing the type of imagery found in neo-Latin heraldic poems within Viennese circles. One example is Joachim Vadianus' commentary on his familial coat of arms, published in Vienna in 1517 (fig. 123).[662] Johannes Eck wrote to Vadianus (originally called von Watt) in 1517 about his lineage, to let him know that he had come across another family called *von Watt* when he had been in Nuremberg and he was interested to know about a possible heraldic connection.[663] Eck stated that his curiosity had been satiated by Vadianus' publication. The poetic commentary is lengthy and replete with citations from classical sources, including Strabo, on the various myths surrounding the griffin, which was Vadianus' heraldic charge. The publication, entitled *Aecloga, cui titulus Faustus,* provides a mythologising, ekphrastic gloss for this simple coat of arms in a humanist, neo-Latin form. At the beginning of the

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[659] Johannes Cuspianus sometimes bore the figure of Mercury as a heraldic crest, for example on his faded coat of arms on the reverse side of his marital portrait by Lucas Cranach the Elder. See Koepplin, 1973, 144-147.
[660] Agrippa, 1530, sig.h[4]^{r}. *"...mirum tamen q[uum] stulta sapientia in istis astrologicantur, philosophantur, etiam et theologissant paludati isti Heraldi..."*
[661] See also Fürbeth, 1995, 443-444.
[662] Vadianus, 1517.
[663] Eck, 1517, no. 41.

publication a woodcut illustration of Vadianus' insignia is printed, including the assertion that it was granted to his family by Emperor Sigismund. This booklet utilised print culture to reframe the antiquity of the von Watt heraldry in a more public form, complete with an updated, Latin commentary befitting a poet laureate. In setting the scene, Vadianus paid particular attention to the topographical details associated with the heights of the Ryphean mountains, where the Griffins were said to reside, including details about the gold mines that they guarded. This topographical attentiveness reflects his personal interest in descriptive, geographical texts, including Pliny's *Natural History* and Pomponius Mela's *De situ orbis*, but also echoes theories within the *Collegium Poetarum* about the relationship between poetry and cosmographic knowledge.

The figurative nature of Vadianus' heraldic charge perhaps required a more explicitly historiographical exegesis, but other contemporary interpretations could involve imaginative leaps between the abstract and the figurative. For example, Stabius compared the graphic thread running through his various designs of his *Horoscopes,* culminating in Banninsius' compact *Horoscopion omni generaliter congruens climati,* to a lengthy mountainous ridge in the Appenine mountains.[664] Since Banninsius was deacon of Trent cathedral at this point, the geographical reference may have been personal. In the eyes of a viewer attuned to spotting correspondences and composing poetic exegesis, the lines on a functioning astronomical instrument could morph into landscapes, flora or heraldic motifs before their eyes, like pictures in clouds. A further example of such a visual rhyme may be found in the coat of arms adopted by Celtis himself, featuring the monogram C.C.P.P (*Conradus Celtis Protucius Poeta*) (fig. 124). The letters are mirrored either side of a central axis, in which the Cs double

[664] Marr, 2018, 64.

as the curving face of the Ps. Peter Luh has suggested that this arrangement was meant to evoke the shape of the sound holes on a classicising lyre, thereby affirming Celtis' personal affinity to Apollo and Orpheus, as Platonic poets and seers.[665] The consciously slender, Italianate form of Celtis' shield only serves to enhance the allusion. Comparison between the coat of arms and representations of Apollo's lyre within Celtis' circle also confirms the visual overlap. Clearly, the circles around Celtis were obsessed with drawing connections between signs, creating layers of meaning ranging from the antiquarian to the mythological.

Forging New Heraldic Communities

The correspondence between scholars in this broadly defined circle also demonstrates that they were attentive to one another's heraldic identities. Johannes Eck's fascination with Vadianus' possible connection to the Nuremberg von Watt family was not a unique incident. Eck also wrote to Pope Paul III in 1537, having investigated the genealogy of the Farnese house, explaining: "I find that very noble German counts carry lilies in coats of arms; the lilies are in the same arrangement as the Farnese house, but in different colours, and brothers differ from castle to castle and have different names."[666] He was evidently curious about the spread of heraldic motifs, particularly ones linked to renowned families. Moreover, scholars were deeply familiar with each other's insignia and iconographies, making them able to spot related images or phrases. Many, like Celtis, carefully cultivated their own ensigns. Hans Burgkmair started using his coat of arms from 1516, featuring two bear heads with

[665] Luh, 2001, 129.
[666] Eck, 1537, no. 327. My translation is from Peter Fabisch's German translation. *Inter alia invenio Comites nobilissimos Germaniae fuisse liliorum, qui sex lilia deferebant, situ et ordine quo Farnesia domus, sed tamen variis coloribus ornabantur, et ab arcibus fratres divisi, varia sortiebantur nomina.*

interlocking mouths (fig. 99).[667] The design process was no doubt influenced by his extensive experience depicting other heraldic motifs and working closely alongside humanists like Celtis and Peutinger. Ashley West has suggested that Burgkmair purposefully referenced his heraldic charge in the etching *Mercury, Venus and Cupid* (c.1520) through Mercury's discarded, anthropomorphic helmet (fig. 125), which appears to gape "open-mouthed over the pool like a real animal come thirsting to water."[668] The helmet acts as a subtle nod to those familiar with the artist's heraldry, rewarding the viewer with a partially concealed visual rhyme. Burgkmair's use of his heraldic form in this context strengthens Peter Luh's argument that Celtis' coat of arms was meant to recall the form of Apollo's lyre. The poet and the artist both found ways to reformulate their shields as the attributes of their mythological alter-egos.

The earlier coat of arms of the astrologer Johannes Tolhopf, which must have been designed by Tolhopf himself, exemplifies the humanist aspirations underpinning new heraldic designs, although it is far more complex than those of Celtis and Burgkmair (fig. 126).[669] The heraldic patent was officially granted by Tolhopf's patron, Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary, in 1480, but an illustration of the arms was subsequently printed on the verso of a single-sheet woodcut. This print has been dated by Peter Luh to 1496 and features a well-known image of Maximilian I and the *Hercules Germanicus* on the opposite side (fig. 127).[670] An explanation of Tolhopf's heraldic imagery accompanies the print, identifying the image as the "coat of

[667] Falk et al, 1973, cat. no. 99.
[668] West, 2013, 388.
[669] On Tolhopf's intellectual influence at the University of Ingolstadt, see Schöner, 1994, 162-182.
[670] On the grant of arms see Schöner, 1994, 173. For dating and analysis of the woodcut see Luh, 2001, 334-342. For further translations and analysis of the heraldic side of the print, see Orbán, 2017, 146-158. Larry Silver also mentions the woodcut: Silver, 2008, 23. For the original heraldic patent, which only survives as a seventeenth-century copy, see Mikó, 2014, 224-5.

arms of Janus Tolophus, the *vates* of the German Hercules."[671] The text goes on to explain that the two colours of the shield, blue and gold, reflect the heavens and the golden Parnassus, whilst the two-headed figure on the shield represent Janus, who acts as the eyes of the heraldic eagle above him. On one side Janus holds the keys to the heavens, represented by a cloud frill, whilst on the other he welcomes a ship with a staff of office. The ship alludes to Ovid's account of Janus welcoming Saturn's arrival by ship, heralding the Golden Age, as well as Deucalion's ship that landed on Mount Parnassus.[672] The peacock-feather crest is described as bearing "the eyes of Argus", providing a classicising gloss while also alluding to Maximilian's peacock crest, which was allegorised in courtly manuscripts as a representation of the all-seeing eyes of the emperor.[673] The overloaded symbolism of the coat of arms reflects the self-conscious design of a court astrologer and poet, steeped in classicising iconographies of prophets and oracles. Although Tolhopf's heraldry is not as succinct as that of his close friend, Conrad Celtis, it also demonstrates their joint fascination with visual motifs that might embody more than one interpretation. In the tightly wrought world of esoteric, courtly discourse, heraldry became a primary vehicle for expressing one's learning and one's relationship to powerful noblemen.

The intellectuals in the Celtis circle were also deeply engaged with developing new pictorial representations of their scholarly commitments. Peter Luh has argued that Celtis' interest in the design of philosophical and mythological prints may have been prompted by his close friendship with Tolhopf.[674] Heraldic imagery provided a useful framework for structuring the

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[671] *IANA TOLHOPHI GERMANI VATIS HERCVLEI Armorum Insignia.*
[672] Orbán, 2017, 149; 151. On the association between the golden age and the poet-as-*vates,* see Luh, 2001, 342.
[673] Orbán, 2017, 151n164. On the allegorisation of Maximilian's peacock crest, see Zimmerman, 2011.
[674] Luh, 2001, 346.

allegorical content of these pictures. For instance, the woodcut known as the 'Allegorical Imperial Eagle' (1503/1504), designed by Celtis and Burgkmair, uses the heraldic eagle of the empire as the framework for a programmatic image expressing the theory of poetic creation espoused within the *Collegium Poetarum* (fig. 128).[675] The eagle had been used as an isolated, background motif previously, as an abstract support for other pictorial motifs. The crucifix, for example, had been laid on the wings of the eagle since the twelfth century, representing the emperor as the protector of Christendom. Similarly, the feathers on the wings could be used to support the individual heraldic shields of various regions and figureheads serving the emperor. Celtis' woodcut extended this tradition by superimposing an architectural fountain of the muses upon the body of the eagle, capped by the emperor enthroned. Two chains of seven medallions run down either side of the wings, containing illustrations of the seven stages of creation in Genesis and the seven mechanical arts. On the tower supporting the basin of the fountain are personifications of the liberal arts, gathered at the feet of Philosophia. The allegory is a complicated assemblage of mythological references, but ultimately presents the emperor (through the eagle) as protector of the creative arts, both divinely inspired and mechanical, which together create the perfect conditions for the flourishing of the liberal arts and wisdom more broadly. Regalia, including heraldic motifs, provided a useful structure for presenting complex allegories like this, particularly since they were already based on mnemonic principles.[676]

Novel heraldic charges also emerged in this circle, such as the cloud frill, which later appeared on the coats of arms of Peter Apian and Georg Tanstetter, albeit in a simpler form than on Tolhopf's shield (figs. 129 and 130). A new heraldic community was being forged,

[675] For an extensive examination of the iconography of this print, see Luh, 2002.
[676] On the art of memory in relation to the Allegorical Imperial Eagle, see West, 2006, 35.

replete with a web of interconnected iconographies that linked coats of arms with other genres of imagery, the study of texts, cosmography, the composition of poetry and imperial ambitions. These courtly circles perceived the symbolic potential of the coat of arms as a means of cultivating publicity and fortifying their links to one another and to the emperor, forming the intellectual equivalent of a high medieval tournament society. The poplar leaf, for example, appears twice in the *Hercules germanicus* woodcut. Hercules wears a wreath of poplar labelled "Corona populea", which purposefully echoes the label next to Maximilian, "populares", indicating his service to his people.[677] No doubt Peter Apian and Johann Wilhelm von Laubenberg were aware of the imperial connotations conveyed by the poplar leaf. Apian's decision to tie his heraldic instruments to those produced by Stabius endowed his designs with a prestigious intellectual lineage and also flattered his patrons by welcoming them into an exclusive heraldic community. The two pedigrees – one scholarly, one noble – were mutually sustaining.

Interpreting Heraldry: Cosmography

The visual properties of heraldic images evidently appealed to Bavarian and Austrian scholars and did more than simply convey authority and status. The aesthetics of brevity associated with coats of arms formed a central part of this appeal, since concision was associated with direct and swift communication. However, the information conveyed by coats of arms was far from straightforward. Vadianus' lengthy poetic commentary on his family's arms is not historiographical; instead, the griffin acts as a prompt for rhetorical exegesis and ekphrasis, pulling a range of classical source material into a poetic assemblage. Yet on other occasions,

[677] Luh, 2001, 335.

heraldry played a central role in genealogical discourse, both for evidencing historical connections and for visualising lineage. Coats of arms were sometimes associated with particular historical moments of origination, but at other times were treated as eternal images capable of transcending temporal boundaries. This was partly because coats of arms could be subject to different interpretative methods with contrasting disciplinary objectives, but also because in this period there was a shift in the practice of historical source analysis, which had implications for the use of heraldry as evidence. This section of the chapter will consider how scholarly viewers of coats of arms dealt with the interpretative challenge posed by the ambiguity of heraldic meaning, focusing firstly on cosmography and secondly on genealogy. The deployment of heraldic evidence in historiographic and cosmographic writings reveals how authors viewed the temporal status of coats of arms.

During the sixteenth century the boundaries of geography as a category of intellectual inquiry were being re-assessed, especially in relation to the broad disciplinary category of cosmography. There was no fixed definition of cosmography, since authors like Peter Apian often supplied their own definitions, but the principles underpinning this disciplinary shift are important.[678] In Apian's *Cosmographicus liber* (1524), he identified cosmography as a mathematically grounded discipline, pertaining to the underlying structures connecting the motions of the heavens and the position of places on Earth.[679] Despite Apian's insistence on the mathematical foundations of cosmography, other cosmographical authors took a descriptive approach, providing vivid surveys of topographies, cities, natural resources and

[678] A clear summary of the discipline of cosmography can be found in Johnson, 2008, 50-59. More recently, see Mosley, 2019.
[679] Johnson, 2008, 52, 219n2. For the importance of images in Apian's aproach to cosmography, see Vanden Broecke, 2000.

the culture of different peoples – what we might now think of as 'human geography'.[680] However, even mathematically grounded cosmographers like Apian would include descriptive details about people and places among their tables of latitudes and diagrams. Descriptive details rendered mathematical tables more vivid, while numerical details endowed a sense of precision and authority upon descriptive geographies.[681] Cosmographic inquiry demanded that practitioners mastered different categories of knowledge, blending astronomy, historiography, philology and geography with practical mathematics. Apian was especially attuned to this kind of cross-referential study. In the *Astronomicum Caesareum,* Apian emphasised how his astronomical instruments could help historians establish chronologies with greater accuracy, for example by dating eclipses referenced in antique texts.[682] In the text accompanying his *Folium Populi,* he indicated how the dotted lines dividing the *Judenstunden* (Jewish or Biblical hours) could be used to better comprehend references to particular times in the Bible, bringing a new level of precision to theological interpretations.[683] The study of the cosmos was intertwined with historiographical practices and Biblical exegesis, which had implications for the conceptualisation of temporal specificity in relation to universal constants.[684]

The flexibility of cosmographic studies introduced some contradictory impulses into the discipline. While its mathematical foundations acted as "a secure anchor across time and space," emphasising the transcendent, universal principles underpinning the cosmos, the descriptions of locations and their inhabitants forced practitioners to acknowledge that place

[680] Gaida, 2016, 283.
[681] Johnson, 2008, 56-57.
[682] Grafton, 2011, 55-72.
[683] Apian, 1533c, sig.Bii^{r} (Latin) and sig.Cii^{v} (German); Scheuerer, 1997, 91.
[684] For more on humanism and historical chronology, see Grafton, 1993, *passim.*

names, physical topographies and cultural curiosities had changed over time.[685] Johannes Vadianus highlighted this distinction in his commentary on Pomponius Mela (1518), arguing that cosmography relies on universal mathematical axioms, whereas geography involves the study of people, cultures and topographies, which are all subject to the transformative effects of time and can therefore never be treated as universal principles.[686] The growth in scholarly awareness of temporal specificity had parallels in contemporary historiographic debates about how the process of cultural change worked, especially in relation to nomenclature. Since coats of arms were deeply intertwined with naming practices, they were sometimes referenced by scholars to calibrate their understanding of the origins of peoples and places, for example serving as textual substitutes when there were doubts about the etymology of a place name. The visual interpretation of heraldic motifs by early sixteenth-century cosmographers reveals the difficulty they had situating coats of arms within historic chronologies. While the antiquity and permanence of coats of arms were central to their cultural appeal, authors were forced to acknowledge that, like language, coats of arms were mutable.

A particularly rich source for this problem is the large body of historic work authored by Johannes Turmair, called Aventinus. Aventinus was an important figure in the Ingoldstadt-Vienna school, who reformed the practice of historical study. He was listed alongside Johann Wilhelm von Laubenberg as a collaborator in Apian's antiquarian publication, the *Inscriptiones sacrosanctae vetustas,* and referred to Apian as "ever my dear friend" (*mihi semper amicissimus*).[687] In his historiographic surveys of Bavaria, Aventinus made extensive

[685] Johnson, 2008, 55-56.
[686] Vadianus, 1518, sig.a3^{v}-a4^{v}. Johnson, 2008, 57.
[687] Hofmann, 1997, 31.

use of etymological arguments to establish chronologies. Aventinus formulated his own theory about the ancient lineage of the Bavarian people, in which he drew connections between etymological arguments, classical texts and heraldic evidence. Aventinus had already established in his historical inquiries that the Germans were descended from the Franks, who were in turn descended from the Phrygians. Aventinus promised his reader that he would demonstrate that "...the Bavarians are also as old [as the Franconians], as is shown in their coat of arms and shield."[688] According to Herodotus, the Egyptians acknowledged that the Phrygians were a more ancient people than them, so Aventinus was keen to include Herodotus' anecdotal evidence as part of his history. Herodotus relates a story about the Egyptian king Psammetichus, who wanted to discover more about the origins of language. [689] According to the legend, the king thought that the earliest vocal sounds made by children without any input from adults must reflect the earliest vocal sounds made by mankind. Therefore, the language that was most 'childlike' would be the oldest. Having established this hypothesis, Psammetechus had two young children raised by a shepherd, instructing the shepherd never to speak to the children, so they could develop their own language without external influence. When the children did speak, they repeated one sound, which Aventinus transcribed as "beck, beck, beck."[690] In Herodotus' original anecdote, the king then searched the lands trying to find which language had a word most proximate to this noise, and found that the closest linguistic relative was the Phrygian word for bread. He therefore surmised that the Phrygians were the most ancient of people.

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[688] Aventinus, 1881, 1:342. *Das auch die Baiern so alt sein, bezeugt ir wappen und schilt, so si fürn, von dem ich etwas grössers und weiters reden will.*
[689] Herodotus, *The Persian Wars,* I:II:2.
[690] Aventinus, 1881, 1:342.

Aventinus, however, took this anecdote a step further. First, he reminded the reader that the Franconians were descended from the Phrygians, and that the Germans were descended from the Franconians, meaning that the Germans could also boast of an ancient lineage. Then he drew attention to a number of German words for types of bread, such as "spitzweck, peck, pachen," suggesting that the Germans might also boast that their language was linked to these primitive words. Finally, he wrote, "That is why the Bavarians of old, who were then commonly called Phriges, carried twenty-one blue and white *Wecken* in their coat of arms and shield."[691] The Bavarian shield features blue and white diamond chequers, which to a modern eye look nothing like *Wecken,* a name for a type of bread roll (fig. 131). Yet, *Wecke* was used to mean both a heraldic diamond (also called a *Raute*) and a type of bread. It is possible that the diamond shape was reminiscent of the loaf-shape of sixteenth-century breads, or perhaps the checkers reflected the criss-crossed pattern of slashes or folds on the top of these loaves. In any case, Aventinus' evidence about the ancient lineage of the Bavarians reflects a heady blend of intertextual citations, in which heraldry acted as an authoritative and ancient type of language, with little distinction made between the verbal and the visual.

Elsewhere, Aventinus discussed heraldry as an authoritative source. When discussing the coat of arms of the town of Ötting, he digressed to make a few comments about heraldic painting, writing,

> "Then the ancients painted many things concisely [and] carried coats of arms and signs, so that they meant local things and thus committed these things to eternal memory (to exhort and educate their descendants to such manhood).

[691] Aventinus, 1881, 1:342. *Derhalben haben die Baièrn von alter her, welche dann gemeinklich die Phriges geheissen haben, ein und zenzig wecken blau und weis in iren wappen und schilten gefürt [...].*

> One has called it the 'sacred painting' [*hailig gemäl*], this being said in a number of books that are still in existence."[692]

For Aventinus, the age of heraldic painting was consummate with the brevity of its contents, akin to the primitive building blocks of a language. Heraldic concision is like the most basic of human sounds, the visual equivalent of "beck, beck, beck". By the early seventeenth century, Dutch authors like Franciscus Junius and Richard Verstegen would argue that the ancient, primitive 'purity' of the Dutch language was reflected in the virtuous simplicity of their native artistic production.[693] In particular, they connected the Dutch verb *schilderen,* to paint, with the word for a shield, *schild,* thus arguing that their native visual and verbal languages were ancient, natural, concise, unadorned and honest. Given Aventinus' allusions to the sanctity and authority of heraldic painting, which he connects to the simplicity of the German language, it seems that these ideas were already present in the early sixteenth century. Although Aventinus' historical patriotism was more regional (i.e. focussed on Bavaria) than that of the seventeenth-century Dutch authors, he too expressed pride in the simple economy of Germanic cultural languages. The abstract brevity of heraldic imagery was something to be valued, reflecting a kind of masculine virtue.

Aventinus' reference to the ornamentation of shields as 'sacred painting' and attribution of this idea to "a number of books that are still in existence," allowed him to frame himself as a

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[692] Aventinus, 1886, 5:23. *[...]dan die alten haben etlich solch kurz gemäl, wappen und zaichen gefüert, damit si ir êrliche tat bedeut und also in ewige gedächtnus (ir nachkomen zu ermanen und raitzen zu solcher manhait) bracht haben. Man hat's das 'hailig gemäl' gehaissen, sein etlich püecher, davon sagend, noch verhanden*.
[693] Weststeijn, 2012; Marr et al, 2018, 154.

custodian of historic wisdom, capable of elucidating the cultural customs of the past.[694] At the same time, it elevated the status of heraldry to a divinely inspired, ancient artform. One possible source for this idea might have been the *ancile,* a sacred shield supposedly gifted from heaven to the second Roman king, Numa Pompilius. Recognising that the destiny of this shield and of Rome were intertwined, Numa had an expert craftsman make eleven identical copies of the shield, so that nobody with ill-intent could identify and damage the real *ancile.* The story of the *ancilia* appeared in Ovid's *Fasti,* a poetic commentary on the Roman calendar, including details of all the religious ceremonies associated with the months January to June.[695] Philipp Gundel, a well-known professor of poetry at the University of Vienna, who visited Aventinus, published a version of Ovid's *Fasti* in 1513.[696] Ovid's description of the *ancile* echoed a lengthy tradition in classical poetry in which shields were related to the heavens: "Like the Shield of Aeneas, the *ancile* is an *imago mundi* which is also a guarantee of Roman rulership over the world it represents: a *pignus imperii.*"[697] Although Aventinus tended to avoid such poetic imagery in his chronicles, his historical reasoning still drew upon the same sources of inspiration as humanist poets and designers of the heraldic instruments. Instead of invoking a celestial origin myth in his interpretation of the Bavarian coat of arms, he tried to imbue the shield with antique authority by using a linguistic argument.

Other historical authors in Aventinus' circle tried to reconcile heraldic meanings with other types of source material. When discussing the possible sixteenth-century equivalents of the ancient place-name *Dittasium* in his *Rerum Germanicarum* (1531), Beatus Rhenanus noted

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[694] Aventinus must have been familiar with Pliny the Elder's account of shield-portraits, which equated *virtus* and *imagines.* See Winkes, 1979, 483.
[695] Ovid, *Fasti,* III.373-376.
[696] Gundel, 1513. On Gundel's life, work and contacts, see Worstbrock, 2008, 992-1010.
[697] Gee, 2000, 45.

with resignation that "...the Germans never tire of twisting strange words until they are completely disfigured and have some meaning for them. I once saw the coat of arms of the now extinct Counts von Hasenburg, and there was no rabbit on it."[698] Rhenanus here implies that, as the coat of arms makes no visual reference to the name 'Hasenburg' (*Hase* meaning rabbit), it seems likely that the place-name was the product of a linguistic corruption, rather than a translation of an older name. He suggested that the locals had called Dittasium 'Tasenburg', which had eventually mutated to 'Hasenburg'. Rhenanus' allusion to the German's habit of 'twisting' names until it sounds like a familiar word reflects Aventinus' suggestion that coats of arms were used to document "local" ideas. Both acknowledged that heraldic meanings were mutable like language and that communities tend to force comprehensible explanations upon their local identifiers, thus obscuring older meanings. Despite these difficulties, the two historians also placed great trust in the possibility of accessing older meanings through careful and attentive interpretation. In particular, they viewed the oral 'sounding out' of heraldic motifs as integral to their meaning.

Beatus Rhenanus and Johannnes Aventinus conducted their historiographic work in a period when the nature of etymological argumentation was coming under increased pressure.[699] Excessively imaginative etymology was associated with scholastic methodologies for conducting spiritual exegesis. It was therefore mocked among humanist circles in parodic texts like the *Letters of Obscure Men* and Erasmus' colloquy *On Things and Names* (first printed in 1527).[700] Both texts stage ridiculous dialogues between semi-fictitious characters

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[698] Mundt, 2008, 334 (Latin), 335 (German translation). *Siquidem Germani non desinunt externas uoces torquere, donec detortae signi cent sibi aliquid. Vidi insignia aliquando Comitum Hasenburgensium, qui nunc sunt extincti, nec leporem habebant.*
[699] On etymology in the Northern Renaissance, see Borchardt, 1968.
[700] Erasmus, 1997, 39-40: 809-817.

about word origins and the deeper meanings of names. The two characters in Erasmus' colloquy are named Beatus and Boniface, referencing Erasmus' friends Beatus Rhenanus and Bonifacius Amerbach.[701] The dialogue begins with Boniface lamenting that they do not embody the meaning of their names: rich and handsome. The entire dialogue rests on the idea that a name is merely an accidental label attached to a being or an object. A name neither reveals nor determines the fundamental character of a given thing. Erasmus could not resist the opportunity to include a further dig at those who faked their nobility. Through the mouth of Boniface, he used nobility as an example to illustrate the emptiness of nominal signs. As he points out, being noble does not actually indicate nobility of character, since "Some inherit it from ancestors."[702] Equally, nobility could be bought or faked: "others buy it, some simply appropriate it." Hence, the use of such titles did not indicate strength of character. Names were merely a surface ornament.

Despite the humanist critique of scholastic etymology, they continued to practice the analysis and elaboration of words. As Franck Borchardt noted, "[f]anciful etymology clearly remained, despite all Humanist attacks, a means of embellishing a literary work, of defining a subject of dispute, of carrying out argumentation, and of coming to new knowledge."[703] Historians like Aventinus and Beatus Rhenanus were aware of the fine line between useful and overwrought etymologies. Their works are littered with cautious comments about the temporal fluctuations of language, which might cause nominal meanings to mutate rather than remain consistent throughout time.[704] Equally, they relied heavily on etymological

[701] Erasmus, 1997, 39-40: 814.
[702] Erasmus, 1997, 39-40: 814.
[703] Borchardt, 1968, 424.
[704] Flavio Biondi's concept of *mutatio* was influential on humanist historical authorship. See Mundt, 2008, 492-494.

arguments, especially when source material was limited. Rhenanus worried over this problem when he discussed the origins of the city of Basel.[705] He argued that it was "absurd" to believe that the name derived from the basilisk, simply because the beast often appeared as a heraldic supporter for the civic coat of arms. Rhenanus commented that it was "common" for cities to choose their heraldic symbols by punning on the city's name. As a result, basing an etymology on a coat of arms was pointless, because in Rhenanus' view they arose after the name was well established. Elsewhere, Rhenanus established his own etymological arguments. For correspondents like Aventinus and Rhenanus, the practice of good, historical etymology required sound judgement. Without common sense, a commentator risked tying himself in knots with ridiculous etymologies. Alternatively, "fictitious etymologies and over-clever wordplay were the province of the *logodaedalus*: a dangerously cunning wordsmith."[706] The ingenious lexicographer, philologist or poet had to take care, lest they were accused of folly or deceit.

Beatus Rhenanus largely avoided rooting his historical interpretations in heraldic source material, but he would happily introduce a coat of arms if it supplemented his analysis. In contrast, Aventinus was more invested in the status of heraldry – or at least, the ornamentation of shields – as an ancient and "sacred painting," but he was also wont to use heraldic evidence in a very gestural manner. He did not try to clarify the relationship between the etymology of the word *Wecken* and its appearance on the Bavarian coat of arms, but

[705] Mundt, 2008, 330 (Latin), 331 (German translation). *Absurdior est illorum opinio, qui a Basilisco hic reperto nomen traxisse uolunt, propterea quod uident nonnumquam appingi basiliscum, qui insignia urbis teneat. Nam non considerant hoc fuisse solenne plerisque ciuitatibus, ut insignia affingerent ad suum quaeque nomen in propria lingua alludentes. Sic florem praefert Florentia, Colmaria clauam, Schafhusia arietem. Id quod hodie passim fit ab iis, qui natalibus restituuntur a Caesare, dum imagines siue insignia affingunt, quae Princeps approbet.*
[706] Marr et al, 2018, 10.

merely introduced it as a compelling piece of familiar, visual evidence. When discussing an ancient battlefield in the vicinity of the city of Ötting, he wrote that the civic coat of arms featured a wolf under a bower, "which after the old custom (*nach der alten brauch*) is an indication of such a battle."[707] His vague reference to the "old custom" implies that the meaning of a coat of arms might change over time, whilst also alluding to the authority of antiquity underpinning his use of heraldic evidence. Aventinus could thus frame himself as a custodian of true heraldic interpretation, without having to point to absolute instances of heraldic conferral.

Like cosmographical studies, in the early sixteenth century heraldry became caught between two interpretative poles: the description of particulars and the desire to define universal constants. On the one hand, the proximity between coats of arms and verbal language meant that humanist historiographers had to acknowledge the temporal contingency of heraldry. On the other hand, the patronage system encouraged authors to continue writing panegyric glosses for noble coats of arms. Furthermore, the scholars themselves were indebted to the same honours system and sought to promote their own heraldic identities, as was the case for Conrad Celtis and Johannes Vadianus. In order to maintain the authority of heraldry, whilst also acknowledging that individual coats of arms were the product of human whim and specific circumstances, humanist authors tended to validate the general idea that heraldry was a noble and ancient form of image, without making explicit attempts to trace any one coat of arms to a particular moment of inception. Instead, they sought to root heraldic practices within classical precedents, endowing coats of arms with authority by reclaiming their antiquity.

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[707] Aventinus, 1886, 5:23. *Darumb ist das alt wappen der stat Ötting ain wolf under ainer stauden, das ist nach der alten brauch ain anzaigen solcher schlacht.*

Interpreting Heraldry: Genealogy

When fifteenth- and sixteenth-century scholars were asked to research a patron's genealogy, the examination of coats of arms was non-negotiable. As a result, heraldry came under even closer scrutiny in genealogical studies than in cosmographies. The links between coats of arms and other names that could constitute genealogical evidence might seem entirely coincidental, but often visual or nominal correspondence was trusted as a reliable witness to historical links.[708] For example, the relationship between the medieval Zähringen dynasty and the Habsburg line was asserted by Jakob Mennel, court historian, by comparing the two coats of arms: both bore a rampant lion in red and gold, the only difference being that the colour of the field and the charge were switched around.[709] Pictorial evidence – even if it was purely coincidental – could be mobilised in the formation of origin myths, as we have seen in relation to Aventinus' reading of the Bavarian coat of arms. However, the genealogical methods of historians like Mennel attracted criticism.[710] As such, it is often difficult to tell which cases would have been considered reasonable and which ridiculous in the eyes of a contemporary, humanist scholar.[711] Indeed, even when we know the views of different factions in early modern debates over the meaning of specific heraldic motifs, it can be tricky for twenty-first-century scholars to comprehend these slippery boundaries.

[708] On the practice of "etymological conclusions by analogy" in relation to a specific genealogical project, see Hecht, 2019, 155-157.
[709] Schadek and Schmid, 1986, 110-113, 311. Ladislaus Sunthaym was the first to try and propose this link: Mertens, 1986, 159-163.
[710] On Stabius' critique, see Lachsitzer, 1888, 20-28. Mertens, 1988, 139, argues that Mennel was more skilled than Stabius at balancing historical rigour with Maximilian's desires for his genealogy.
[711] On this historical problem, see Enenkel and Ottenheym, 2019, 146-148.

This is the case for Maximilian I's genealogical projects more broadly.[712] The extensive heraldic pedigree that was meticulously depicted as part of the monumental *Triumphal Arch* woodcut was the final product of years of genealogical research by Maximilian's court *literati*. The genealogy was carefully calibrated to bolster Habsburg claims to imperial rule, both by drawing connections to the Roman empire and elaborating the links between Austria and Franconia. The Franconian connection was particularly key, because it reinforced the relationship between the Habsburgs and Burgundian rule, as well as connecting Maximilian to Roman antiquity through the desirable Trojan pedigree of the French crown. As Thomas Schauerte has illustrated, Maximilian's large-scale genealogical projects were steeped in the heraldic studies of his father, Friedrich, whose fabulous Viennese *Wappenturm* remains the most ambitious sculpted heraldic cycle of the fifteenth century (fig. 132).[713] However, Friedrich's genealogical programme was mainly fictional; out of 107 coats of arms, only 14 were real. This imposing visualisation of the Habsburg pedigree provided a material counterpart to some important documents, the so-called *Privilegium maius,* which were grants of freedom to the Duchy of Austria allegedly written by Julius Caesar and Nero. In fact, the letters were fourteenth-century forgeries, but Friedrich promoted their contents, not least because they contained assertions about the antiquity of Austria, connecting the ducal seat to a genealogy that stretched into the deep past.[714] The *Wappenturm* was a laborious visualisation of what this lengthy pedigree might have looked like in the language of heraldry, even though this involved making up multitudes of fake coats of arms.

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[712] On the genealogical research, see Lachsitzer, 1888; Zimmerman, 2011; Kellner and Webers, 2007; Madar, 2003; Mertens, 1988; Eheim, 1959.
[713] Schauerte, 2011a.
[714] Schauerte, 2011a, 354-356.

The fictional heraldry on the *Wappenturm* ought not to be understood as a cynical historical falsification, for although the design leans heavily on the visual authority of genealogical diagrams, at no point was it presented as an objective historical document. However, the main heraldic and genealogical sources that fuelled Friedrich's historiographical projects were criticised by Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini for their fabulous nature.[715] This made it difficult for Maximilian to adopt his father's apocryphal heraldic cycle without alteration. The re-negotiation of the traditional Habsburg genealogy provides at least some insight into the shifting approach to historical research that occurred within Maximilian's intellectual circles. Maximilian's triumphal arch project mostly features real or well-known coats of arms, such as the heraldic toad, which was thought to have been an ancient Roman military emblem, and the much-mythologised *fleur-de-lis,* which had the advantage of being so ubiquitous in heraldry as to be a believable charge, while also evoking the French monarchy. The scholars conducting research into Maximilian's genealogy were at least concerned with the appearance of historical objectivity through the depiction of plausible, carefully rendered coats of arms.

In a presentation drawing for Maximilian, the genealogy stretched further back in time to Hector the Trojan, who was depicted bearing a heraldic lion that was obviously meant to echo the future Habsburg lion. However, these extra ancestors were not included in the final print, possibly because they would make the family line look too excessive and hence undermine its authenticity. In any case, by connecting Maximilian to ancient Franconia, the legendary Trojan origins were implied without requiring explicit visual representation. Heraldry was an extremely useful tool for making such allusions without having to state the links too clearly.

[715] Schauerte, 2011a, 351-352; Lhotsky, 1967, 43-44.

All of the coats of arms represented were at least plausible, but also served to unify the narrative and make it visually persuasive. The court artists and designers had to strike a careful balance to ensure that the pedigree consolidated the foundations of all the Habsburg claims to imperial rule, without being so extensive as to appear meaningless.[716] Genealogies were a form of visual argument in which heraldry played an essential, para-textual role, because they could covertly imply historical connections.

In her thesis on visual strategies in Maximilian's memorial projects, Suzanne Madar acknowledged the uneasy status of heraldic evidence, observing that "[h]eraldry supports genealogy [...], yet is clearly a separate system with separate logic and history."[717] Madar struggles to pin down the exact nature of this "logic and history." I would argue that this uncertainty arose from the open-ended nature of coats of arms. On the one hand, heraldry could be used as historical evidence, but on the other, it was a consciously rhetorical art form on a par with encomiastic poetry. The court historian Jakob Mennel made use of the duality of heraldic imagery in his *Fürstliche Chronik* about the genealogy of the Habsburgs, particularly in relation to Maximilian's rampant lion and peacock-feathered crest. For example, Mennel claimed he had visited the site of a miracle involving the Habsburg shield, which had survived an all-encompassing fire in 1507: "only the outermost claws of the first foot of the red lion were a little charred, but hardly."[718] All the other shields were burnt, endowing the Habsburg lion with a quasi-divine, iconic status in addition to its genealogical function.

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[716] Maximilian was alert to the possibilities of heraldic evidence, instructing Ladislaus Sunthaym to pursue his investigation of the Zähringer coat of arms, in case it was associated with more than one territory: Mertens, 1986, 159.
[717] Madar, 2003, 71n63.
[718] Mennel, 1518, II: fol.94^{r}-94^{v}. Transcribed by Kathol, 1999. *Vßgenome[n] die vordern/ kläwlin der ersten fues des Rotte[n]/ löwens/ waren ain wenig besengtt/ aber nit vast.*

Mennel also visualised the first count of Habsburg, Ottpert, with a peacock as an attribute and explained that the Habsburg adoption of the bird arose from their Trojan heritage, since in pagan rituals the peacock was linked to the worship of Juno and Jupiter (fig. 133).[719] According to Mennel, the positive associations conveyed by the peacock lingered through the generations, even after the decline of paganism. However, he then layered this historical explanation with allegorical interpretations of the peacock, emphasising the sanctity of the bird. Finally, he added an etymological argument, suggesting that the coat of arms might be linked to the first prince of *Gallia Belgica*, called Bavo, which sounds like the Latin word *pavo*, for peacock.[720] The peacock crest thus provided an extremely fruitful and flexible starting point for Mennel's genealogical web, allowing him to suggest that the Habsburgs may have had historic connections to the Brabant, but that the feathers were initially chosen due to the sanctity of the peacock in Trojan culture. To top it off, Mennel cited Biblical texts to evidence the longstanding association between the peacock and divinity, imbuing the Habsburg crest with a transhistorical prestige. Mennel's heraldic interpretation slipped between the poetic and the historical, endowing the Habsburg line with specific moments of historic transferral *and* a claim to transcendental, divinely ordained rulership.

Of all the court historians, Mennel's genealogy attracted the most criticism from Johannes Stabius' pen, who primarily attacked the contradictory nature of his historical evidence. In a satirical image, Stabius mocked another genealogist, Abbot Trithemius, whose work he felt Mennel had accepted too readily, by depicting him with three different heads, representing the composite, confused nature of his methodological approach (fig. 134). Stabius' criticism

[719] Zimmerman, 2011, 374-378.
[720] Zimmerman, 2011, 383-384.

of their genealogical methods is comparable to the criticism levelled at authors who failed to deploy prudently the rhetorical technique of *copia,* leading to 'chimerical' creations.[721] The technique of using *copia* involved constant elaboration upon a basic principle or sentence and was an important element in the humanist practice of exegetical commentary.[722] However, excessive use of *copia* could indicate a lack of authorial control and judgement. In Stabius' eyes, Mennel and Trithemius had worked themselves into a web of different genealogical accounts without displaying rigorous reasoning or acknowledging the inconsistencies.

Mennel did argue that he had exercised judgement when trying to tease out contradictions in his sources, but evidently this did not satisfy Stabius.[723] He accused Mennel's genealogy of being a 'Trojan Horse', a clever way of demonstrating its internal inconsistencies while also alluding to the Trojan inheritance.[724] More tellingly, Stabius also attacked one of the figures that Mennel had introduced to the genealogy, called Bubo, accusing him of falsifying ancestors to fill gaps in the lineage. As though mocking Mennel's etymological logic, Stabius exclaimed that he had implied that the illustrious Austrian line was intermingled with that of an eagle owl (*bubones*), a thoroughly ignoble bird.[725] For humanist scholars like Stabius, punning wordplay was appropriate within oratorial works when advancing an argument, but completely inappropriate within historical methodology.[726] Since heraldry could be a prompt for both types of interpretation, it was very difficult to fix the 'meaning' of a coat of arms within a textual commentary. Left alone as a silent image on a family tree, however, a coat of

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[721] Full quote in Lachsitzer, 1888, 21n2. Stabius accuses them of producing *chimera:* "Sed cedat chimera."
[722] Marr et al, 2018, 9.
[723] Kellner and Webers, 2007, 129, 143.
[724] Lachzitzer, 1888, 22.
[725] Lachsitzer, 1888, 24. Kellner and Webers, 2007, 143-144.
[726] Similarly, in Lorenzo Valla's critique of *De insigniis,* a legal tract about heraldry, he purposefully used animalistic language drawn from the heraldic realm to refer to his opponents, demonstrating his rhetorical command of the visual system that he sought to dismantle. See Mackenzie, 2019, 1199.

arms could do a lot of heavy lifting on behalf of the genealogical argument without being too vulnerable to the weapons of textual criticism.

Conclusion: Humanism and Heraldic Aesthetics

For too long, scholars have assumed that heraldry and humanism were "incompatible."[727] Certainly, when coats of arms were scrutinised according to the new standards of humanist source analysis, their authority could become unstable. However, if they were treated as a prompt for prudent allegorical or poetic exegesis, then the connotations that were drawn out could be potent. Similarly, as silent images, they could be treated as self-explanatory, supplementary additions to historical arguments. Lorenzo Valla and other Italian humanists sought to reform their historical and legal writings by aligning them with antique exemplars and this extended to a philological interest in the classical equivalents of heraldry and personal devices. In the German contexts, humanists also became interested in the historicity of symbols of power, including military vestments and coats of arms. In doing so, they formulated new readings of coats of arms through reference to classical models. The flexibility of 'the heraldic' as an ill-defined genre of image allowed the German humanists to reference multiple authoritative prototypes, including the round form of antique shields, Homeric ekphrasis, the continuity of ubiquitous charges like the lily and the axehead, the neo-Latin poetic eclogue and the ancient practice of astronomy. Whereas Valla was anxious to clarify the specific terminology for authoritative symbols of power in the classical world in order to regulate the rule of law, for the courtly German humanists the poetic ambiguities

[727] Mackenzie, 2019, 1194.

surrounding coats of arms were part of their appeal, since these mysterious "sacred paintings" required their interpretative expertise.

The difficulty that humanists faced when categorising and defining heraldic images in textual or legal terms was exactly what made them so compelling and persuasive in non-verbal contexts. Their visual ambiguity made them flexible and therefore extremely resilient, despite all the scholarly wrangling over their meanings. These disputes about heraldic interpretation had an indirect influence upon the design, style and content of heraldic images. The heraldic instruments discussed in this chapter seem evidence enough that sustained humanist engagement with historiographical and cosmographical research certainly sparked the production of a novel new visual genre, in which coats of arms were reimagined as mathematical devices. Moreover, many of the scholars in the Celtis circle were concerned with their own heraldic identities, many of which drew on the extensive mythological and classicising iconographies forged by their interdisciplinary studies. These complex heraldic iconographies only functioned properly within the context of other visual genres, including personal devices, philosophical prints and portrait medals. The fluid boundaries between heraldry and other communicative images allowed for an intense period of heraldic innovation, even if it ultimately led to a minor 'crisis' of heraldry as lawyers, humanists and antiquarians tried to regulate, bureaucratise and better define the parameters of coats of arms.

The creators of the heraldic instruments – Andreas Stiborius, Johannes Stabius and Peter Apian – seemed to have relished the ambiguity of heraldic images, affirming the notion that they viewed their creations as poetic rather than as verification of particular historical or astronomical ideas. The heraldic instruments of Johannes Stabius and Peter Apian may be understood as a form of visual poetic exegesis, since they show-off the ingenuity of their

authors in their ability to draw out co-incidences. Peter Apian's antiquarian familiarity with the *fascis,* his attentiveness to the classical connotations of the poplar leaf, and the fact that he purposefully toyed with the semantic overlap between *insignia* and *signa,* demonstrate that the lack of philological clarity, which so irked Lorenzo Valla, could be a productive ambiguity for the Austrian and Bavarian scholars. They utilised the multifaceted nature of the term *insignia* and its synonyms, like *clypeus* (shield) and *signa* (signs) in order to infuse the restrictive bounds of mathematical diagrams with heraldic authority, broadly construed.

The instruments were persuasive because these co-incidences of form connoted the authority of mathematical precision, cosmic structures, antiquity and inheritance, without claiming to prove anything concrete about the patrons' coats of arms. As instruments, they are a typical example of what Jim Bennett has called the "geometric theoric."[728] A theoric does not model a scientific hypothesis, but instead provides a systematic representation of information. A map, for example, is a theoric, because the topographical details are transcribed systematically through cartographic projections. As a result, the theoric has more to do "with doing rather than knowing."[729] The instruments were not intended to prove universal mathematical principles to readers, just as they were not intended to prove anything novel about the origins of particular coats of arms. Their persuasiveness arose from their functionality, as precise encapsulations of geometric information.

Students could learn the functions of the instruments through hands-on interactions with the prints, maybe even personalising their version of a design with colour or additional labelling. Each time the instrument design was used or re-produced in a different medium, the user would re-trace the constituent parts of the heraldic motif. By staging this repeated interaction,

[728] Bennett, 2003.
[729] Bennett, 2003, 136.

the heraldic instruments established a new way of spreading the reputation of a patron's heraldry, embedding it in such a way that it was very difficult to separate the instruments from the heraldic charges.[730] Stabius and Apian seem to have recognised that heraldic images were akin to geometric theorics, since they are both communicative types of image, underpinned by (loosely) systematic principles of representation. They are both keys for extracting information, but they themselves do not represent undisputable facts or universal principles. Their meanings are and were wholly contingent upon the actions and inclinations of a user.

Just as maps, tables of latitudes and time conversions infused descriptive geography, travel accounts and Scriptural commentaries with an air of mathematical certainty, so the heraldic instruments shored-up the ambiguous status of coats of arms through the reassuring precision of geometric relations. When historiographers debated the correct and proper methodologies for interpreting their sources, the timeless prestige of heraldry threatened to be undermined by the revelation of their culturally-specific – and often underwhelming – origins. The heraldic instruments reinstated the transcendental, cosmic status of coats of arms, by transforming them into keys for reading the world, rather than keys for identifying individuals. I am not suggesting that Johannes Stabius or Peter Apian designed their instruments as a conscious defence of heraldry. However, given their involvement in contemporaneous debates about the relationship between historiography and poetry, mathematical versus descriptive cosmography, and about the decorum of source analysis, their heraldic instruments do evidence a desire to bring coats of arms up-to-date using the latest techniques for visualising authority and reliability. The ambiguity of the heraldic was advantageous in the design of

[730] This is similar to Koerner's idea about 'tethering' trademarks to pictorial designs: Koerner, 2002, 27.

diagrammatic images like geometric instruments and genealogical tables, both of which are designed to represent relationships between elements, rather than specific ideas about the individual elements themselves. Coats of arms, like lines of projection on a geometric instrument, are relational images, capable of structuring the reception of information, but less effective as storehouses of content. Like ornamental motifs more broadly, they are compelling, rather than evidential, types of image.

For the Austrian and Bavarian scholarly community, the exposure of contradictions within the field of heraldic studies created a dynamic tension eliciting the production of novel forms. This narrative recalls the work of Christopher Wood, who, in his individual scholarship and his collaborative work with Alexander Nagel, has argued that in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries there was a renewed focus on the ability of certain artefacts to 'fold time' or to embody plural models of temporality.[731] Importantly, in Wood's monograph he focussed on the earlier generation of the scholarly community forged around Celtis. He also came to the conclusion that the period from around 1490-1530 was one of intensive renewal and fascination with the 'anachronic' artefact, a made object that drew its authority from two contradictory models of origination: first, the particular moment of production by an identifiable human agent rooted in historical time and second, a lengthy chain of succession connecting the artefact to a point of origination in deep time. The 'performative' theory of origination found its fullest expression in the modernist ideal of the artist as author, whereas the best exemplar of the 'substitionary' model was the *vera icones,* the 'true image', an icon whose formal origin was the direct impression of a person or object. The scholarly assessment of heraldry in the Renaissance definitely brought these two contradictory impulses

[731] Wood, 2008; Nagel and Wood, 2005a and 2005b; Nagel and Wood, 2010.

to the fore, since coats of arms could be mobilised as evidence of particular worldly transfers of authority *or* in order to elevate the armiger to a transcendental status by emphasising the generic antiquity of shield ornamentation. As Wood and Nagel have suggested, this internal dialectic created the condition for artistic revival, even if "the efforts of Renaissance artists to endow their own works with such time-resistant capacities became [...] the laboratory of a new concept of authorship."[732] In the case of the Austrian and Bavarian scholarly community, the desire to re-emphasise the ancient, transcendental nature of heraldic motifs did lead to the highly innovative treatment of coats of arms in both text and image, in order to promote the author as *vates,* the ingenious interpreter of mysterious signs. However, *contra* Wood and Nagel, it was not really the reproductive print that drove this interest in the multiple temporalities embodied by heraldic images. Instead, the new emphasis on the rigorous analysis of material sources in scholarship led the charge; print was simply one major outlet for disseminating the fruits of these new ways of thinking.

At its heart, Wood and Nagel's theoretical framework transforms all artefacts into "events", that is, into an ongoing series of encounters between human agents and objects. In considering the occasion of the artwork as opposed to its objecthood, Wood and Nagel wished to reinvigorate the art-historical recognition of artistic aura, to remind us to acknowledge that artefacts command human attention for reasons beyond their financial value or institutional status.[733] This is important for the study of heraldic imagery, precisely because coats of arms are generally interpreted by historians as pure expressions of power and hierarchy, with little to no aesthetic appeal. Clearly, for at least one intellectual community in the early sixteenth century, coats of arms were compelling and charismatic images that

[732] Nagel and Wood, 2005b, 430.
[733] Nagel and Wood, 2010, 8-9.

demanded cerebral attention. At the same time, their engagement with heraldic forms cannot be untangled from the legal, financial and social structures governing their worlds. For many scholars, their knowledge of heraldic matters led to ennoblement; for some, like Peter Apian, it resulted in their legal right to grant official heraldic patents for a fee. Hence, as art historians seeking to understand the aesthetic or intellectual appeal of particular objects for people in the past, we must be careful not to be so enchanted by the aura of an artefact that we fail to recognise the relationship between aesthetics and systems of value. The material and financial networks in which artefacts circulated are inseparable from the cognitive experiences that they elicited.

In returning one final time to the heraldic instruments, let us consider the relationship between their aesthetic appeal and their temporal status. As printed instruments on paper that could be assembled in three-dimensions by users, the heraldic instruments staged the interaction between viewer and image as an event. As such, it was not necessary to pin the authority of the coat of arms onto a specific point of origin; the repeated use of the instrument made it familiar, binding heraldry within a "mutually sustaining web of relations rather than an association with an authoritative model."[734] Stabius and Apian's recognition of the possibilities of print – both from a pedagogical and a financial perspective – allowed them to generate a new kind of interaction between viewers and coats of arms.[735] By making coats of arms useful and functional, the printed instruments renewed the relevance of heraldry for a community of viewers, at a time when it perhaps seemed more and more irrelevant.[736] The innovative treatment of heraldry was made possible due to the heightened attention that was

[734] Powell, 2006, 710.
[735] On interactive prints and the cultivation of new audiences, see Schmidt, 2017.
[736] Note, for example, the correspondence between the Behaim brothers about the lack of authority of coats of arms by the early sixteenth century (discussed in chapter 1, 69).

paid to coats of arms by scholars during this period. Even though that level of scrutiny threatened to undermine the authority of coats of arms, it also created the conditions necessary for visual innovation, particularly the freedom to rethink older graphic forms.[737] The heraldic instruments, along with the other novel heraldic designs discussed throughout this thesis, established new audiences for coats of arms and cultivated communal curiosity in the function and social role fulfilled by heraldry. In exploiting the epistemic potential of heraldic forms, scholars invited a greater range of beholders to engage with and relate to coats of arms.

[737] Marr and Oosterhoff, 2020, have suggested that early modern intellectual controversies, such as the Copernican hypothesis, may have freed astronomical instrument designers from the strictures of established forms. The conditions of scholarly controversy, i.e. rethinking traditional boundaries of knowledge, may indirectly create an environment in which all kinds of innovative developments are able to flourish.

Conclusion

This thesis has provided a much-needed reassessment of the prevailing scholarly assumption that the sixteenth century was a crisis moment for heraldry. The varied examples have shown that 'crisis' is far too strong a word for what was actually an innovative and transformative period in the history of heraldic display. The proliferation of heraldry in daily bureaucracy on a local and international level does not seem to have stunted heraldic efficacy. If anything, as heraldry became more common on paper than on the battlefield in the late middle ages, it was subject to more pictorial innovation in the hands of artisans, clerks and scholars. The argument that heraldry was undermined by more successful competitors, like emblems, devices and portraiture, also does not stand up to scrutiny. Coats of arms often coexisted alongside other devices and the boundaries between them were untheorized and permeable, at least in the first half of the sixteenth century. Artists and humanists used heraldry as a means of self-expression on the public stage, even as they promoted the collation and production of emblematic ornaments. These socially mobile individuals had a particularly innovative relationship with heraldry, partly because they were often new armigers, but also because they were thinking deeply about images and signs.

My research shows that heraldry was not at odds with the culture of the Renaissance, nor were coats of arms a sign of stagnant medievalism. Even the most stereotypical representatives of 'Renaissance men' – humanists and famed artists – were engaged with heraldry and laid claim to heraldic expertise. Coats of arms were not limited to the nobility, so to approach heraldry as a sign of social conservatism in tension with the rise of an educated 'middling sort' is anachronistic. There were heraldic networks at nearly all levels of

society and users of heraldry were happy to adapt coats of arms to suit their needs. Far from being a heavily regulated sign-system, heraldic forms were open to manipulation, mockery and creativity. Depending on the occasion, users invested time, money and aspirations in depictions of coats of arms.

At a basic level, I have contributed to our understanding of Renaissance heraldry by gathering a wide-ranging selection of objects and sources that have not been considered alongside each other before. Some of the objects and texts will be familiar to Renaissance scholars, but even these renowned sources have received limited attention for what they tell us about the heraldic mode. They have also never been brought into dialogue with the more neglected, humble and surprising examples examined here. I have highlighted textual extracts that reference heraldry, some of which were found well off the usual paths pursued by heraldic scholars; these texts provide a much richer understanding of the constant, daily presence of heraldry in early modern lives. Heraldry experienced limited theoretical attention as a cohesive branch of knowledge during this period, especially compared to other visual genres, which is why it is crucial that scholars of heraldry do not limit their research to armorials, *Wappenbriefe,* tournament books and 'official' heraldic practices.

My thesis has demonstrated that the study of heraldry as an artful visual type is possible, provided we let individual objects and sources guide our research methods, rather than beginning with intuitions and pre-conceived assumptions. I am well aware that there are other fascinating case studies to be located and researched that were not included in this thesis. In particular, it would be profitable to seek more examples of heraldic graffiti, painted coats of arms, sculpted heraldry in architectural settings, fictive heraldry in manuscripts and maybe even marginal doodles in books. Finding these case studies would require a lot of

explorative, time-consuming fieldwork, but my research has succeeded in laying the groundwork for pursuing these themes.

In posing more expansive questions, I have revealed promising avenues for further research questions about heraldry. The two court cases that I highlighted concerning disputes over heraldry suggest that there is much more material to be mined in the legal records by historians of patenting and trademarking. A thorough account of the regulation and institutional function of heraldry in the German *Reich* of the sixteenth century is a monograph in the waiting. The geographic and temporal scope could also be extended, for instance to consider the reception of the imaginative heraldic designs explored here in the Netherlands and beyond. After c.1550, the practice of keeping *alba amicorum* (friendship albums) grew from its origins in Evangelical German universities to a fully-fledged genre that was especially popular among travelling scholars in the Netherlands, providing a new demand for customised heraldic images. The transmission of heraldic models could be traced through the spread of *alba.* In addition, the instances I have highlighted when theologians and humanists wrangled with heraldry suggests that coats of arms are a perfect case study for examining changing attitudes to secular images in a period of reform. All these recommendations for further study show that heraldry warrants more scholarly attention across a range of historical disciplines.

My thesis has not simply demonstrated the centrality of heraldry in pre-modern Europe. More importantly from an art historical perspective, I have underscored the aesthetic and artful qualities of heraldry that delighted historic viewers and makers: technical material knowledge of armour, subversion, ornamental caprice, *varietas,* chivalric heroism, polyvalence, concision and witty compositional solutions. Artists showed off their detailed,

technical knowledge of armour in prints and drawings, with heraldry providing a frequent outlet for displays of armorial bravura. Other scholars have shown how the mimetic rendering of shimmering armour in paint was celebrated as a demonstration of artistic prowess, but I have illustrated that this went well beyond paint.[738] Virtuosic artists like Albrecht Dürer exploited the various textures found in heraldic designs in monochrome, from the sheen of metal to cascades of foliate mantling to the feathers of an avian crest. The obsession with *varietas* as a crucial component of ornamental prowess may be seen in heraldic designs, too, where artists constantly sought new ways to manipulate the basic geometric form of the shield. The prestige of metalwork and armour production in the Holy Roman Empire contributed to the centrality of heraldic forms in artistic repertoires. Shield and helm types appeared alongside the human body in a number of German *Kunstbücher,* attesting to the perceived importance of the heraldic vocabulary.

Beyond a love of armour and weaponry, two-dimensional heraldic images were relished for their own particular aesthetic qualities. With the rising popularity of figural imagery centred on the human body, artists and their clients sought new ways to incorporate bodies in heraldic designs, either through shield supporters or through ambitious narrative scenes framing the coat of arms. Heraldic compositions incorporated both inanimate objects and anthropomorphic motifs, allowing artists to toy with the internal, pictorial logic of heraldry. Albrecht Dürer, Niklaus Manuel, Hans Baldung, Urs Graf and Hans Holbein the Younger all explored this aspect of heraldic design, often producing ambiguous, mannered ornamental caprices with complex registers of address. Indeed, designers pursued playfulness and polyvalence when working with heraldry. For instance, Hans Burgkmair's personal coat of

[738] Raymond, 2012, 521.

arms distilled his professional interests in chiaroscuro through a suitably ingenious counterchanged bear motif. Punning was deeply embedded in medieval heraldry through the tradition of canting arms, but from the late fifteenth century artists employed visual and verbal polysemy as a way of enlivening heraldic designs. The Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet translated the humour of mock-blazon into a pictorial mode and Dürer may have selected a common pun when he chose to use a crowing rooster as his fictitious crest. 'Accidental' encounters between terrifying beasts and serene maidens were alighted upon whenever possible. The heraldic instruments examined in the final chapter were an intellectual celebration of heraldic versatility, making visible new rhymes and resonances between simple heraldic motifs, mathematical relationships, historical authority and the patterns of the cosmos. The increasing cultural authority of visual design and skilled composition is palpable in these examples, demonstrating that coats of arms were perfectly suited to 'Renaissance' sensibilities.

Furthermore, the notion that heraldry was too communal for the era of the individual is misplaced. Communal networks remained central to all aspects of personal identity and public life. Social mobility increased one's association with complex, interlocking communal identities, which may have required a greater range of devices for different functions. Many artists cultivated their signatory identities alongside a family coat of arms and even a personal motto, illustrating how heraldry retained its function but was complemented by a growing number of alternatives. Indeed, by adopting heraldic imagery, artists sought to convey the nobility, pedigree or practical skill of their professional identities. As we have seen, the messages embedded in heraldic images were varied according to the projected character of the artist or designer: Dürer treated coats of arms like antique relics with a particularly Nuremberg inflection; Manuel localised Dürer's heraldry using personal and Bernese

iconographies; Graf brought his coarse soldierly identity into his heraldic designs. Coats of arms could be calibrated according to their intended function and desired mood. Equally, they were already deeply embedded in communal practices. To determine with any certainty whether individuals were more likely to opt for a non-heraldic sign would require the collation of vast quantities of data and contextually sensitive analysis, which was well beyond the scope of my thesis. If such an investigation were ever attempted, it might show that individuals did lean away from heraldry as the number of signatory options expanded, but I do not believe that such a slow, preferential switch could be described as a 'crisis'.

The phrase 'crisis of heraldry' purposefully echoes Lawrence Stone's influential publication on the 'crisis of the nobility' in early modernity. Revisions of Stone's argument have stressed that the European nobility were not endangered or rendered impotent by the social changes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, although some of them *perceived* their rank to be under threat and consequently expressed their insecurity. Comparably, there are textual sources explored in my thesis that suggest critical attitudes towards heraldry, but these need to be placed in context, rather than taken as evidence of a 'crisis of heraldry'. Italian humanists and their northern counterparts mocked a number of heraldic texts, which has led scholars to assume that humanists rejected heraldry. However, as I have suggested throughout the thesis, humanists were suspicious of older scholarly methods used by heraldic practitioners, rather than coats of arms more generally. Humanist philological practices clashed with medieval heraldic encomia, but humanists still relied on noble patronage networks and frequently encountered coats of arms in their work. When scholars like Erasmus attacked heraldic imagery, complaining about the violence of rampant lions and snarling eagles, they were actually condemning noble feuding practices, the glorification of war and individuals who projected a false image of knightly chivalry. In short, criticisms of

heraldry were motivated by wider social anxieties, especially about noblemen, rather than a desire to eradicate coats of arms. Equally, critiques of heraldry were fairly formulaic, suggesting that authors were adopting the established literary practice of deploying heraldry in encomia – speeches for apportioning praise and blame. Like burlesqued coats of arms, the critique of heraldry had a medieval, literary precedent, which was a larger influence on these sources than genuine anxieties about heraldic decline.

However, I have proposed that the widened engagement with heraldry sometimes led to destabilising scrutiny as well as innovation. Humanist philological, genealogical and antiquarian methods struggled to tame the slippery, multifaceted nature of heraldic meaning. This resulted in quite novel attempts to use coats of arms as source material to bridge gaps in historical knowledge. It also contributed to the pioneering use of heraldry in print projects, like Maximilian I's various genealogical projects and the development of heraldic paper instruments. Coats of arms were put under further pressure by Reformation debates about temporal versus spiritual authority. Heraldry was even drawn in to discussions about real presence in the Eucharist, demonstrating one way in which intellectual reckoning over images and signification sparked renewed attention to secular as well as sacred visual genres. The fracturing of faith communities initiated by reform movements also fostered the mobilisation of heraldic display as groups tried to visualise their reconfigured brotherhoods. Scrutiny and changing group dynamics led to experimentation with coats of arms.

From a material cultural perspective, print played a crucial role in the transformation of heraldry. The speculative nature of print provided a channel through which exclusive, elite cultures of literary humour and luxurious manuscript illumination practices could slowly seep out to more diverse audiences and contexts. Print encouraged pioneering artists to re-invent

localised or regionally specific iconographies, like coats of arms, for a more general audience. Similarly, print fostered new outlets for the circulation of knowledge, such as Peter Apian's extremely popular publications on practical mathematics. The heraldry of Apian's patrons were also channelled through these networks, as the printing press carved out new means for amplifying the magnificence of patrons to a wider audience. As the sixteenth century progressed, however, the commercial success of the printing press and the attendant rise of large publishing houses contributed to a notable decline in the production of innovative, single-sheet heraldic prints. Coats of arms were still printed as part of book collations, but they were mostly recycled from older images or repackaged for new purposes, like *Stammbücher*, rather than being the starting point for original visual invention.

In the process of making heraldic prints for a speculative market, artists began to envisage their own practices of transmission and emulation through heraldic subject matter, which was especially appropriate since coats of arms were closely tied to inheritance and lineage. Some artists, like Sebald Beham, were well aware of the irony of producing generic depictions of coats of arms in print, given that coats of arms were meant to be unique identifiers for individuals and institutions. In this sense, print did draw attention to the anomalous relationship between authoritative, exclusive imagery and mechanised reproduction. Printed fictive coats of arms foregrounded the mediating presence of the artist, who in turn invited viewers to take an active role in the ongoing process of transmission. However, these conversational prints did not introduce a newfound understanding about the *temporal* origins of coats of arms, as Christopher Wood has argued for monuments and icons. Instead, print fostered new modes of pictorial address between artist and speculative recipient, which naturally complicated the established role of the artist as silent steward of heraldic information for a known client.

Meanwhile, it was not print, but antiquarian and philological impulses that prompted interest in the temporal origins of coats of arms. However, unlike in the Italian context, where the idea of 'medieval heraldry' was slowly defined through humanist pens, German scholars were less keen to distance themselves from the medieval past. Heraldry was considered a primitive type of image that could attest to the antiquity of the German people, rather than a medieval practice in need of reform. Urban chroniclers provided accounts of the historic origin myths of their civic coats of arms, whilst acknowledging any uncertainties about their authenticity. Through careful quotation and judicious deployment, the mythology surrounding coats of arms was considered amusing and engaging, rather than misleading. Visualising historic heraldry required an informed imagination, just as convincing etymological arguments were prudently innovative. If heraldic images appear 'anachronic', then this is probably because artists were trying to emulate the rhetorical ideal of an experienced, artful author, capable of balancing imagination with reason and a firm sense of occasion. Print rendered the occasion of receipt more uncertain, but it did not significantly transform contemporary understandings of the historicity of heraldry.

I have stressed throughout the thesis that heraldic images, like all types of ornament, are relational. Coats of arms accumulate meaning in groups, when they are transferred, appropriated, endowed or swapped. Heraldic designs were often the result of co-authorship, as individuals exchanged armorial sources, solicited requests, managed the desires of patrons and delegated sections of drawn compositions to different artisans. By emphasising the collaborative agency of individuals in the creation and deployment of heraldic images, I have countered the scholarly tendency to assume that coats of arms exuded some kind of mystical force or aura for pre-modern people. To be sure, heraldry commanded attention and was used

as a means of visualising power, influence, pedigree and friendship, but individuals were cognisant of the human motivations and actions behind the signs. Heraldic stained glass panels were part of a growing secular gift economy and their designs were modified in order to suit the nature of an exchange. If anything, heraldic designs became more discursive, not less eloquent, during the period under study, as artists and armigers sought to adapt coats of arms for new occasions and functions. Artists became more confident about their authority in matters of heraldic design and increasingly inserted their presence in the mediation of these images, through witty conceits, clever compositions and stylistic *varietas.* Indeed, this rhetorical model of ornamental authorship provides a period-specific account of Gombrich's theory of the shield as 'sign' and the heraldic framework as 'flourish,' in place of any psychological explanations.

To speak of 'imagination' foregrounds the mental worlds and thought processes of individuals. The cognitive agency of an individual is at once independent from *and* conditioned by their contextually specific experience of the world. Although there is continuity between Renaissance perceptions of heraldry and our own, we now approach the same images through very different imaginative frameworks: in the heraldic imagination of today, coats of arms might prompt questions about anthropomorphism, abstraction, word-image distinctions, medium-specificity, artistic autonomy, and modernity versus historicity. Artists and their associates in the Renaissance also contemplated the peculiar nature of insignia, but with different concerns in mind. Instead, when they thought with heraldry, they referred to contemporary ideas: of ornament and rhetoric; of emulation and inheritance, antiquity and prestige; of the boundaries between artifice and naturalism, the witty interplay of word and image, and the relative merits of concision and elaboration; of their professional authority as purveyors of images and new commercial opportunities available to them; even

of their personal salvation. These were the broader lines of thought that informed the heraldic imagination in the Renaissance, which this thesis has sought to illuminate.

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Fig. 1. Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, *Peasant women beneath a basket with a coat of arms bearing a sickle*, 1473-1477. Drypoint, 8.1cm x 8.1cm. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum.

Fig. 2. The Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, *Courtly man with garlic heraldry and rat*, 1473-1477. Drypoint. 9.5cm x 8.1cm. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum.

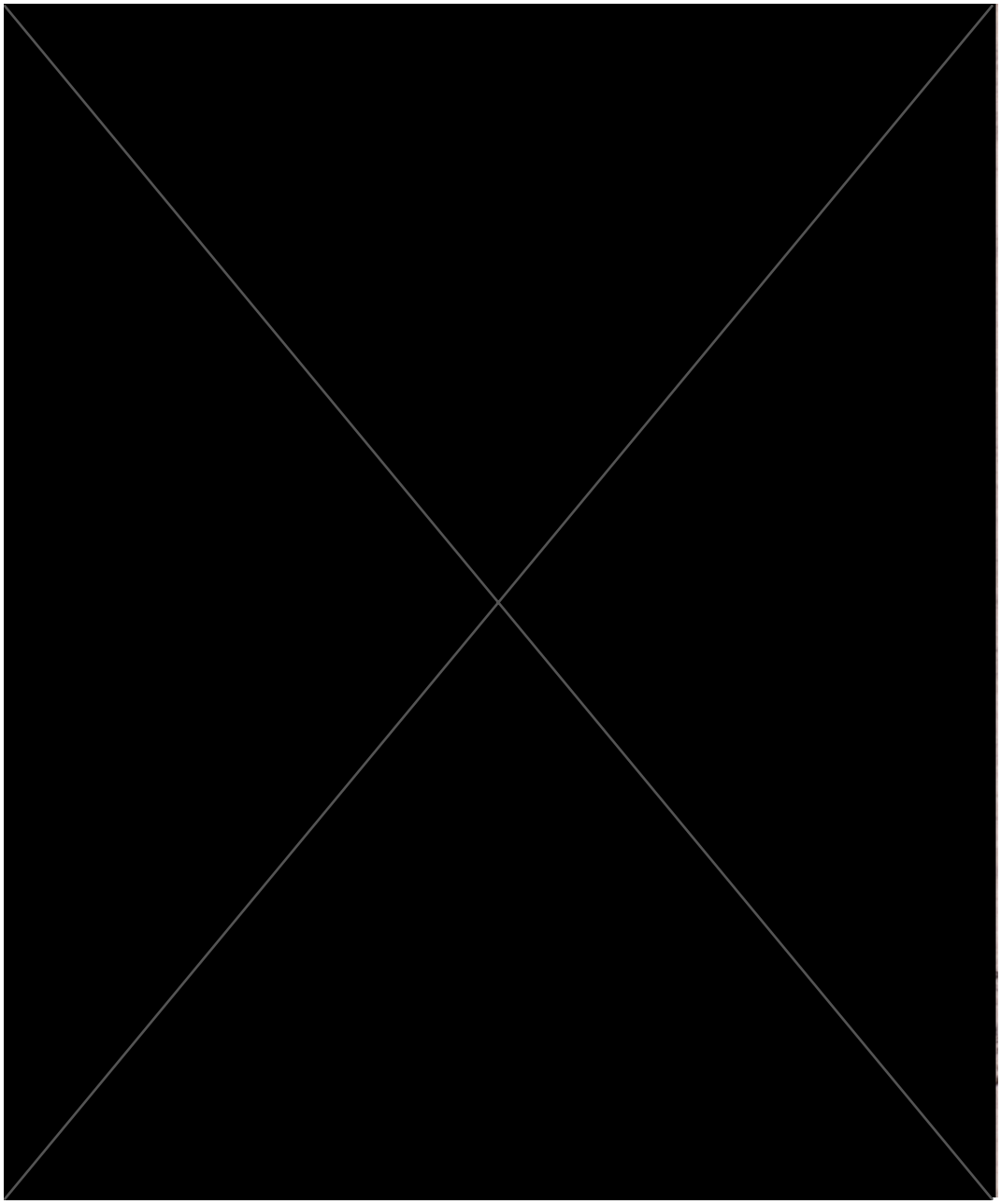

Fig. 3. The Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, *Woman with radish heraldry*, c.1475. Drypoint, 9.5cm x 7.9cm. Dresden: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen.

Fig. 4. Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, *Coat of arms with spinster and shrieking bird*, 1488-1492. Drypoint, 12.5cm x 7.8cm. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum.

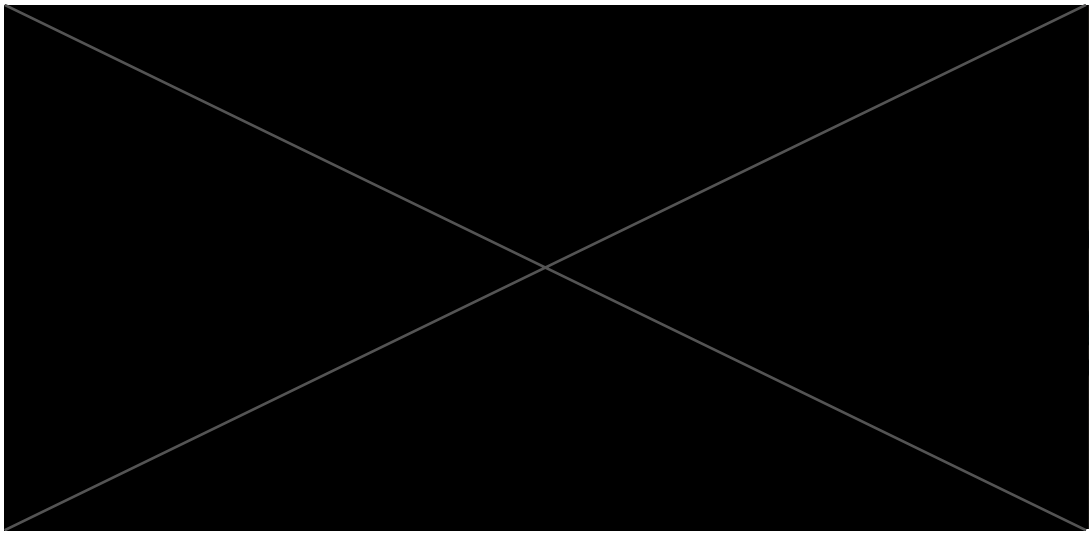

Fig. 5. Master of Catherine of Cleves, detail from fol.2r of *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves,* Utrecht, ca.1440. Manuscript illumination; Full page = 19.2cm x 13cm. New York: The Morgan Library and Museum. MS M.917/945.

Fig. 6. Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, *Woman with two children and a blank shield,* c.1475-1480. Drypoint, 12cm x 14cm. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts.

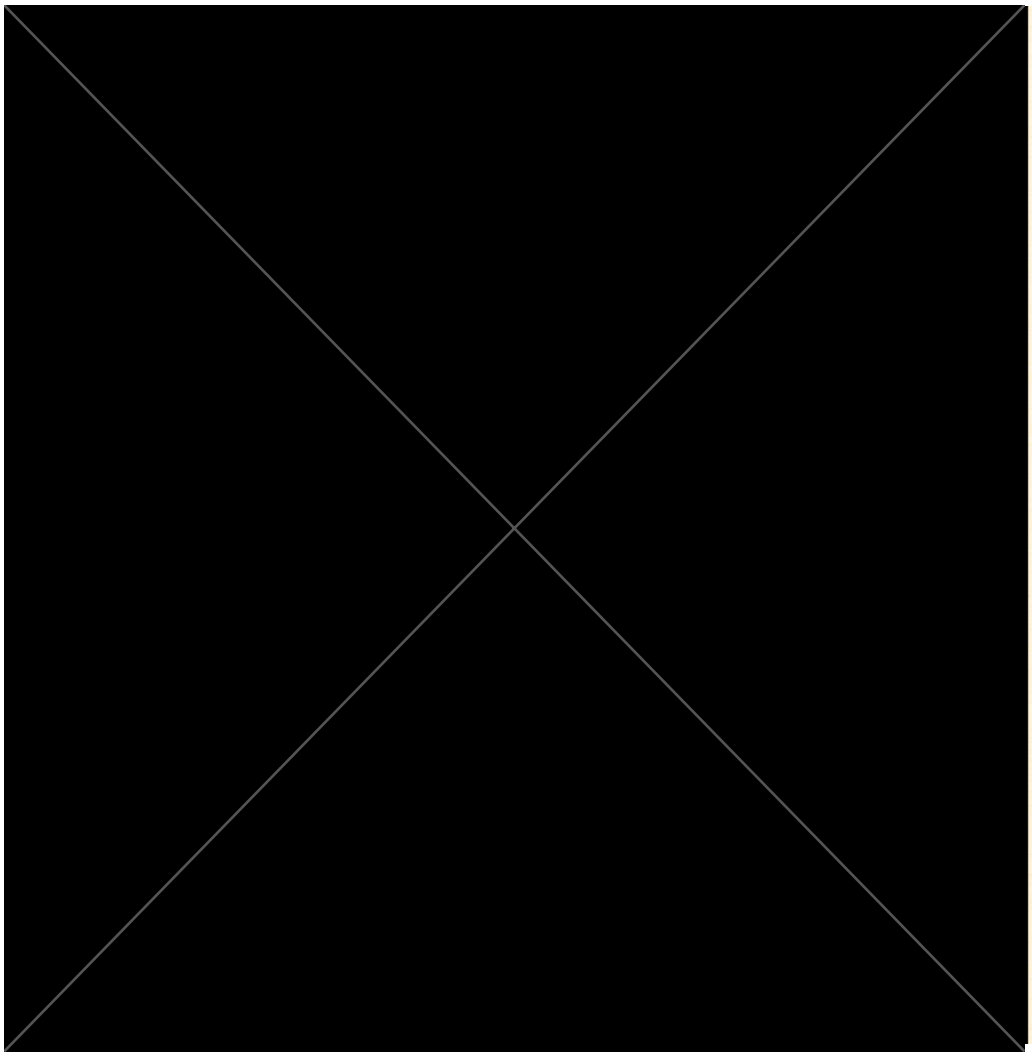

Fig. 7. Martin Schongauer, *Wild woman nursing child with shield bearing lion*, ca. 1435-1491. Engraving, 7.9 x 7.9cm. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

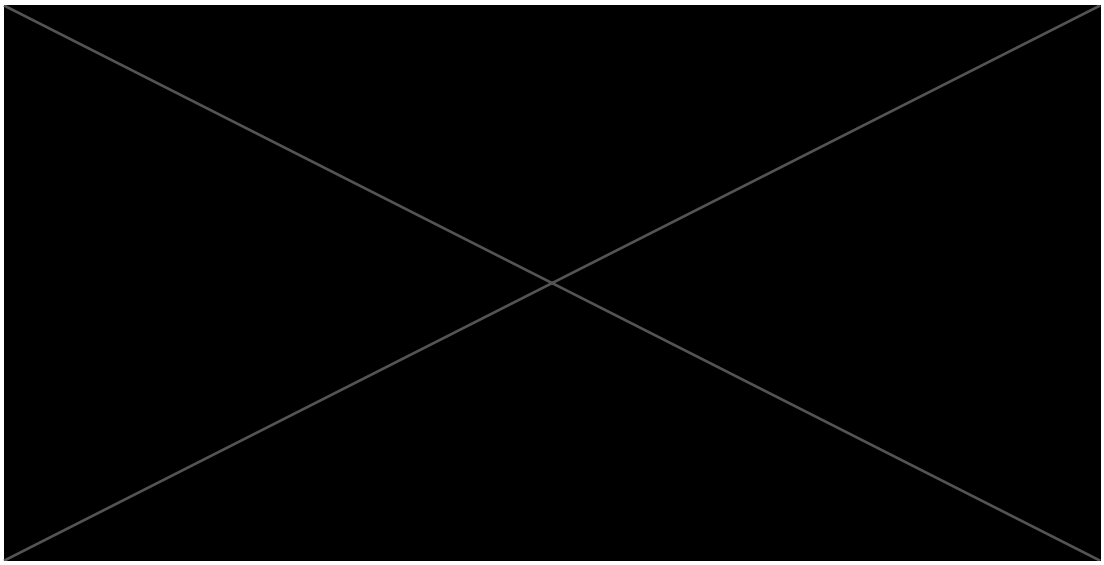

Fig. 8. Detail of marginal ornamentation from the Simmern Prayer Book, c.1480, fol. 8^{r}. Berlin: Kupferstichkabinett (MS 78B4).

Fig. 9. Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, *Spinning peasant woman with a blank shield,* 1475-1480. Drypoint, 7.9cm diameter. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum.

Fig. 10. Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, *Peasant man with blank shield*, 1475-1480. Drypoint, 7.8cm diameter. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum.

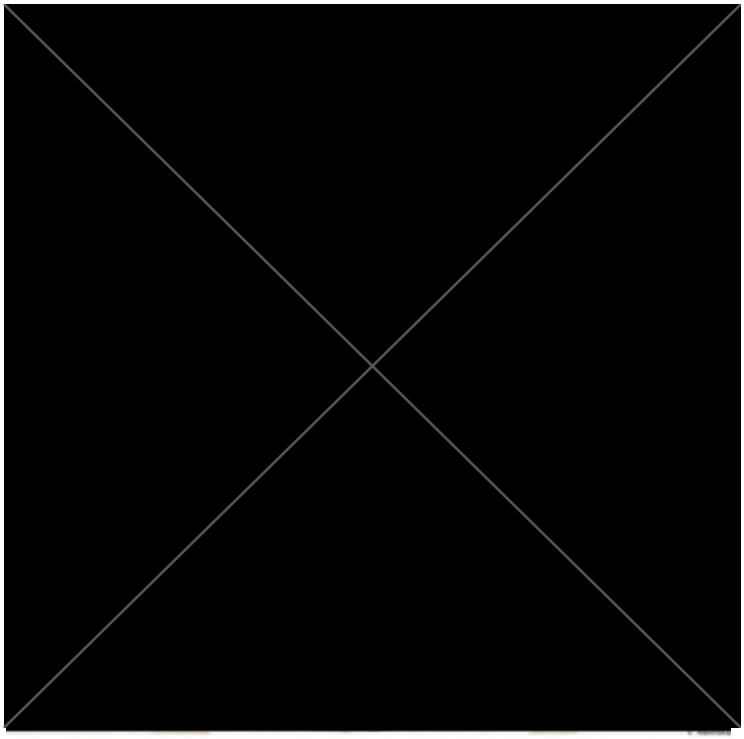

Fig. 11. Monogrammist bxg (after the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet), *Peasant with an empty shield and garlic,* c.1480. Engraving: 9cm diameter. Vienna: Albertina.

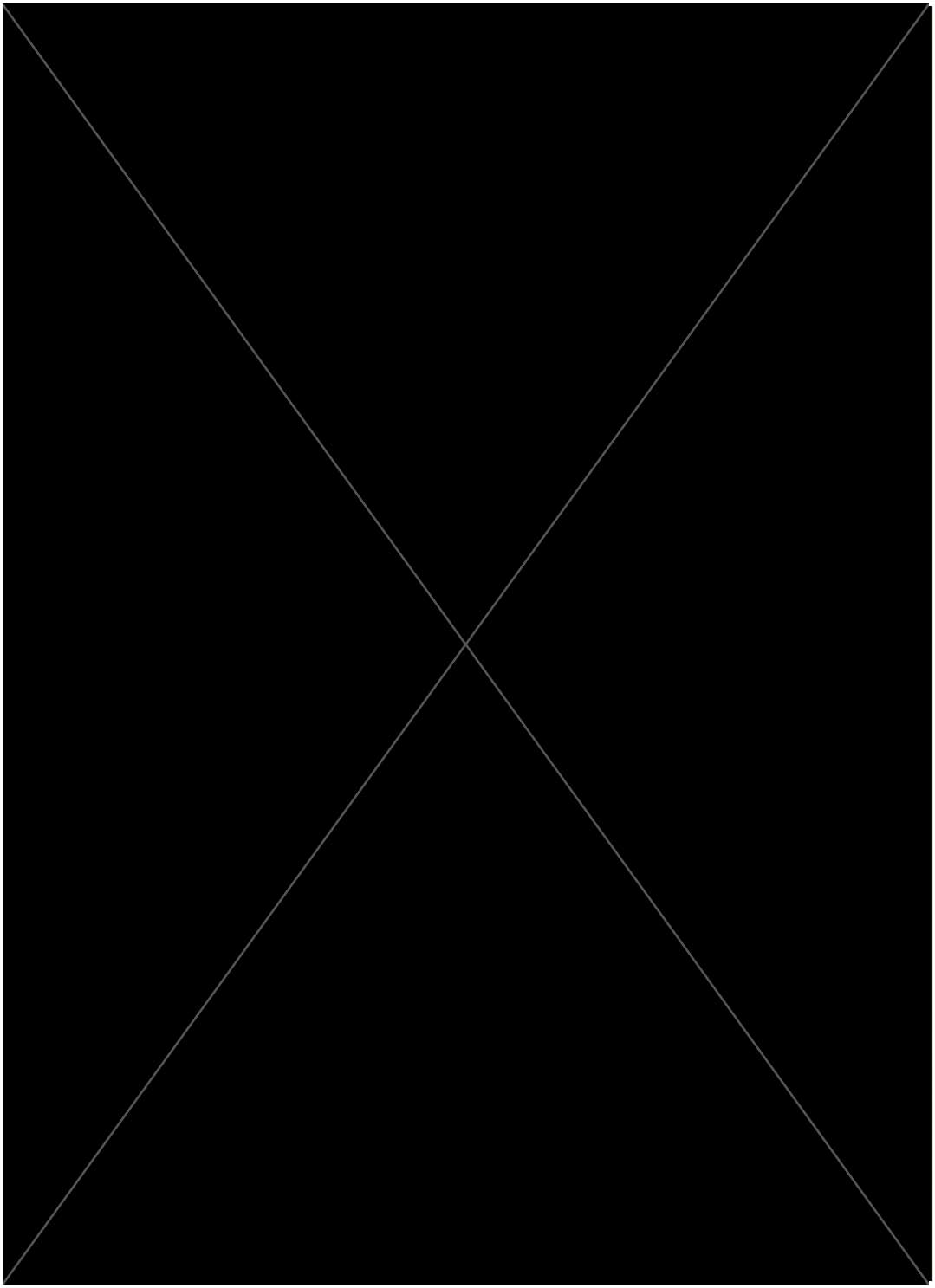

Fig. 12. Master ES, *Woman, Fool and Shield*, 1450-1470. Engraving, 15.8cm x 11.5cm. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

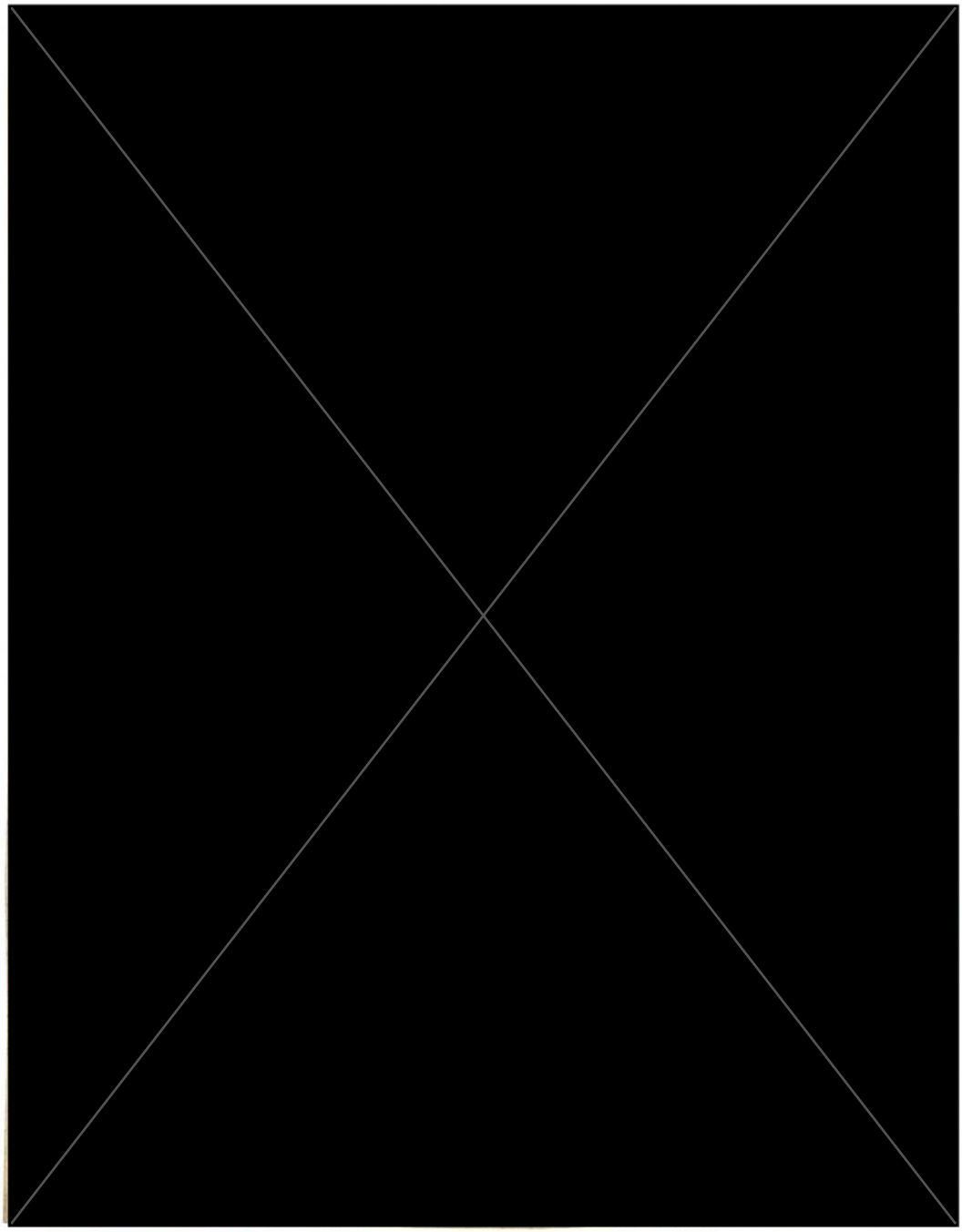

Fig. 13. Master ES, *Nude woman and fool with mirror.* c.1460. Engraving: 14.3cm x 11.3cm. Dresden: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen.

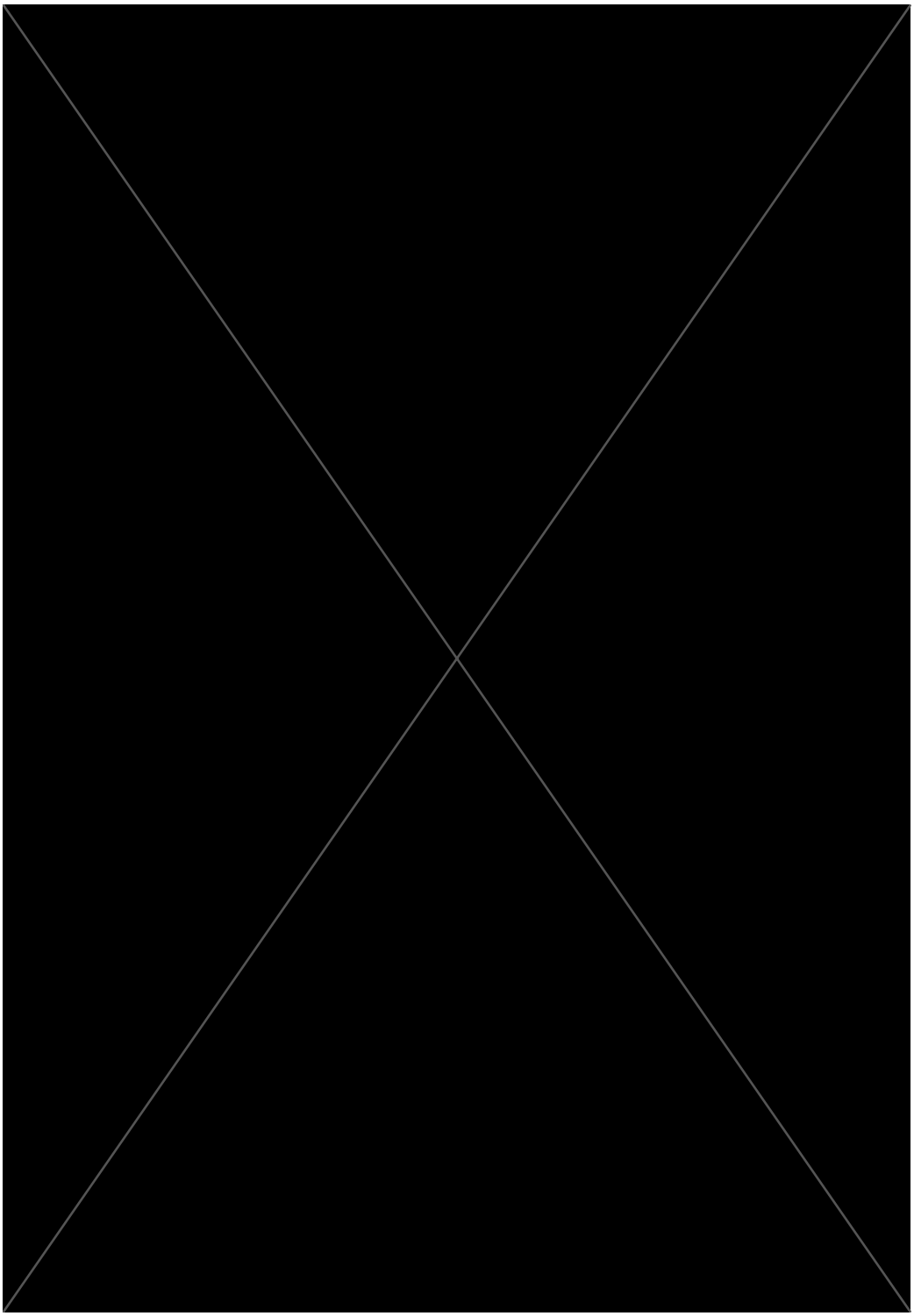

Fig. 14. Master ES, *The Eight of Shields,* from *The Small Playing Cards,* c.1450. Engraving, 9.8cm x 6.8cm. Dresden: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen.

Fig. 15. Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, *Coat of arms with a man standing on his head*, 1485-1490. Drypoint, 13.8cm x 8.5cm. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum.

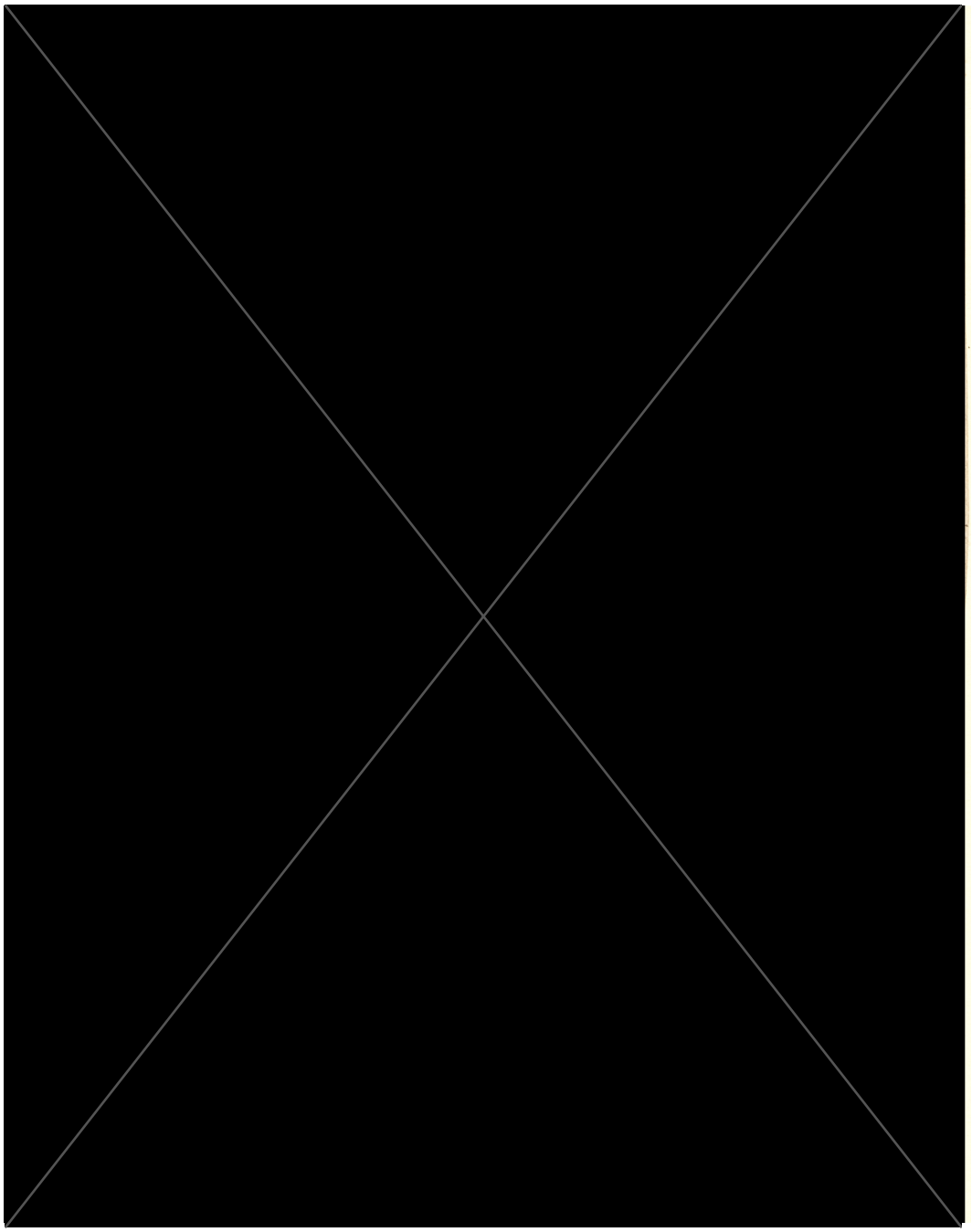

Fig. 16. Israhel van Meckenem, (after the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet), *Coat of arms with man standing on his head,* c.1490. Engraving, 15cm x 11.1cm. Washington: National Gallery of Art.

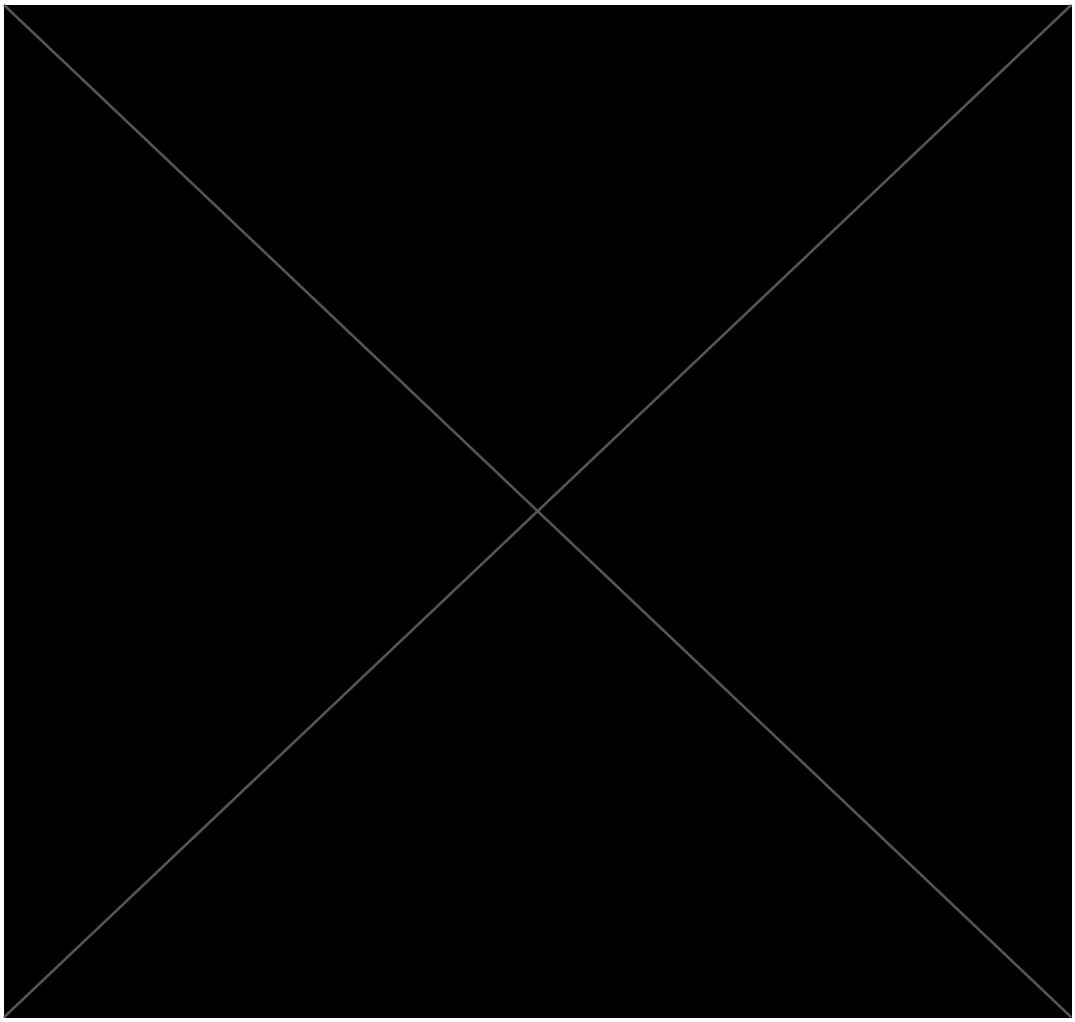

Fig. 17. Martin Schongauer. *Sleeping peasant heraldic roundel*, ca. 1490. Engraving, 7.3cm diameter. London: Victoria & Albert Museum.

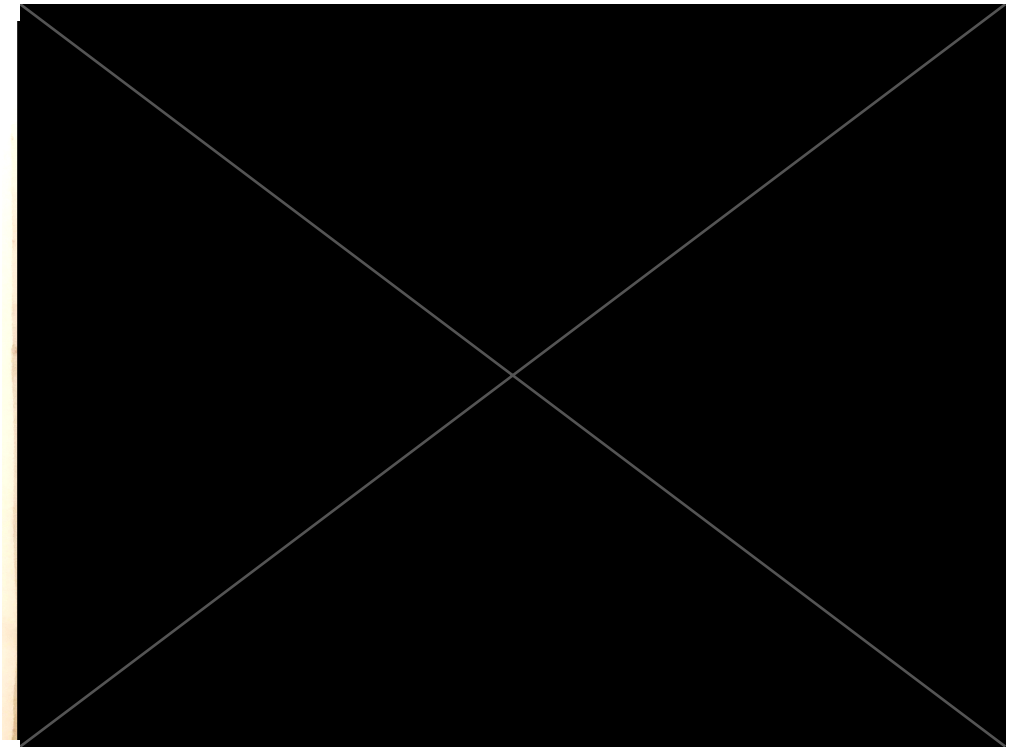

Fig. 18. Defamatory image from the Counts Adolf, Anton and Otto von Schaumberg/Mittelweser against Ludwig von Schwicheldt, Achatz von Veltheim, Jurgen von der Wense, Gebhard Schenk and Achim von Riebe. December 1541. Wolfenbüttel: Niedersächsiches Staatsarhiv, 1 Alt 26 Nr. 16, fol. 2. [Image from Lentz, 2004, No. 120].

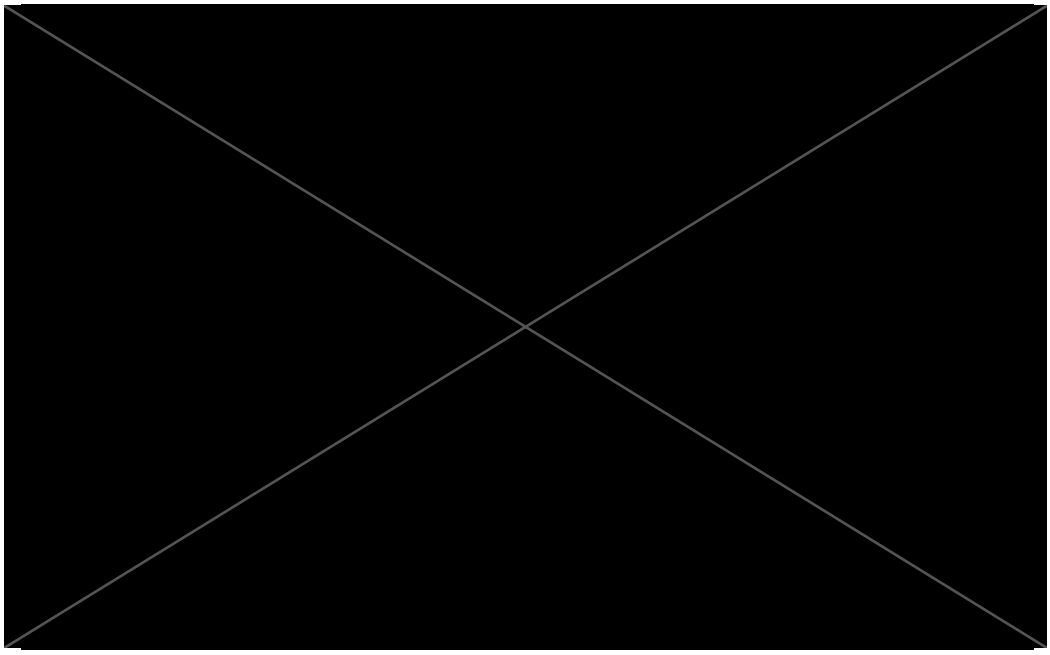

Fig. 19. Defamatory image against Heino von Mandelsloh, copy of a mid-16th century lost original. Bückeburg: Niedersächsisches Staatsarchiv. [Image from Lentz, 2004, No. 144].

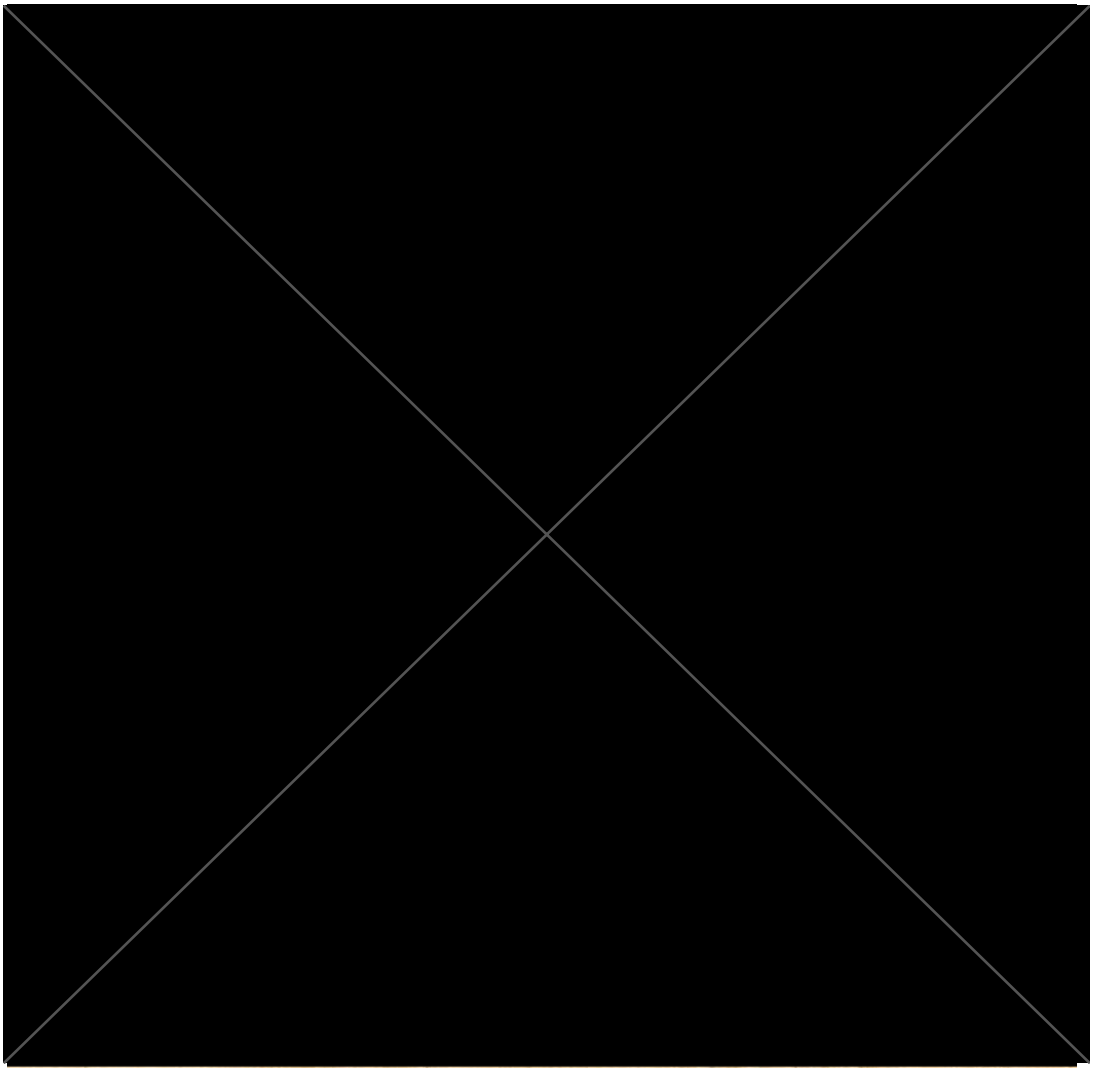

Fig. 20. Detail from Marx Walther's *Turnierbuch* showing his jousting outfit, 1506-1511, Cgm 1930 f.1^{v}. Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

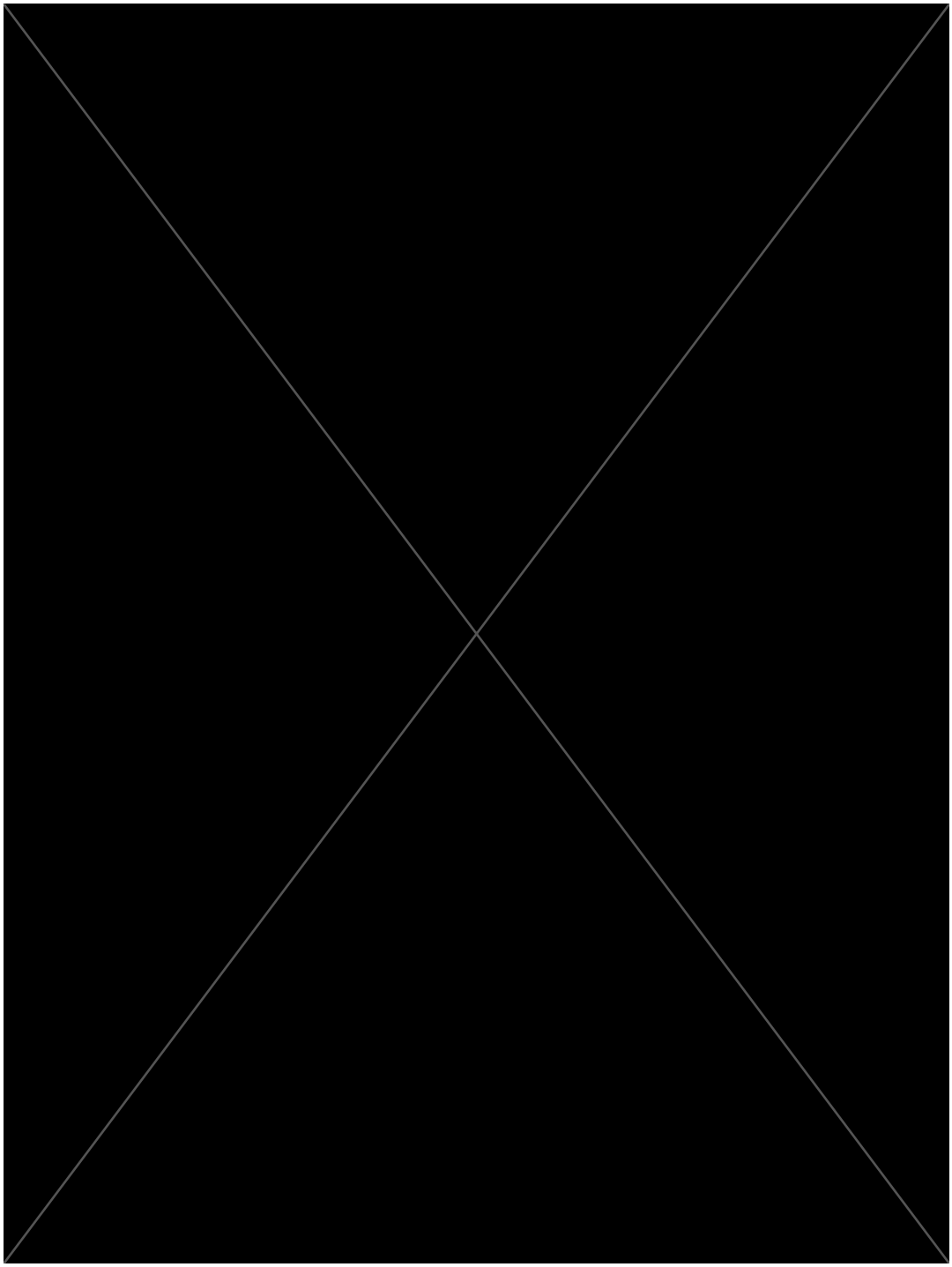

Fig. 21. Parodic heraldic graffiti, dated 1479. Stephensdom, Vienna. Photo Credit: Renate Kohn.

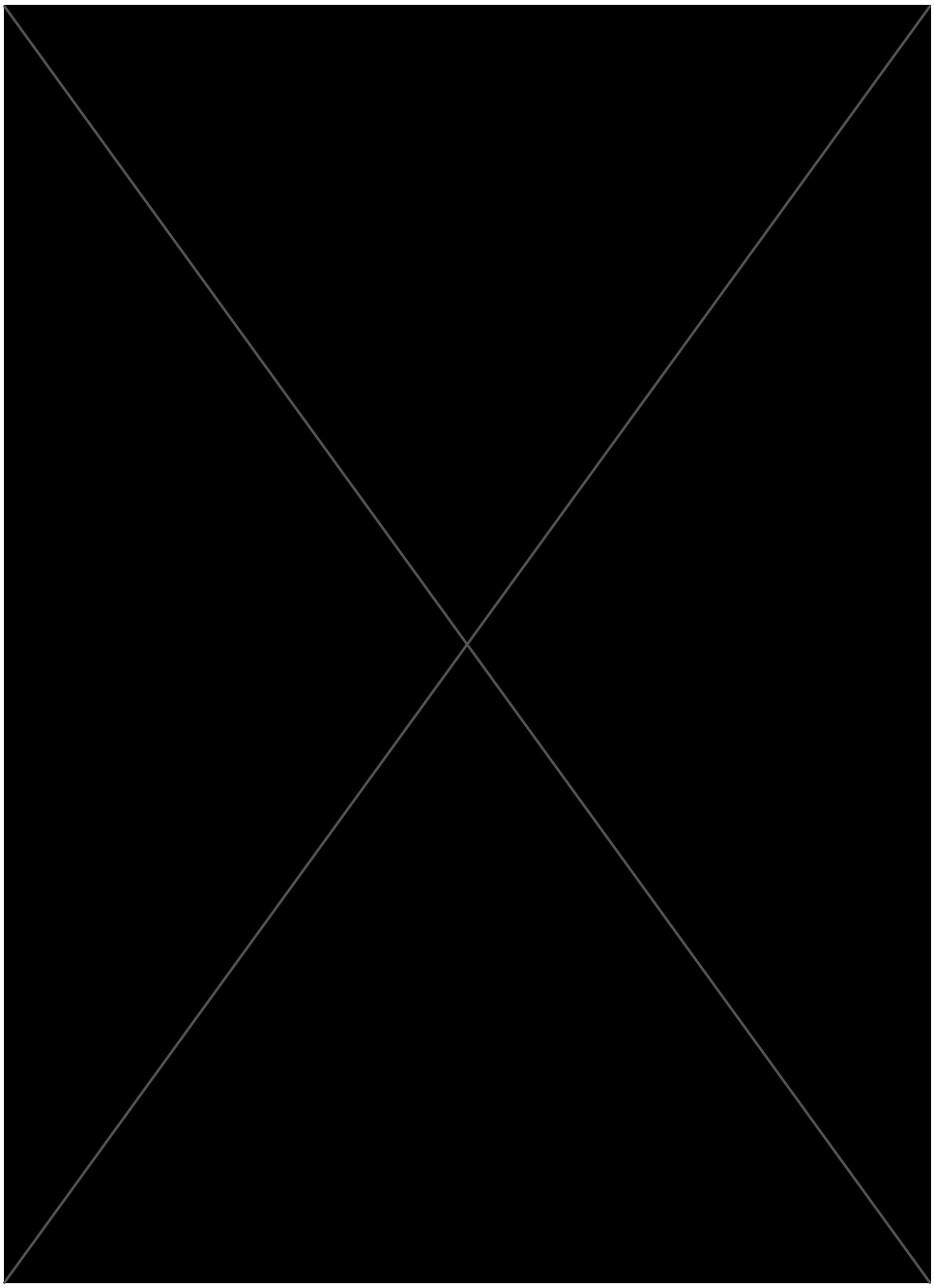

Fig. 22. Impression of *Wappennarren* woodblock, from Weil, Ernst ed. *Einblattholzschnitte des XV und XVI Jahrhunderts von den Originalstöcken gedruckt.* Munich: Verlag der Münchner Drucke, 1925.

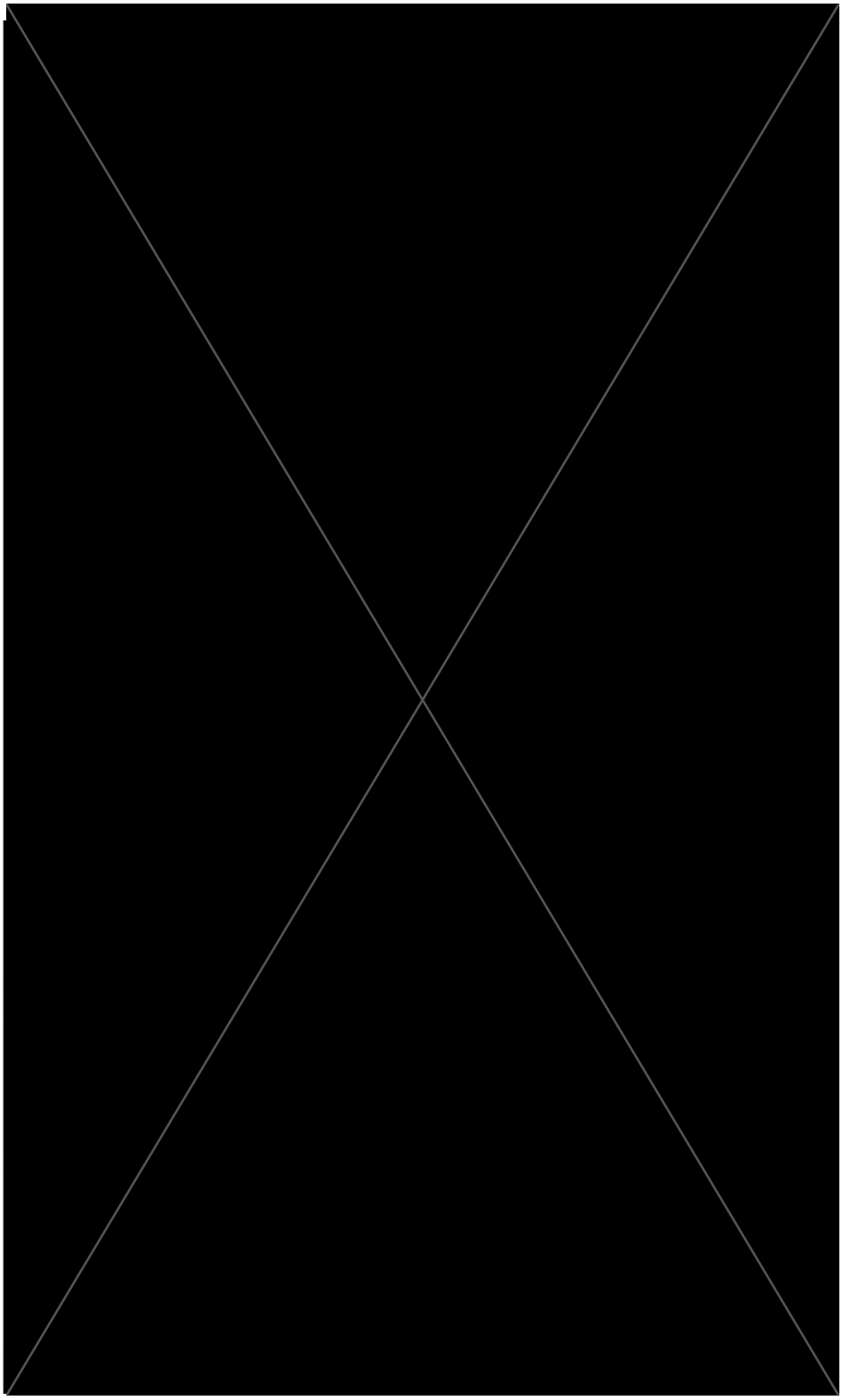

Fig. 23. Woodblock of *Wappennarren,* 1490s Nuremberg [?]. Derschau collection, block no. 226. Berlin: Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen.

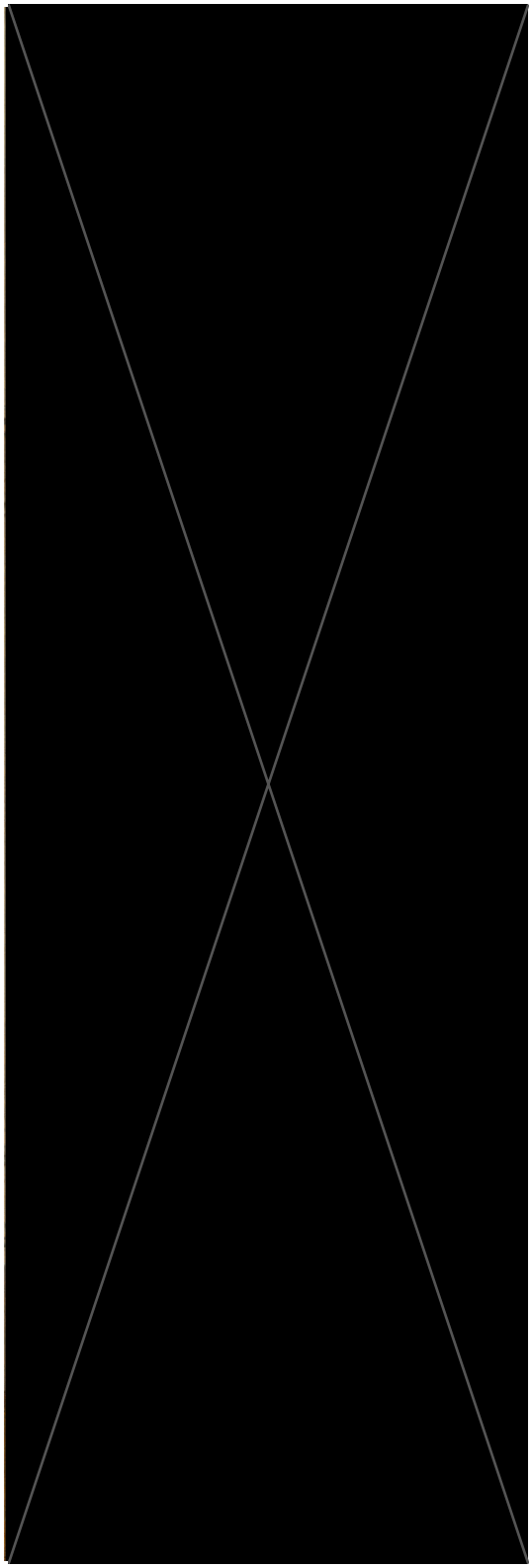

Fig. 24. Hieronymus Bosch, *Death and the Miser,* c. 1485/1490. Oil on panel, 93 x 31cm. Washington: National Gallery of Art.

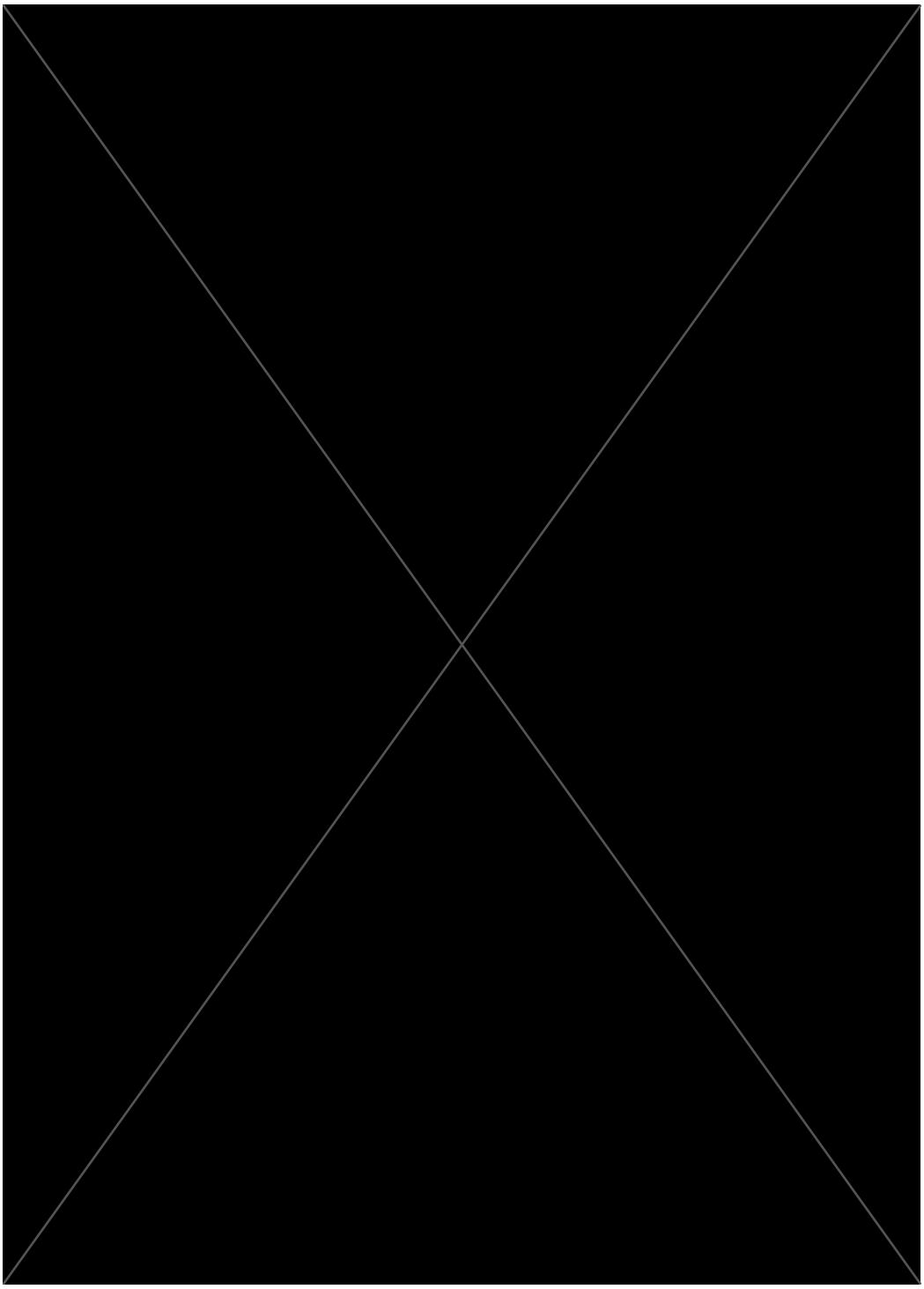

Fig. 25. Woodcut illustration, *Der doten dantz mit figuren.* Heidelberg. Not after 1488. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, fol. 12^{r}.

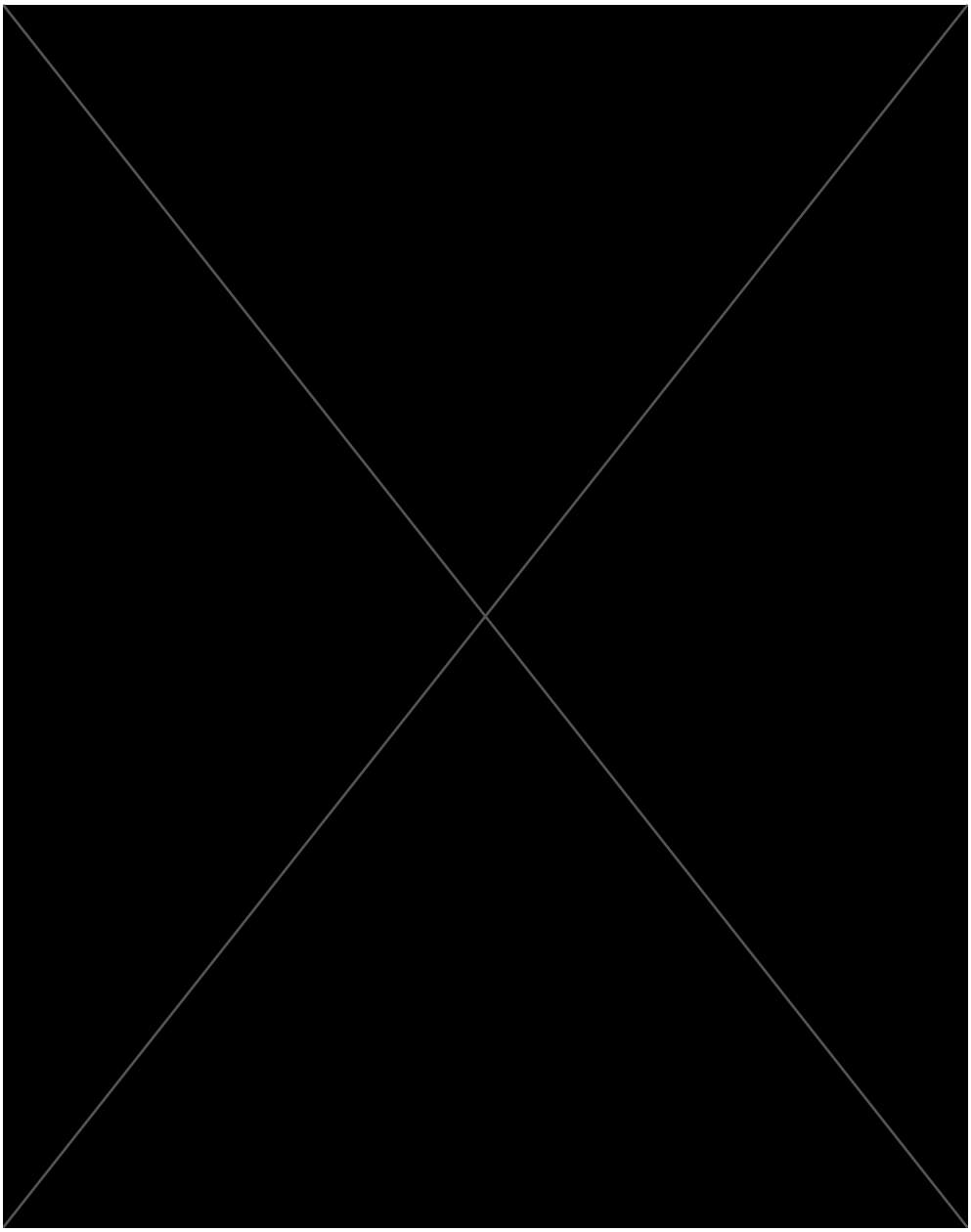

Fig. 26. Designed by Hans Holbein the Younger, *Death and the Count,* from *The Dance of Death,* ca.1526, published 1538. Woodcut, 6.5 x 4.9cm. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

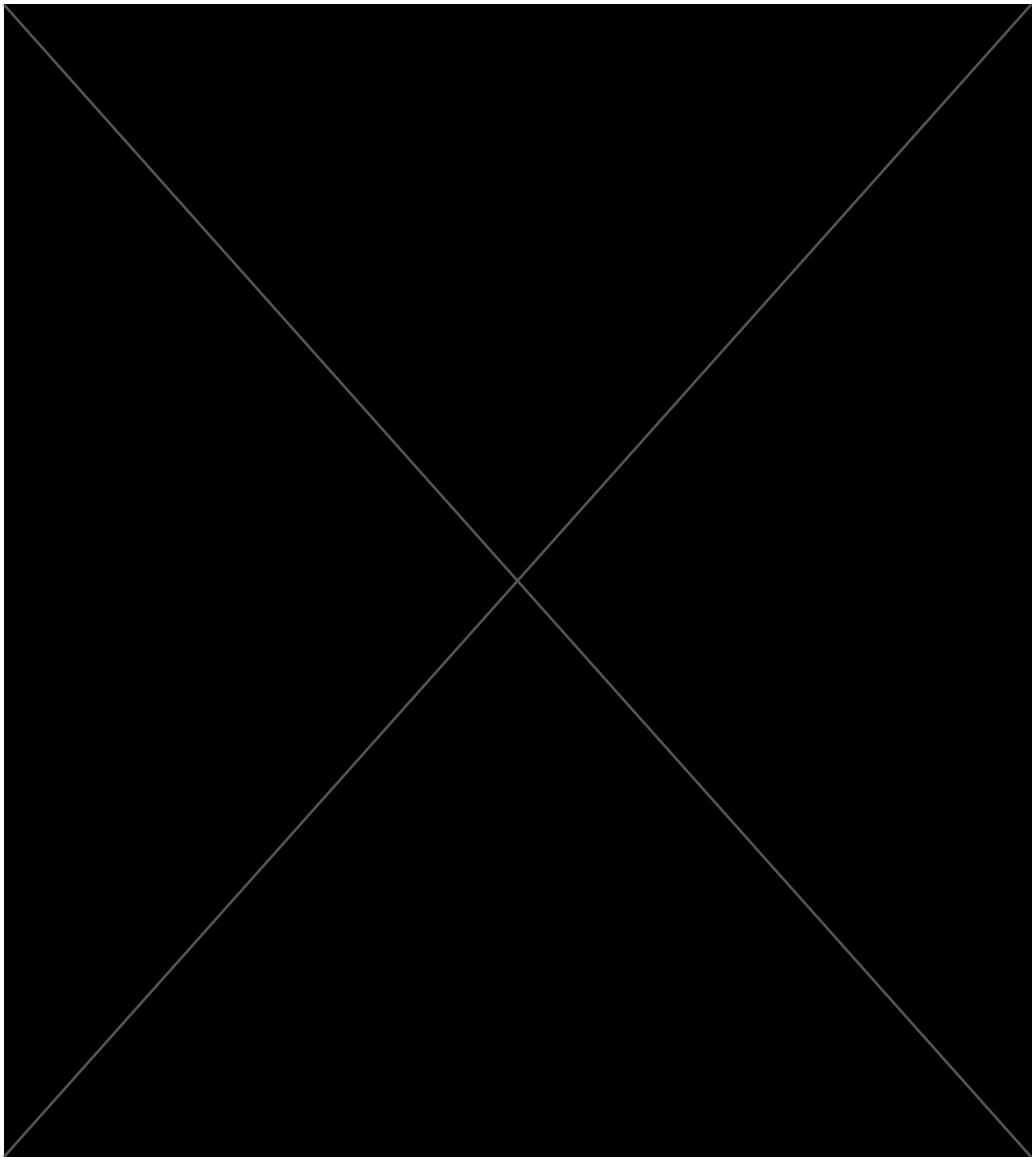

Fig. 27. Hans Holbein the Younger, *Man with feathered cap and a cooing bird*, marginal illustration to Erasmus, *Encomium Moriae,* Basel: Johann Froben, 1515, fol. E2. Basel: Kunstmuseum.

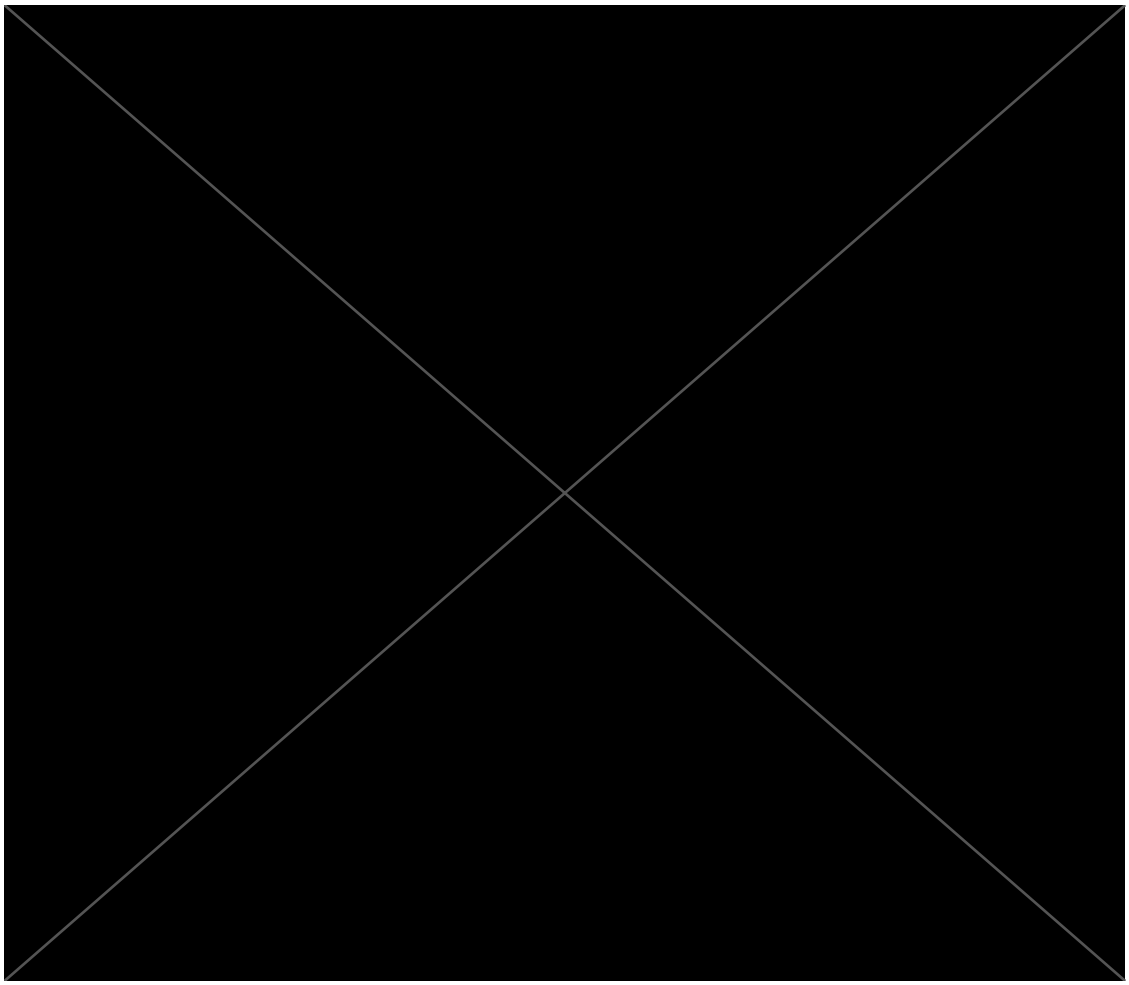

Fig. 28. Woodcut illustration, *Ritter Peter and Doctor Griff.* From Sebastian Brant, *Narrenschiff,* Basel, 1494, sig.niii^{r}.

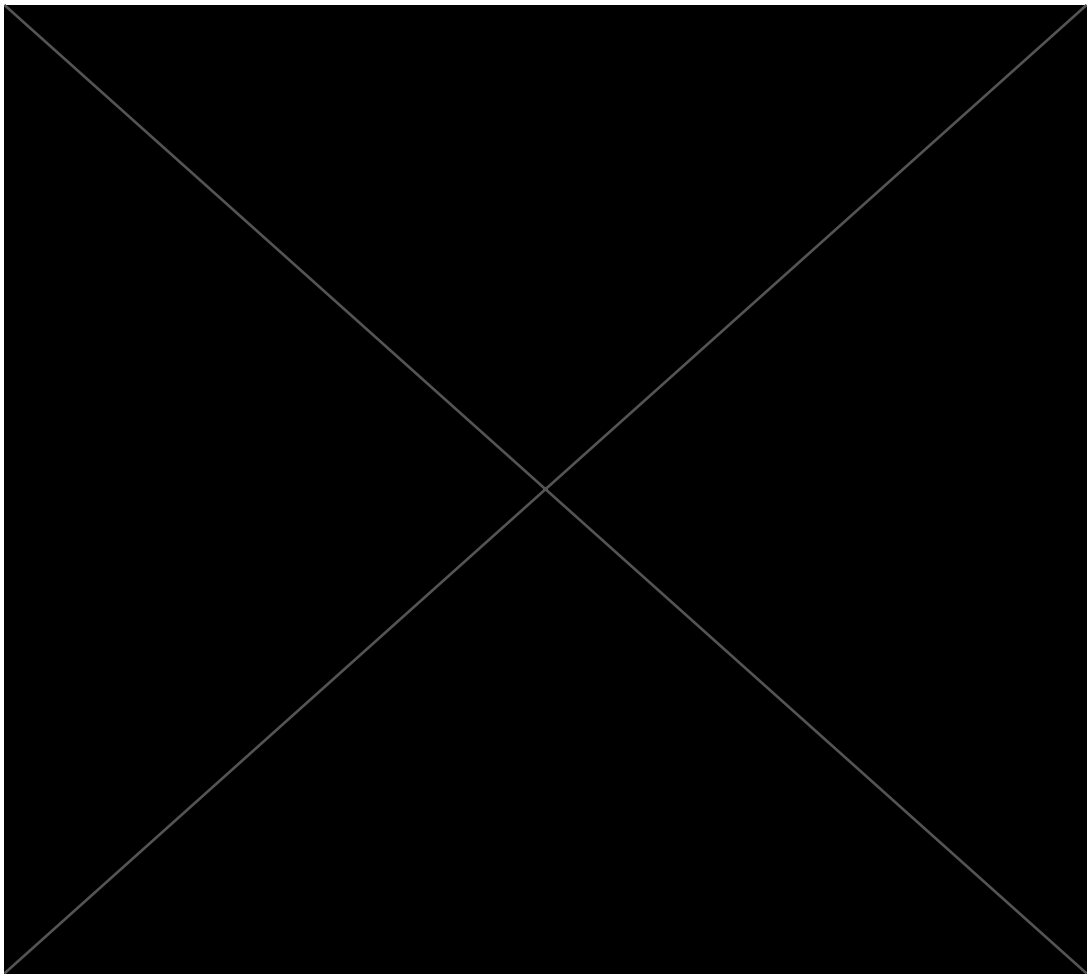

Fig. 29. Manuscript illustration showing the Wainwrights and the Wheelwrights of Krakow. *Codex Picturatus von Balthasar Behem,* c.1505. Krakow: Jagiellonian Library. f.274^{r}.

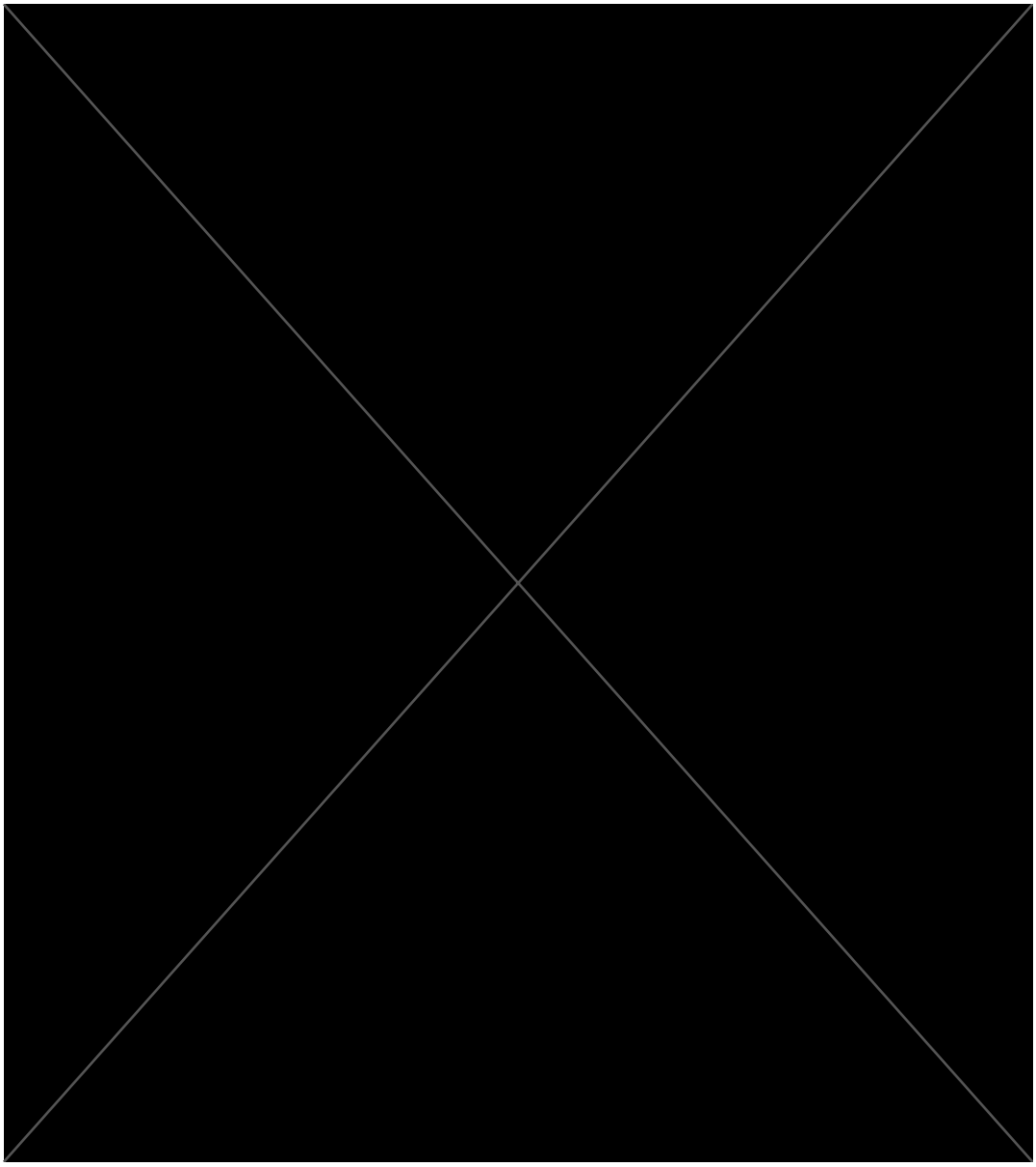

Fig. 30. Manuscript illustration showing the leather-workers of Krakow. *Codex Picturatus von Balthasar Behem,* c.1505. Krakow: Jagiellonian Library. f.308^{r}.

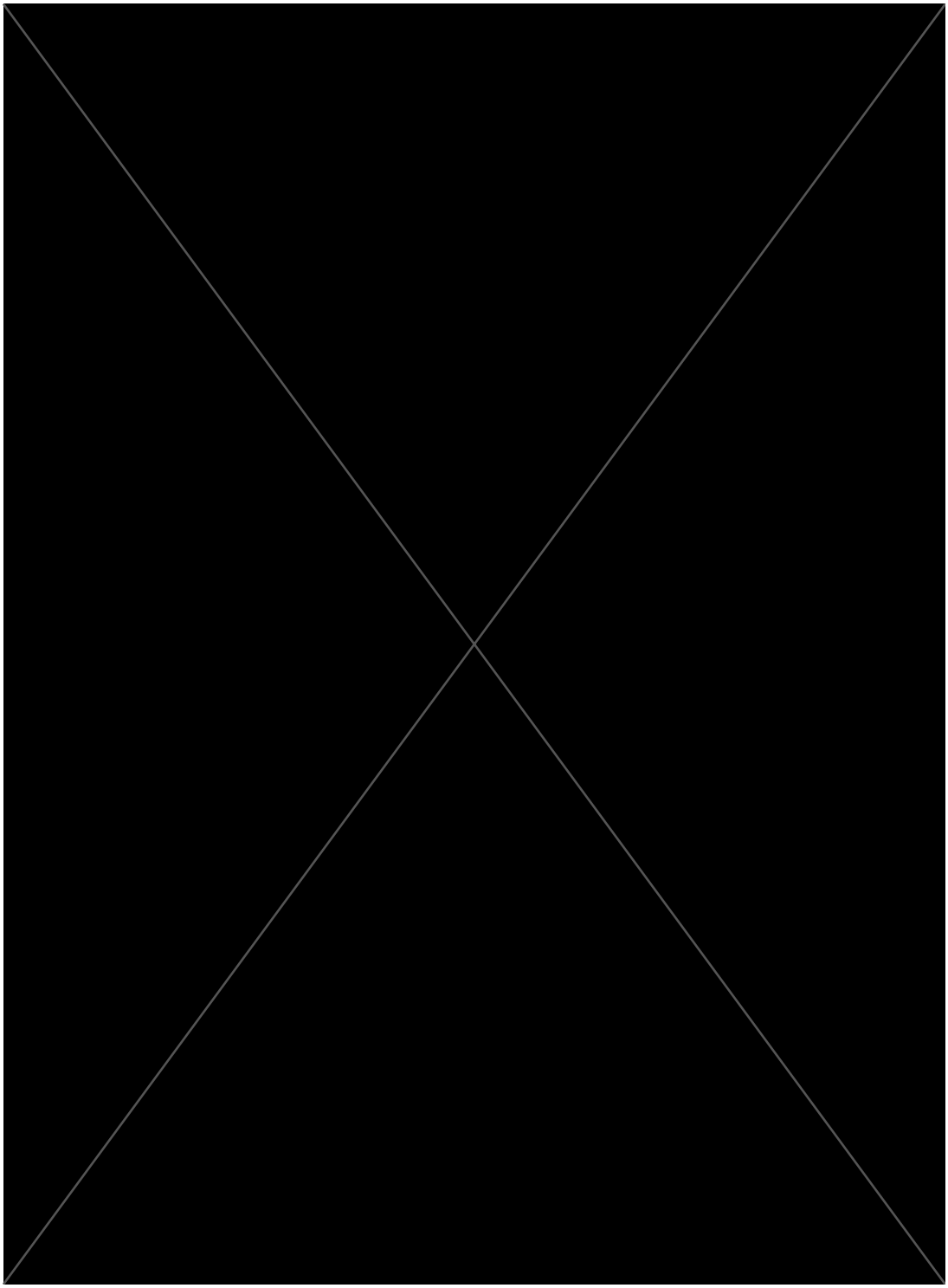

Fig. 31. Jörg Breu the Elder, *Christ crowned with thorns,* from the Melk Altarpiece, 1502. Tempera on panel. Melk: Abbey Museum.

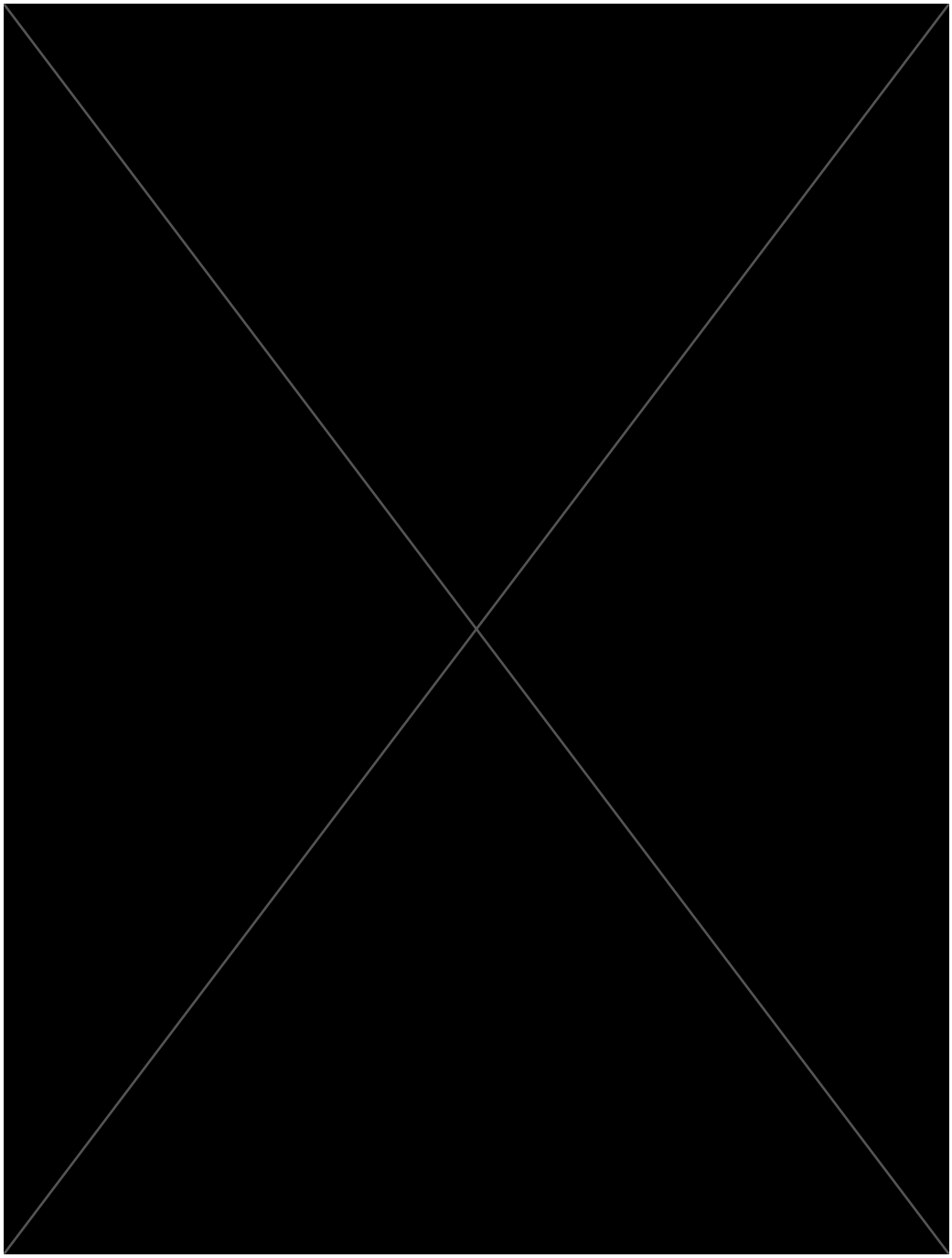

Fig. 32. Manuscript illustration representing the barbers/surgeons of Krakow. *Codex Picturatus von Balthasar Behem,* c.1505. Krakow: Jagiellonian Library. f.313^{r}.

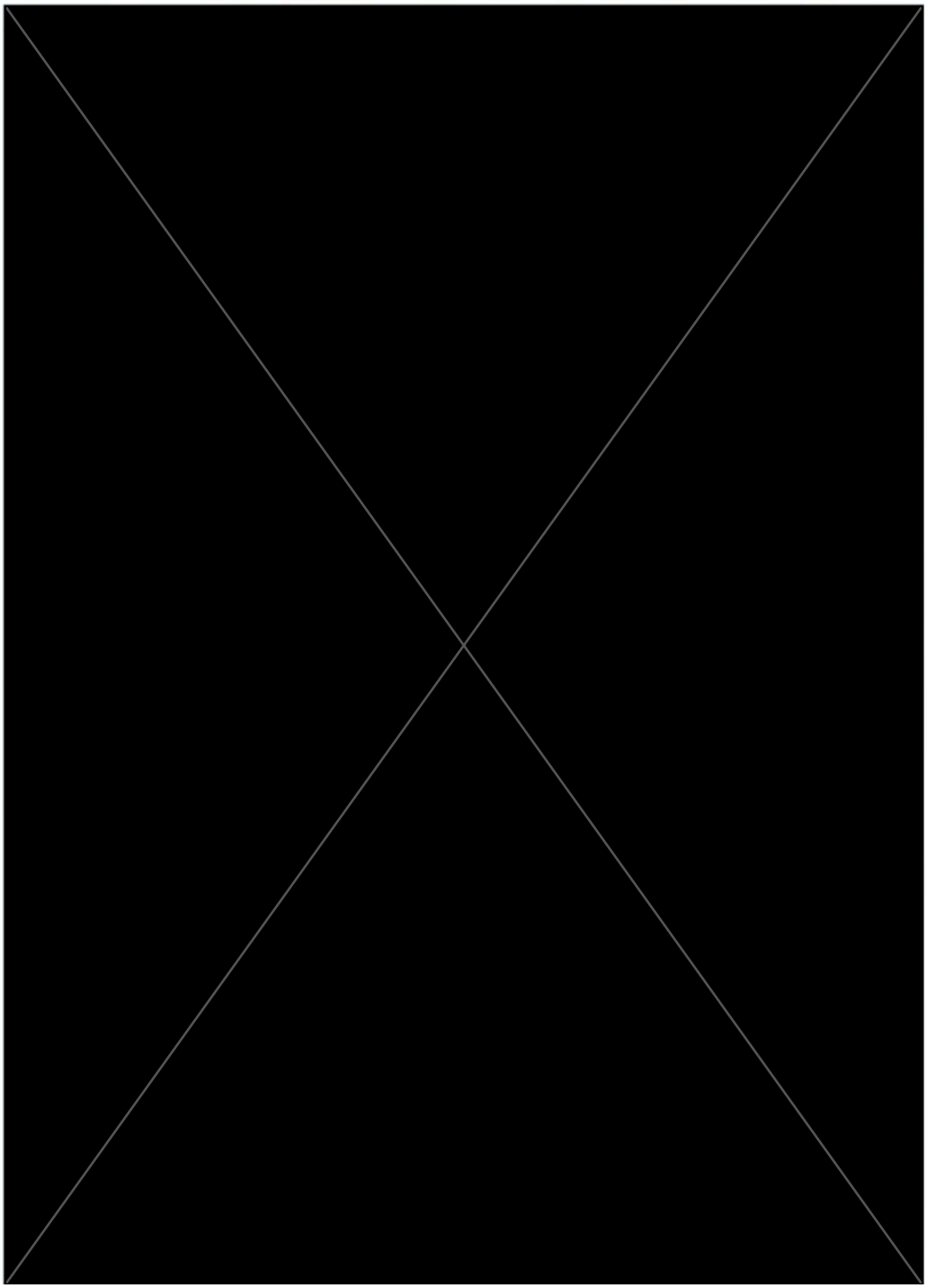

Fig. 33. Unknown Artist, *Mock Coat of Arms with Pigs*, c.1500. Stained and Painted Glass, 42 x 29cm. Bubendorf: Schloss Wildenstein.

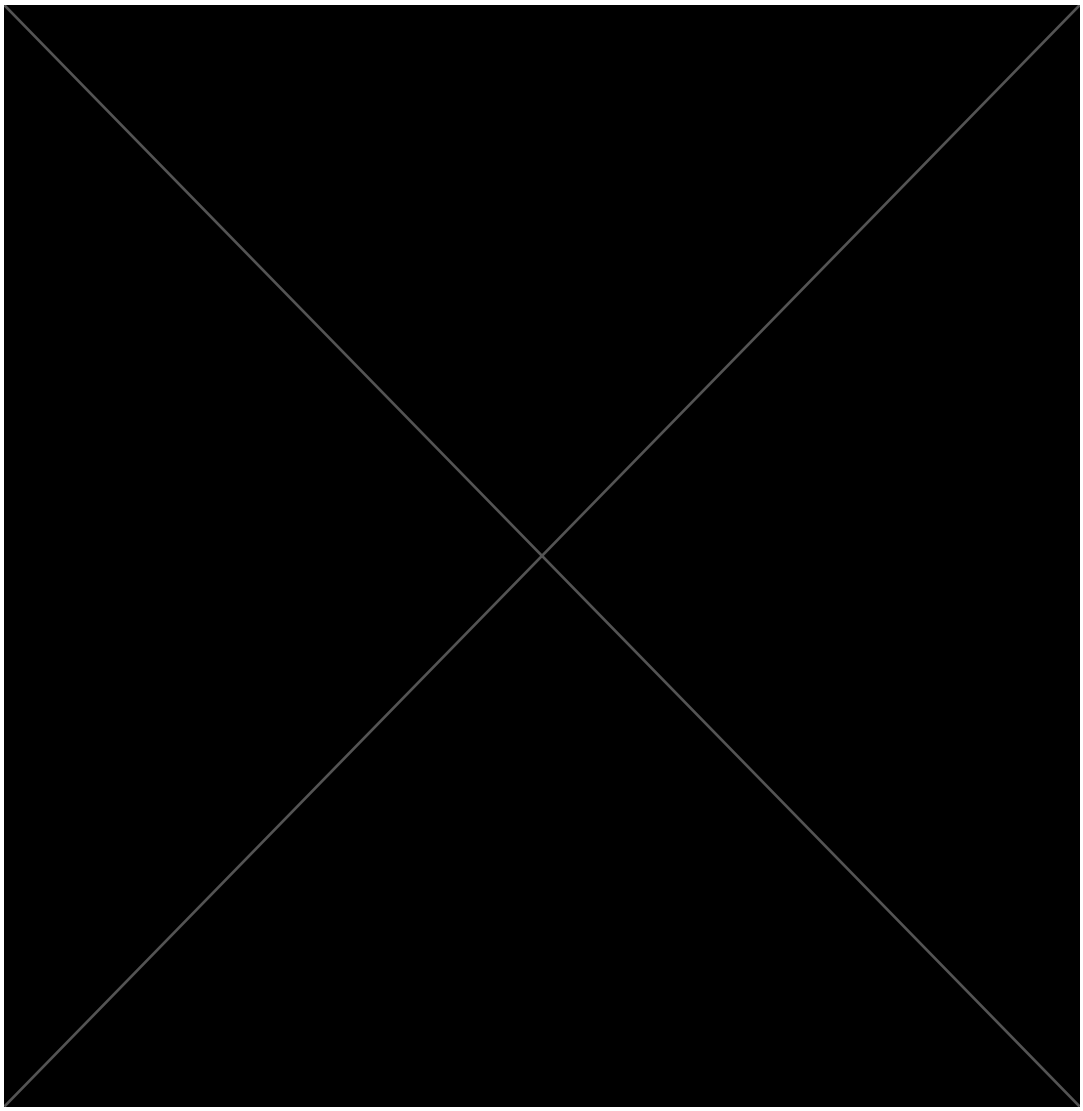

Fig. 34. After Gillich Kilian Proger, *Coat of arms with an owl and hourglass,* 1534. Engraving, 5.3cm diameter. London: British Museum.

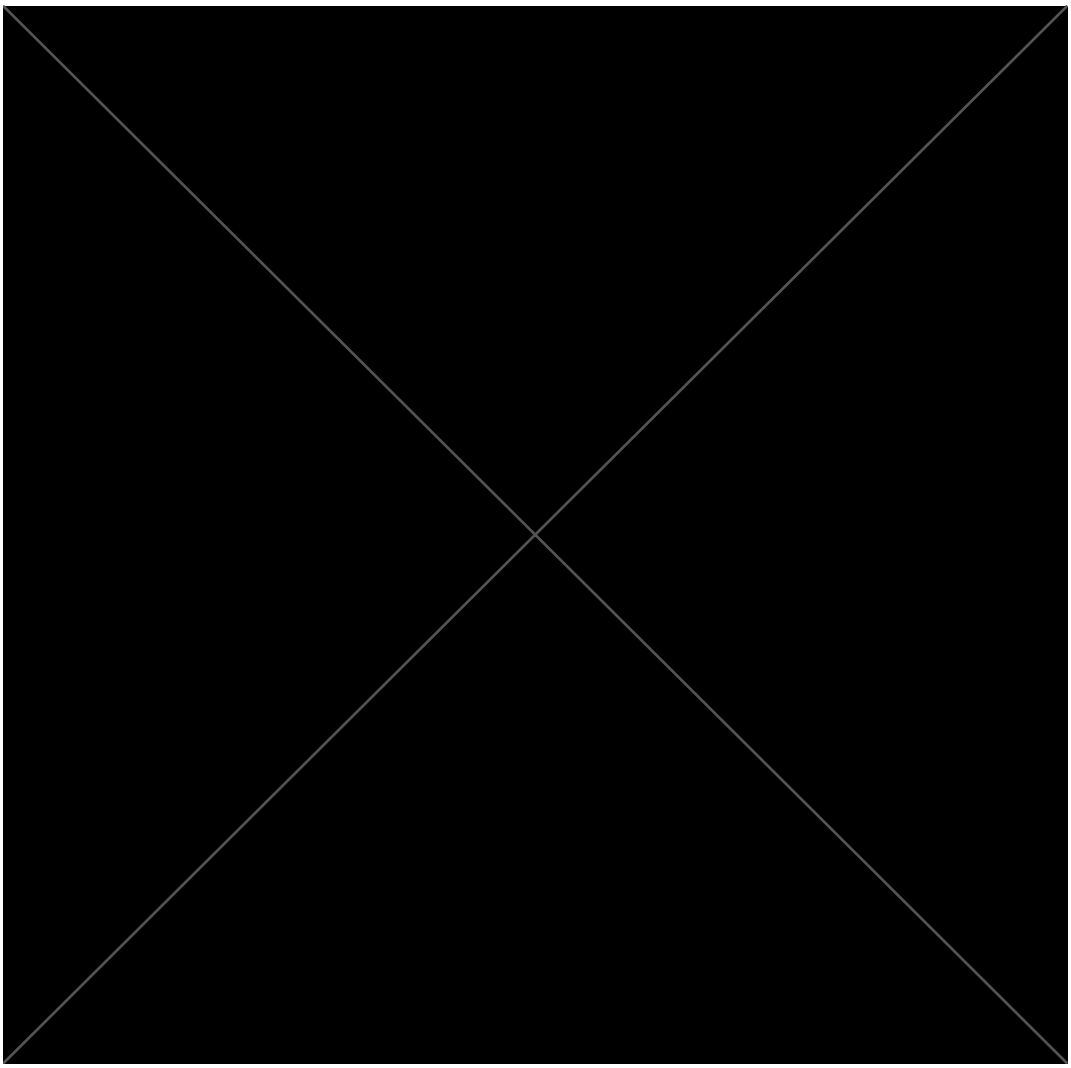

Fig. 35. Jost Amman, *Personification of cooking*, 1563. Pen and black ink, with grey wash and watercolour; 25.7cm diameter. London: British Museum.

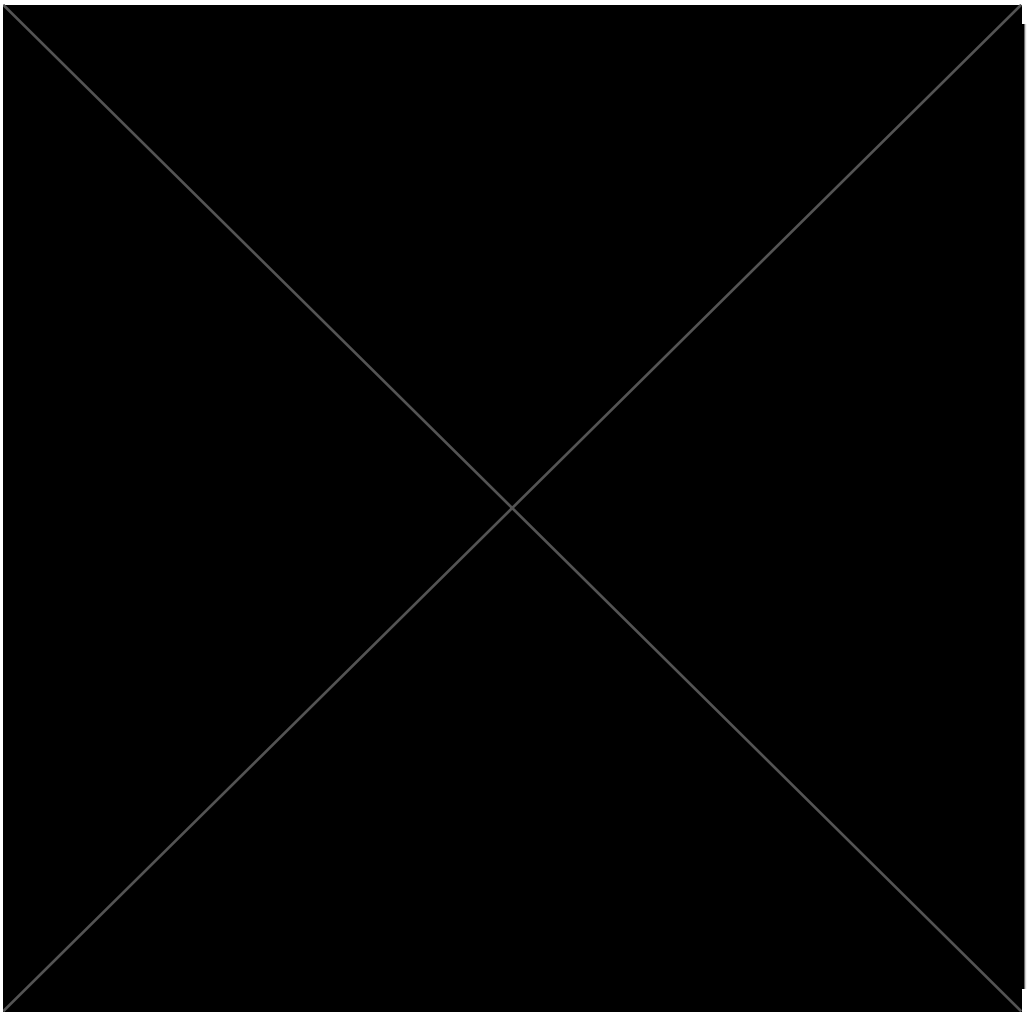

Fig. 36. Jost Amman, *Personification of metallurgy*, 1563. Pen and black ink, with watercolour, 25.7cm diameter. St Petersburg: Hermitage Museum.

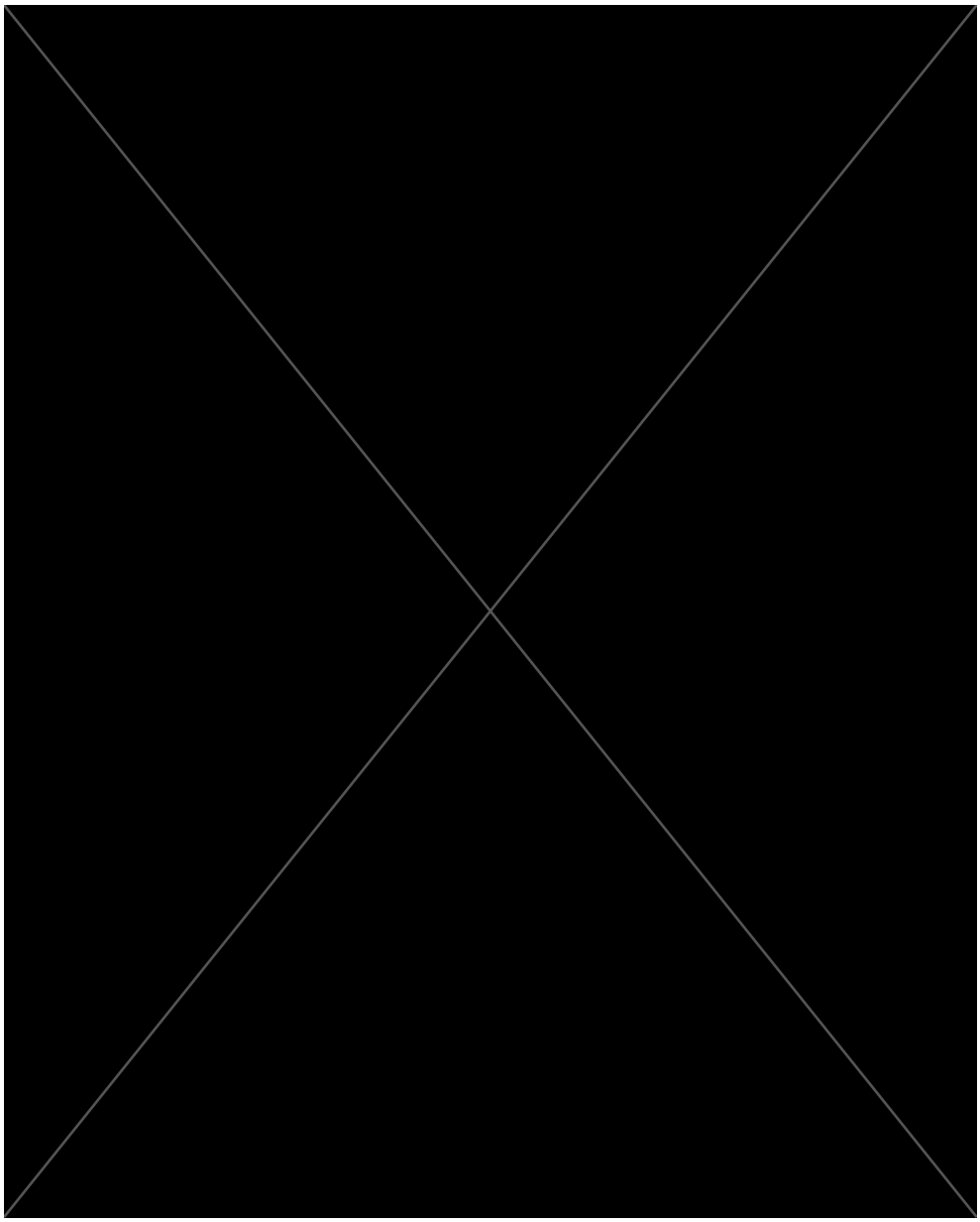

Fig. 37. Peter Flötner, *Coat of arms of Gluttony*, from pack of cards, c.1535. Woodcut, 8cm x 10cm. Berlin.

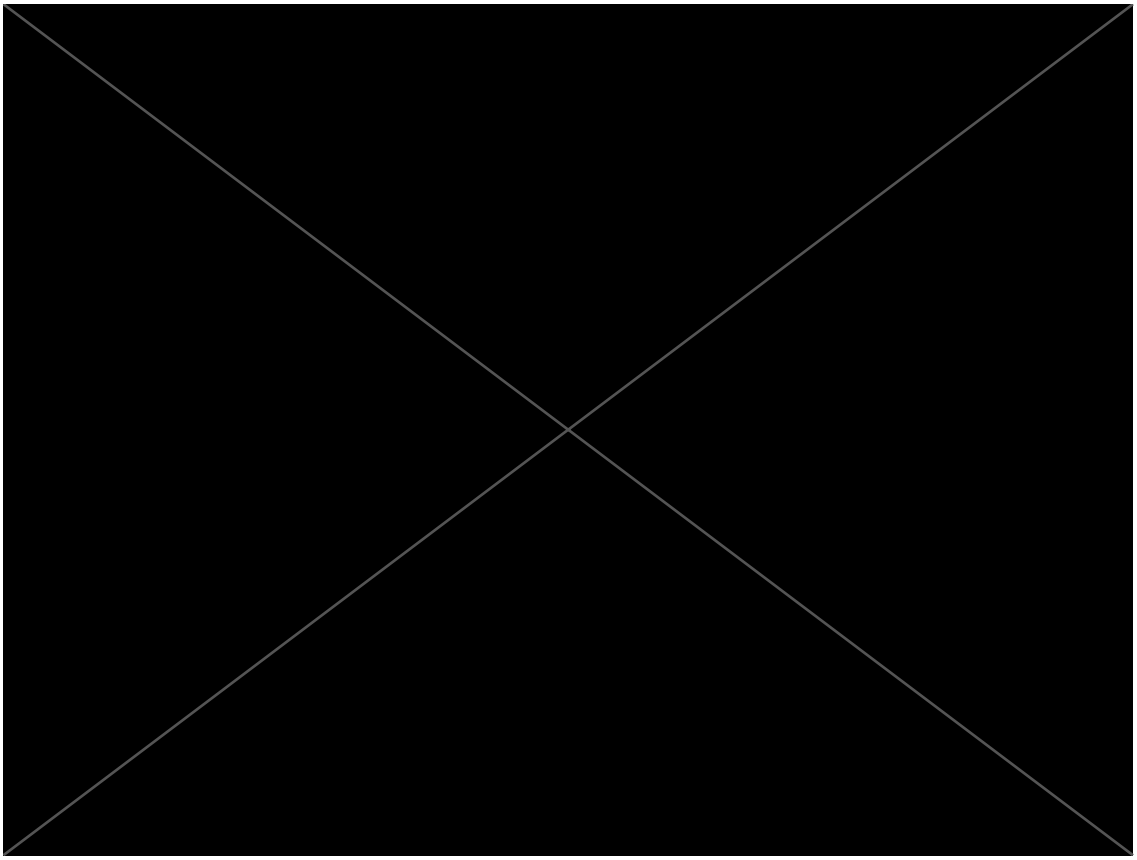

Fig. 38. Attributed to Erhard Schön, with poem by Hans Sachs, ‘Das Wappen der vollen rott/ des Schlauraffenlands’, c.1535. Woodcut, 21.8cm x 35.2cm. Gotha: Schloss Friedenstein.

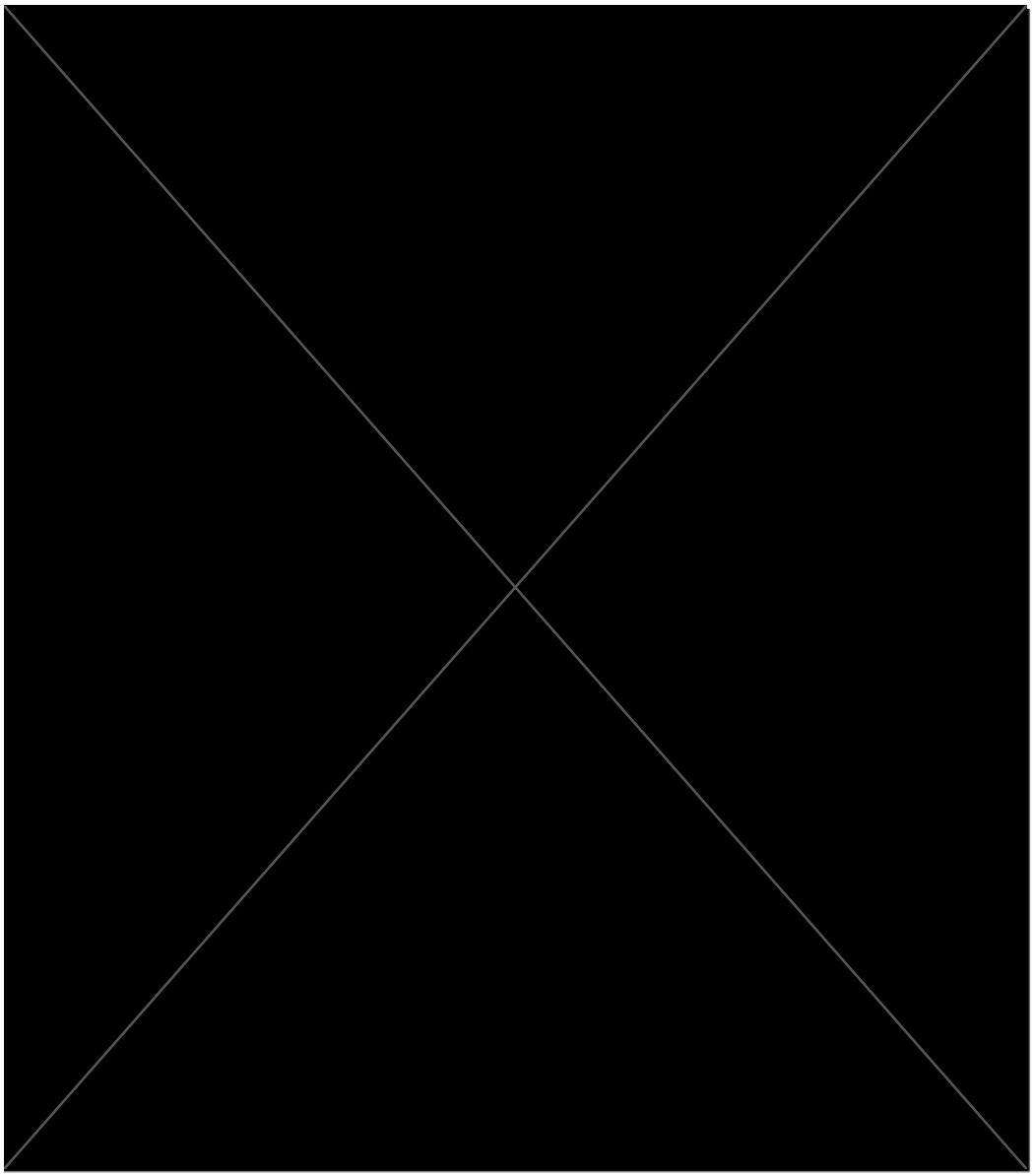

Fig. 39. Workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Broadsheet satire of Roman Catholic Church*, with text by Martin Luther, Wittenberg: Lufft, 1538. Woodcut with hand-colouring, 21.2cm x 21.4cm. London: British Museum.

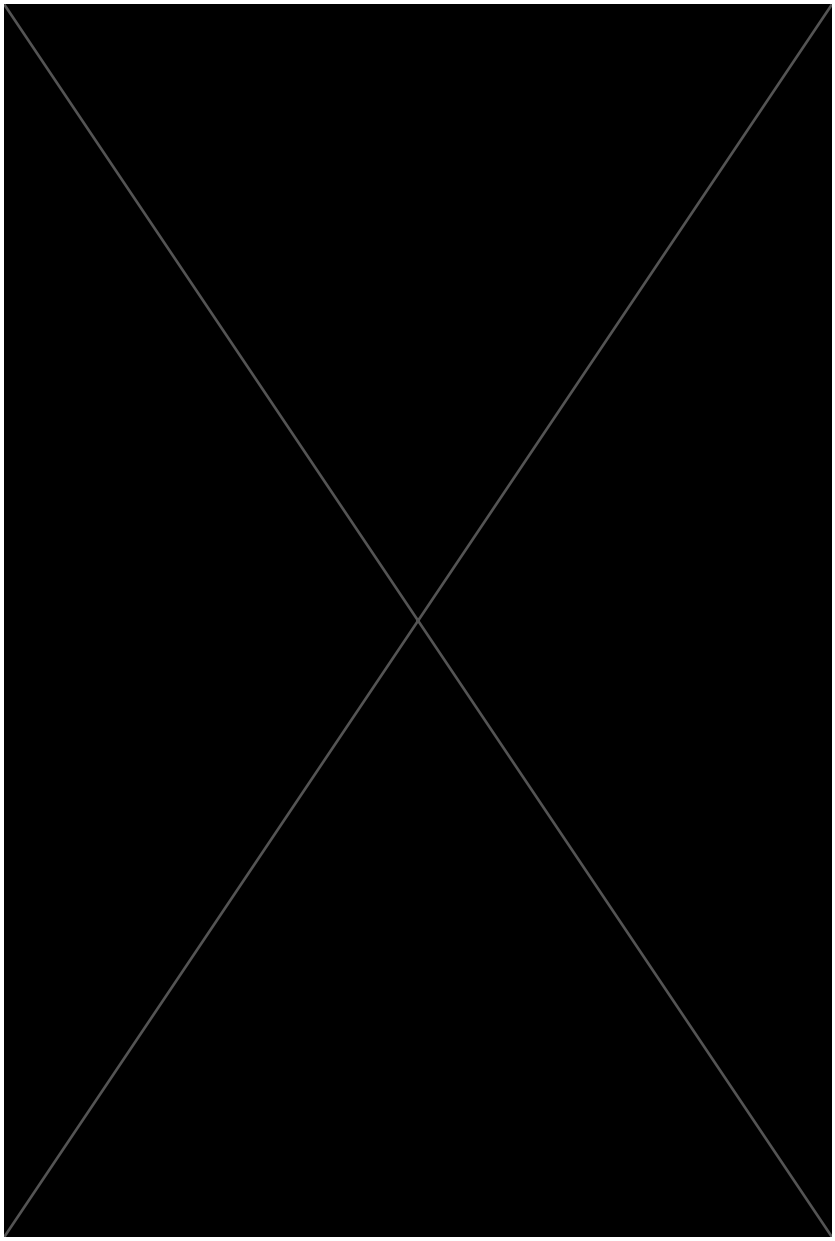

Fig. 40. Heinrich Vogtherr the Elder, *Satirical coat of arms of Cardinal Wolsey*, frontispiece for *Rede Me and Be Nott Wrothe,* by Jerome Barlowe and William Roye. Strasbourg, 1528. Coloured woodcut.

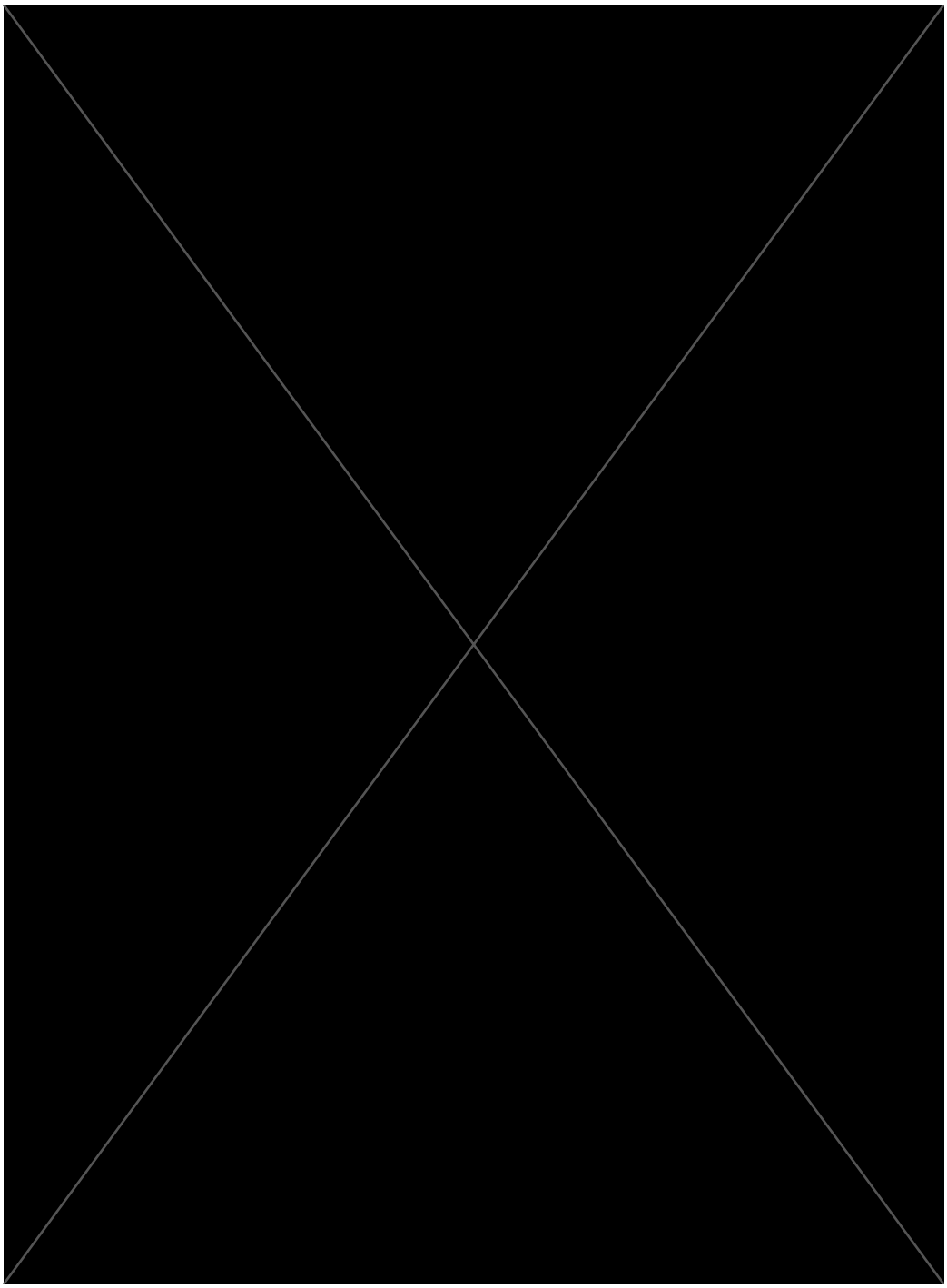

Fig. 41. Niklaus Manuel (called Deutsch). *King Josiah destroys the Idols.* Pen and ink, grey and brown wash: 432 x 320 mm. Basel: Kunstmuseum, Kupferstichkabinett.

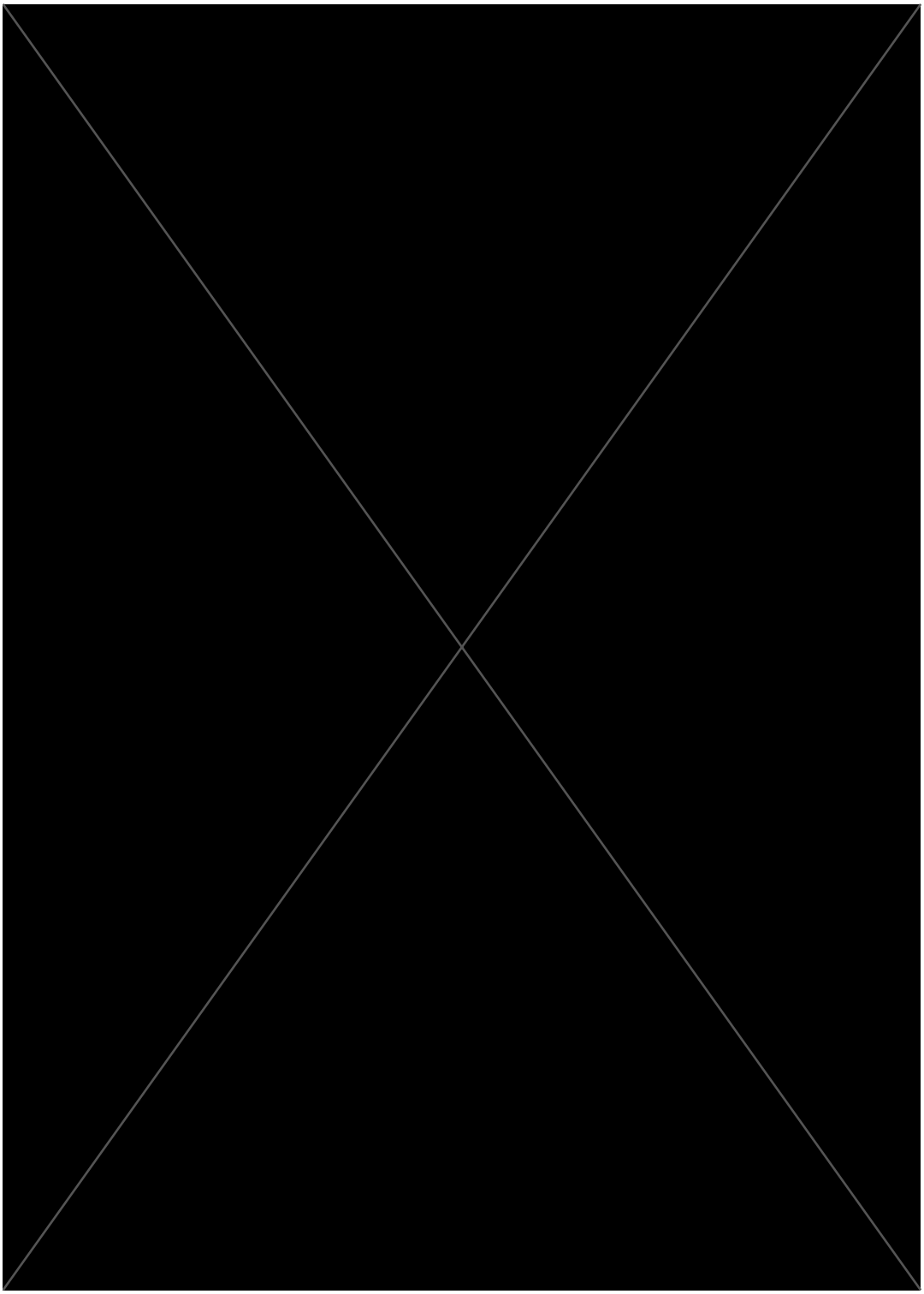

Fig. 42. Unknown Artist, *Glass panel of Sebastian Ramsperger*, c.1525. Stained Glass: 23.1cm x 16.3cm. Reding-Haus: Private Collection.

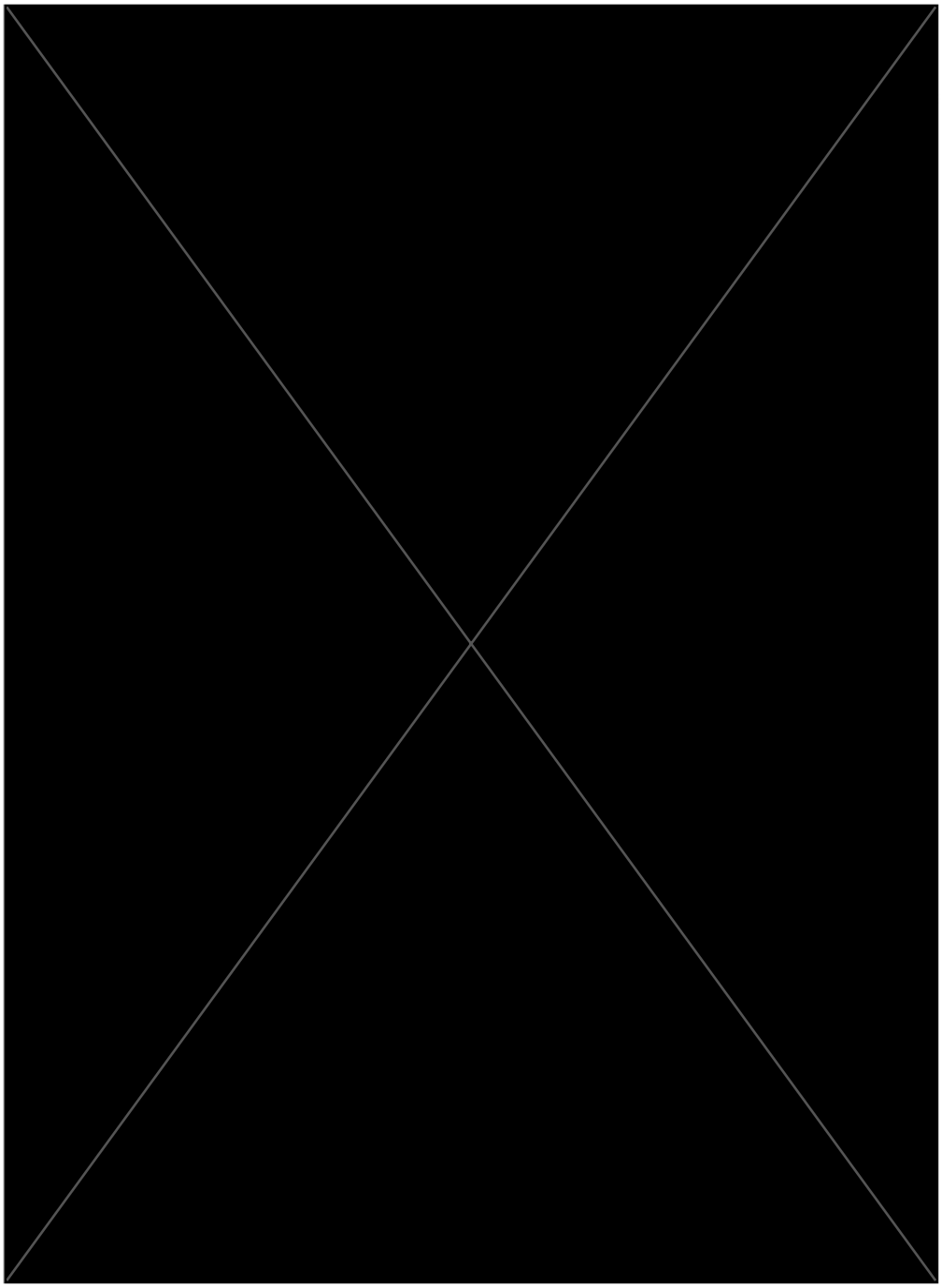

Fig. 43. Unknown artist, *Glass panel with the arms of Balthasar Spentziger*, 1533. Painted glass, 34cm x 24.5cm. Zürich: Scheizerisches Nationalmuseum.

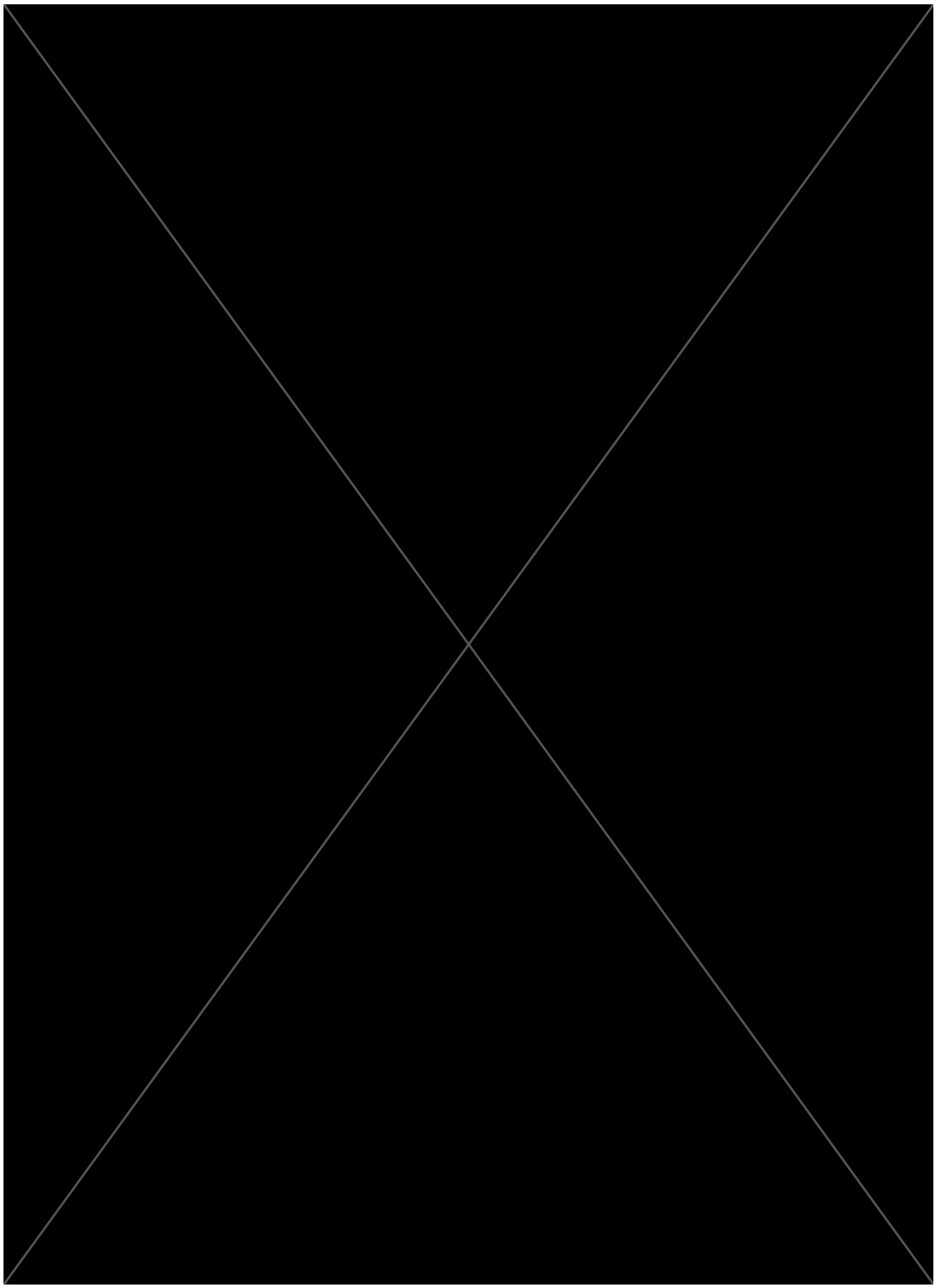

Fig. 44. Albrecht Dürer, *Coats of Arms with a Skull*, 1503. Engraving, 22cm x 15.8cm. Basel: Kunstmuseum.

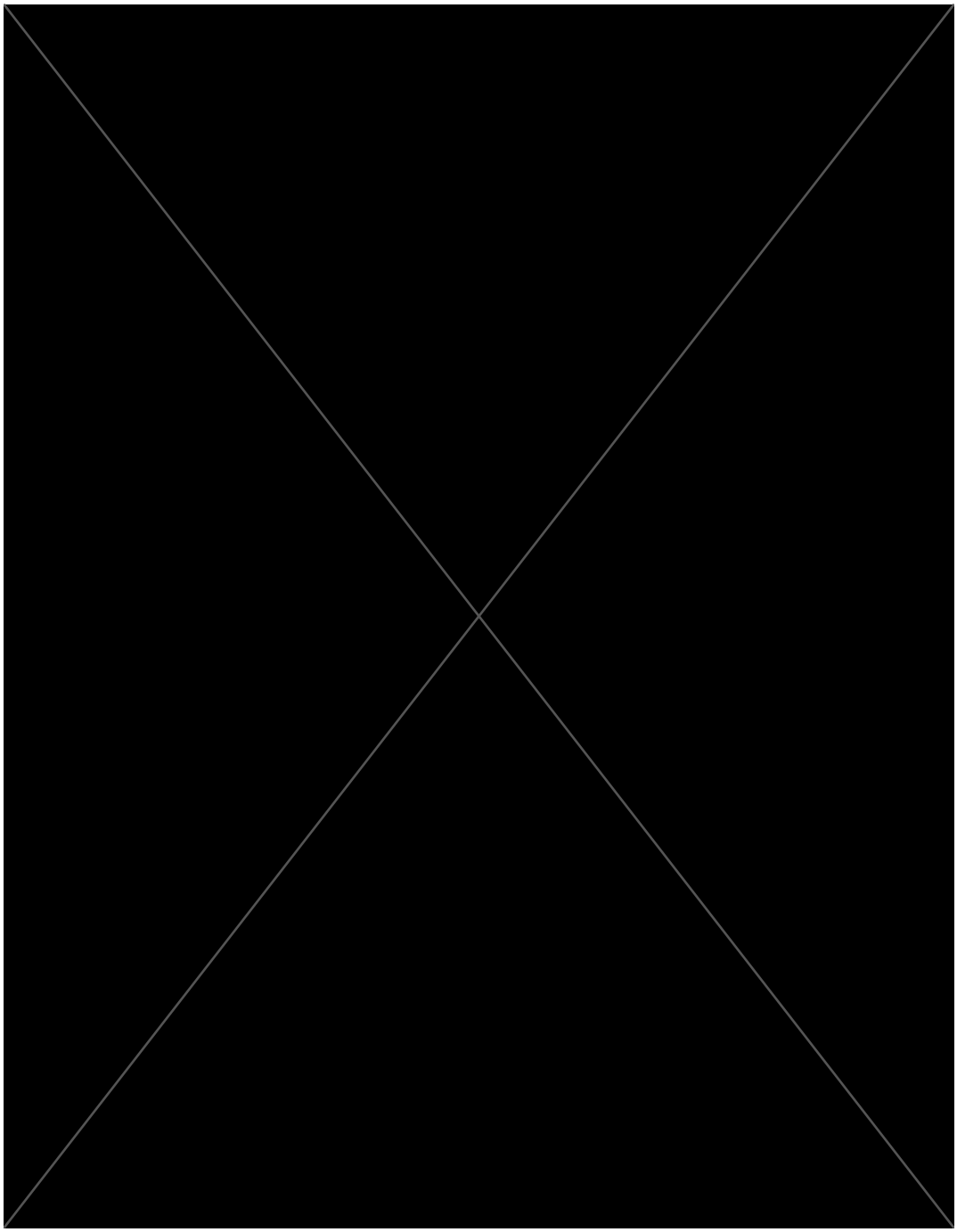

Fig. 45. Hans Holbein the Younger, *Coat of Arms of Death,* from *The Dance of Death* series*,* ca.1526, published 1538. Woodcut, 6.6cm x 5cm. Budapest: Museum of Fine Arts.

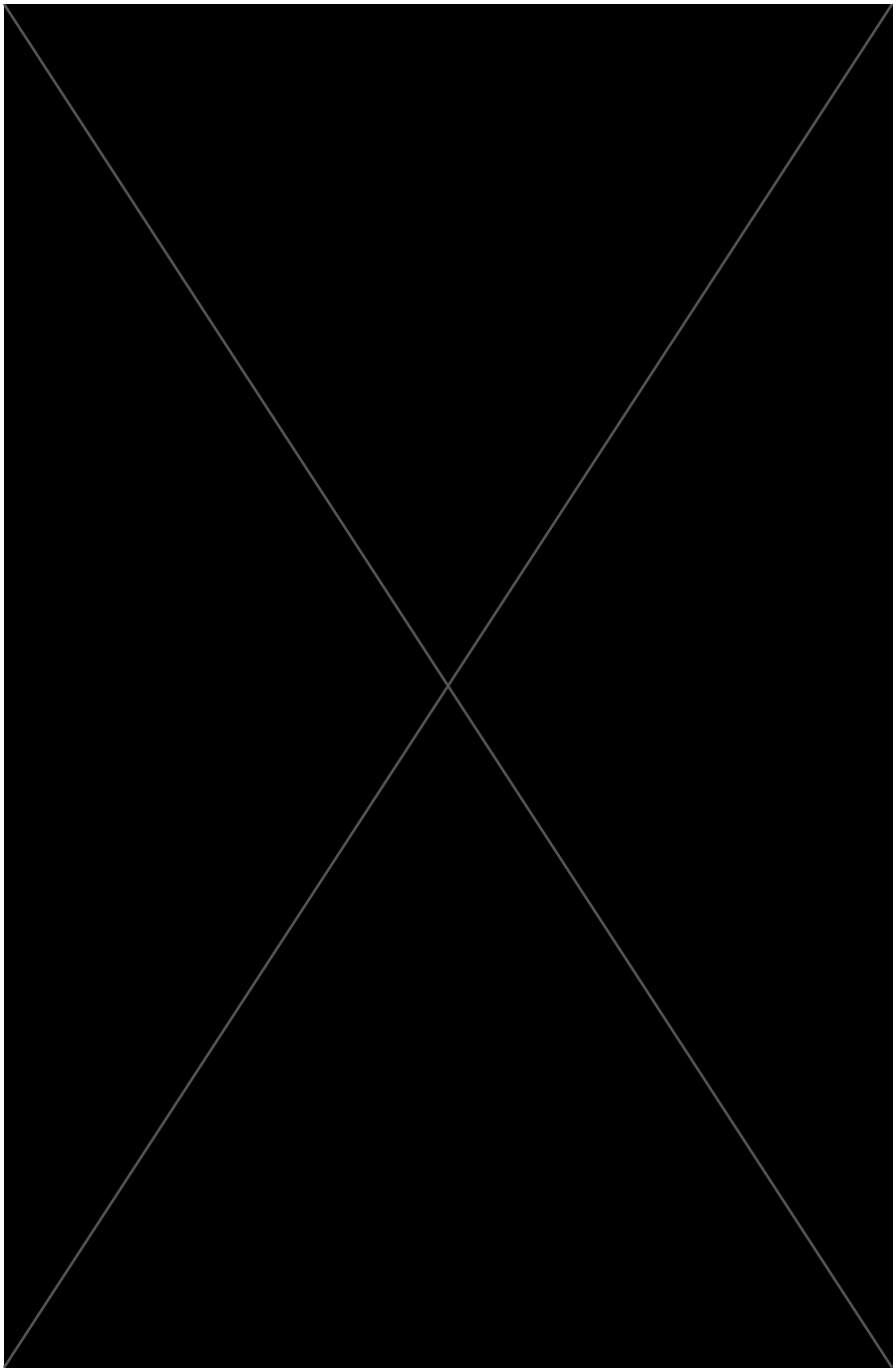

Fig. 46. Coat of arms of death. Illustration from Wappenbuch. Franks Bequest, German Arms, SAL/MS/373, fol.v. Early sixteenth century, after 1531. London: Society of Antiquaries.

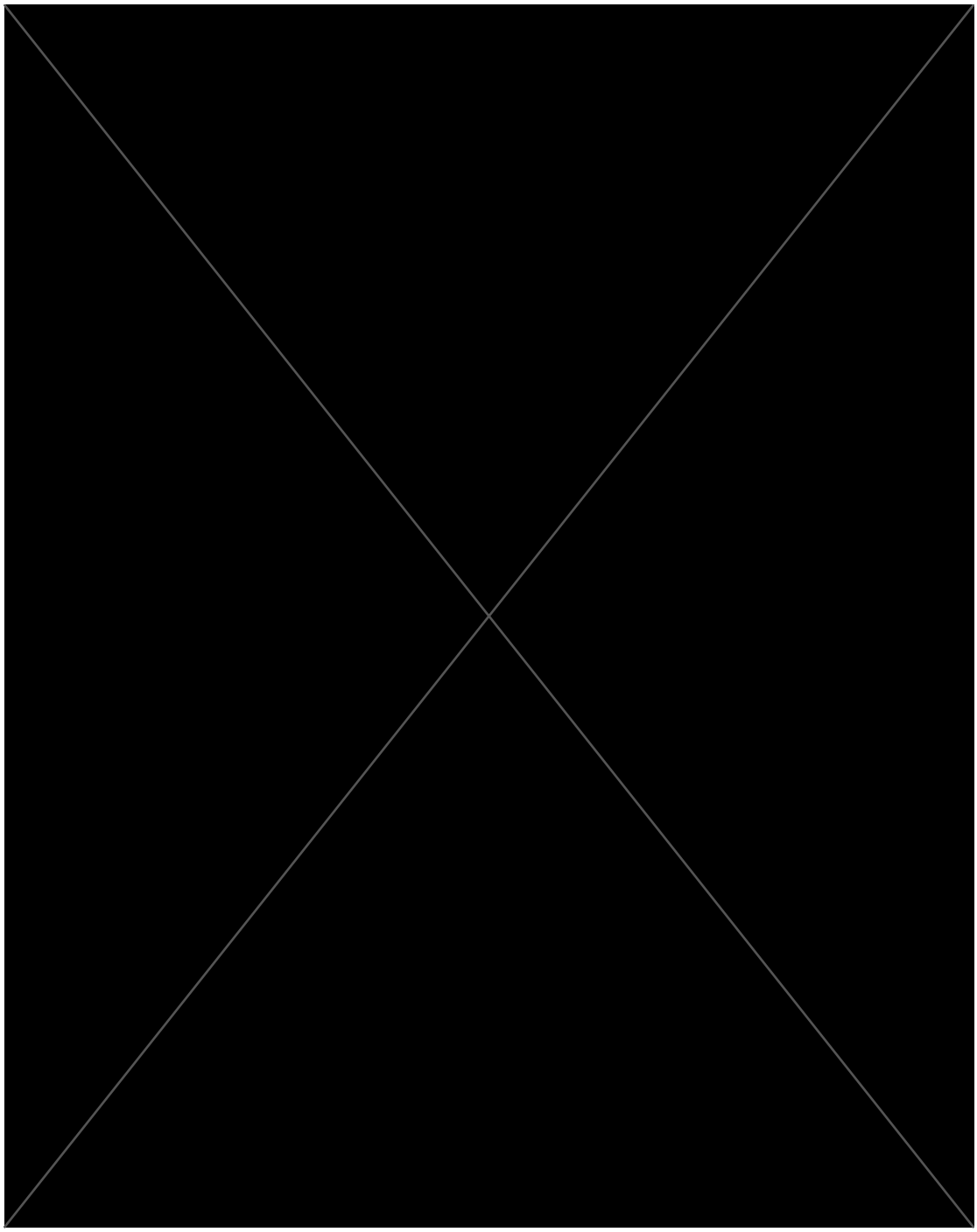

Fig. 47. Niklaus Manuel, *Drawing of a coat of arms with ram*, circa 1514. Pen and ink: 32.3cm x 22.3cm. Basel: Kunstmuseum.

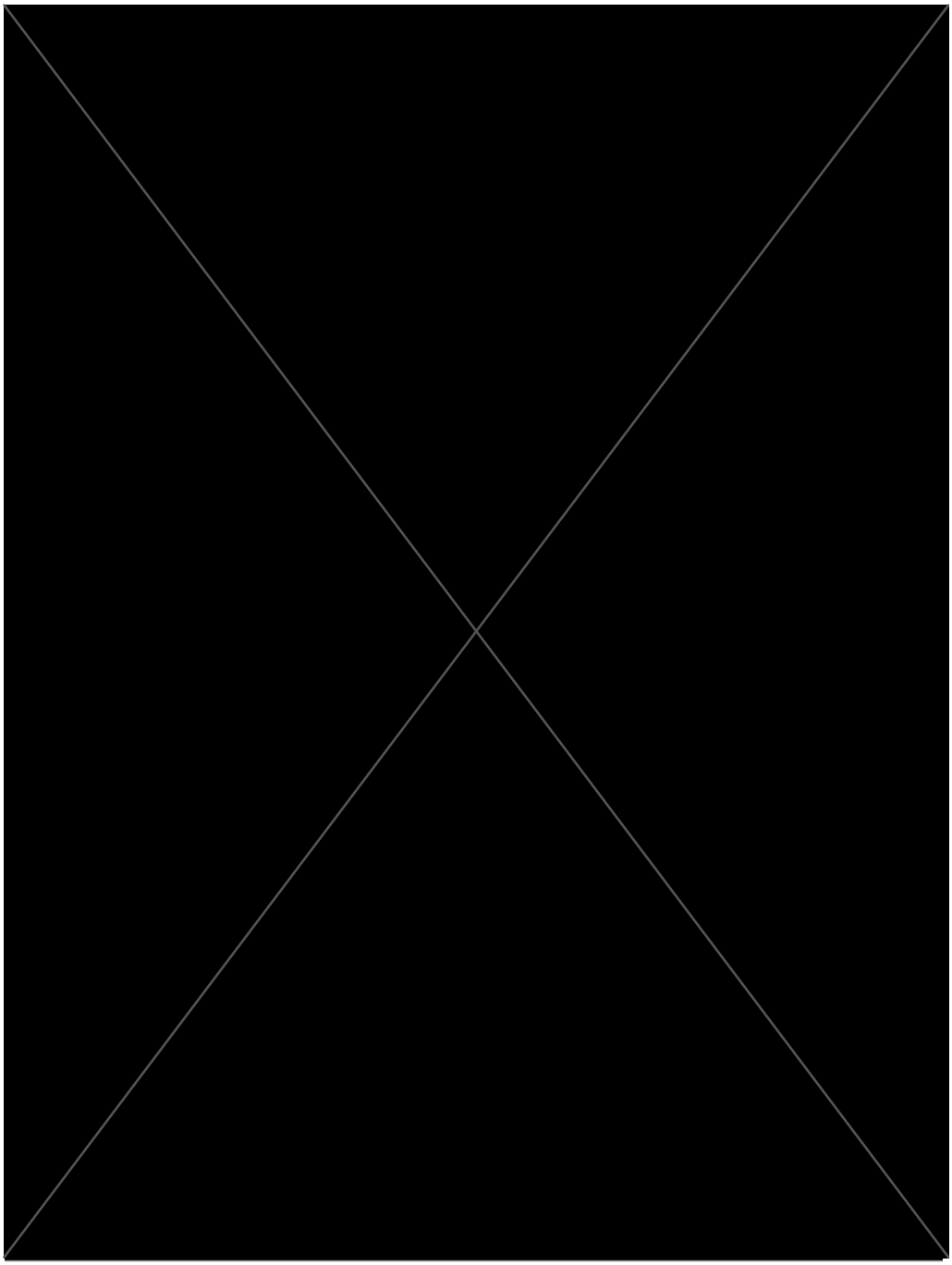

Fig. 48. Urs Graf, *Scheibenriss* with naked woman and Swiss mercenary soldier, c.1512. Pen, brush and ink: 24.5cm x 18.5cm. Basel: Kunstmuseum.

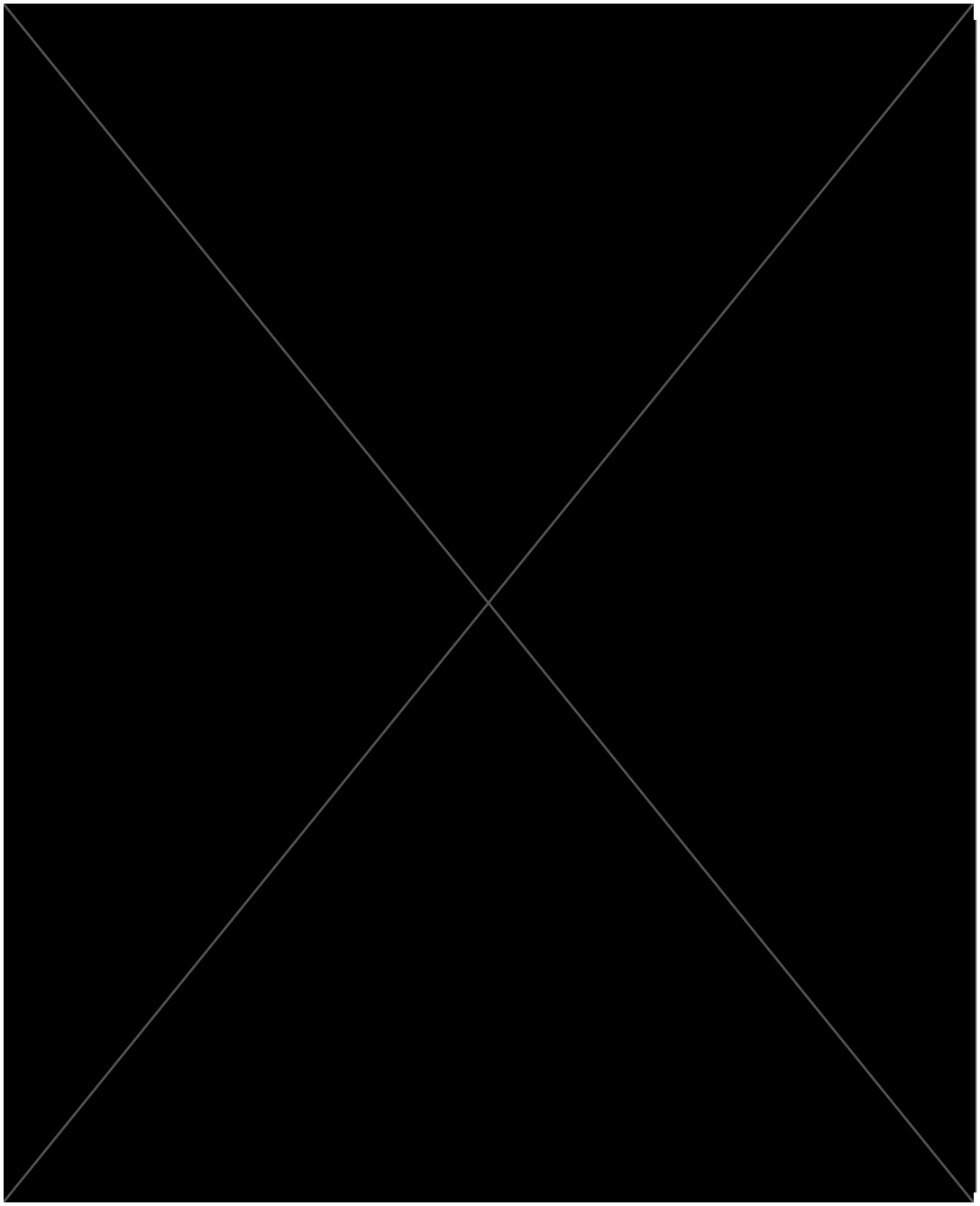

Fig. 49. Unknown artist, *Coat of arms between a young soldier and a corpse.* 16th century. Grey pen and ink drawing: 39.7cm x 32cm. Berlin: Staatliche Museen.

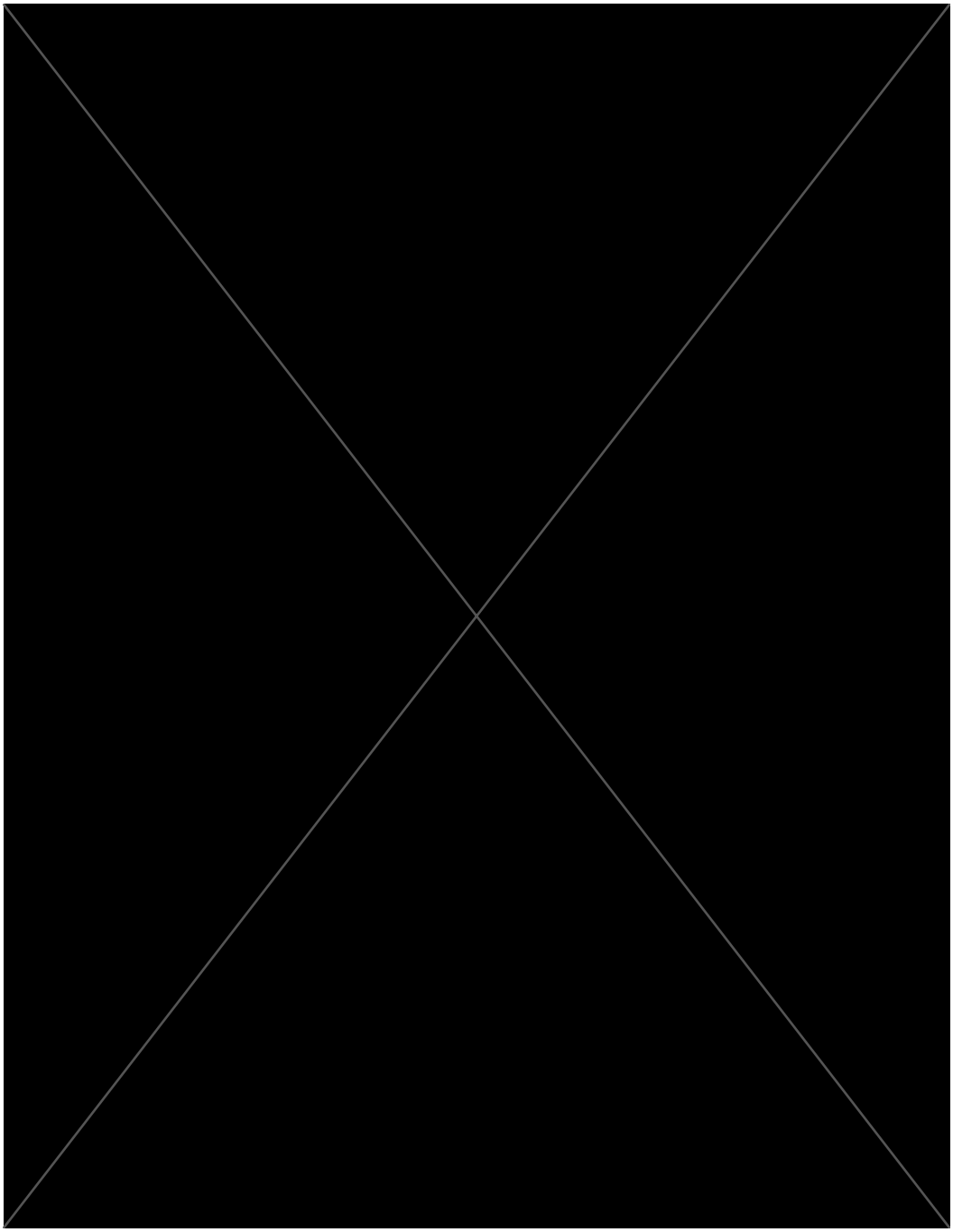

Fig. 50. Unknown artist, *Scheibenriss* with coat of arms of Alexander and Anna Peyer-Schlappritzi, 1540-1560. Pen and ink, 29.3 x 21.2cm. Zürich: Schweizerisches Nationalmuseum.

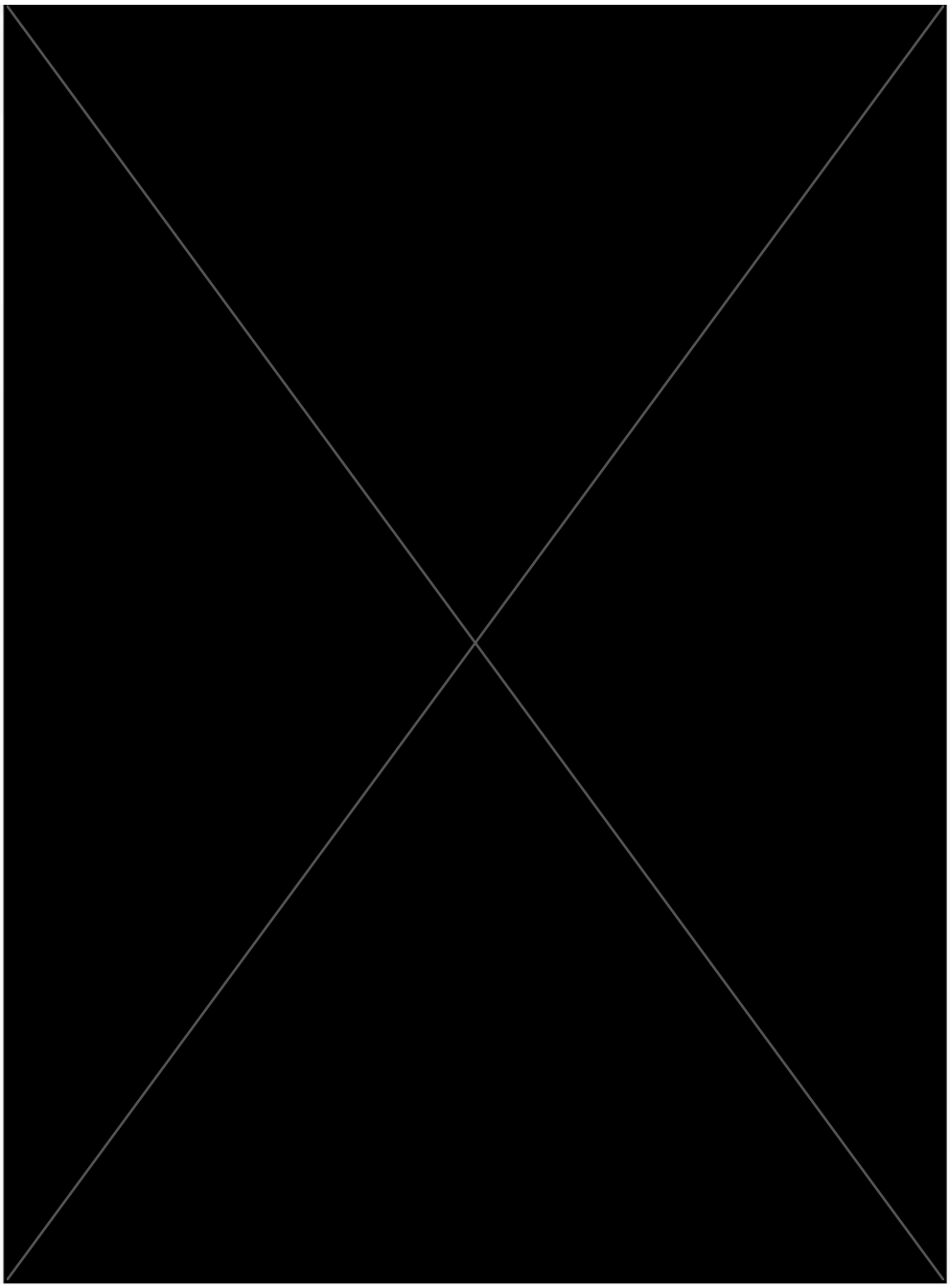

Fig. 51. Niklaus Manuel, *Scheibenriss* with coat of arms of Jakob May*,* 1526. *circa* 43cm x 32cm. Unknown: Private Collection or missing.

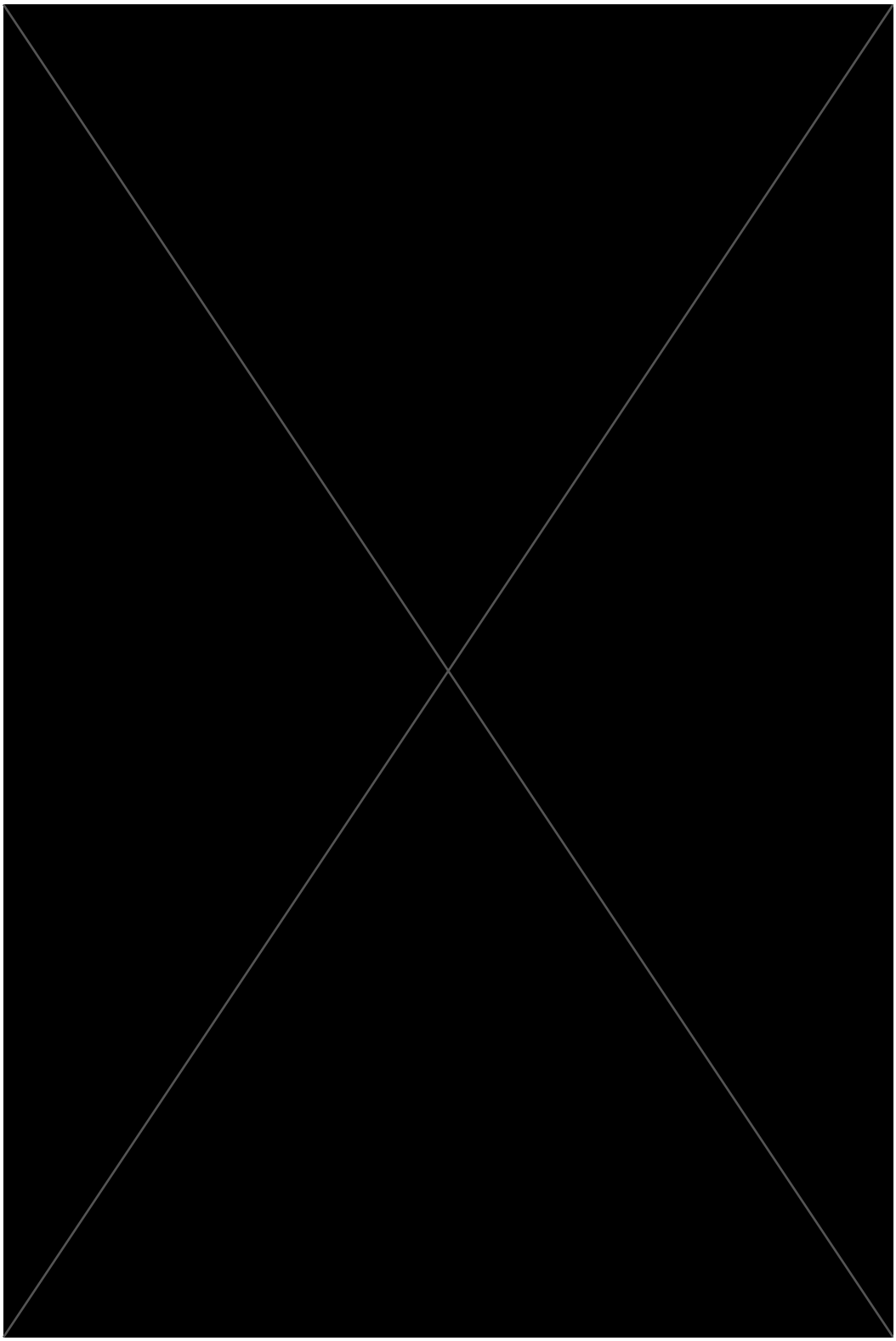

Fig. 52. Unknown artist, Swiss. *Scheibenriss* with an allegory of transience. First half of the 16th century. Black ink with grey wash, 32cm x 21.1cm. Basel: Kunstmuseum.

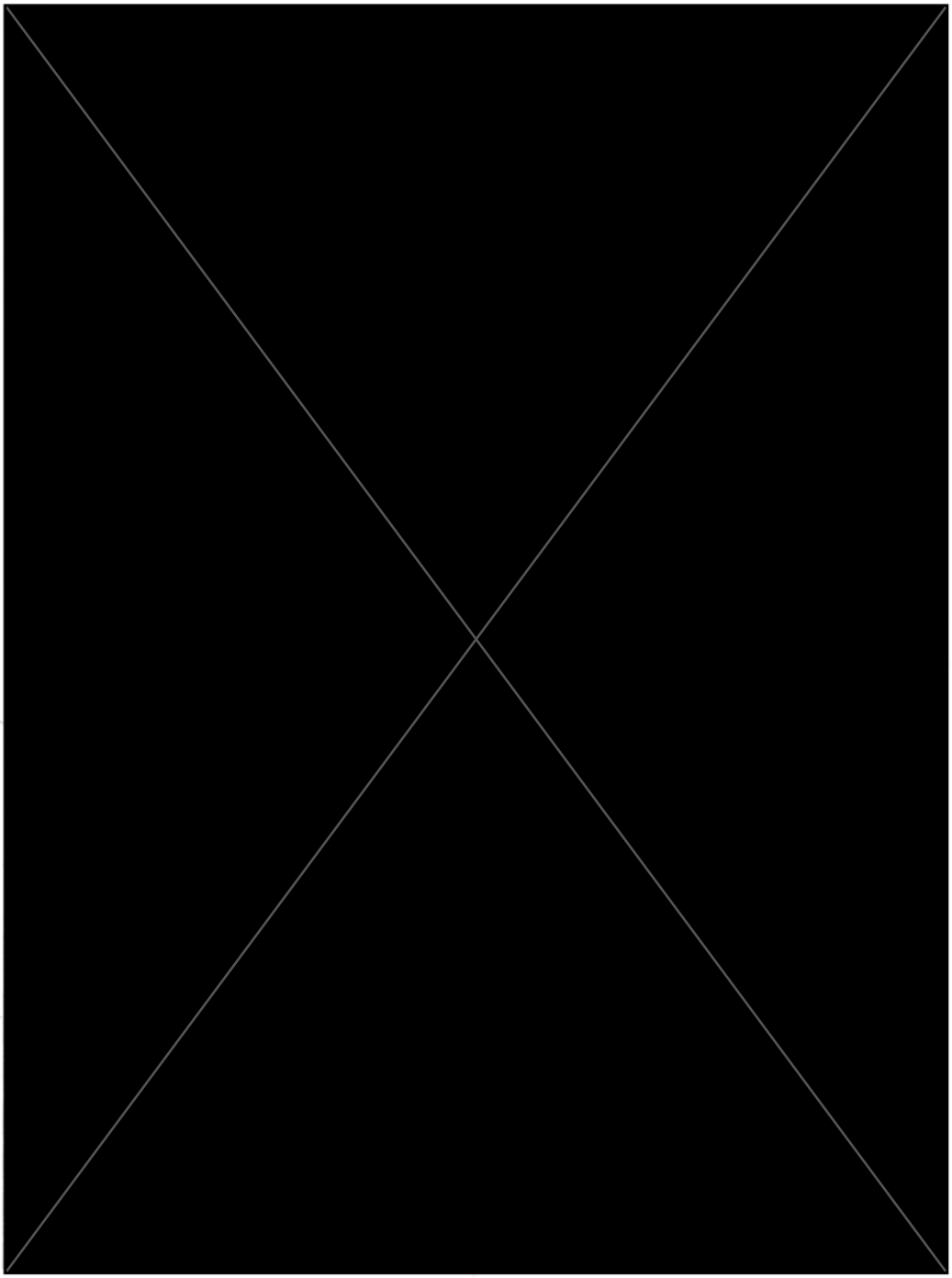

Fig. 53. Unknown artist, probably Bernese. Glass panel with unknown heraldry, possibly Lenzburg. circa 1515 (Lehmann, 1914, 321-323). Dimensions unknown. Zürich: Schweizerisches Landesmuseum (in 1914).

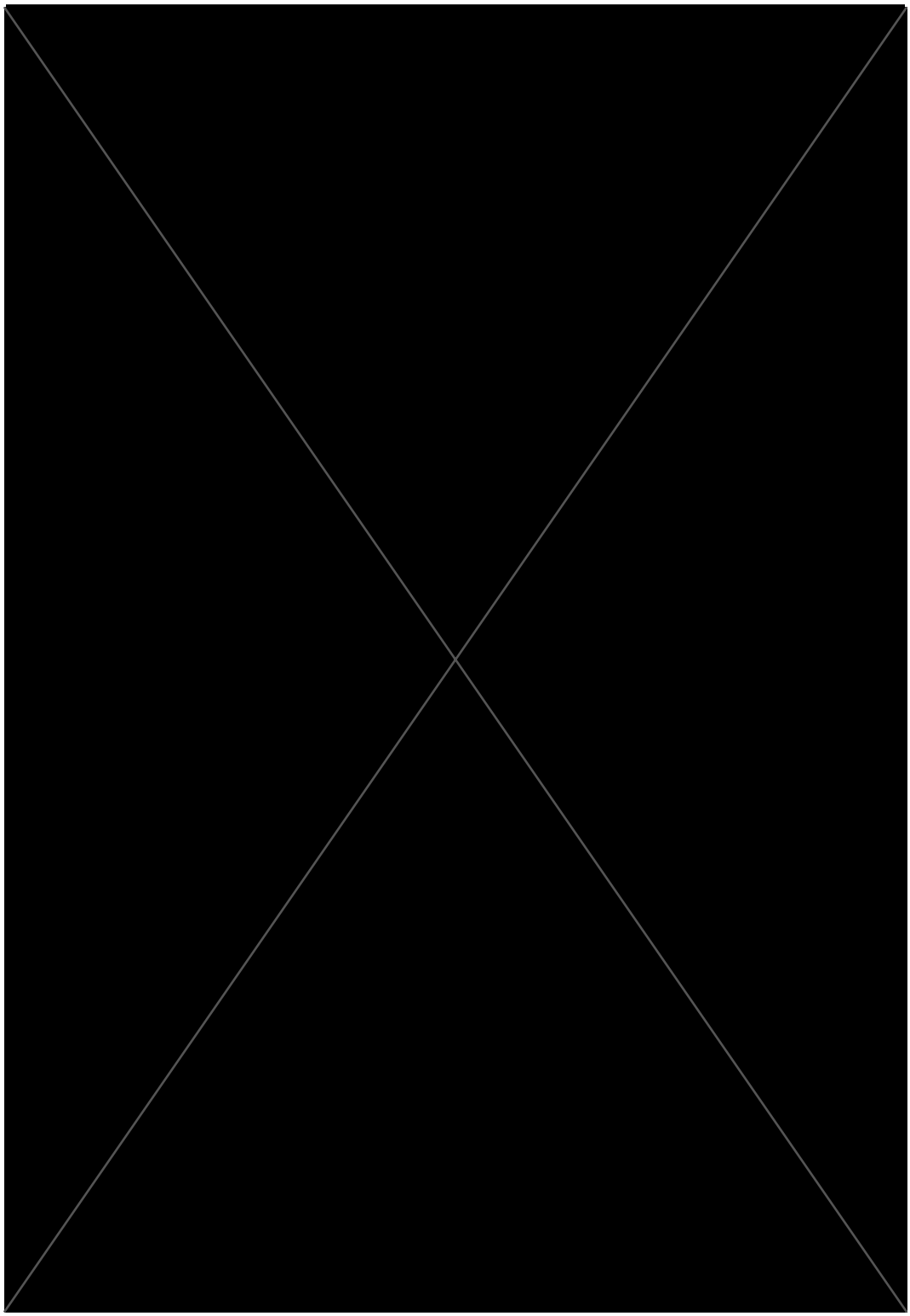

Fig. 54. Hans Baldung Grien and others, *Coat of arms of the Prechter family,* 1512. Pen and brush, 33.2cm x 22.2cm. Kunstmuseum der Veste Coburg.

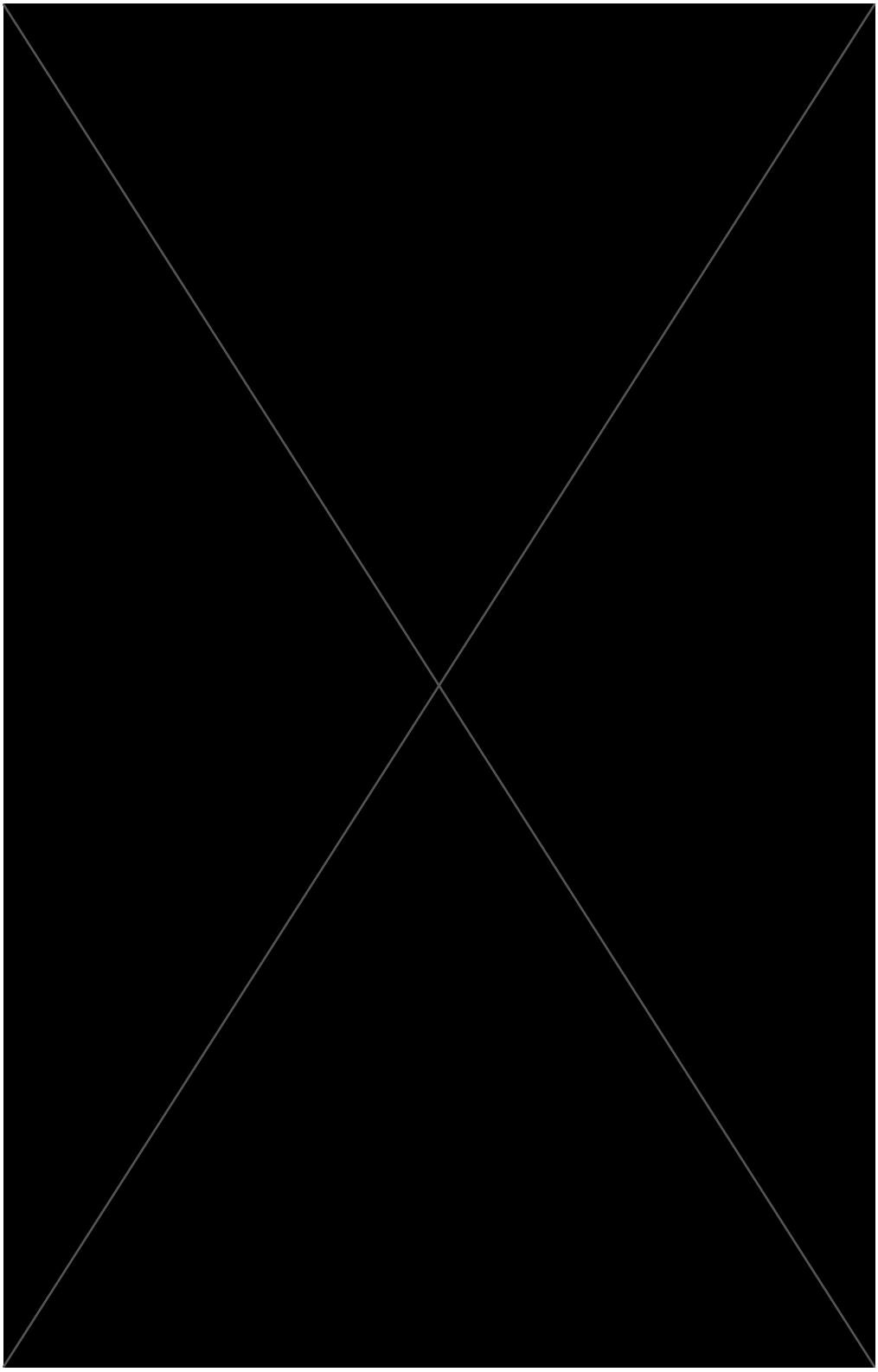

Fig. 55. Unknown artist, *Shield holders with an empty shield*, First half of 16th century. Pen and black ink, with black chalk and brown wash, 21.7cm x 16.4cm. Basel: Kunstmuseum.

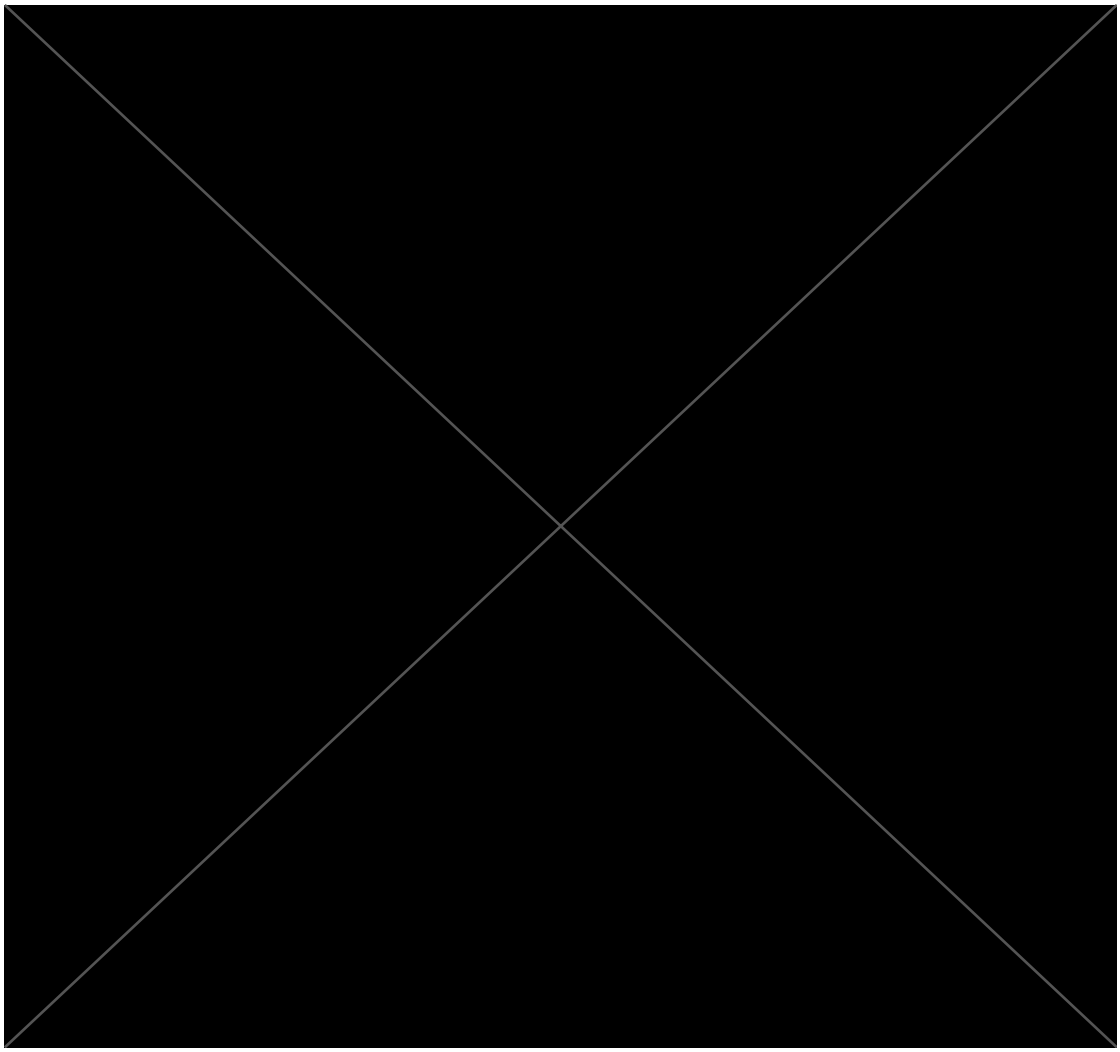

Fig. 56. Urs Graf, *Design for an alliance panel with Stehelin and Bischoff arms*, 1515. Pen and black ink on beige paper, 38.6cm x 41.4cm. Basel: Kunstmuseum.

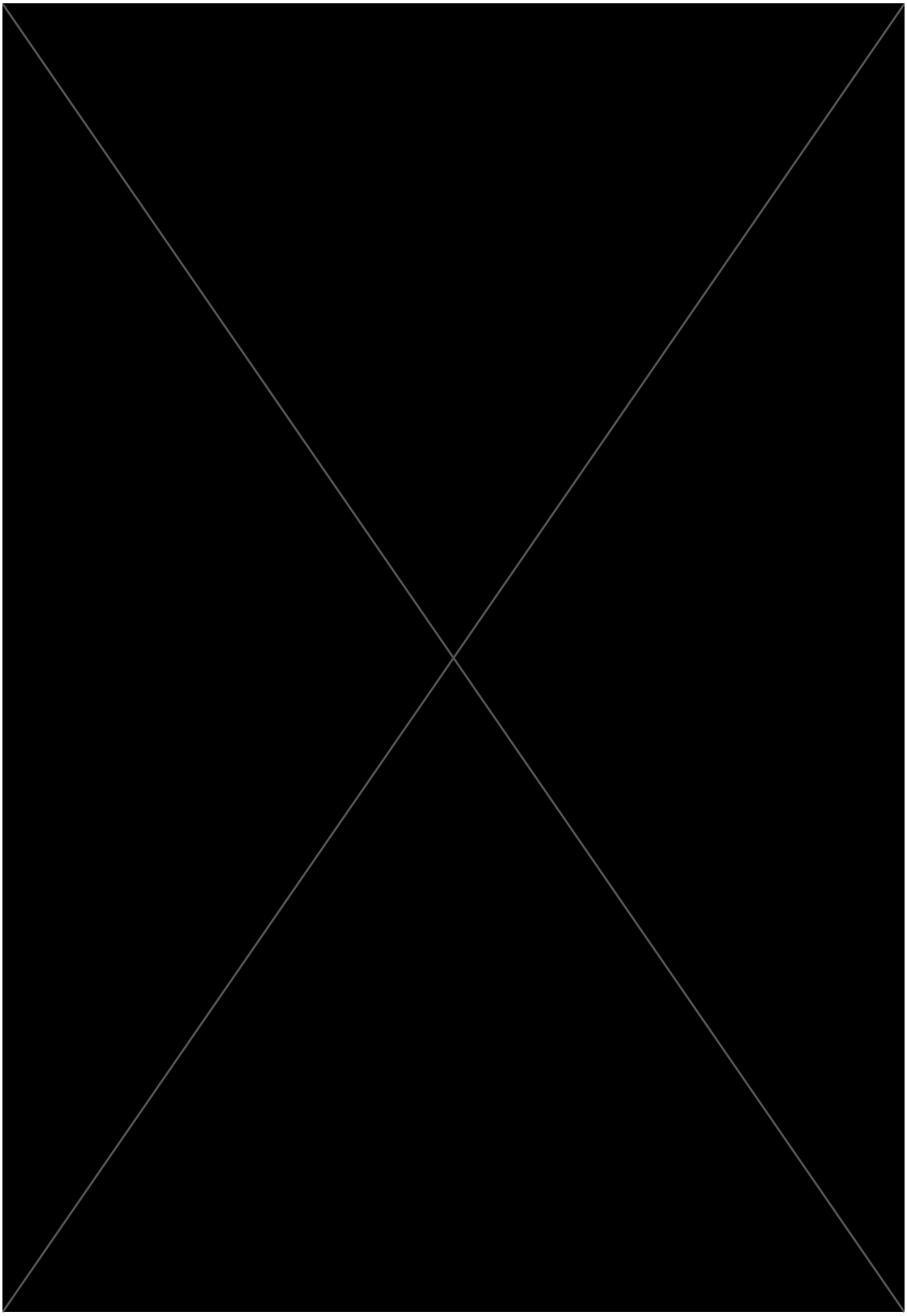

Fig. 57. Urs Graf, *Chiaroscuro with woman lifting skirt*, 1516. Pen and ink, with grey and white chalk, on red- grounded paper, 19.7cm x 12.1cm. Basel: Kunstmuseum.

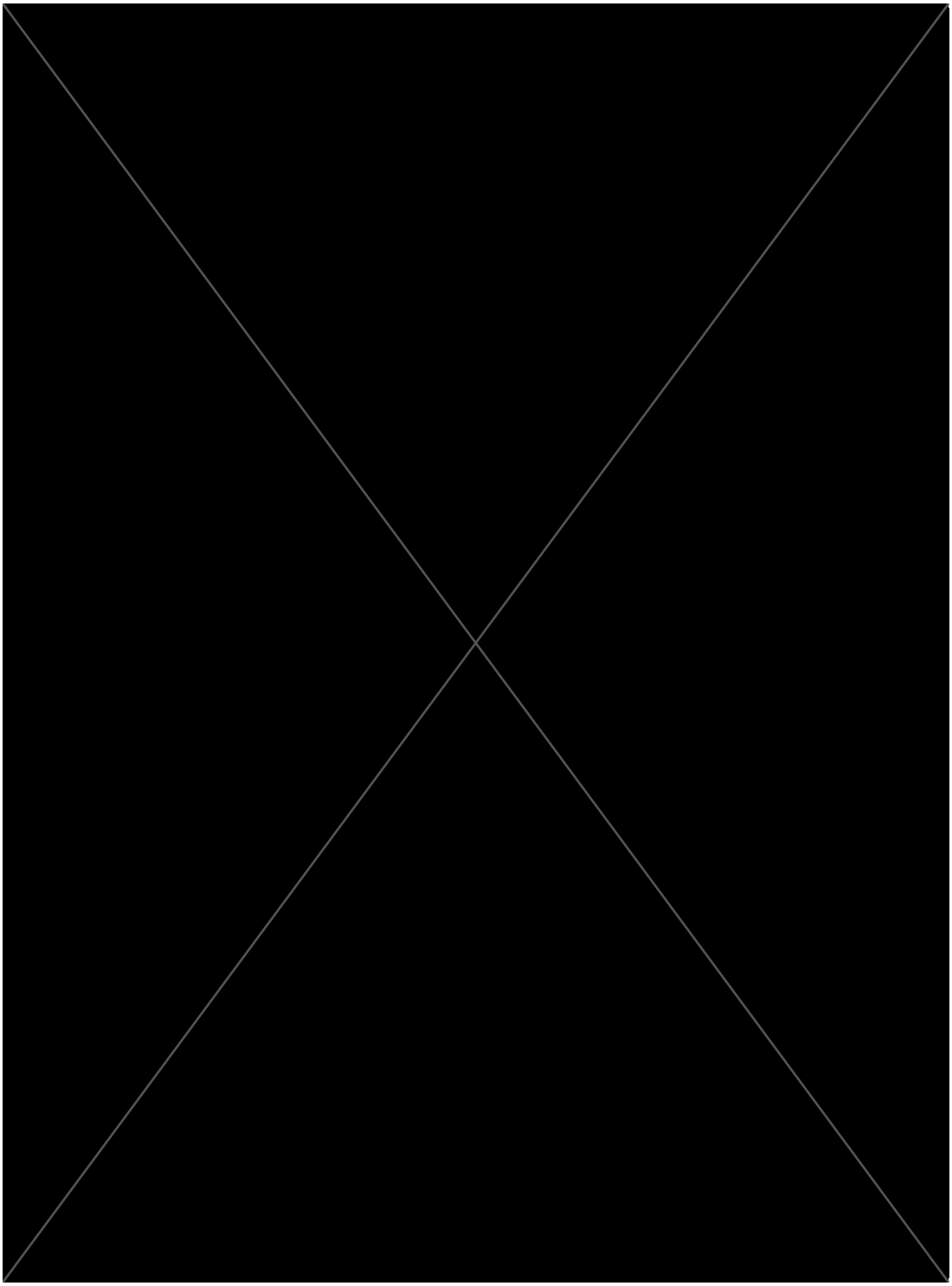

Fig. 58. Jost Amman, illustration from *Enchiridion, Artis pingendi, fingendi et sculpendi*, Frankfurt am Main: Sigmund Feyerabend, 1578. Woodcut, 19.8cm x 14.3cm (full book). London: British Museum.

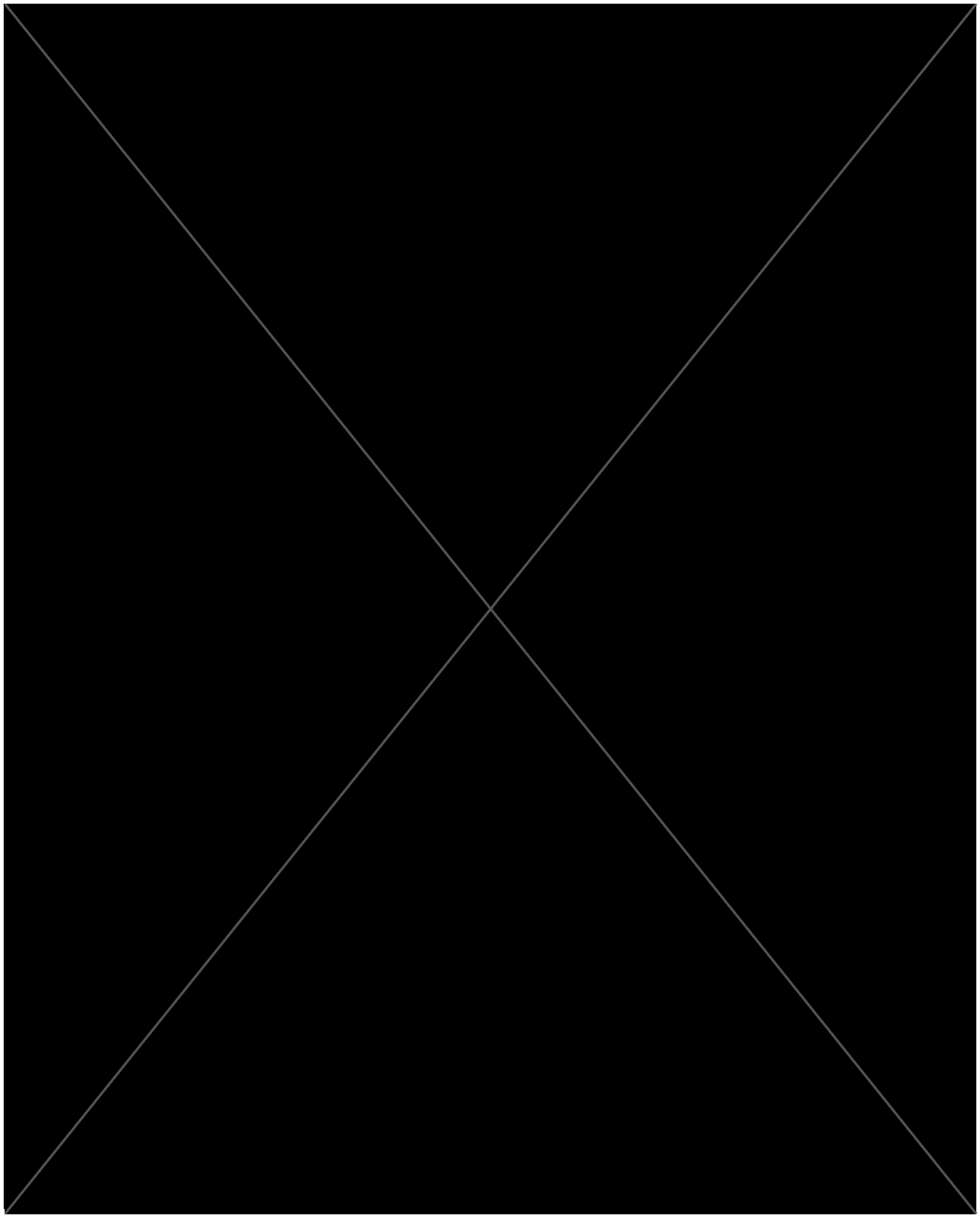

Fig. 59. Wendel Dietterlin, Plate 38 from the book of the Tuscan order, *De Architectura,* Nuremberg: Caymox, 1598. 34cm (full volume height). Zürich: Zentralbibliothek.

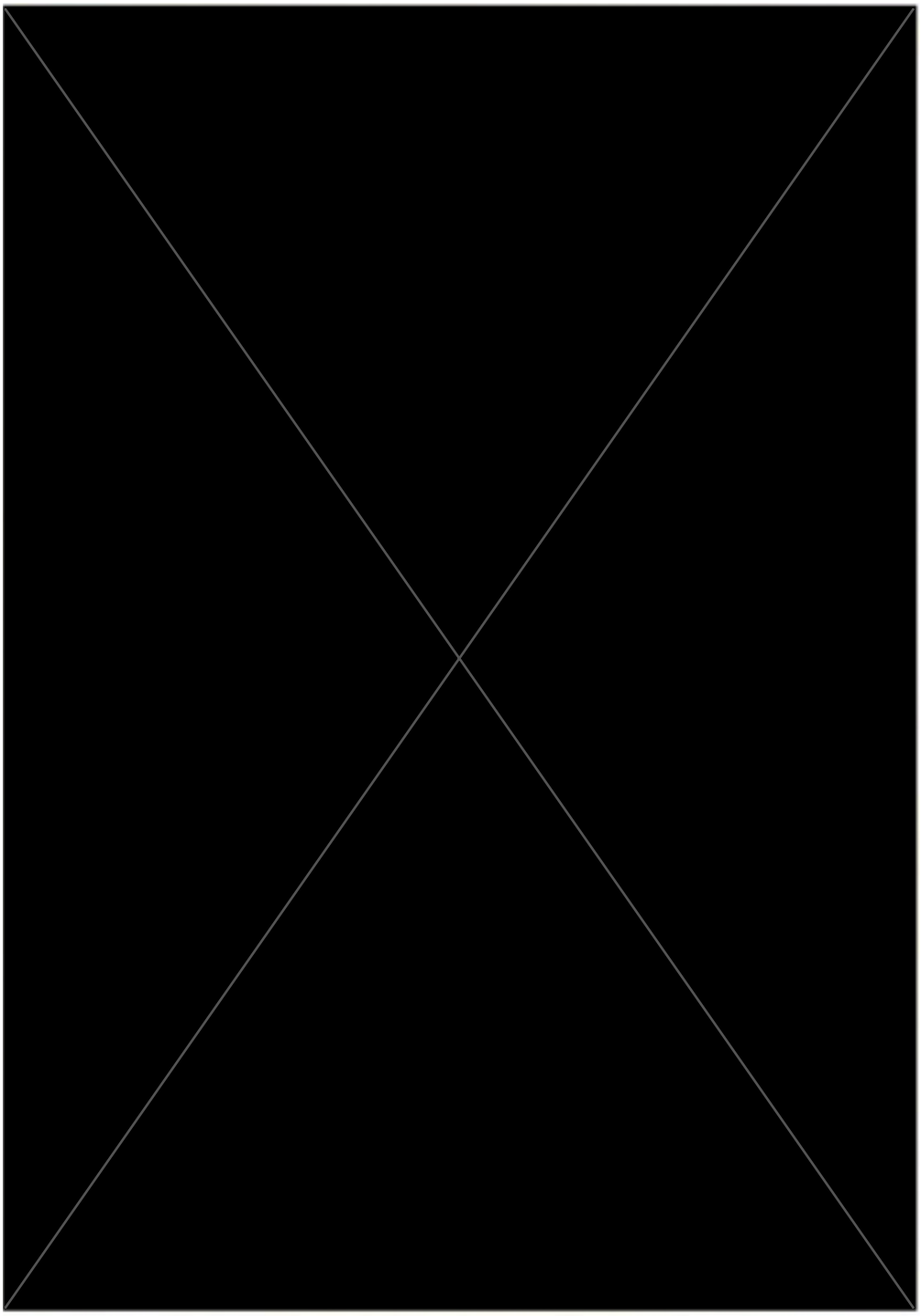

Fig. 60. Albrecht Dürer, *Coat of Arms of Michael Behaim*, circa 1520. Woodcut, 28.2cm x 19.7cm. New York: Morgan Library.

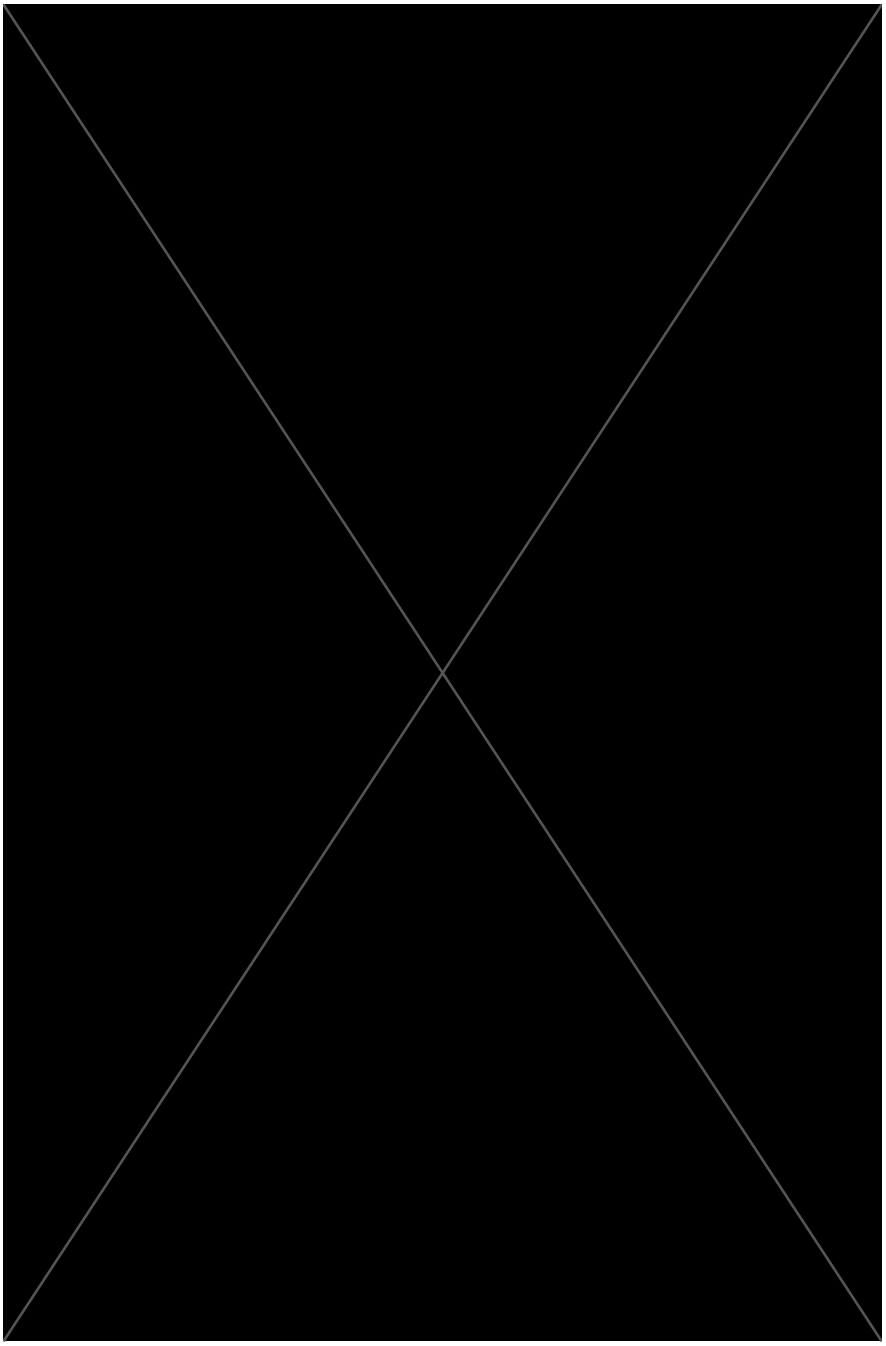

Fig. 61. Lucas Cranach the Younger (workshop of), *Fictive coats of arms; the first three coats of arms in the world and the three best Jews*, Ryland Collection German MS 2, fol.12. Manchester: John Rylands Library.

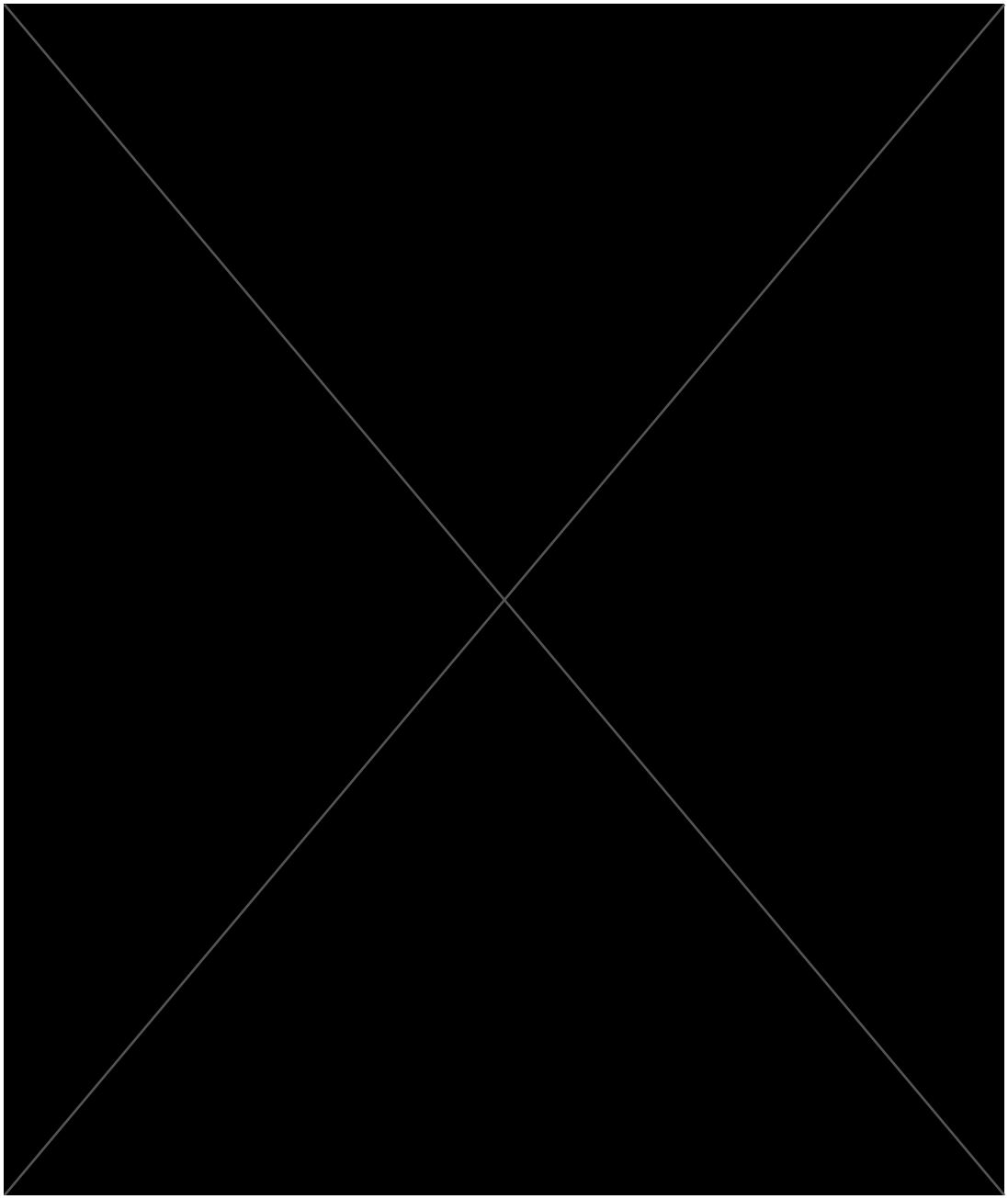

Fig. 62. Attrib. Albrecht Dürer, *Coat of arms with a pelican and youth leaning on a stove*, c.1493-5. Pen and ink, 23.1cm x 18.7cm. Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans van Beuningen.

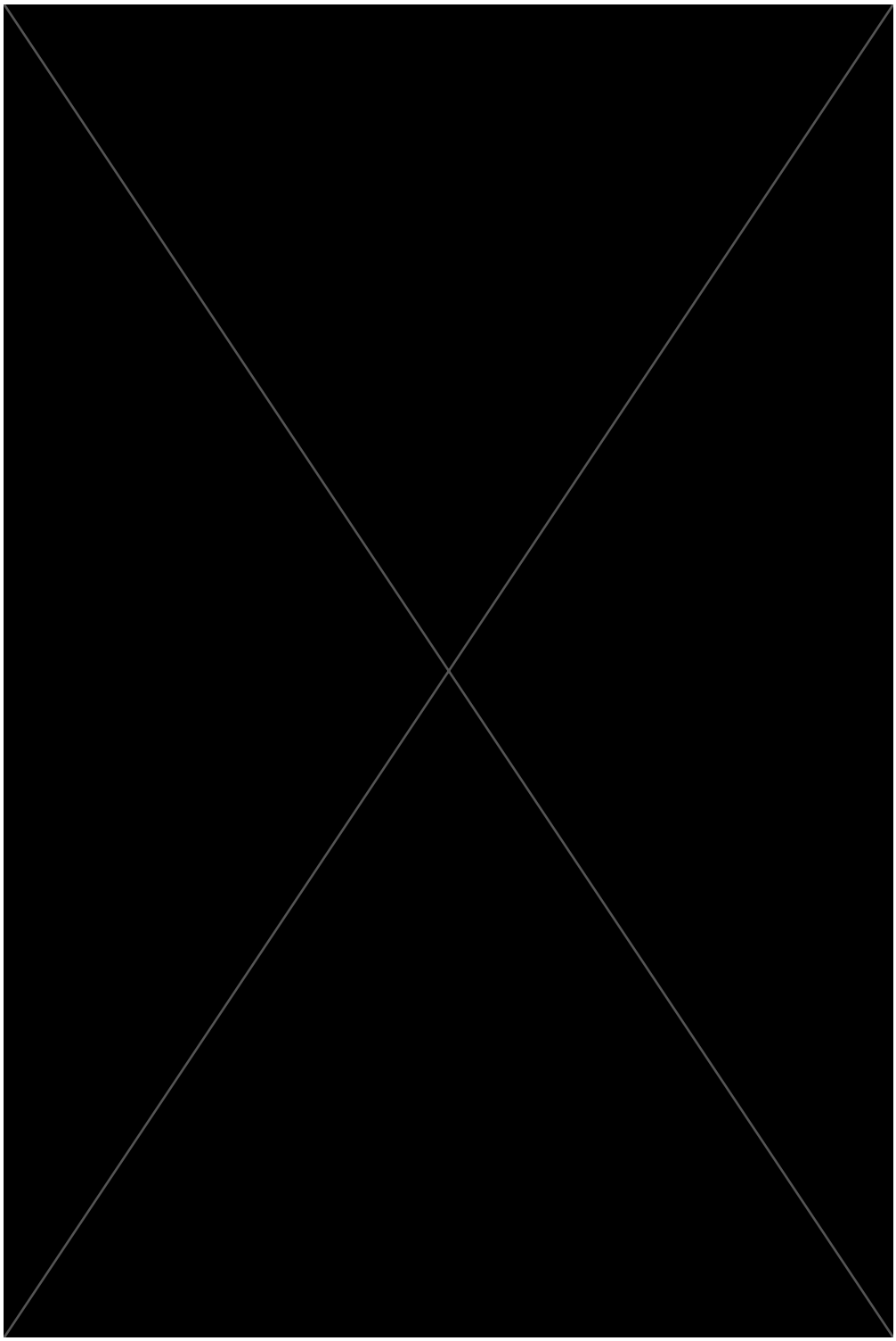

Fig. 63. Albrecht Dürer, '*The Dream of the Doctor'*, c.1498. Engraving, 18.9cm x 11.9cm. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

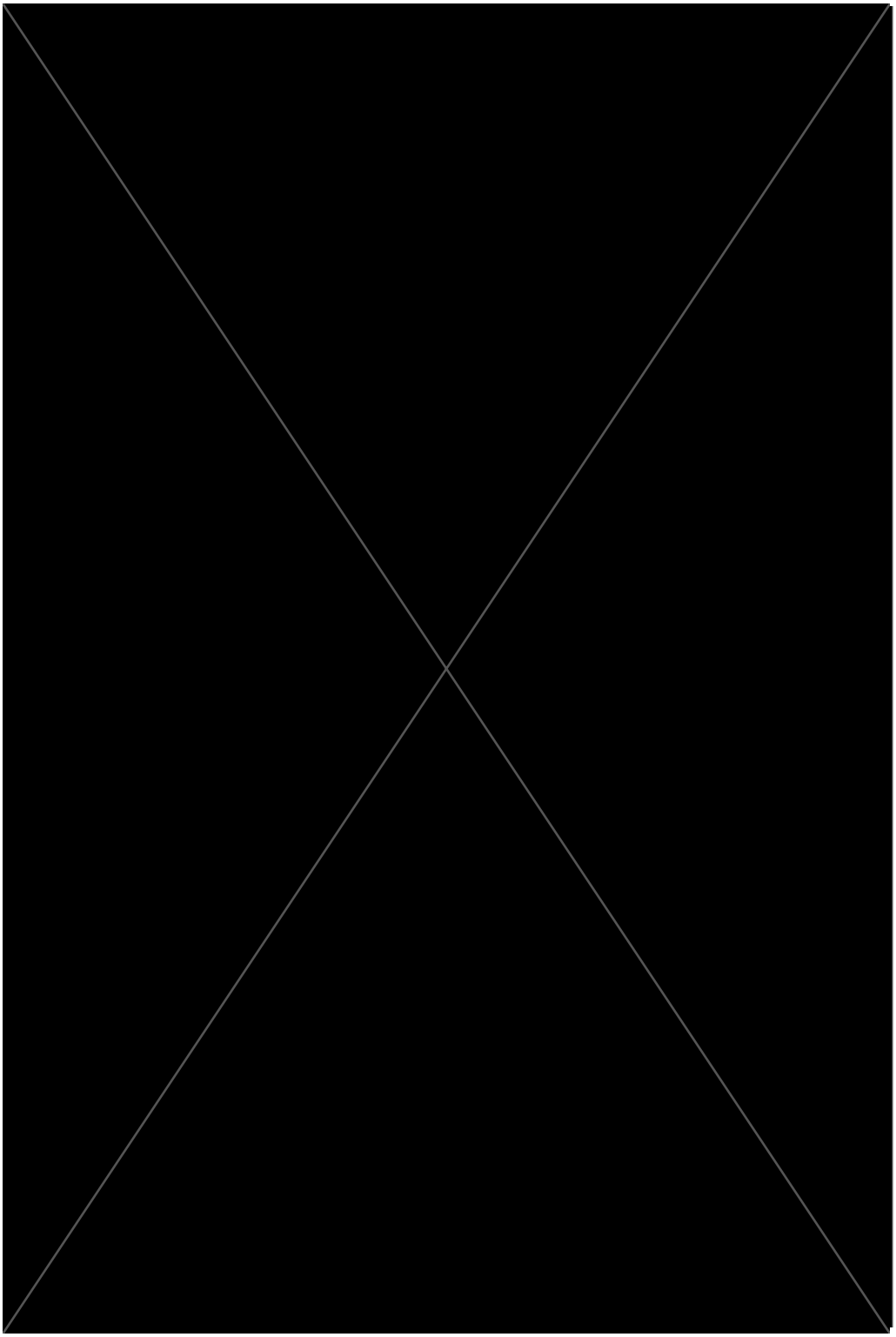

Fig. 64. Dominicus Custos, *The Christian Shield and Helm*, 1570-1612. Engraving, 35.1cm x 21.6cm. Braunschweig: Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum.

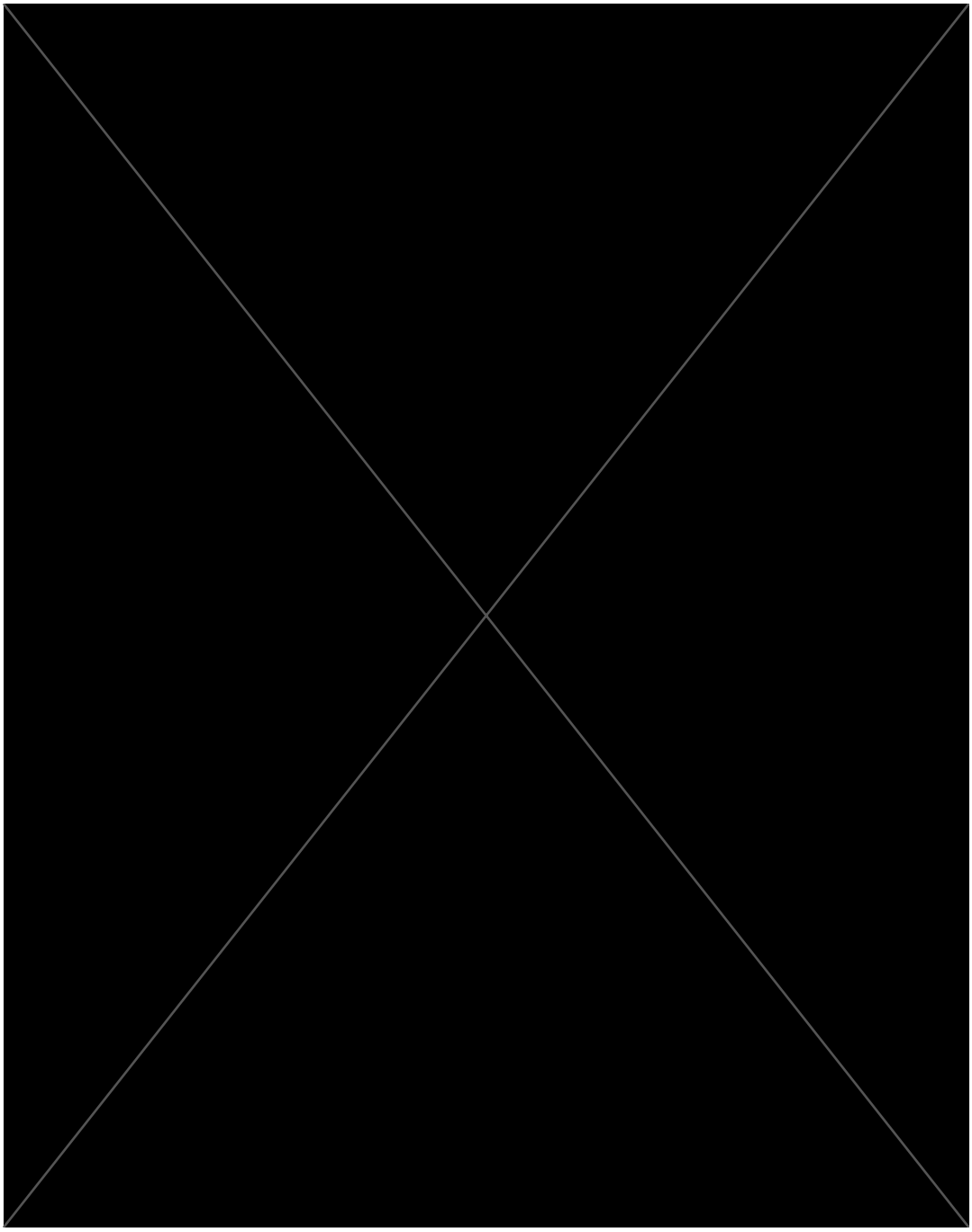

Fig. 65. Isaac Briot after Pierre Delabarre, *Liure de Toutes Sortes de feüilles Seruant a L'orpheurerie,* Plate 2, Paris, 1635. Etching and engraving, 31.7cm x 24.7cm. New York: New York Public Library.

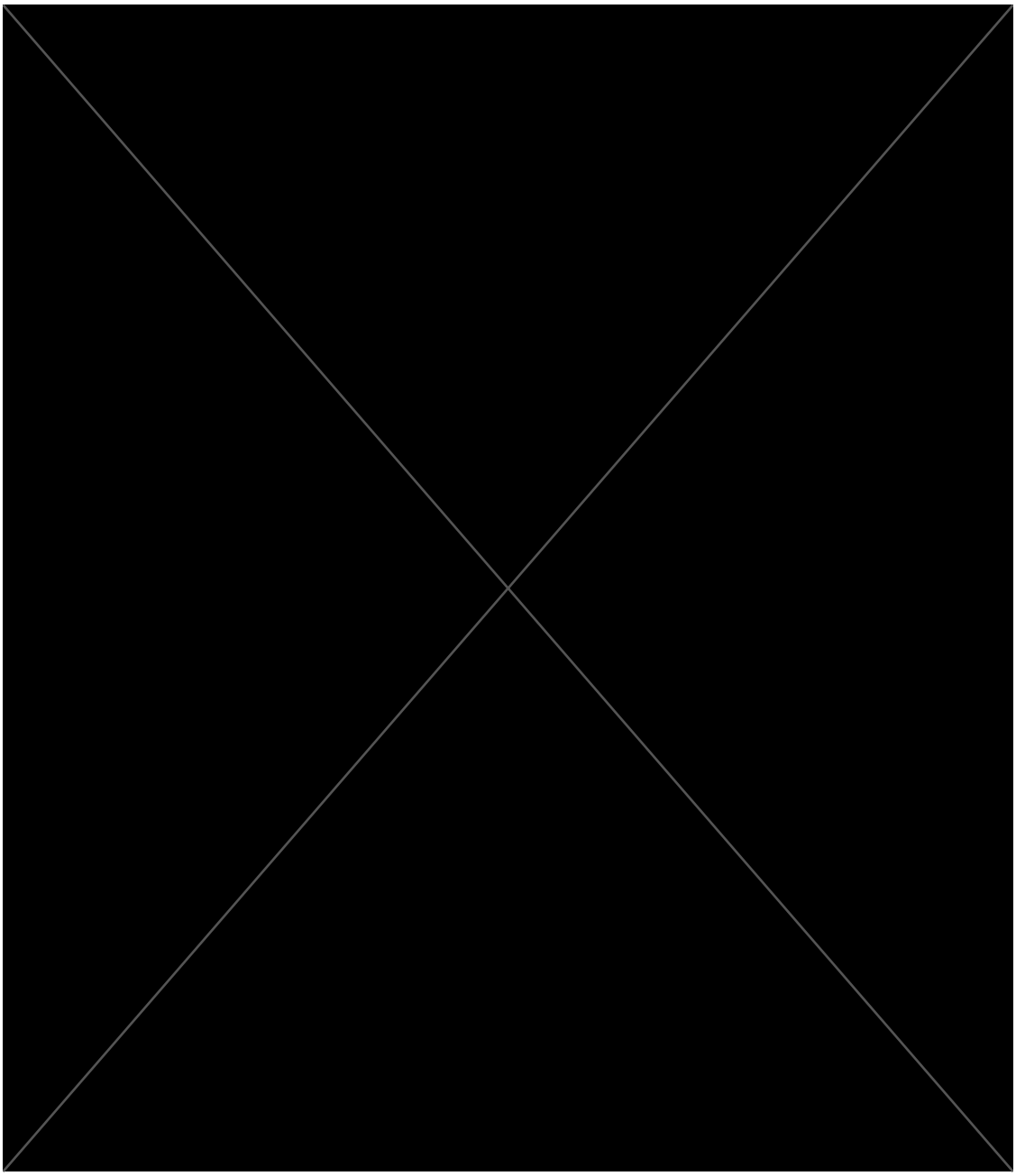

Fig. 66. ‘In garrulum & gulosum,’ in Andrea Alciato, *Emblematum libellus,* Venice, 1546, f.44^{v}.

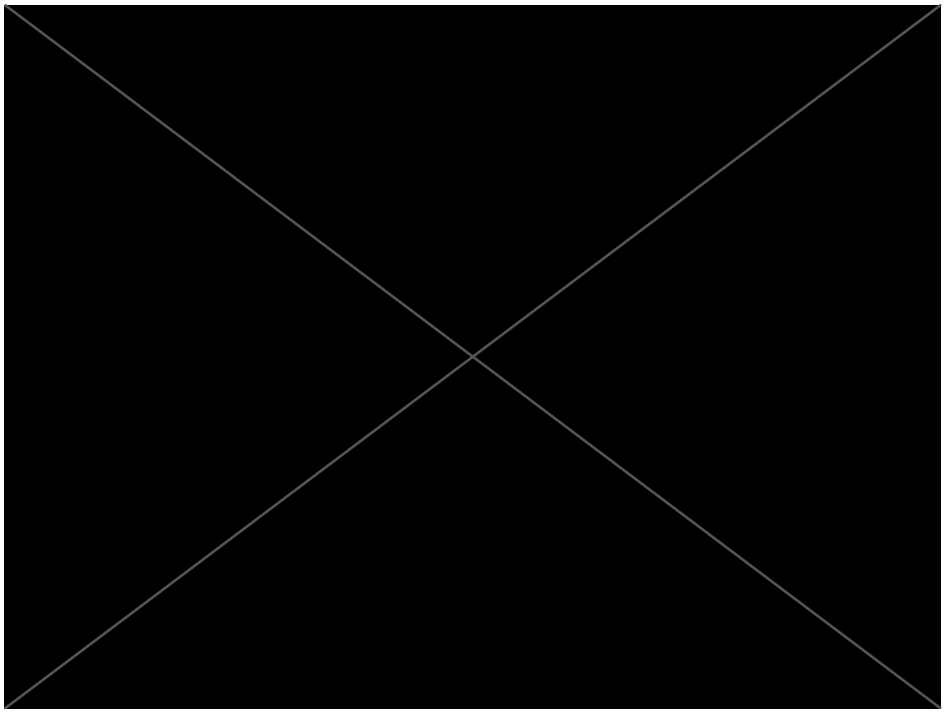

Fig. 67. Detail from *Thurnierbuch,* tournaments held by Kaiser Friedrich III and Kaiser Maximilian I in the years 1489-1511, Augsburg., mid-16th century. Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod.icon. 398, fol.23r.

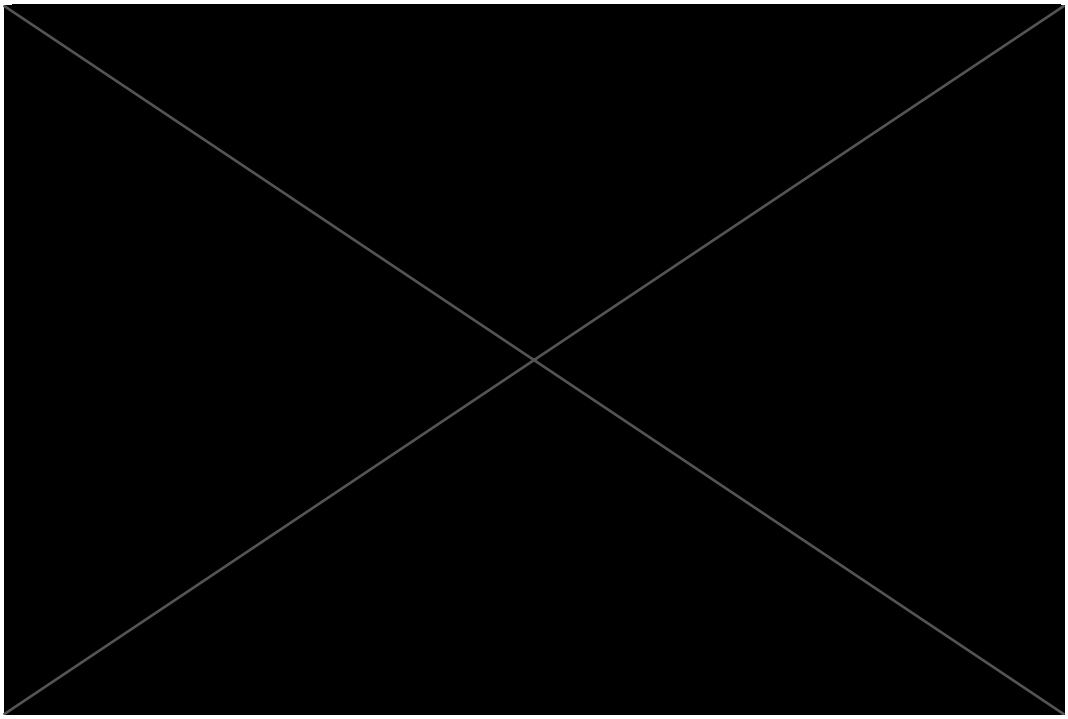

Fig. 68. Detail from Lucas Cranach the Elder, *The Third Tournament,* 1509. Woodcut: 28.6cm x 41.3cm. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

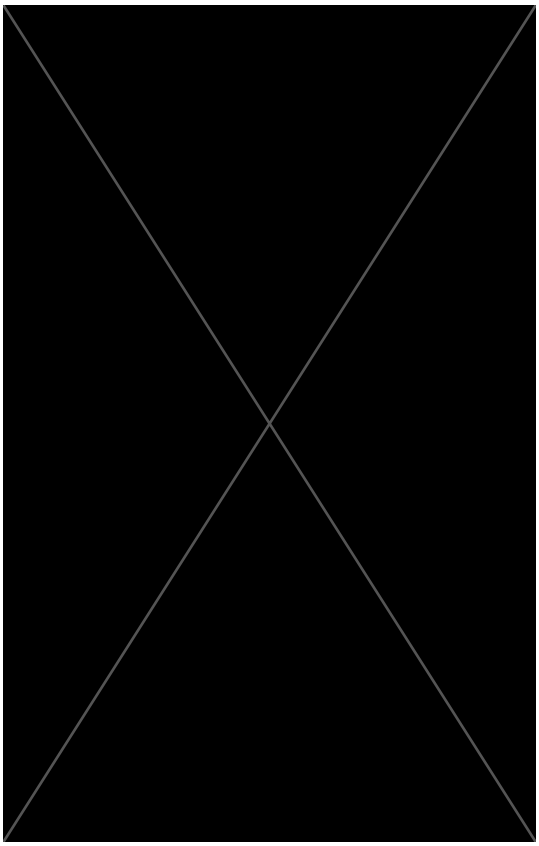

Fig. 69. Heinrich Aldegrever, detail of '*Idleness'* from *Virtues and Vices*, 1552. Engraving, 10.3cm x 6.2 cm.

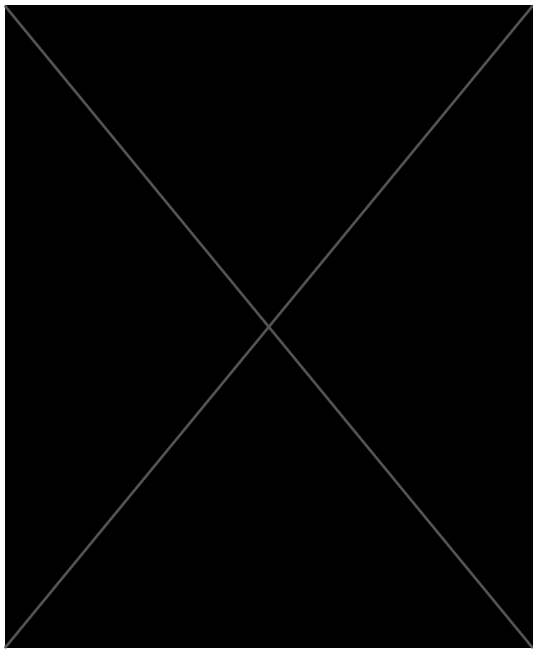

Fig. 70. Albrecht Dürer, detail from *St Jerome in his Study,* 1514. Engraving, 24.6cm x 18.9cm. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

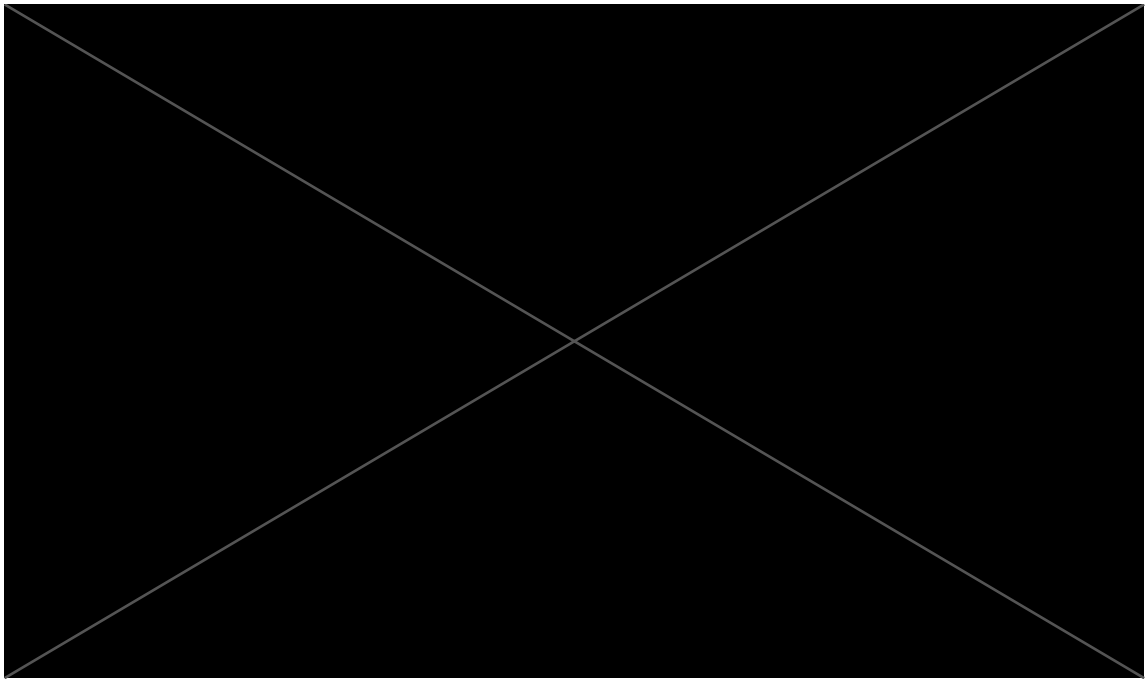

Fig. 71. ‘Pirckheimer Master’, marginalia in Pirckheimer’s copy of Aristotle’s *Opera,* c. 1504/1505. Image reproduced in Eser and Grebe, 2008, 83.

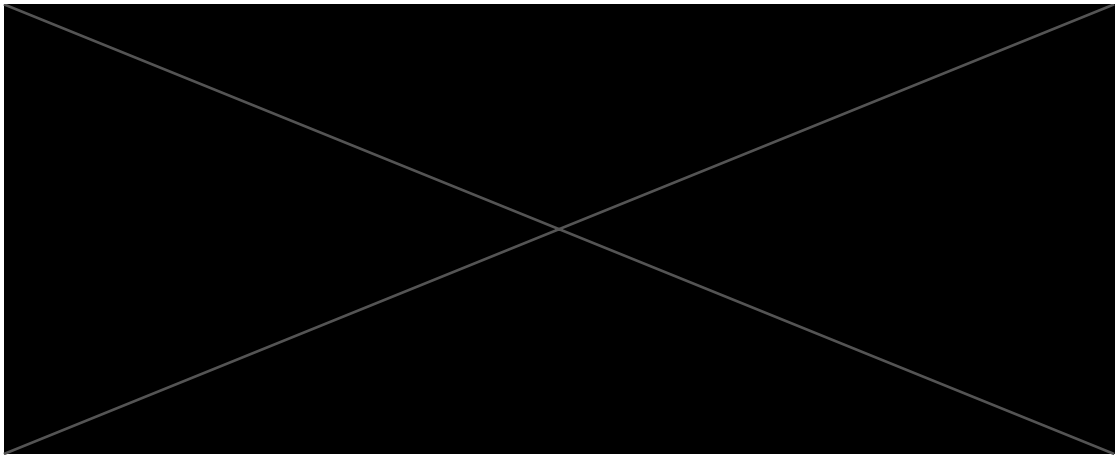

Fig. 72. ‘Pirckheimer Master’, marginalia in *Etymologicum Magnum Graecum*, c. 1504/1505. Image reproduced in Eser and Grebe, 2008, 85.

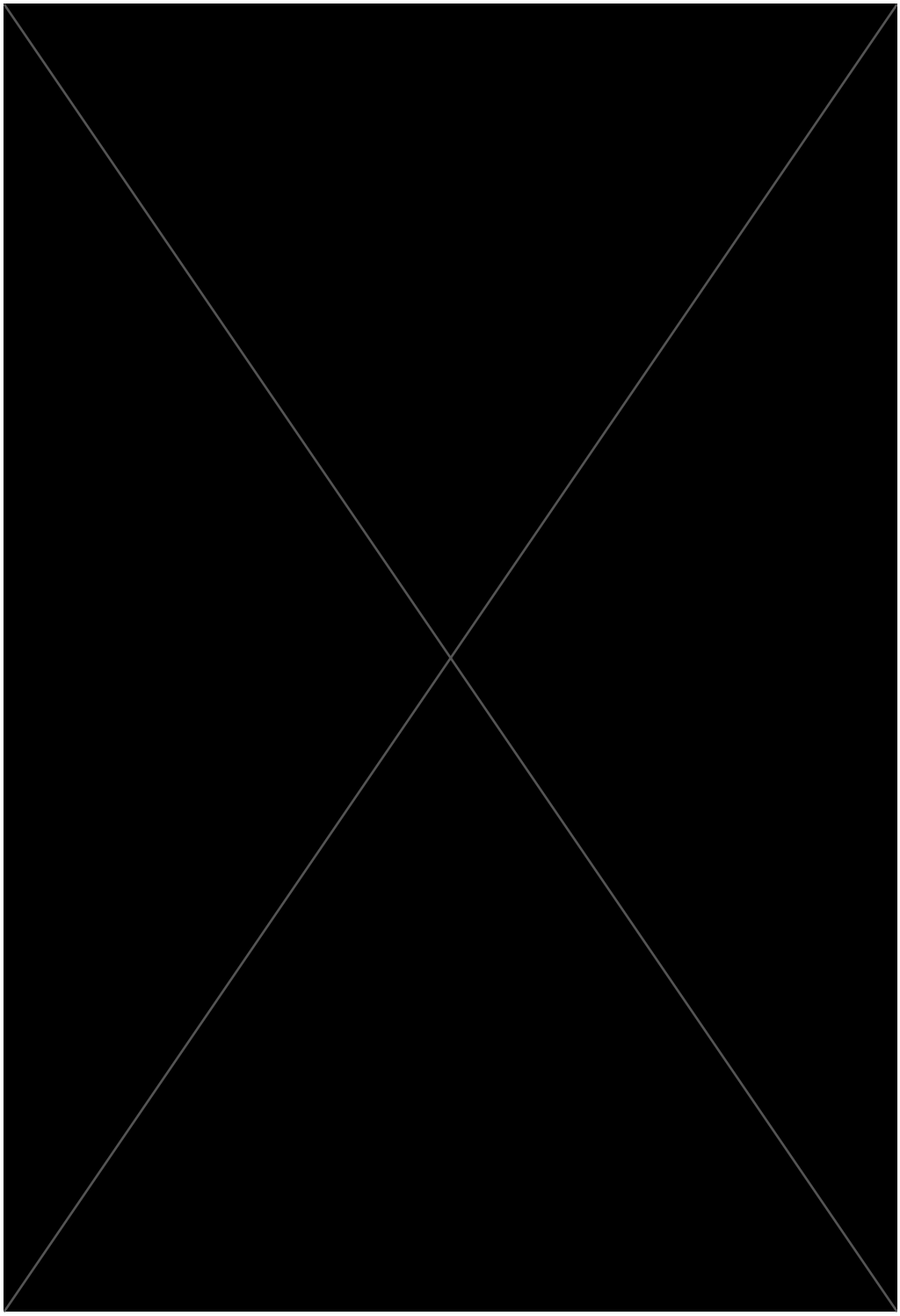

Fig. 73. Albrecht Dürer, *Coat of Arms with Lion and Cock,* ca. 1502. Engraving, 18.8cm x 10.2cm. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

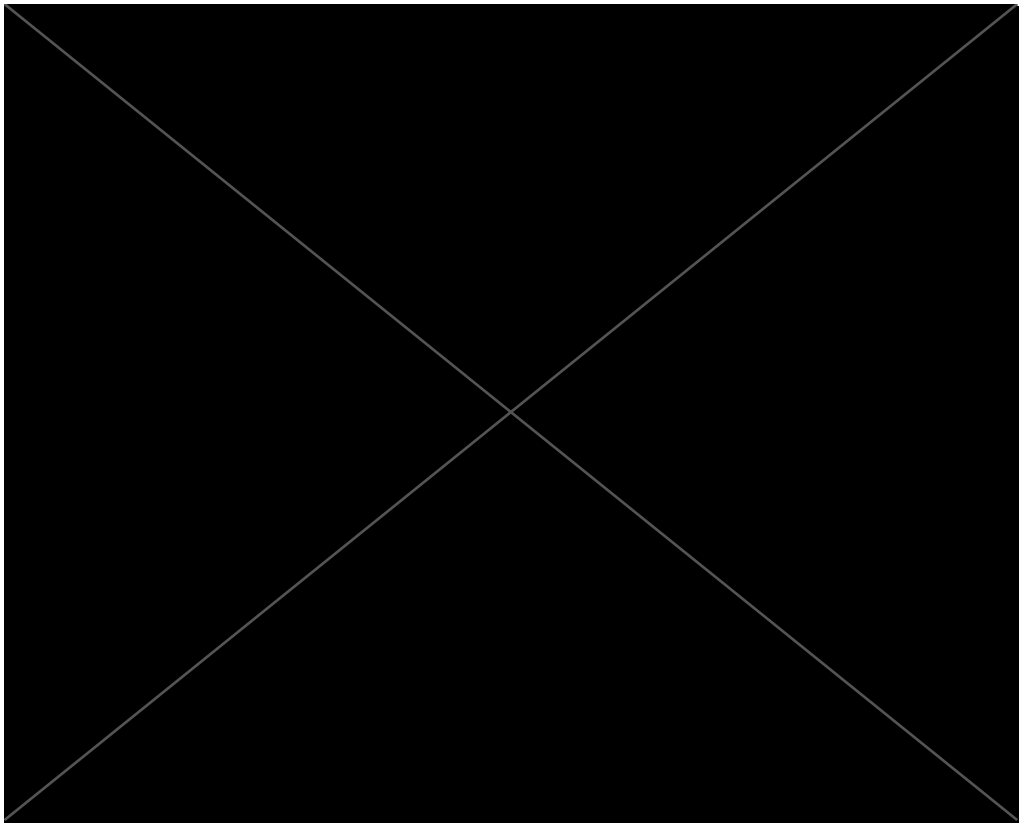

Fig. 74. After model by Hans Kels the Younger, Medal of Kolman Helmschmied (1471-1532), dated 1532. Lead. 5cm diameter. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Fig. 75. Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, *arma Christi,* 1475-1480. Drypoint, 12.5cm x 10.4cm. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum.

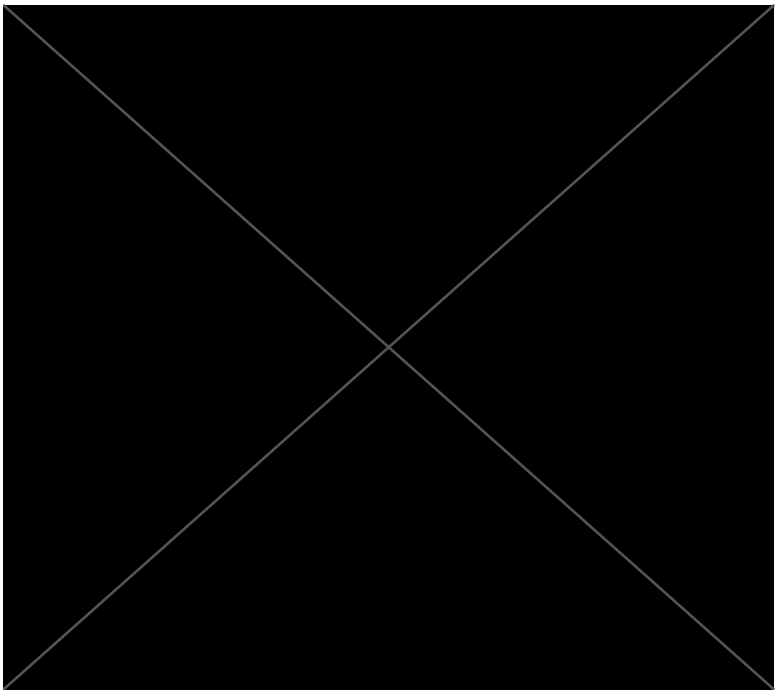

Fig. 76. Reliquary in the shape of a cockerel, woodcut illustration from the *Wiener Heiltumsbuch,* Vienna: Johannes Winterburger, 1502.

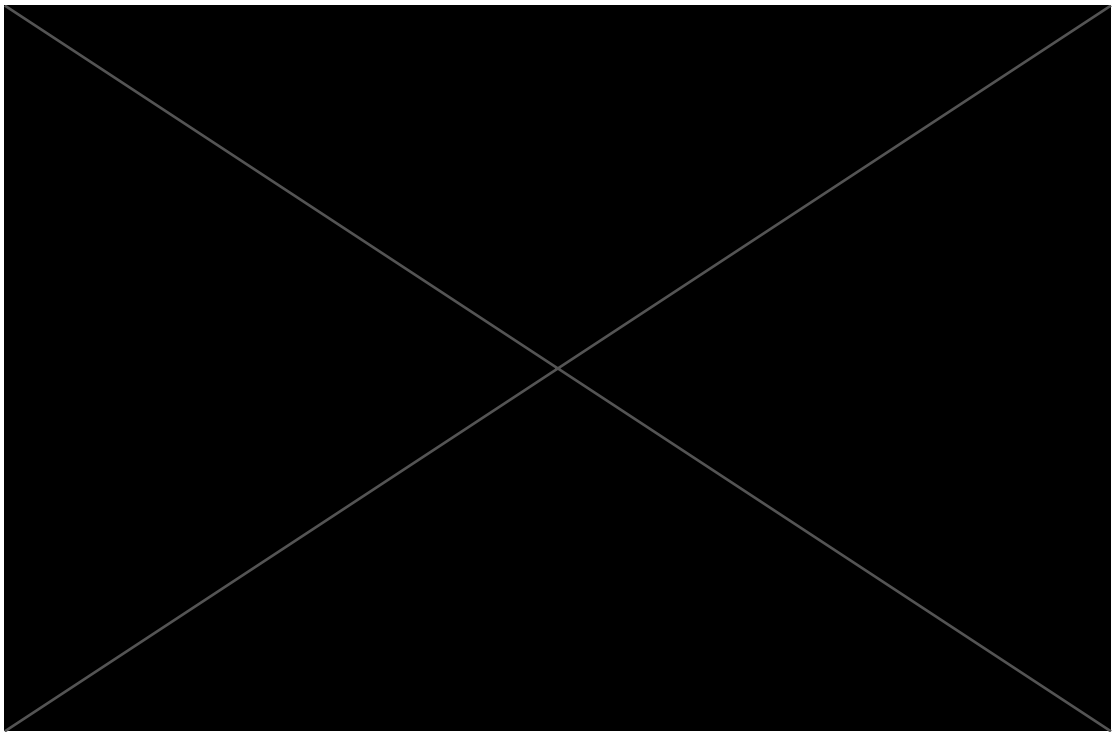

Fig. 77. Attrib. Wolf Traut, Imperial Relics, detail of coloured woodcut from *Heiligthum und Gnad, wie sie jährlich in Nürnberg ausgerufen werden,* Nuremberg: Peter Vischer, 1487, fol. 4v. Washington: Library of Congress.

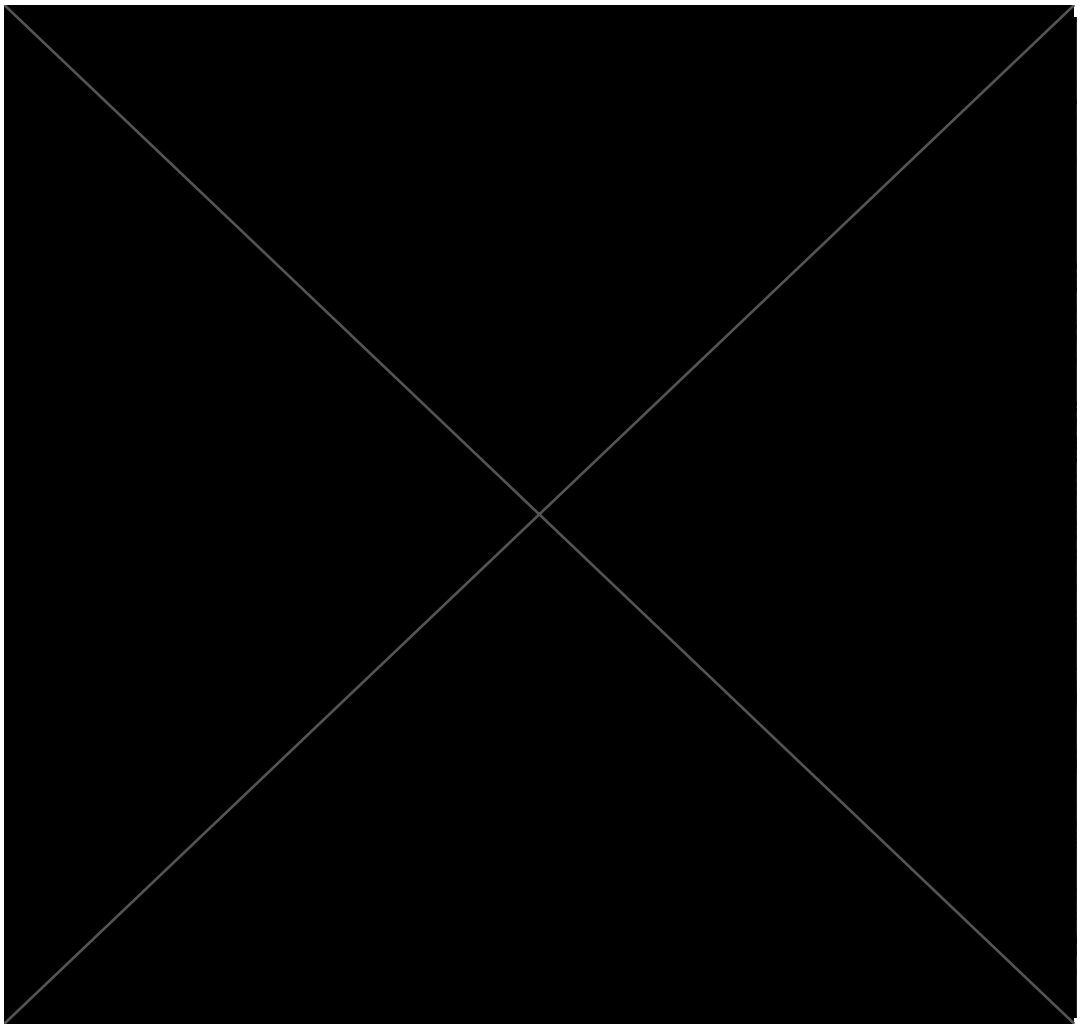

Fig. 78. Albrecht Dürer, detail of *Hercules at the Crossroad,* c.1498. Engraving, 32.3cm x 22.5cm (full sheet). New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

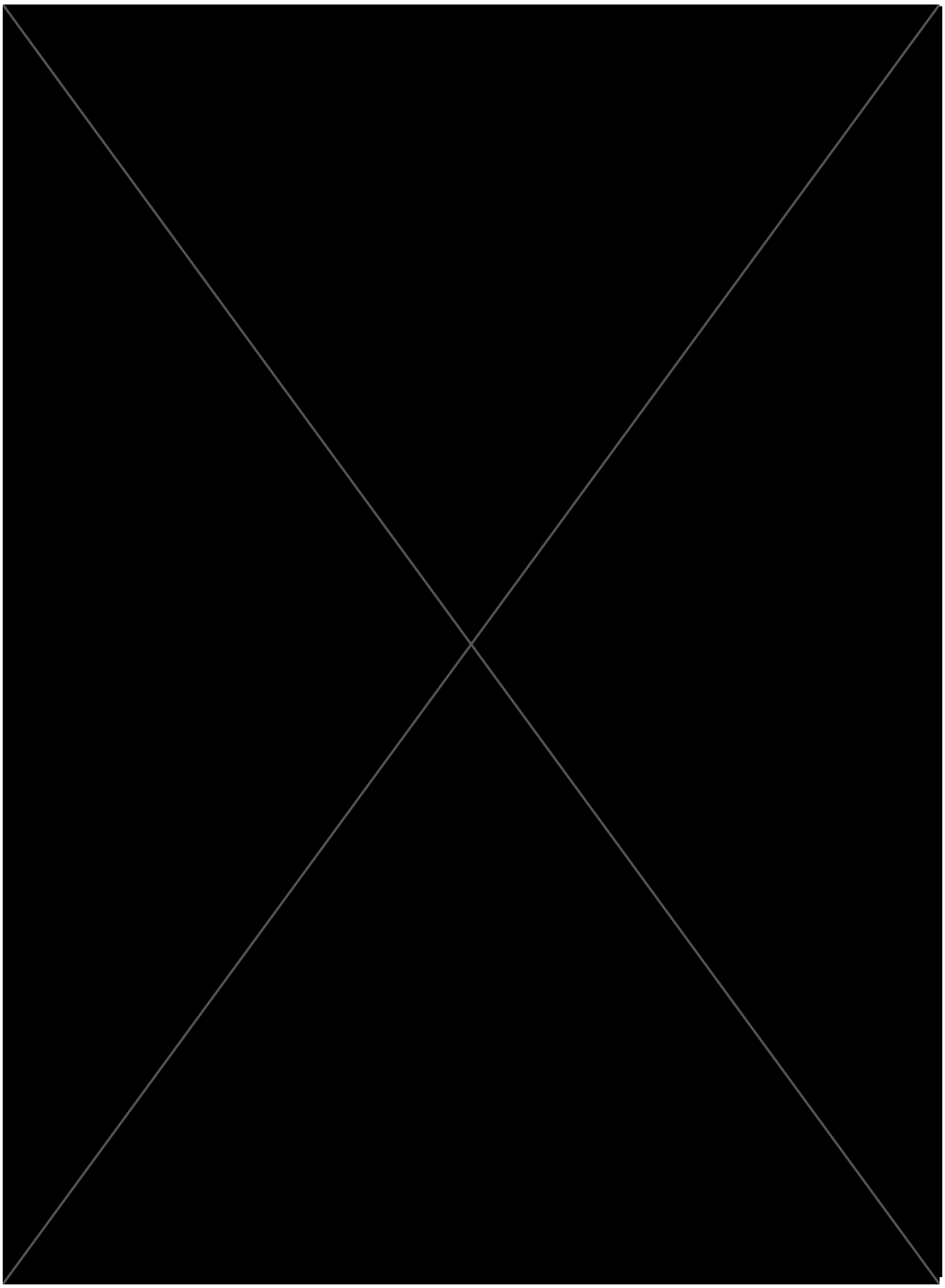

Fig. 79. Albrecht Dürer, *Crane with banderole*, 1507-1519. Ink and wash, 45cm x 32.7cm. London: British Museum.

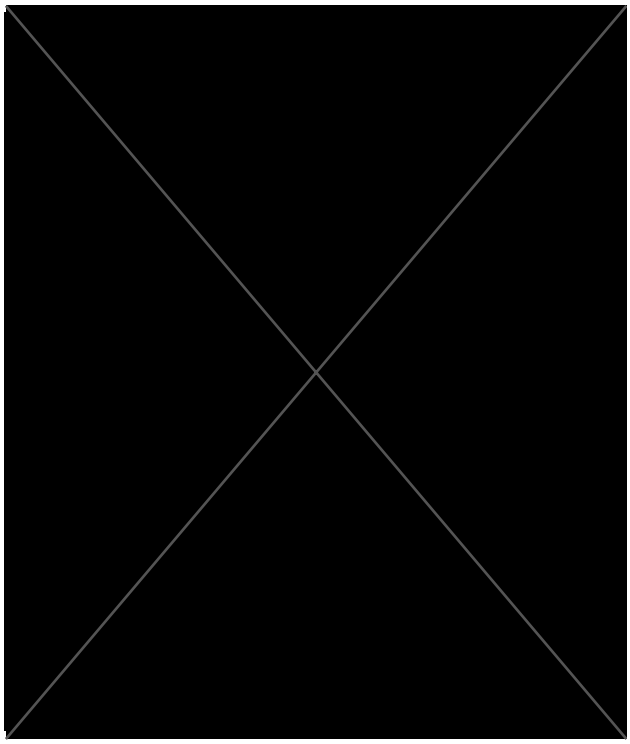

Fig. 80. Page from Erhard Schön, *Underweissung der proportzion unnd stellung der possen...,* 1542, Sig. Ciii^{r}.

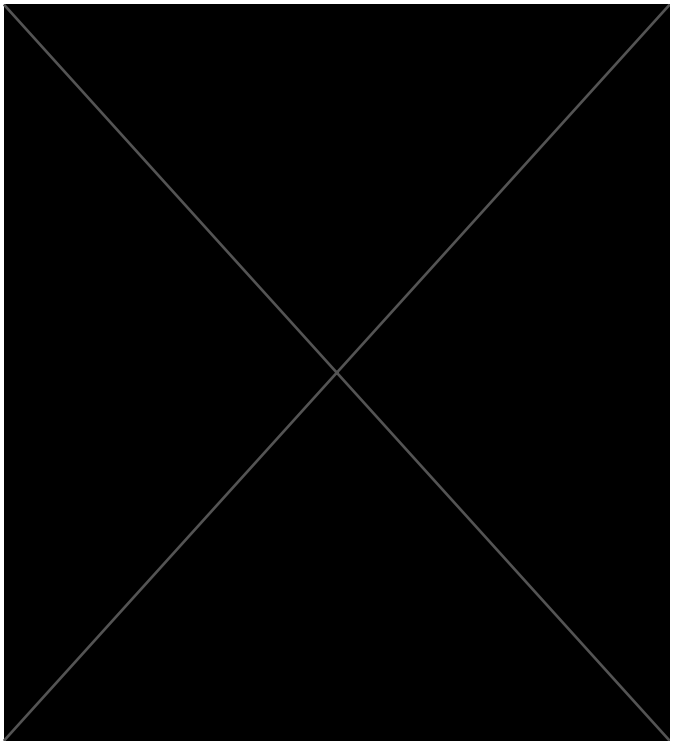

Fig. 81. Page from Erhard Schön, *Underweissung der proportzion unnd stellung der possen...,* 1542, Sig. [Civ]^{v}.

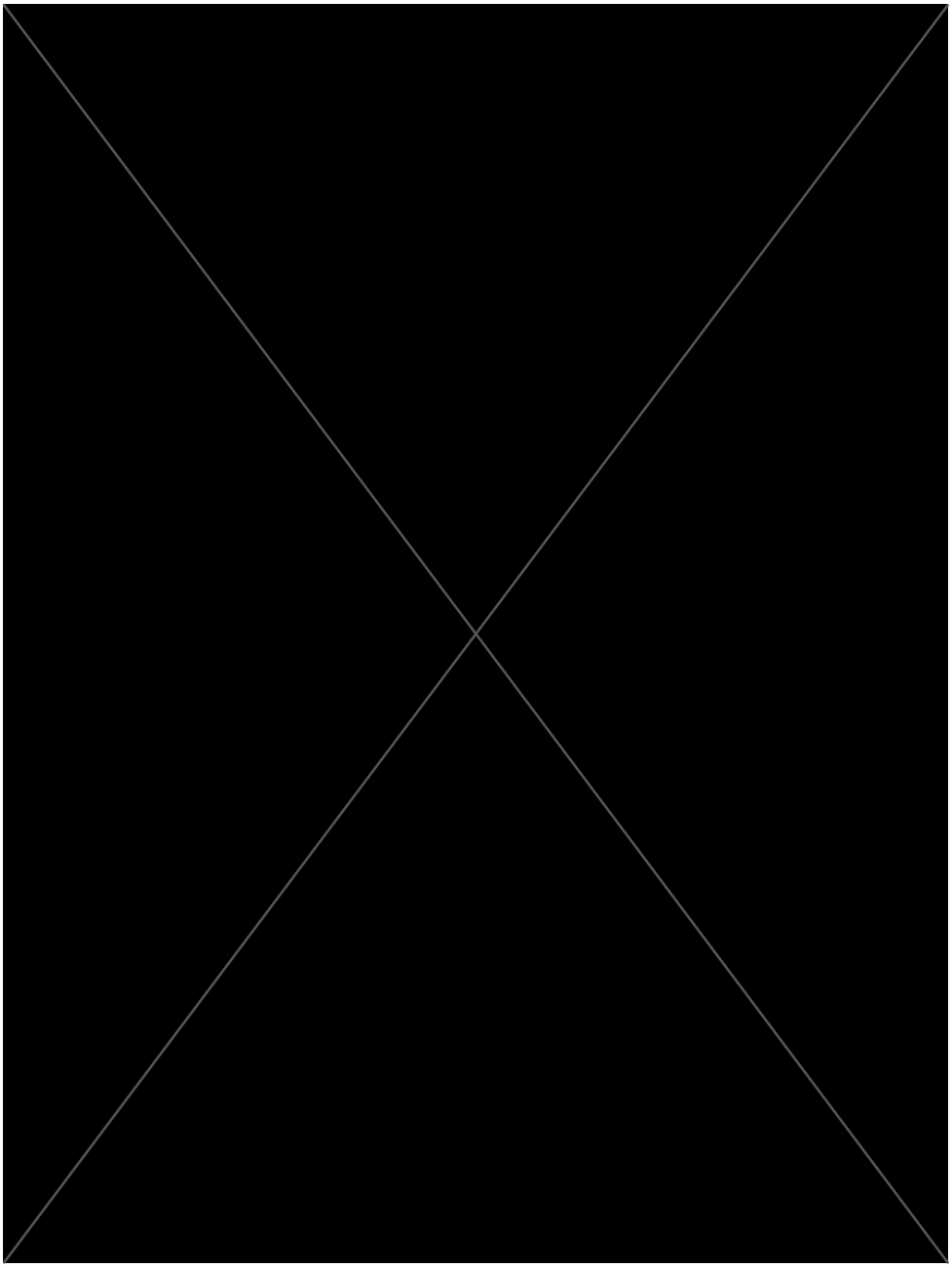

Fig. 82. Page from Erhard Schön, *Underweissung der proportzion unnd stellung der possen...,* 1542, Sig. [Civ]^{r}.

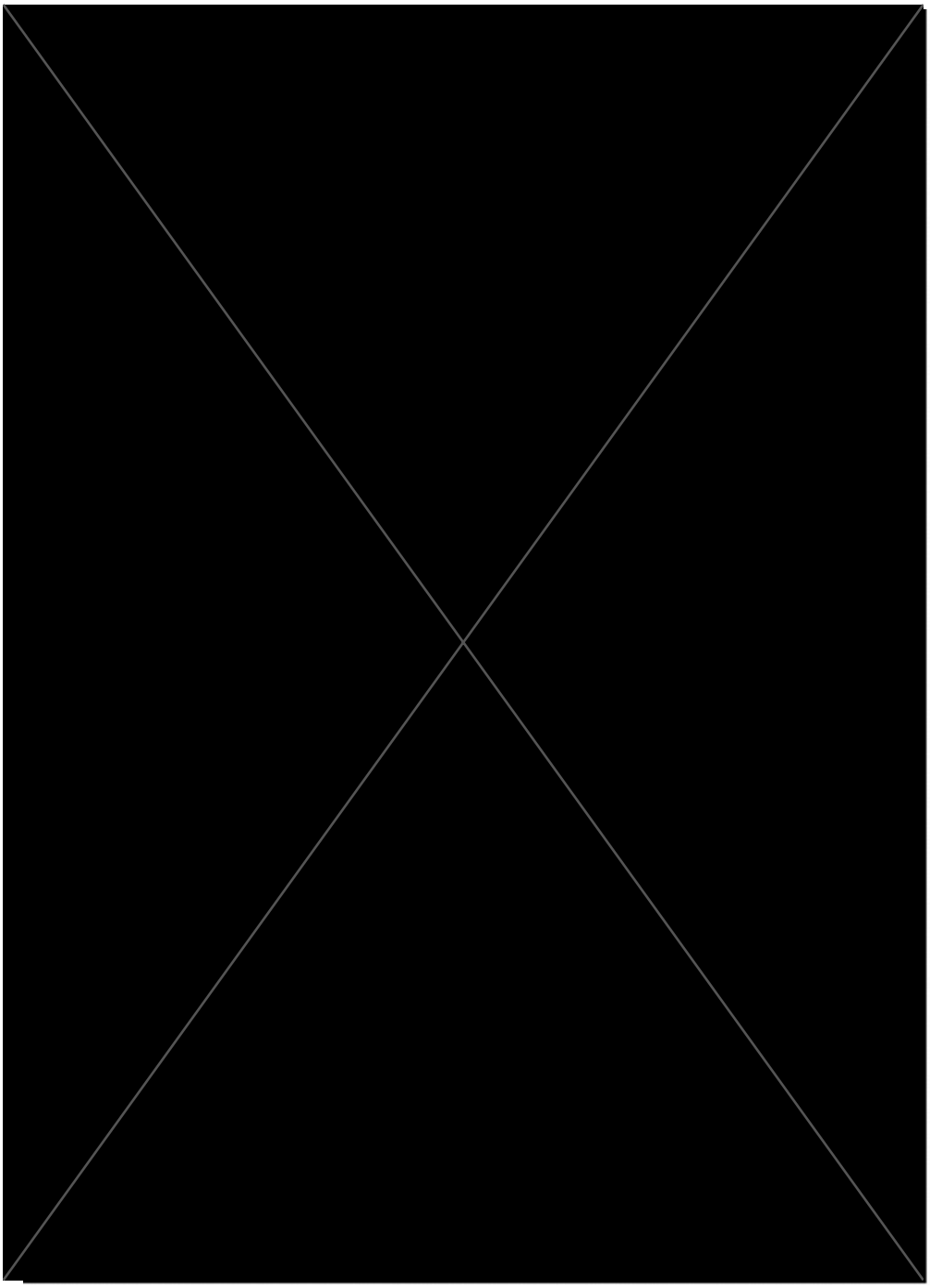

Fig. 83. Hans Baldung Grien, *Coat of Arms of the Uttenheim Family,* c. 1511. Pen and ink, 26.4cm x 18.5cm. Coburg: Kuntsammlungen der Veste Coburg.

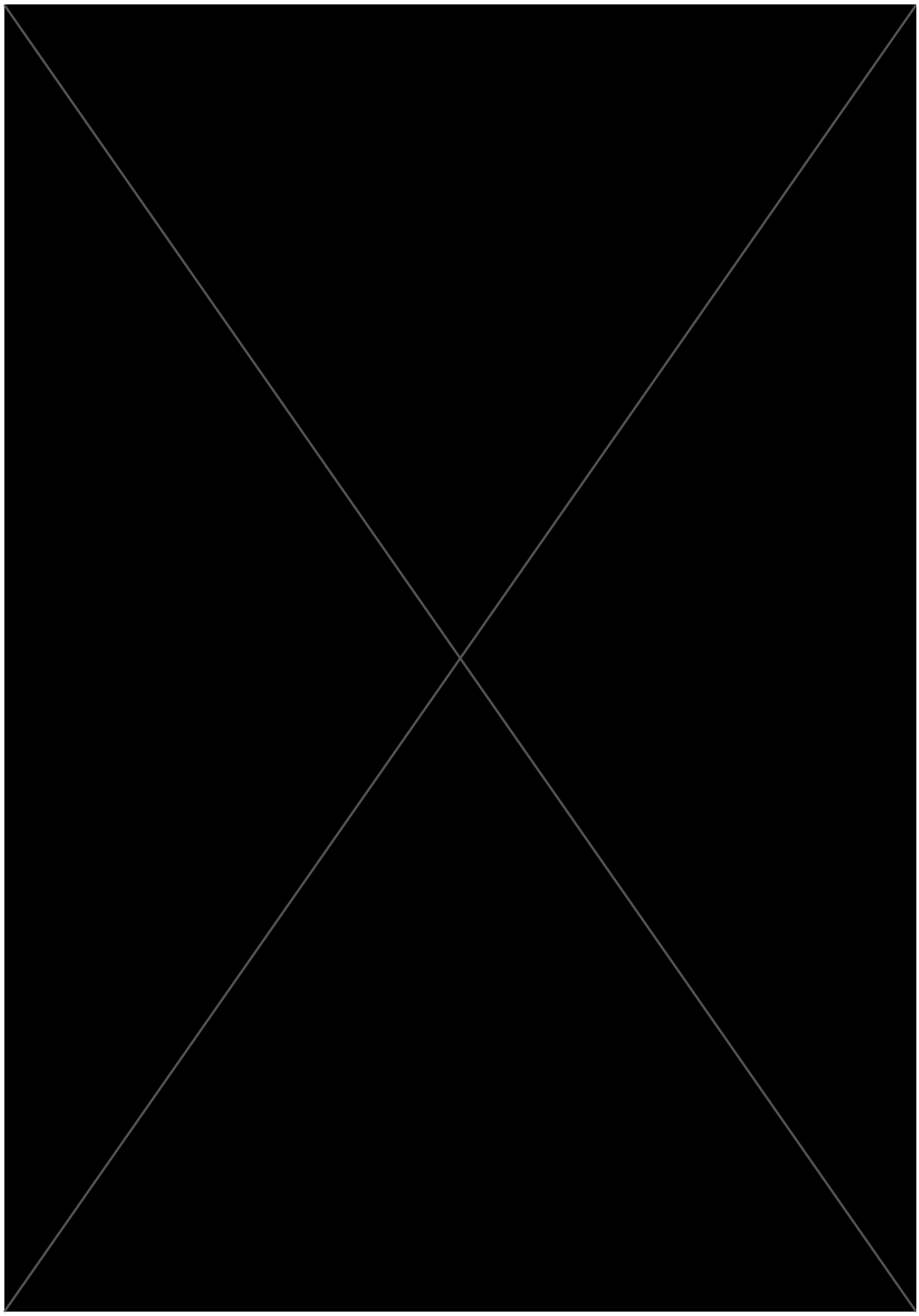

Fig. 84. Urs Graf, *Design for alliance panel with the arms of Graf and von Brunn*, 1518. Pen and ink on cream laid paper, 33.2cm x 21.4cm. Basel: Kunstmuseum.

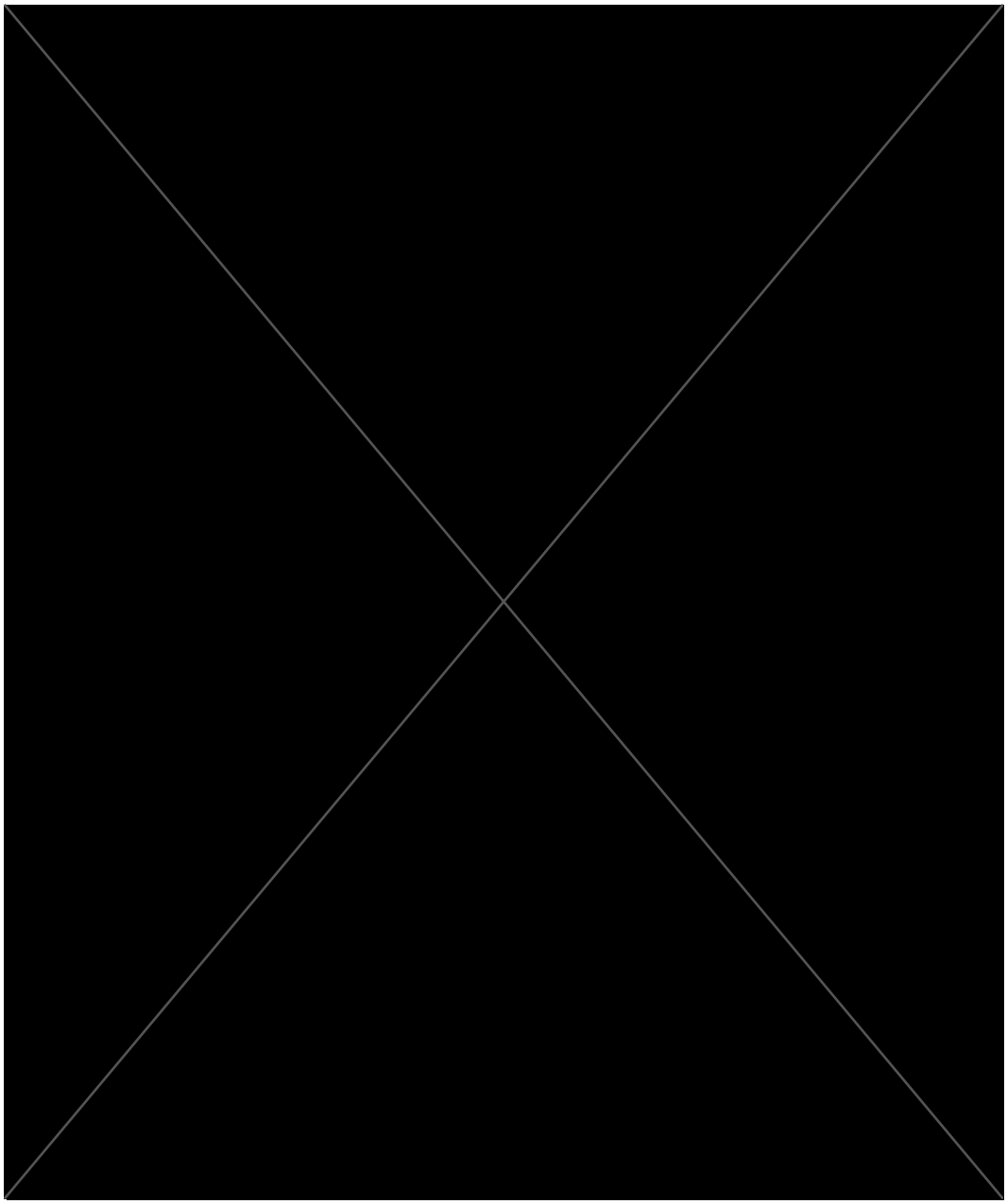

Fig. 85. Urs Graf, *Mother with child*, 1514. Pen and ink, 21.8cm x 15.6cm. Basel: Kunstmuseum.

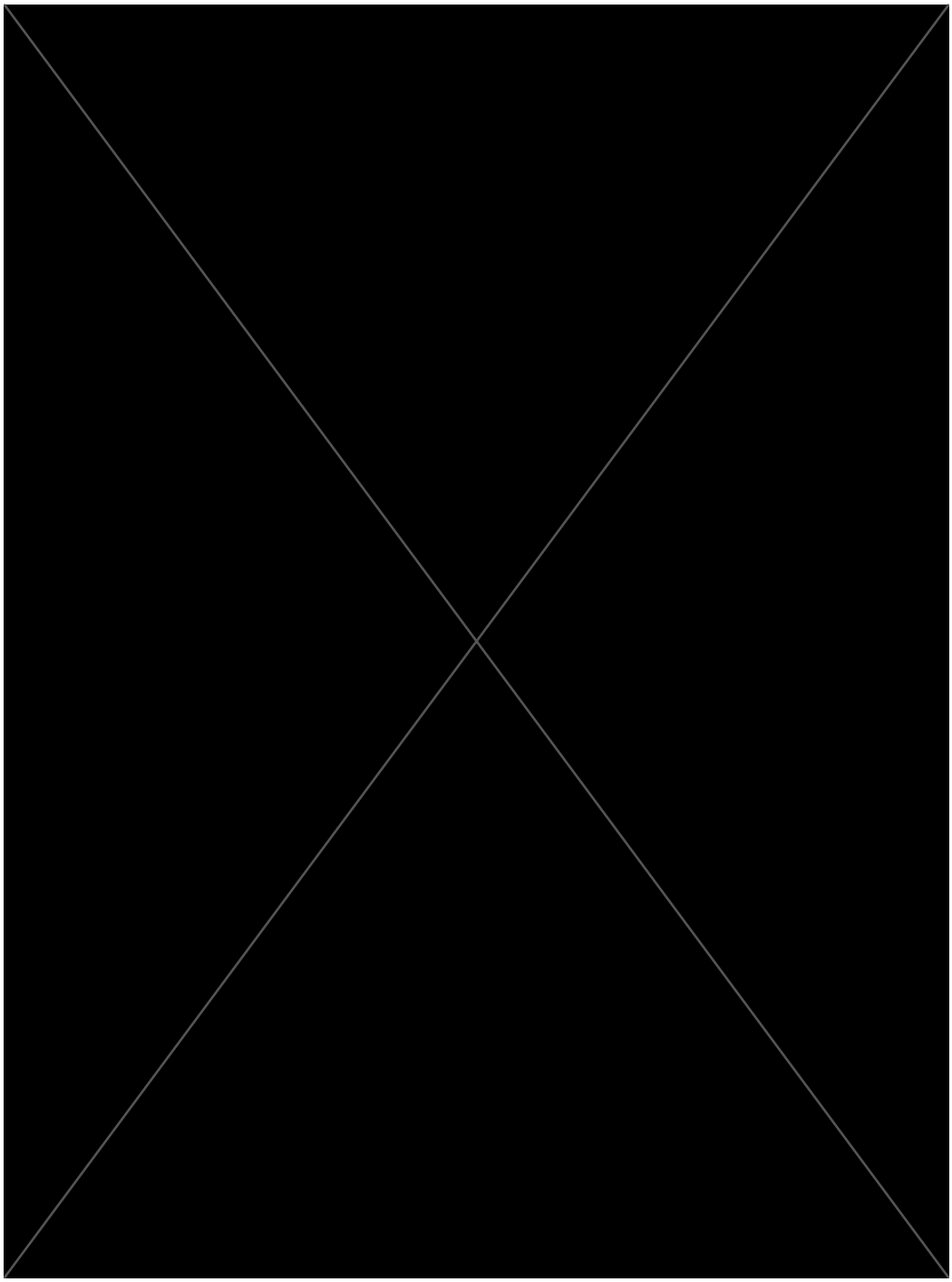

Fig. 86. Hans Baldung Grien, *Design for the coat of arms of Nikolaus Ziegler*, 1515. Pen, ink, chalk and gouache, 40.1cm x 29.8cm. Coburg: Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg.

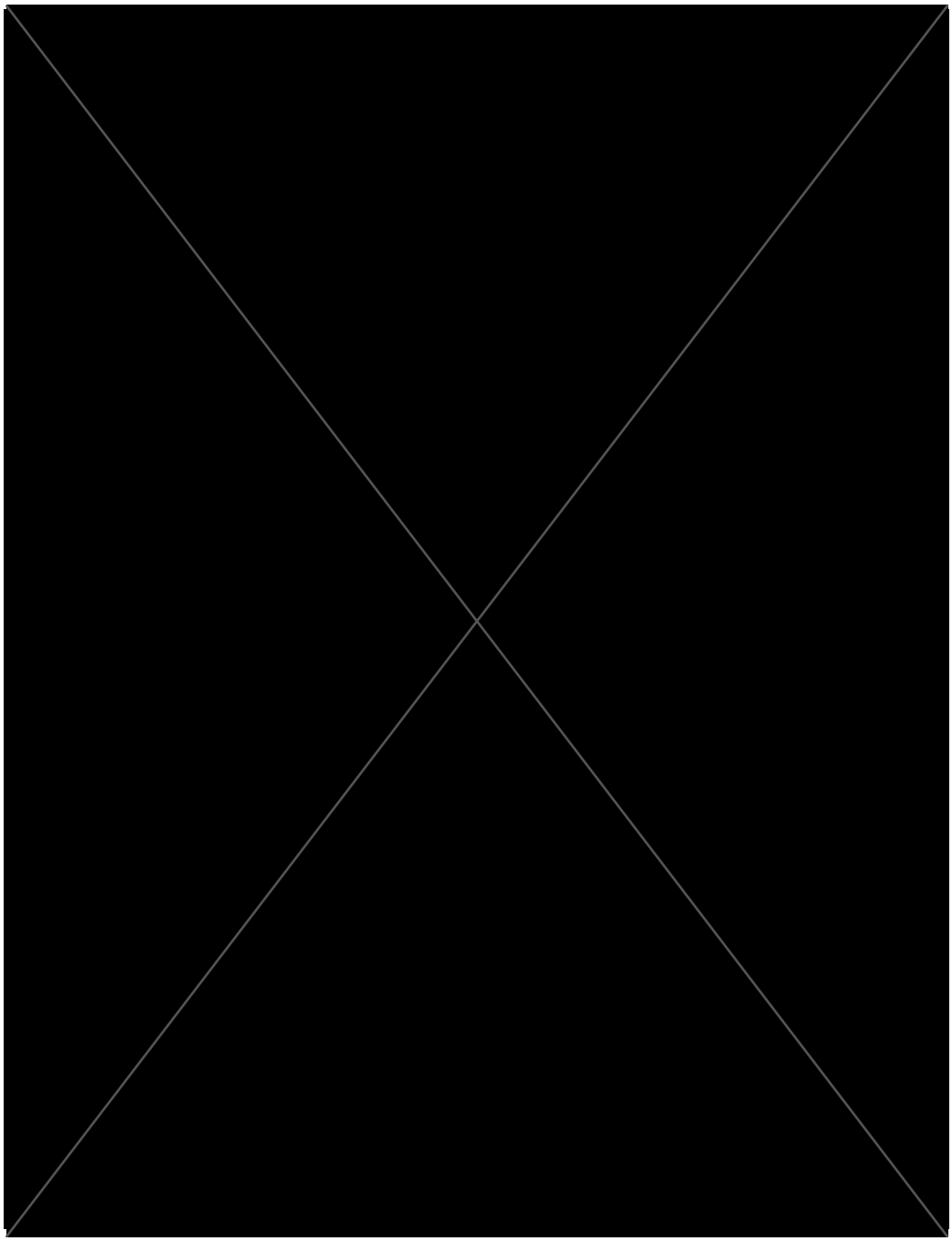

Fig. 87. Christoph Stimmer, Glass panel with the Stimmer arms and a nude figure, Pfullendorf Rathaus, circa 1524. 18cm x 24cm.

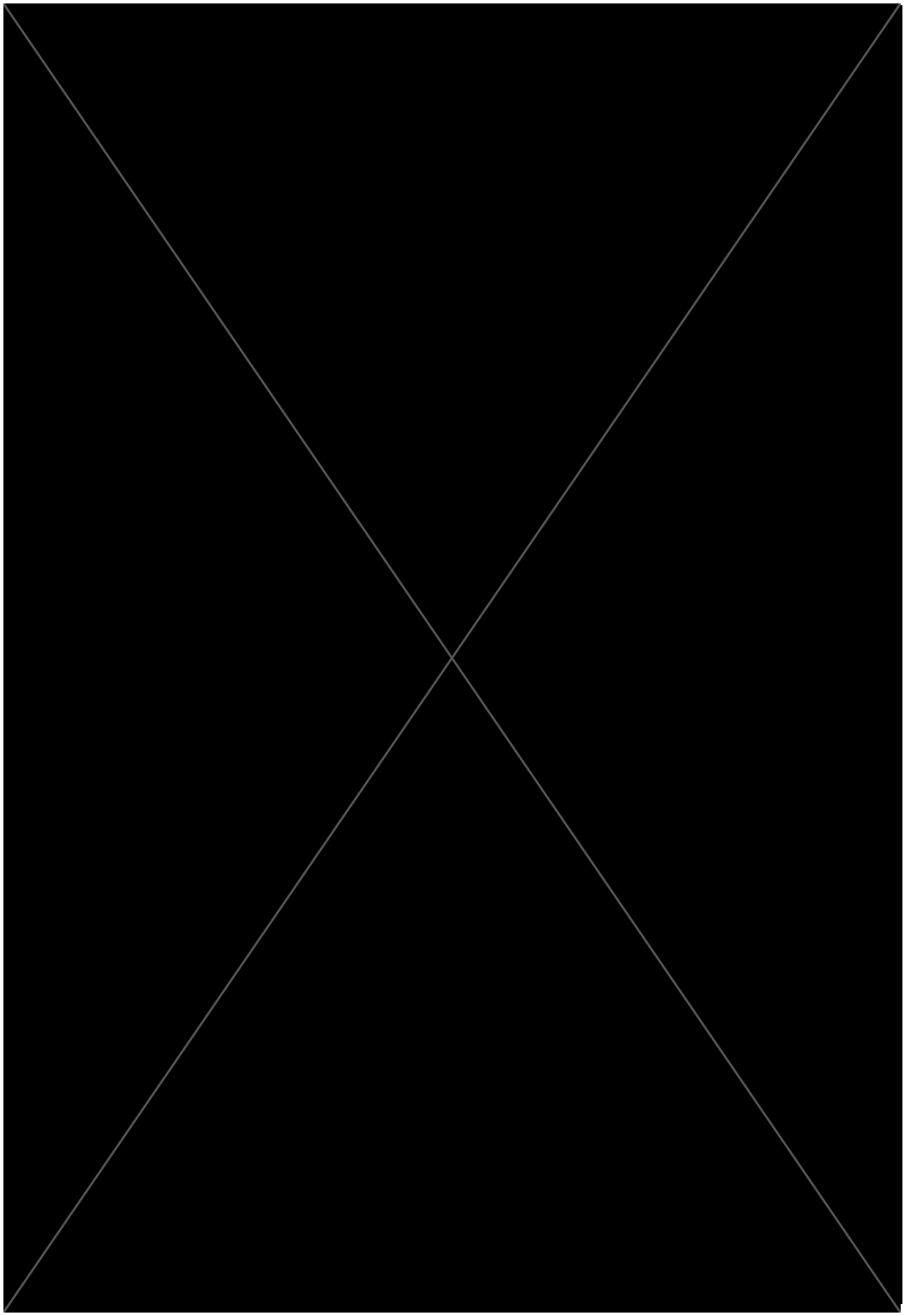

Fig. 88. Niklaus Manuel, *Coat of Arms with a Lion and a Pilgrim,* circa 1515. Pen and ink, white chalk on sepia-grounded paper, 30.6cm x 20.7cm. Basel: Kunstmuseum.

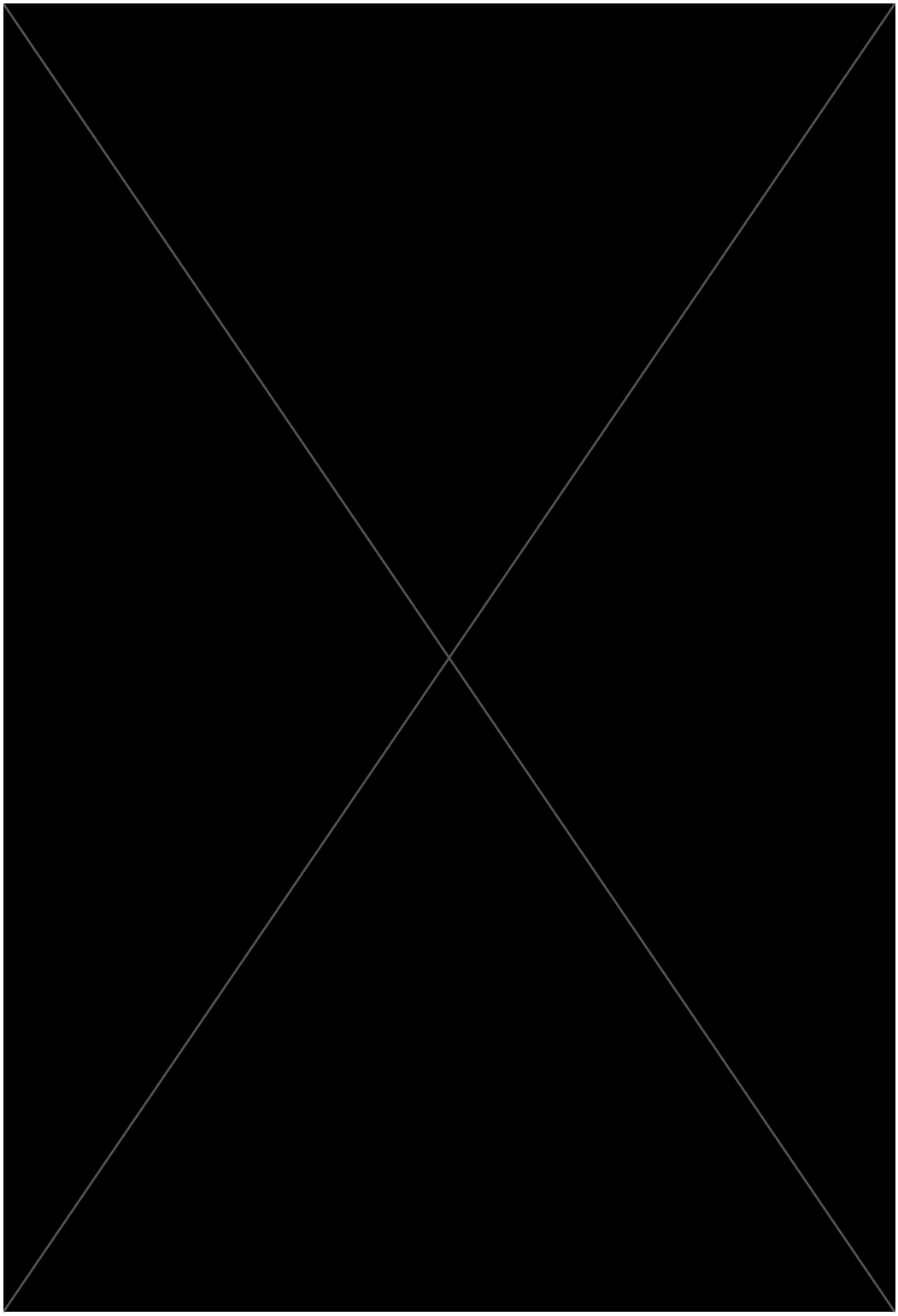

Fig. 89. Detail of fig. 88.

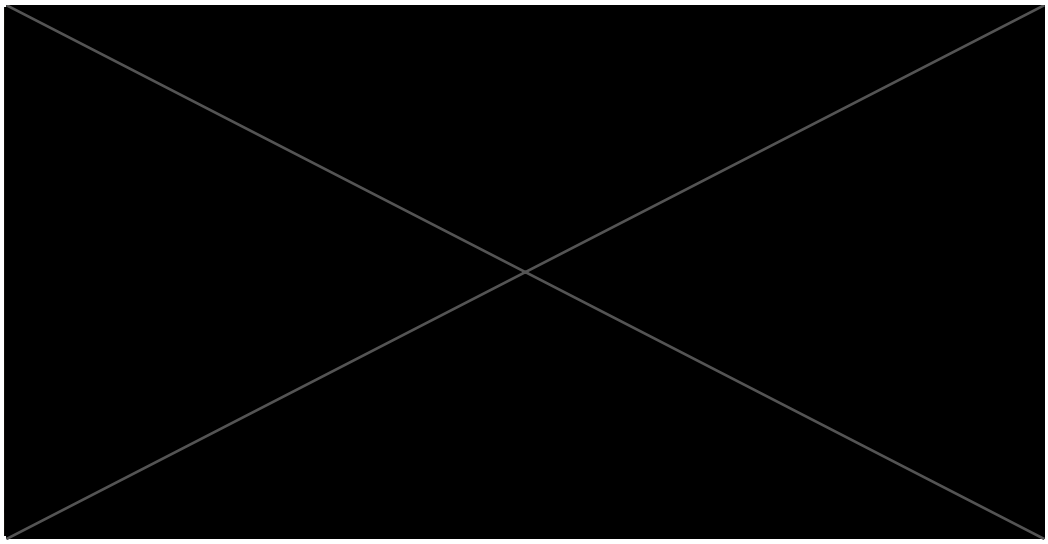

Fig. 90. Sebald Beham, *Feeding the hungry,* c.1520-1550. Pen and ink, 7cm x 15.5cm. Frankfurt am Main: Städel Museum, Graphische Sammlung.

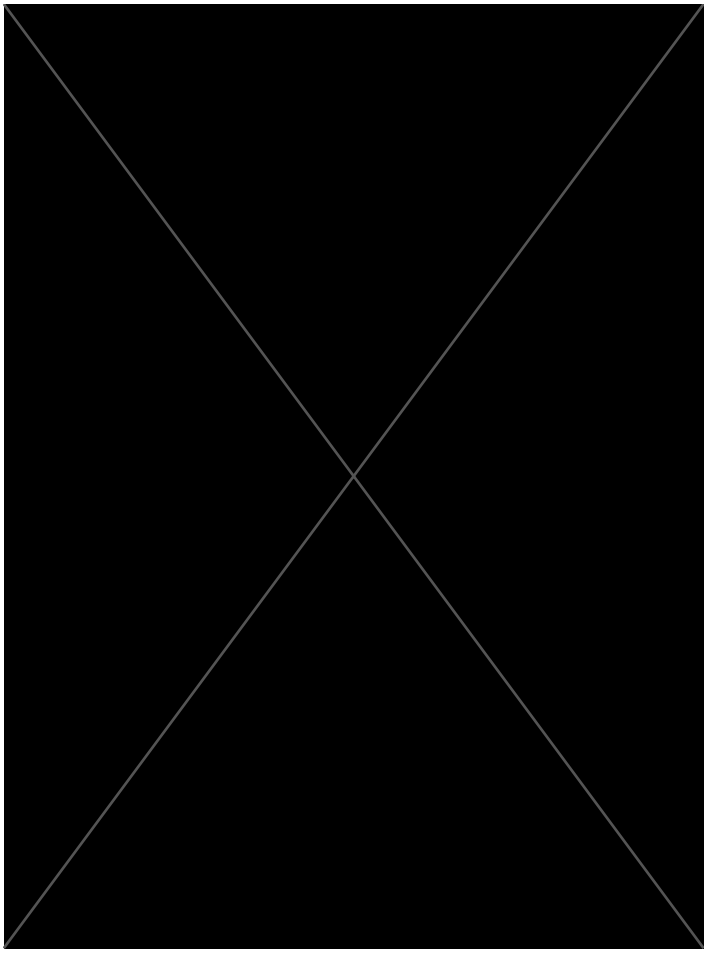

Fig. 91. Illustration of Bern with the arms of the city and Berthold V von Zähringen, in Diebold Schilling's *Speizer Chronik,* Bern, 1484/1485, fol.39. Full sheet: 37cm x 26cm. Burgerbibliothek Bern, Mss.h.h.I.16.

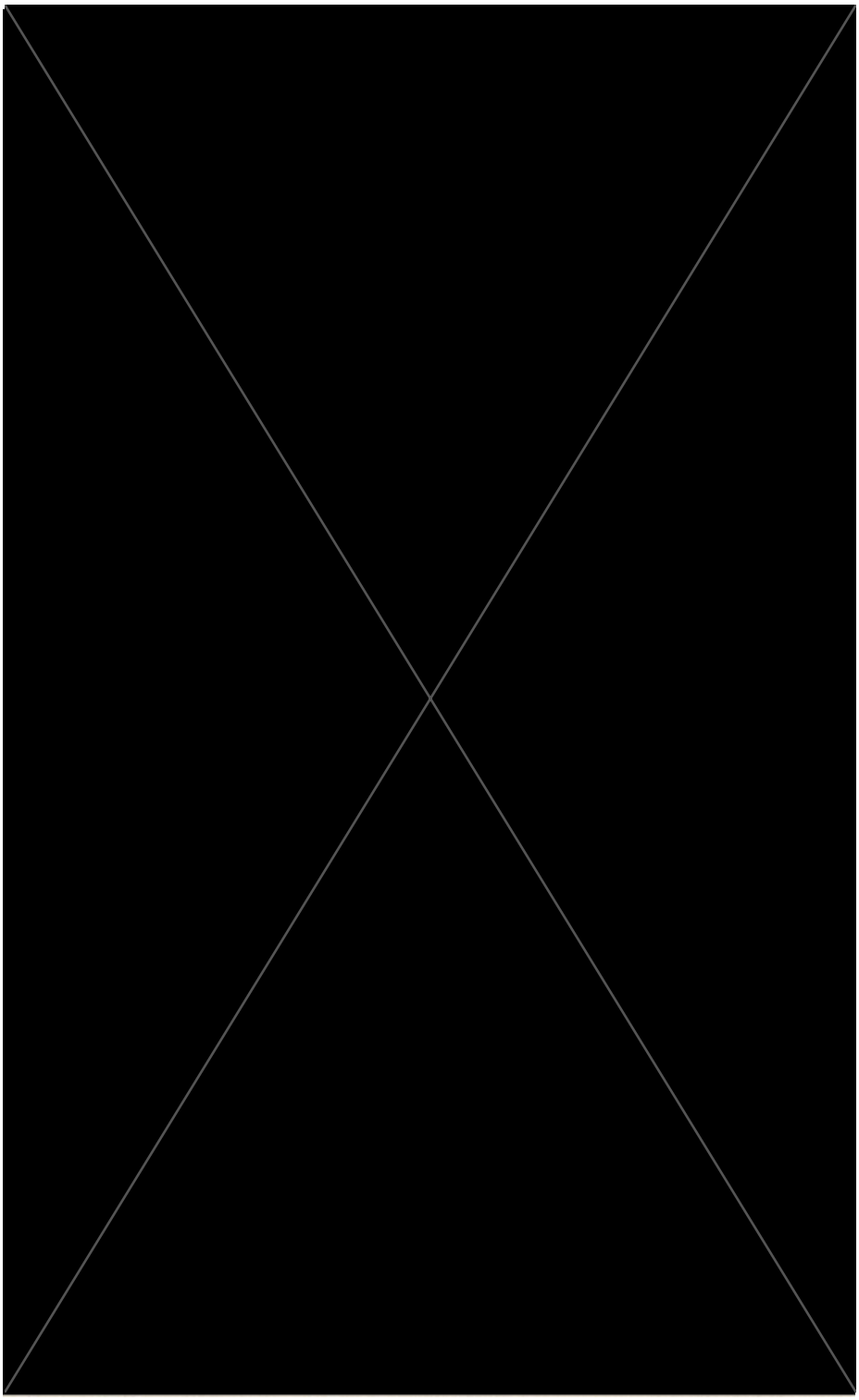

Fig. 92. Heinrich Aldegrever, *Personification of Pride*, 1552. Engraving, 10.2cm x 6.3cm. Victoria: National Gallery of Victoria.

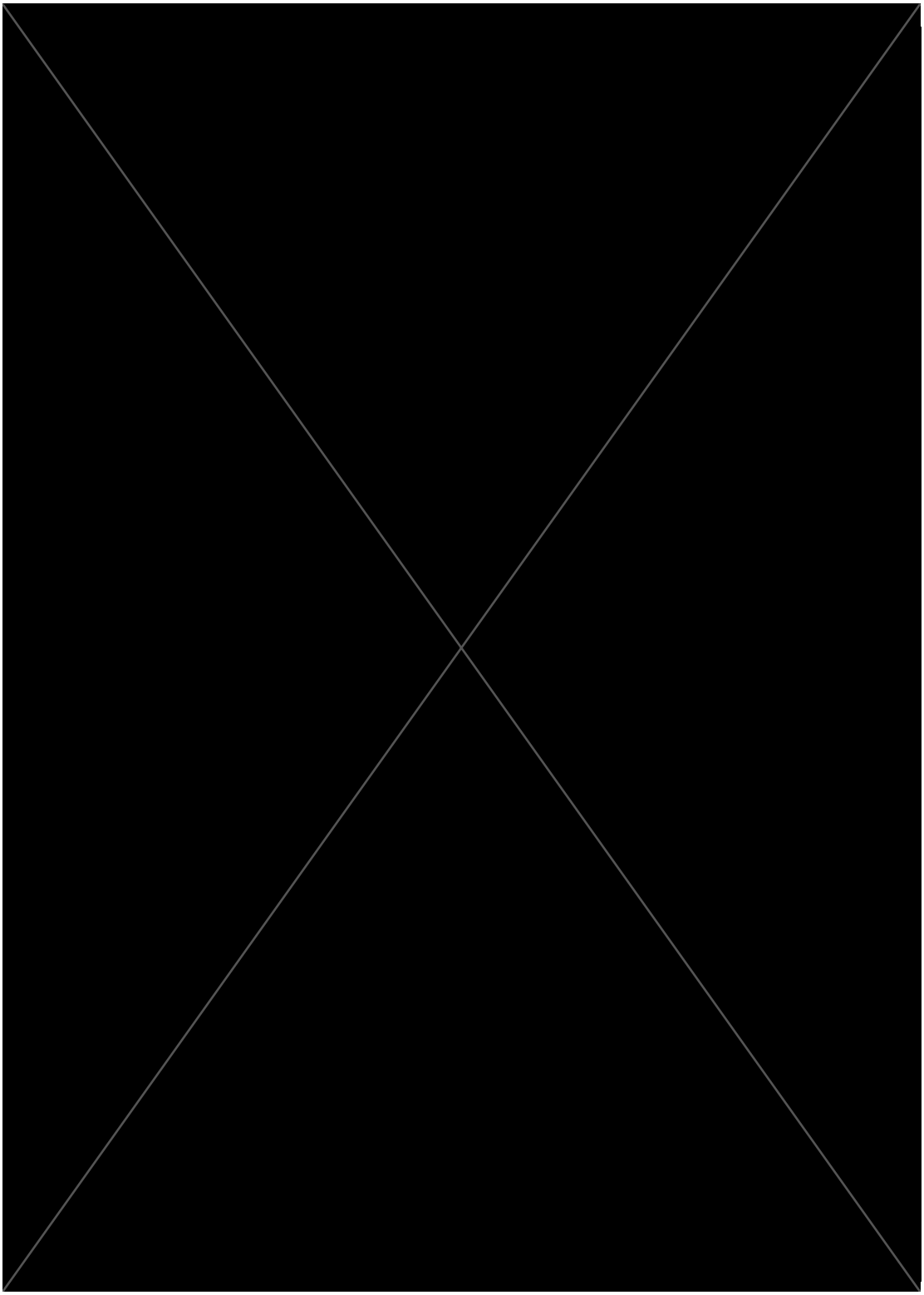

Fig. 93. Anon. (Hieronymus Bosch?), *Der Spiegel der Vernunft,* circa 1488. Woodcut, 40.4c, x 29.1cm. Munich: Staatliche Graphische Sammlung.

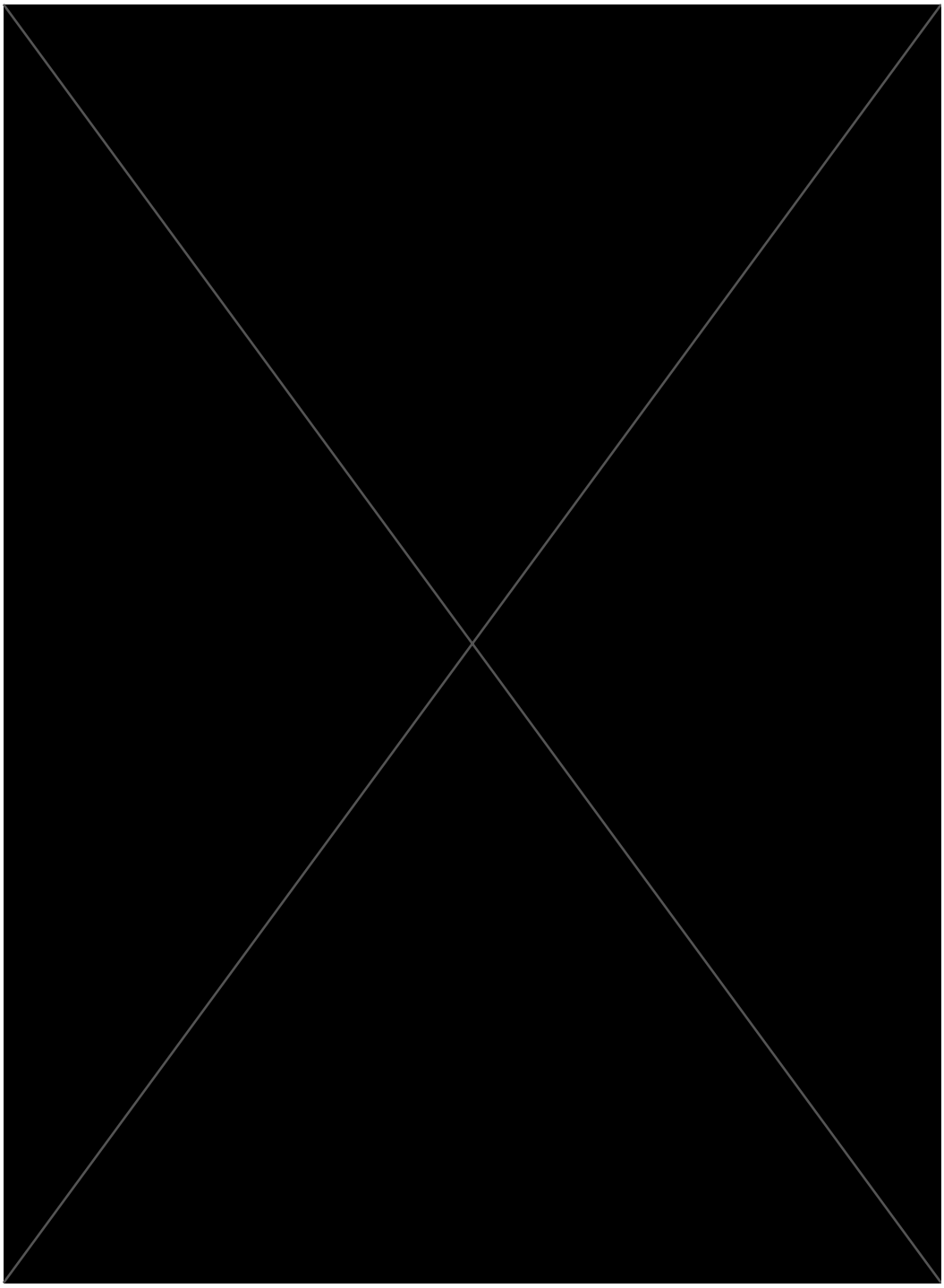

Fig. 94. Niklaus Manuel, *Shield Holder with the Coat of Arms of 'Hattstatt',* circa 1507. Pen and ink, 44cm x 31.9cm. Bern: Bernisches Historisches Museum.

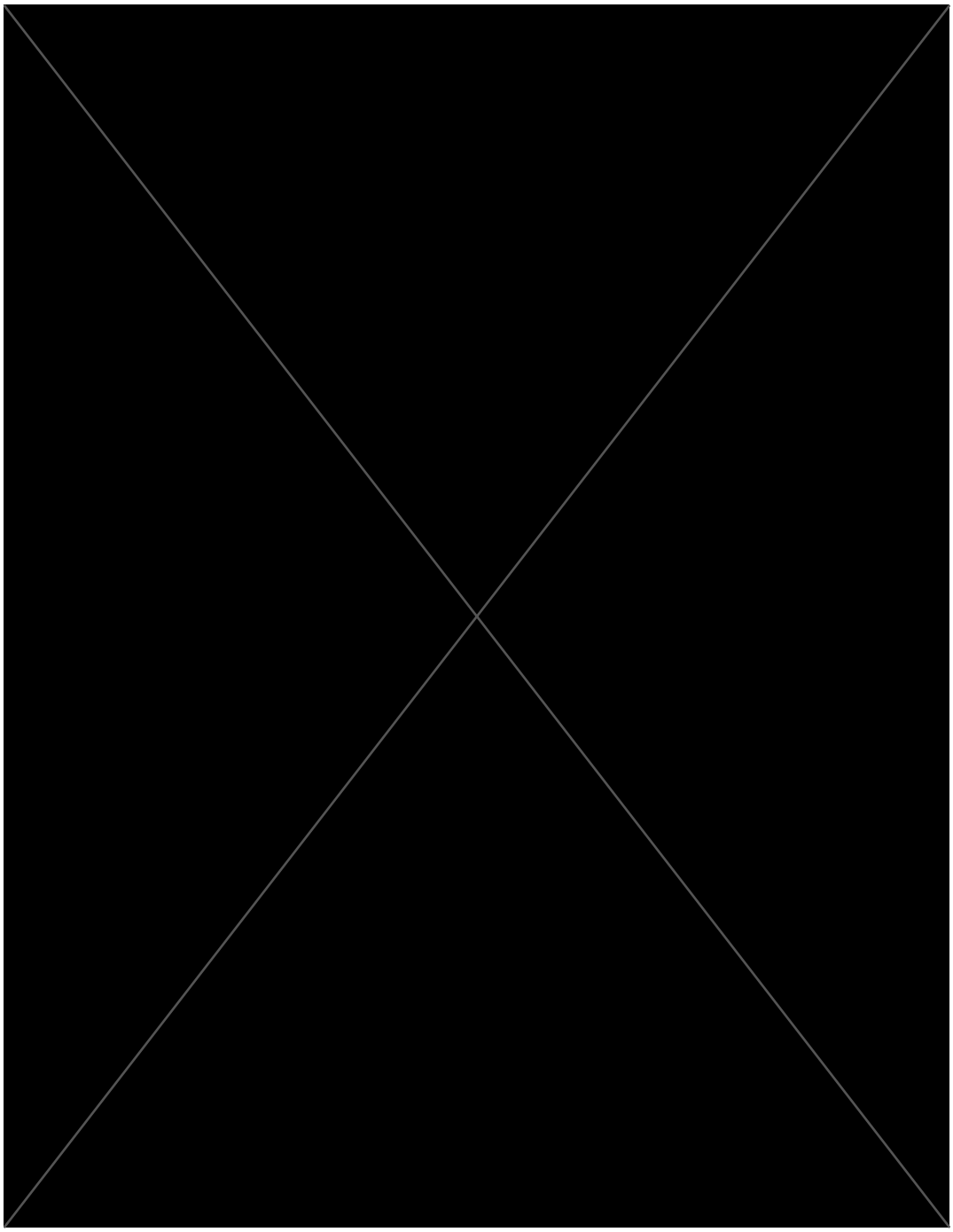

Fig. 95. Niklaus Manuel, *Death and the Maiden,* 1517. Oil on wood, 38.2cm x 29.2cm. Basel: Kunstmuseum.

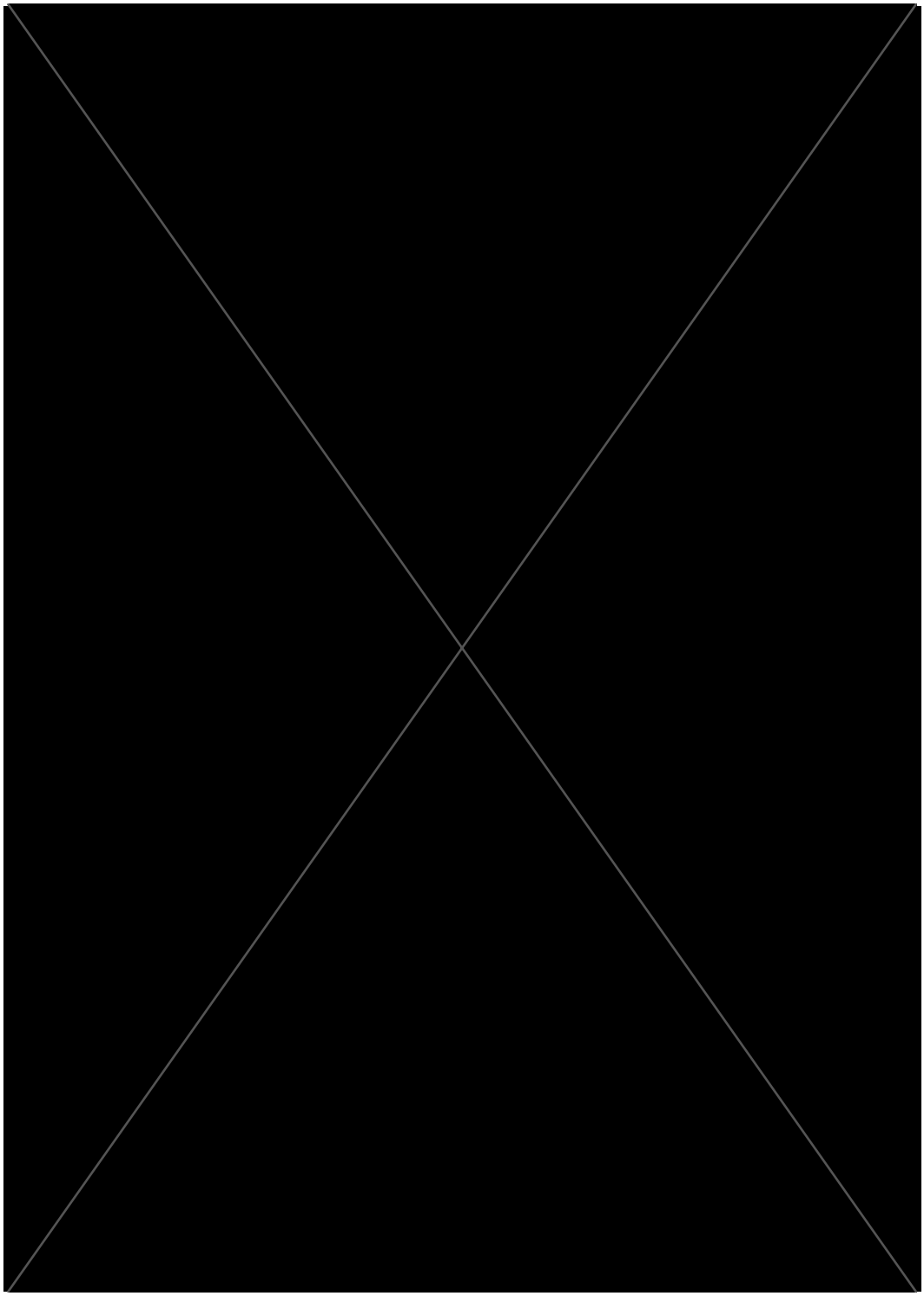

Fig. 96. Niklaus Manuel, *Allegory of a Soldier turned to a Beggar*, 1520. Watercolour, pen and ink, 31cm x 21.3cm. Berlin: Staatliche Museen.

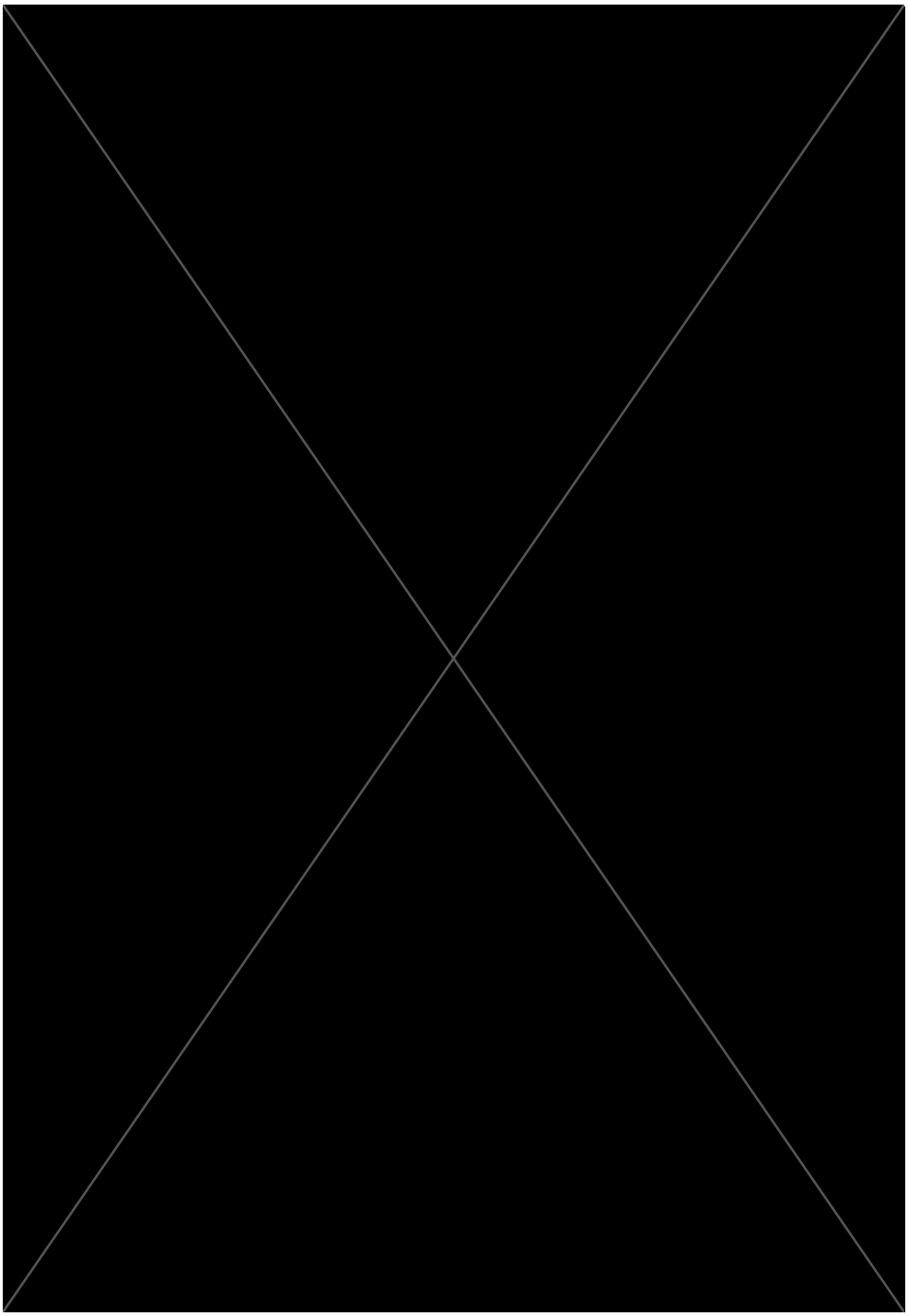

Fig. 97. Georg Schan, *Niemants hais ich was jederman tuot das zücht man mich,* circa 1510, Memmingen. Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

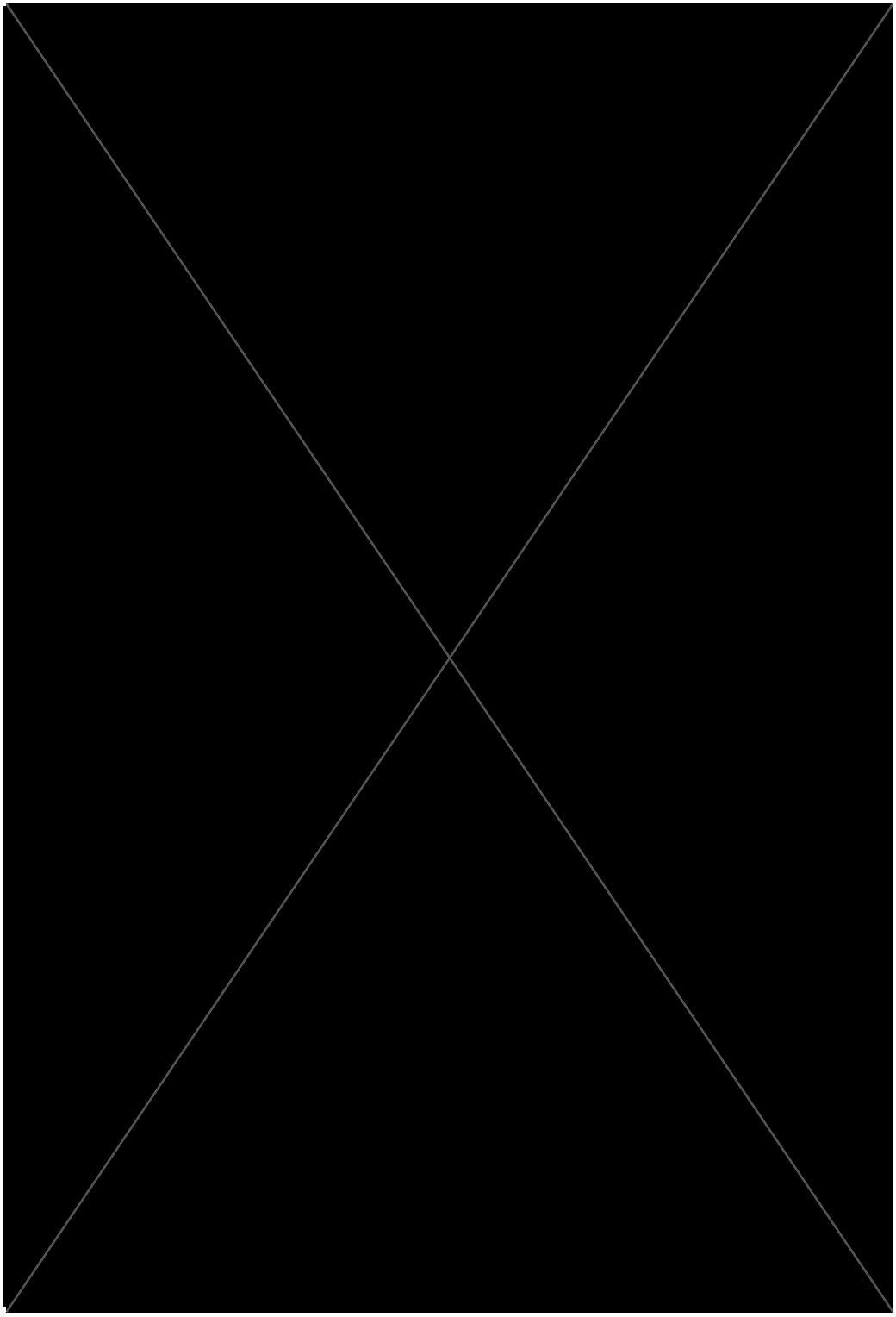

Fig. 98. Niklaus Manuel. *Witch on a spherical throne above a landscape*, c.1513. Pen with black ink and white highlights on brown grounded paper, 31cm x 21cm (sheet). Basel: Kunstmuseum.

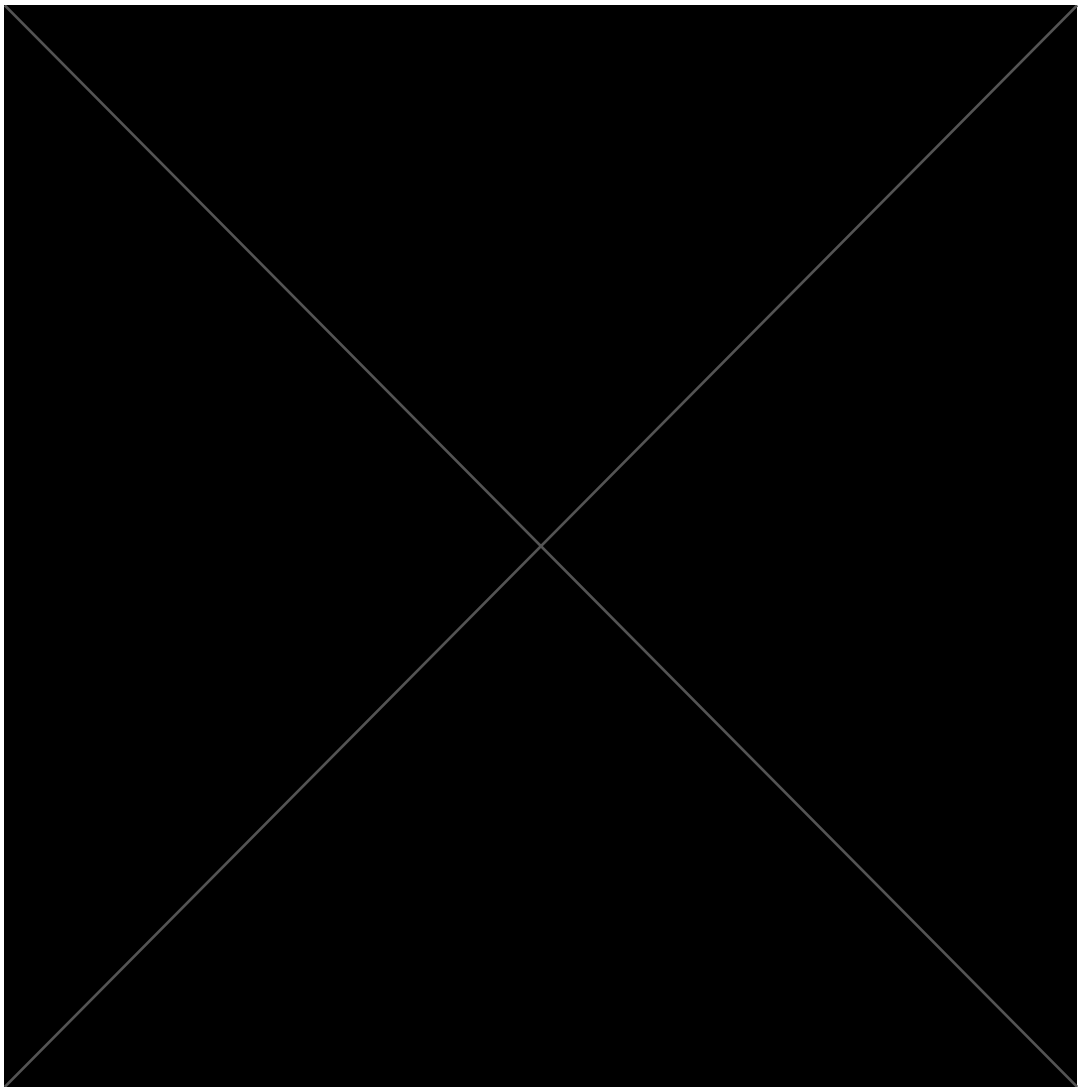

Fig. 99. Hans Burgkmair. *Burgkmair's Ex libris*, 1516. Coloured woodcut, 10.3cm x 7.1cm. This example is pasted into a copy of *Der Theuerdank,* 1517 in Stuttgart: Württembergische Landesbibliothek, (Ra 16, The 1).

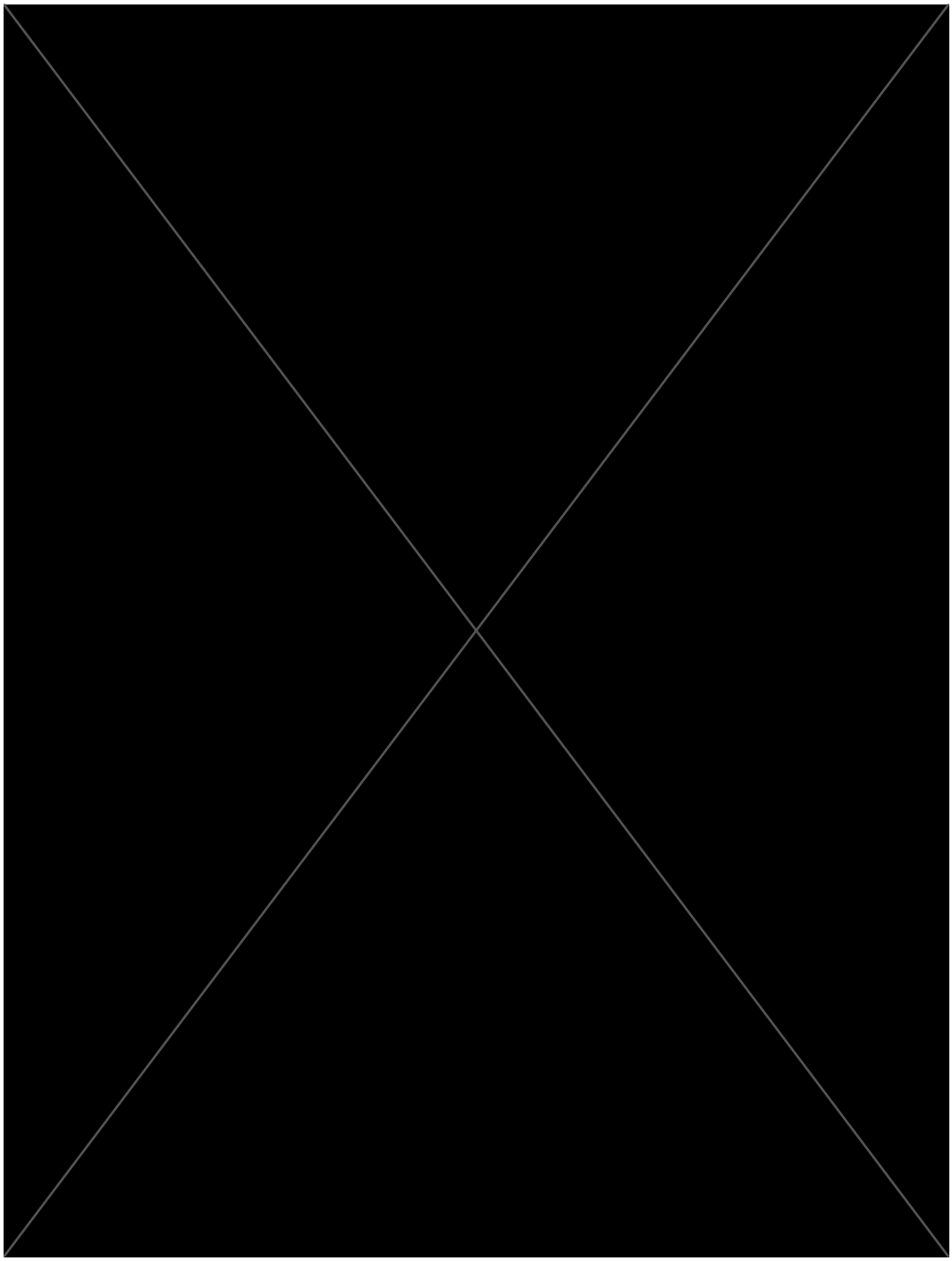

Fig. 100. Albrecht Dürer, *Coat of Arms of Albrecht Dürer,* 1523. Woodcut, 351 x 261mm. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

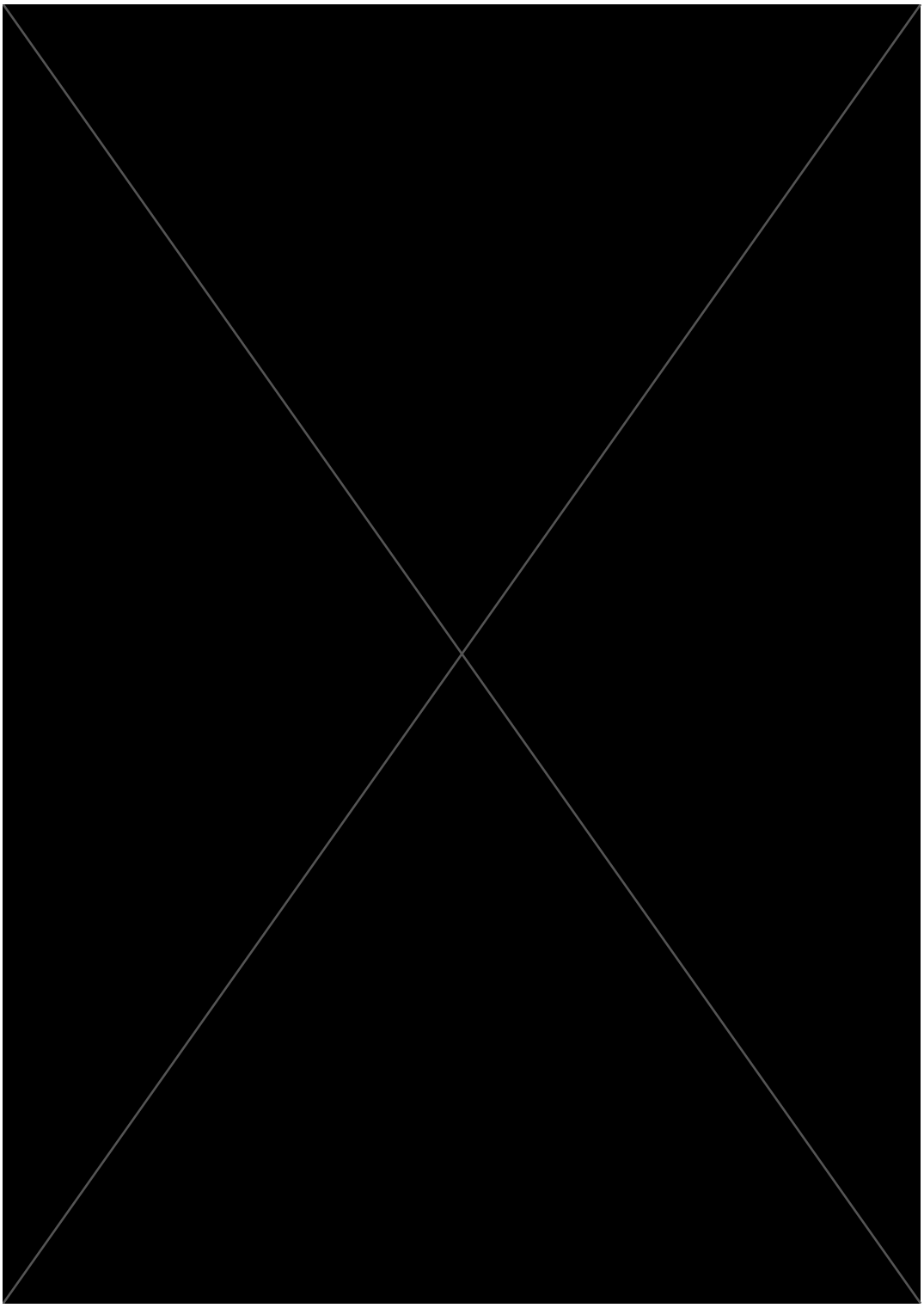

Fig. 101. Sebald Beham, *Coat of Arms with Eagle,* 1543. Engraving, 7.3cm x 5.1cm. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

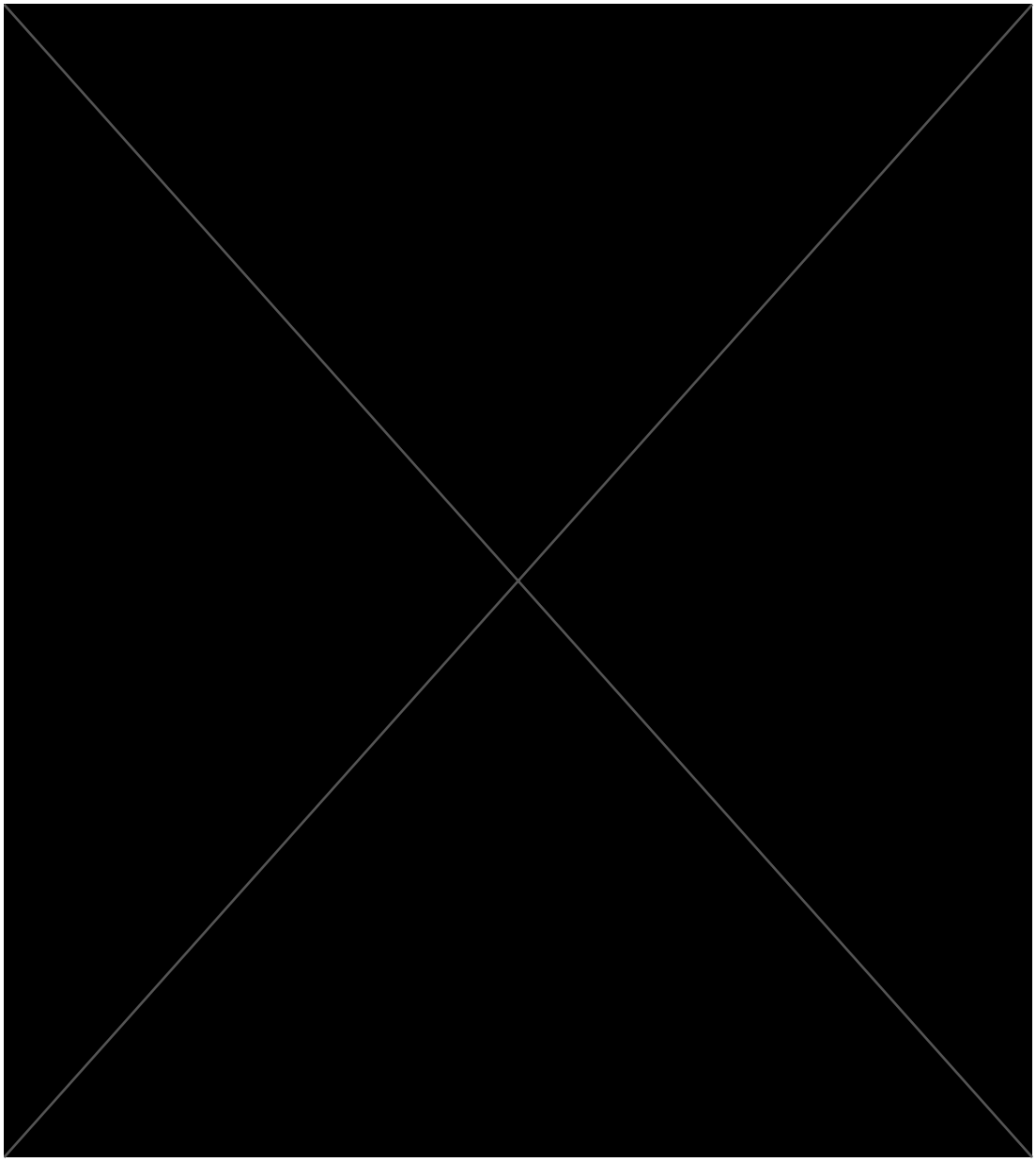

Fig. 102. Sebald Beham, *Coat of Arms with a Lion,* 1544. Engraving, 6.9cm x 5.9cm (sheet). Chicago: Art Institute.

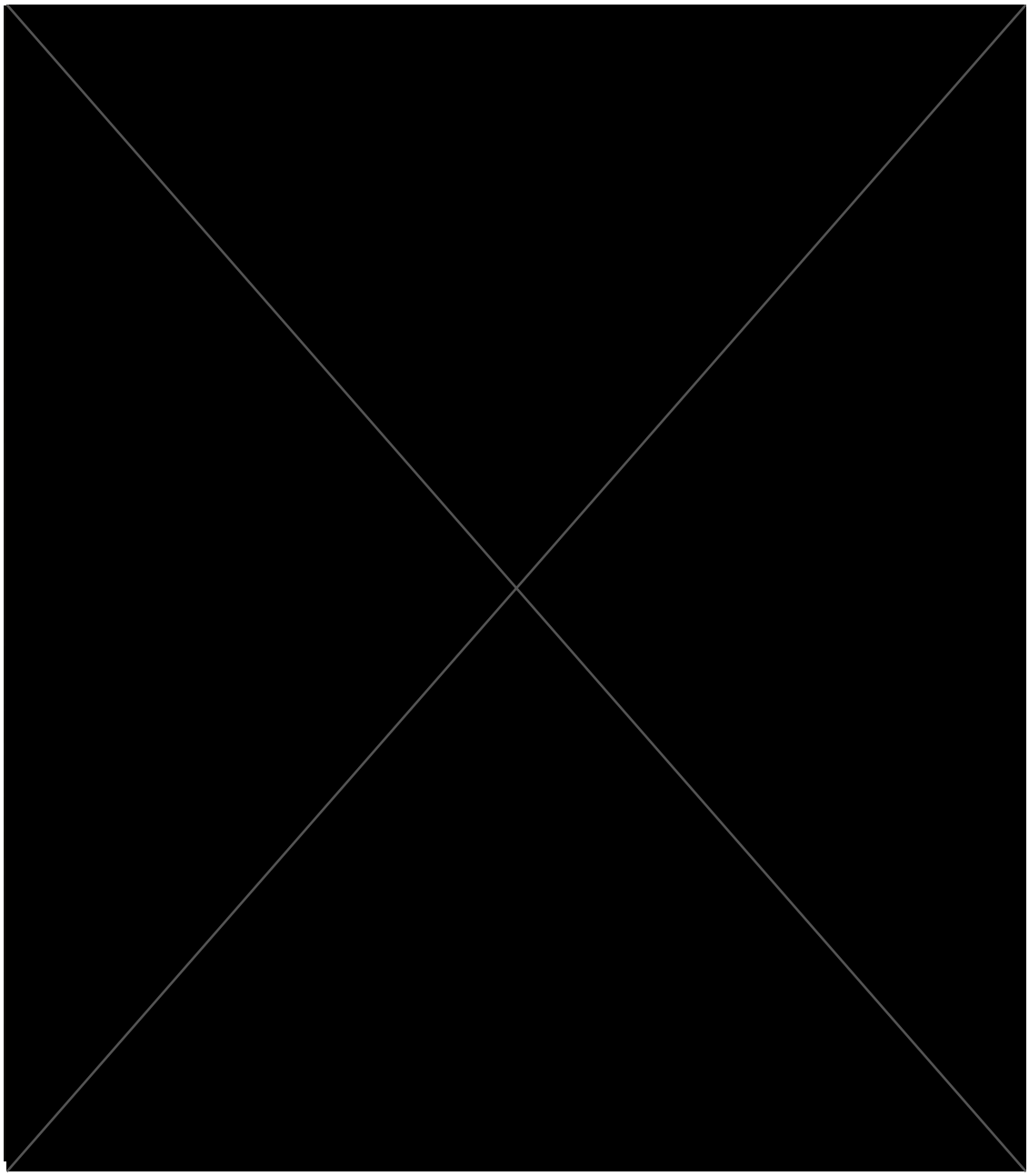

Fig. 103. Sebald Beham, *Coat of Arms of Sebald Beham,* 1544. Engraving, 6.9cm x 5.9cm (sheet). Chicago: Art Institute.

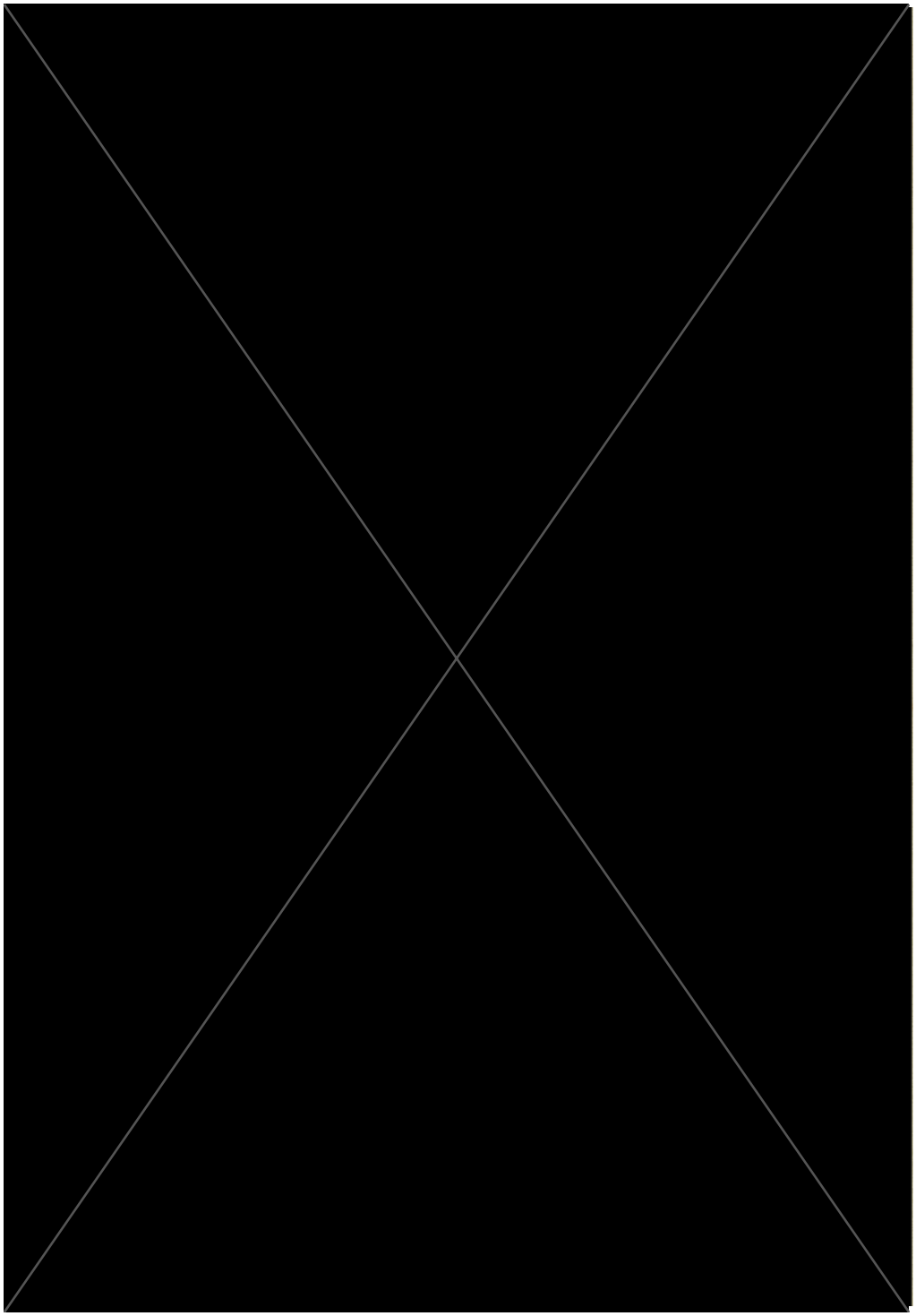

Fig. 104. Sebald Beham, *Coat of Arms with a Rooster,* 1543. Engraving, 6.9cm x 4.7cm. Hamburg: Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe.

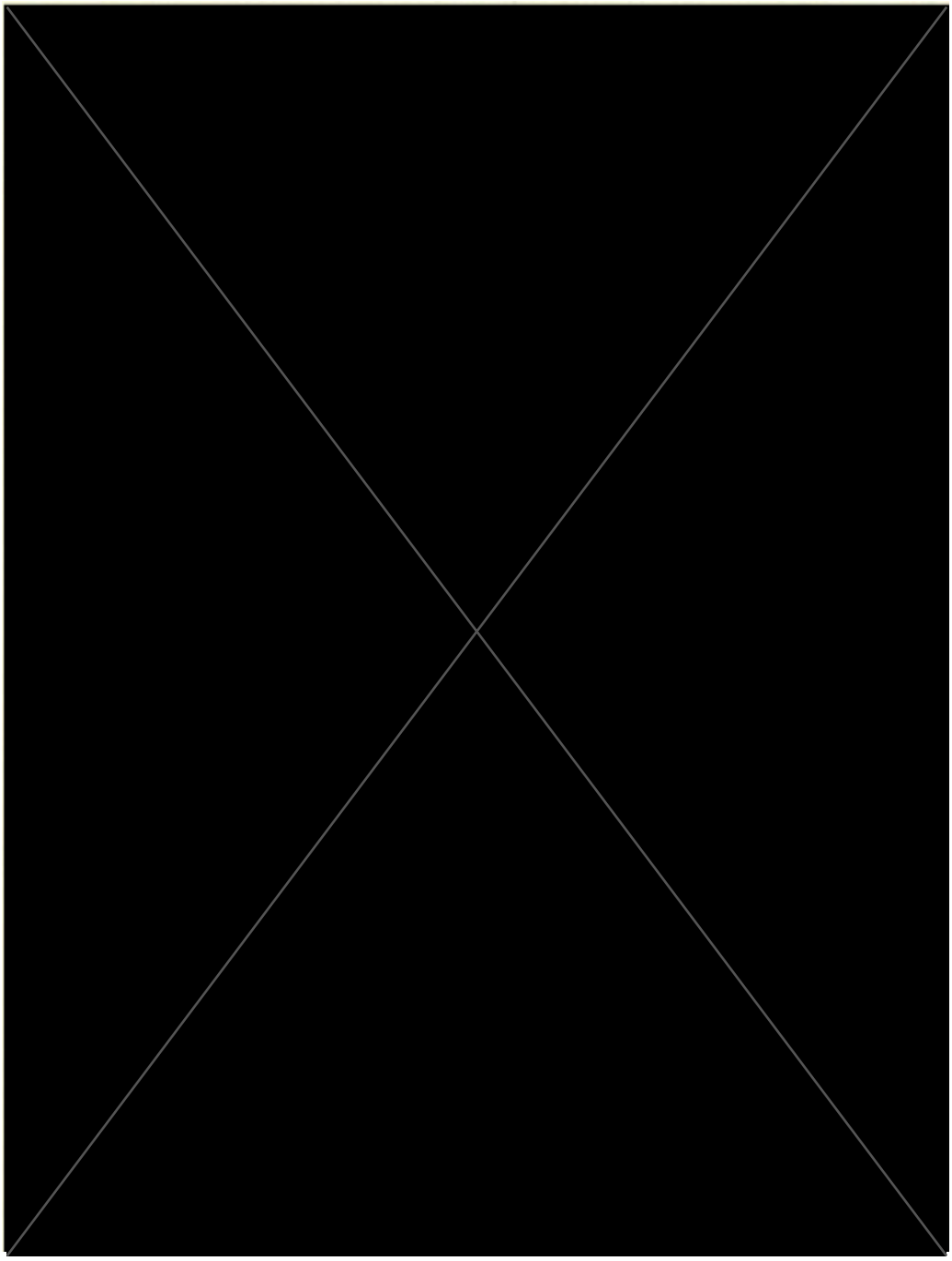

Fig. 105. Virgil Solis, *Fantasy coat of arms,* 1530-1562. Engraving, 7.3cm x 5.3cm. London: British Museum.

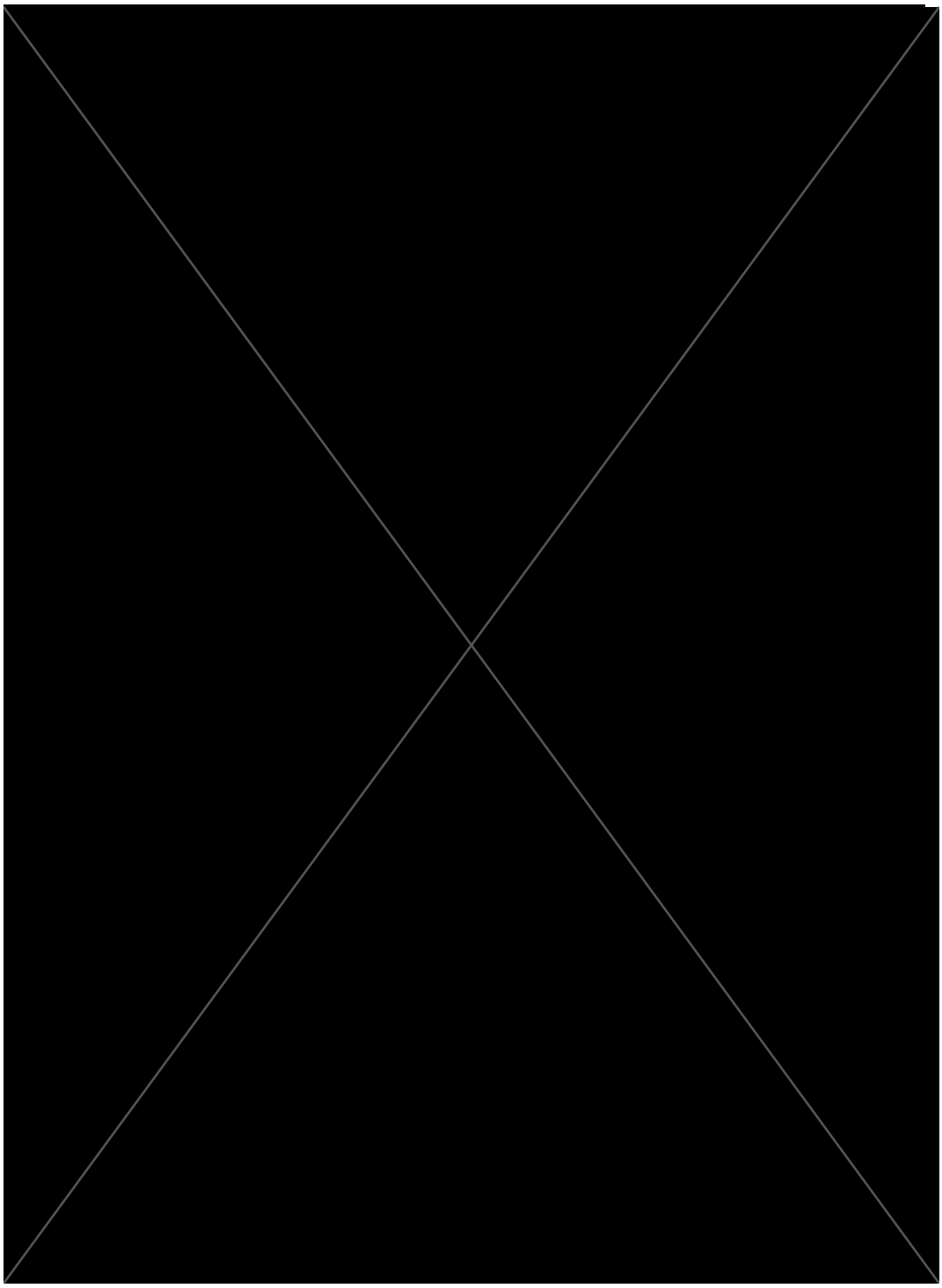

Fig. 106. Virgil Solis, *Fantasy coat of arms,* 1530-1562. Engraving, 7.3cm x 5.3cm. London: British Museum.

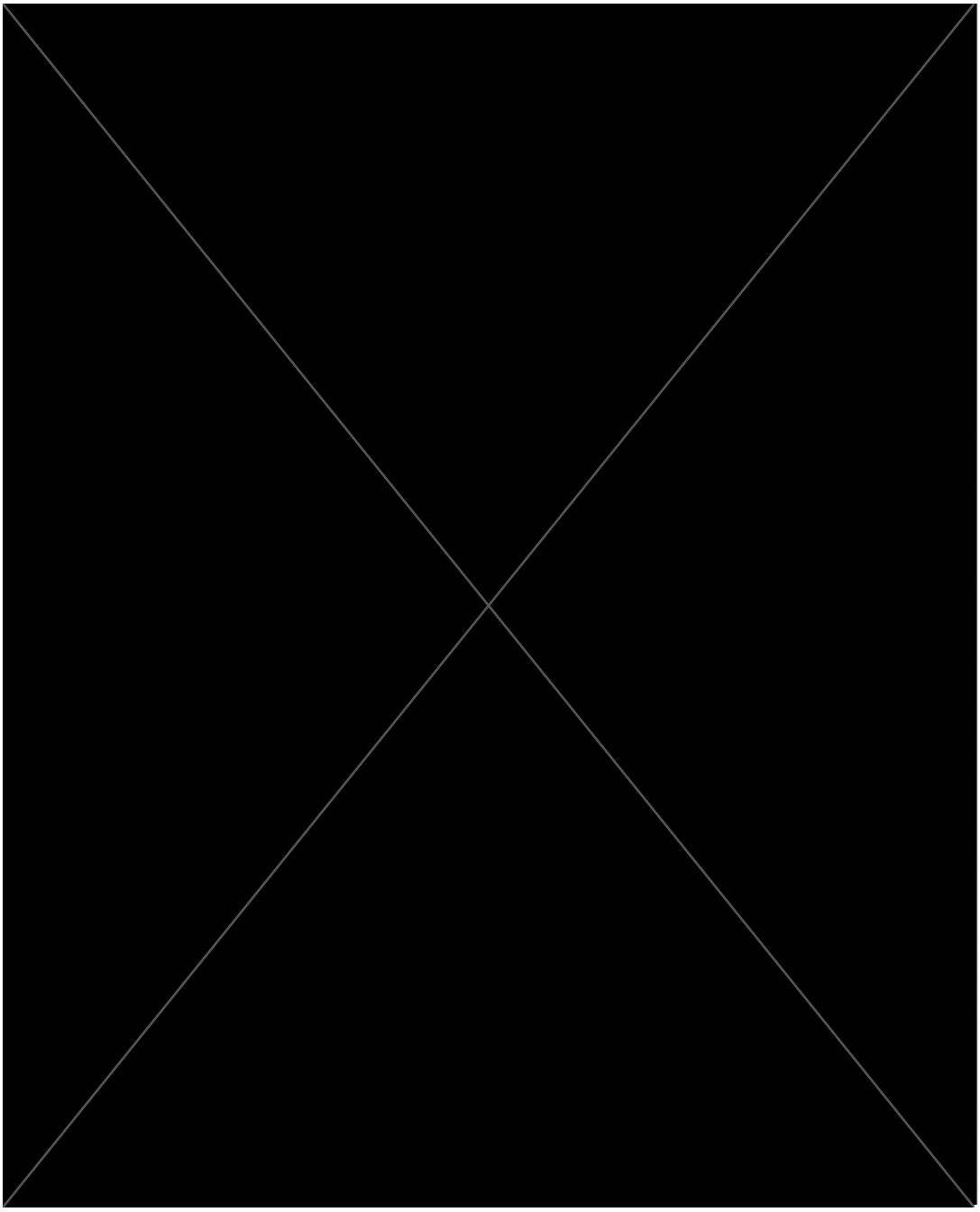

Fig. 107. Virgil Solis/ Solis workshop, *Eight fantasy coats of arms,*1530-1562. Etching and engraving, approx. 7.5cm x 5.5cm. Paris: Louvre.

Fig. 108. Balthasar Jenichen, *Fantasy coats of arms*, 1565. Göttingen: Kunstsammlung der Georg-August-Universität. Photo credit: Katharina Anna Haase.

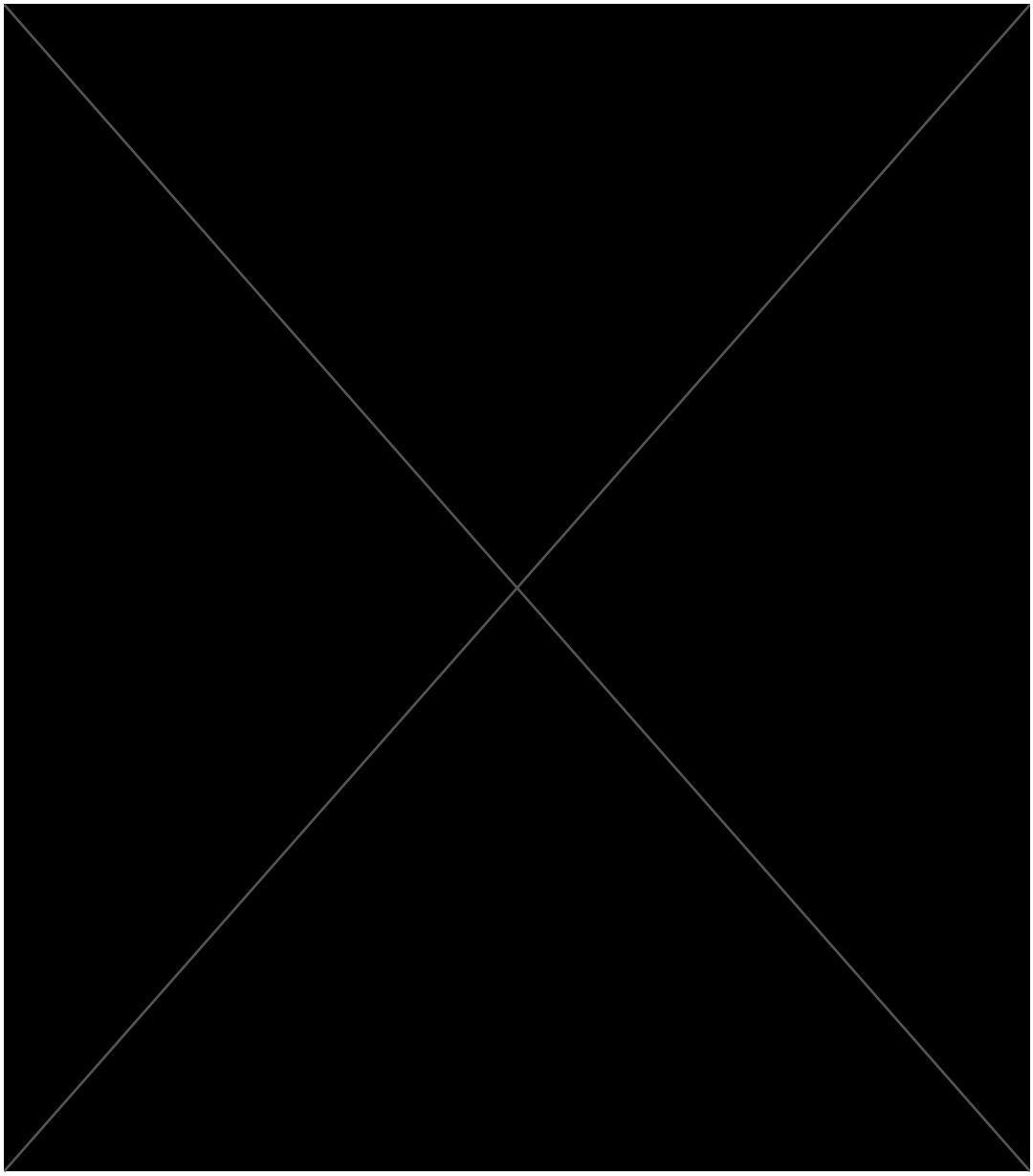

Fig. 109. Hans Burgkmair, *Maximilian learns the dark arts*, illustration for the *Weisskunig,* cut 1514-1516, first published 1775. Woodcut, 22.1cm x 19.5cm. London: British Museum.

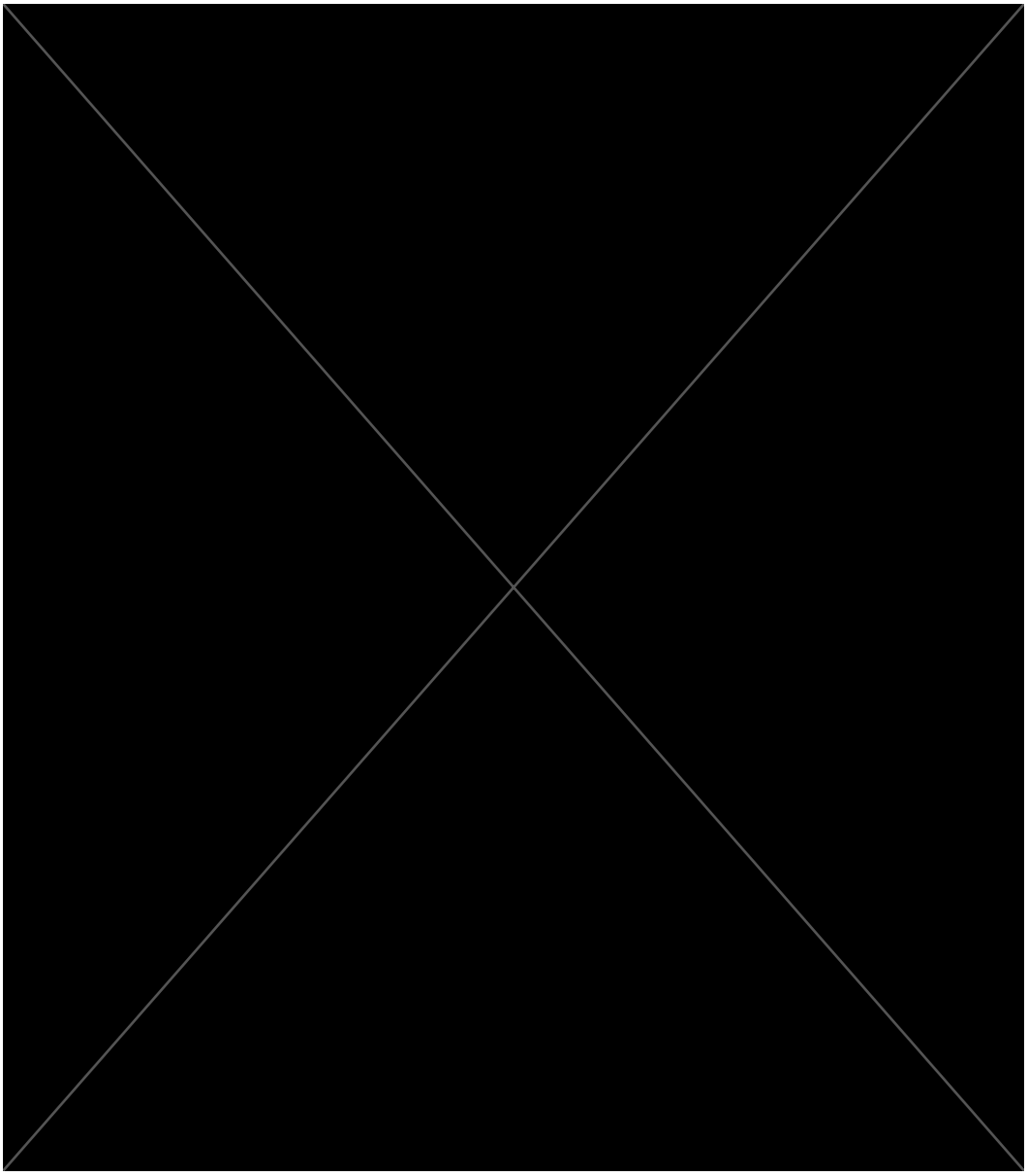

Fig. 110. Hans Burgkmair, *Maximilian instructs a painter*, illustration for the *Weisskunig,* cut 1514-1516, first published 1775. Woodcut, 22.1cm x 19.5cm. London: British Museum.

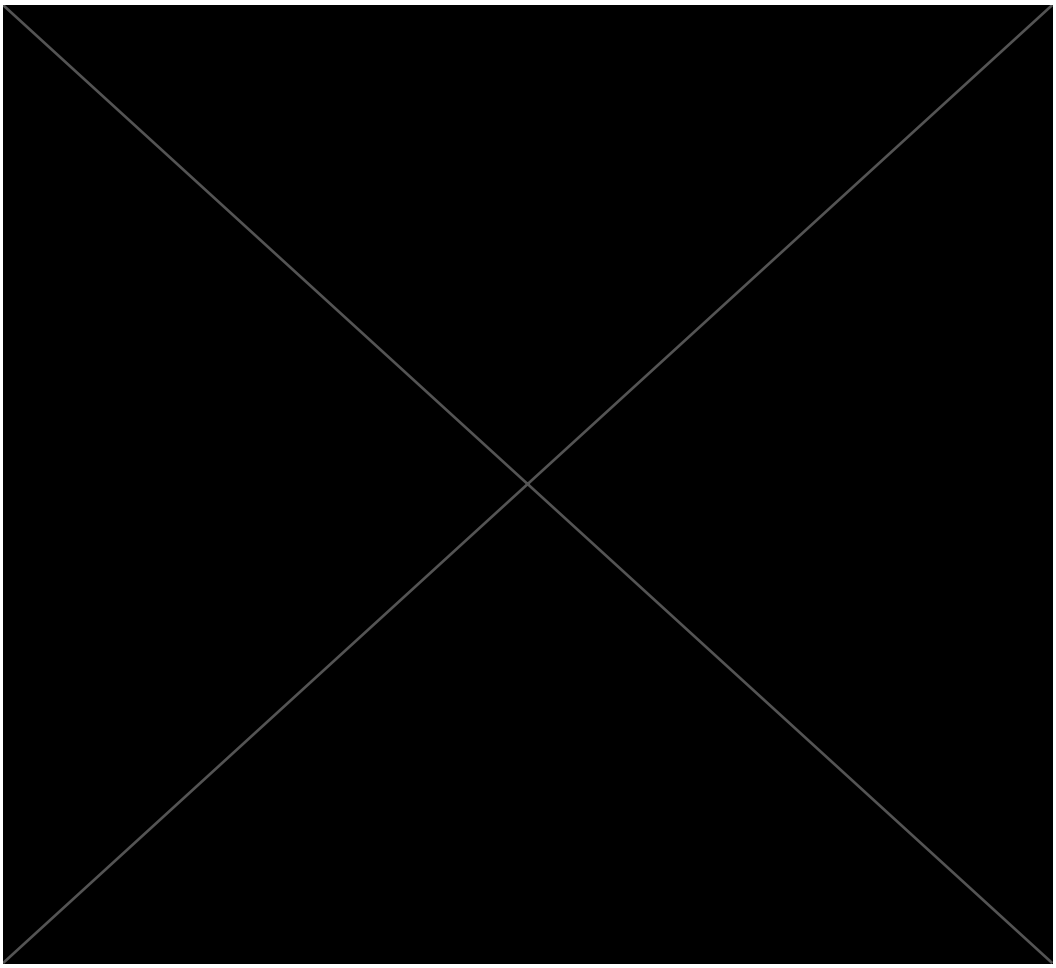

Fig. 111. Albrecht Dürer, Jörg Kölderer, Johannes Stabius, Detail of top sheet from the *Triumphal Arch of Maximilian,* 1515, printed 1517/18. Woodcut, 45.7cm x 62.2cm (individual sheet). New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

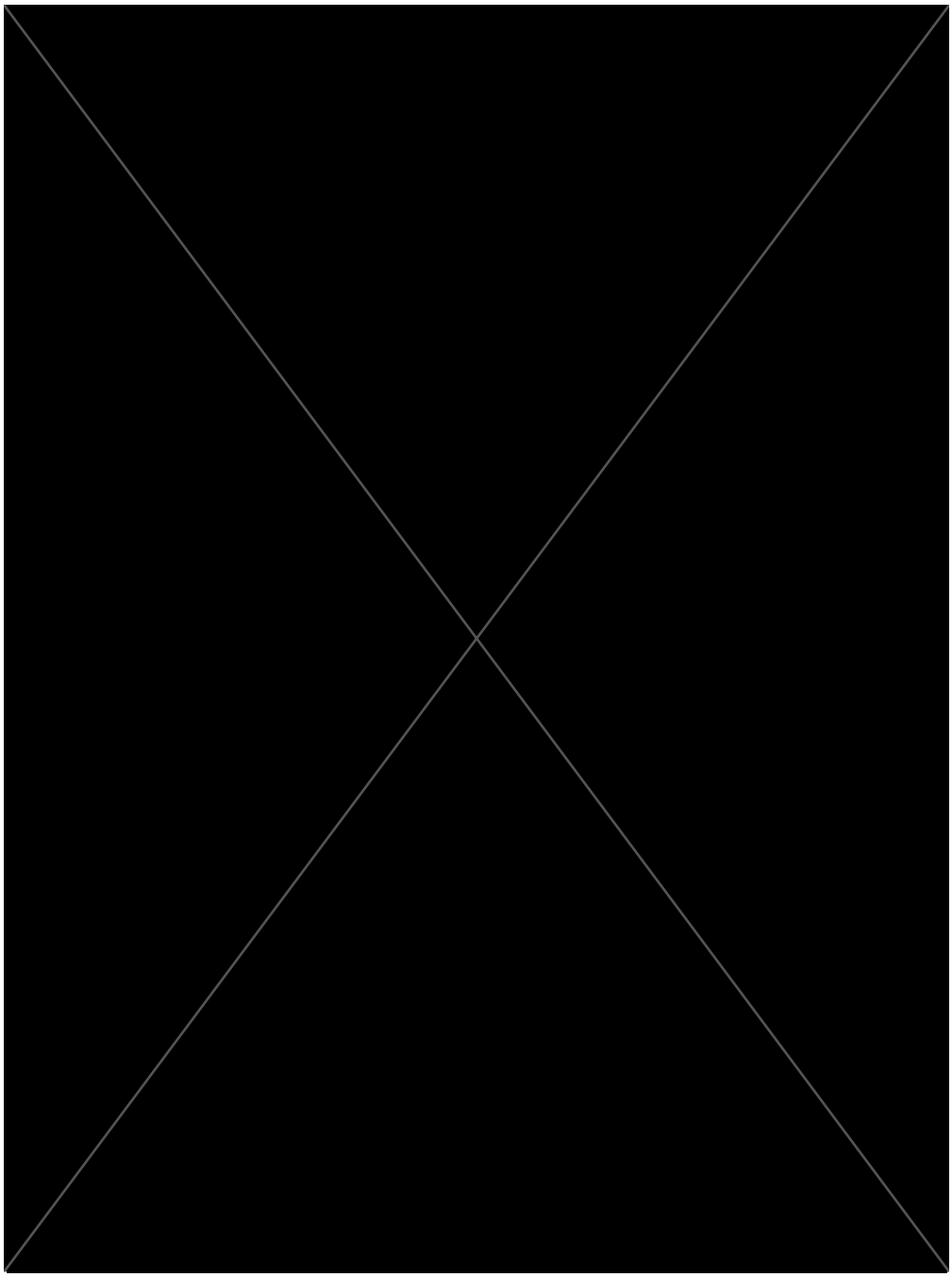

Fig. 112. Illustration to Sebastian Brant's poem, *De corrupto,* from *Varia Sebastiani Brant Carmina,* Basel: Johann Bergmann, 1498, sig.ai^{r}. Woodcut, 20.3cm x 14.2cm. London: British Museum.

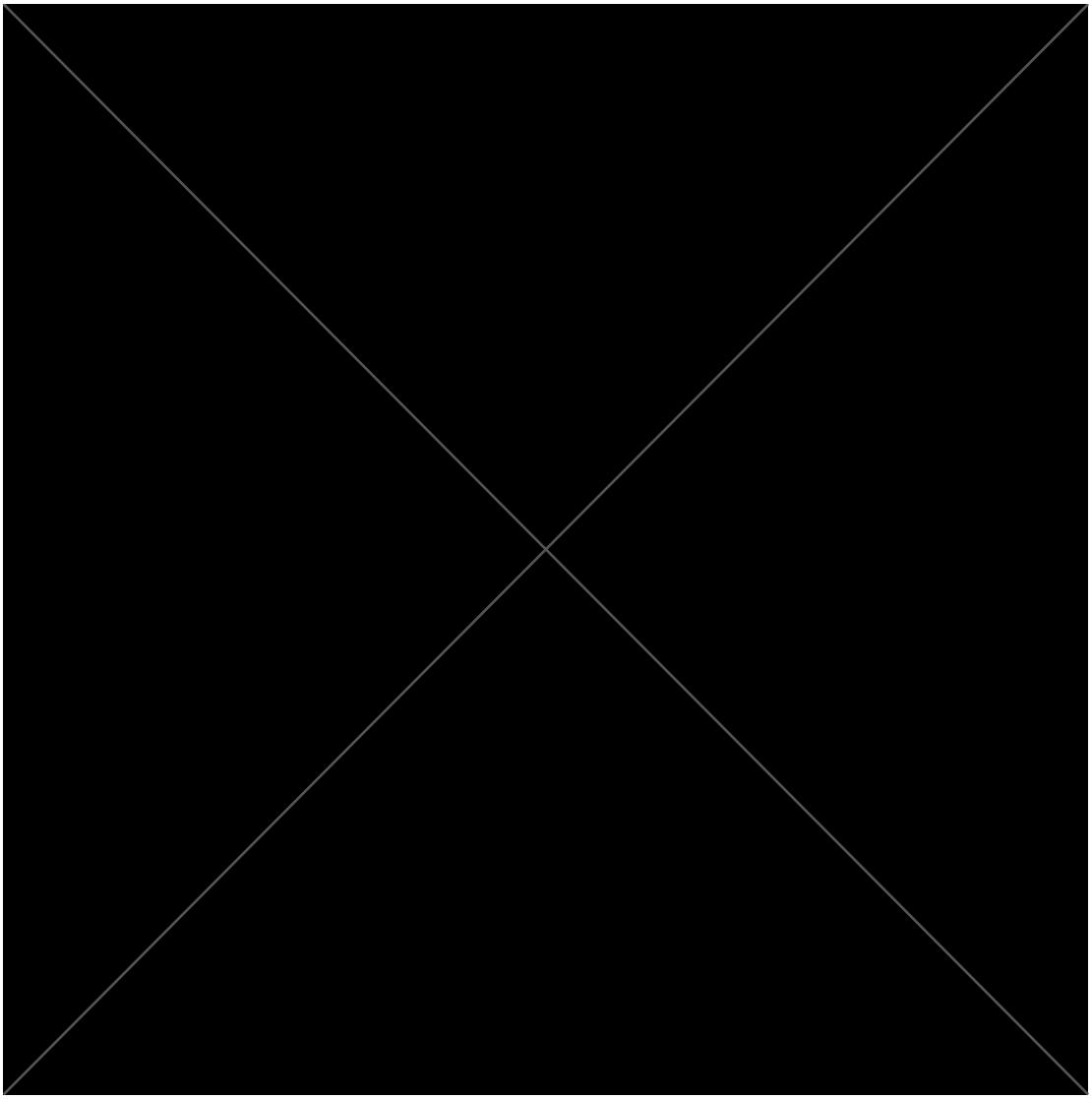

Fig. 113. Johannes Stabius and Hans Springinklee, *Horoscope for Maximilian,* 1512. Woodcut with colouring, 46.8cm x 46.3cm. Vienna: Albertina.

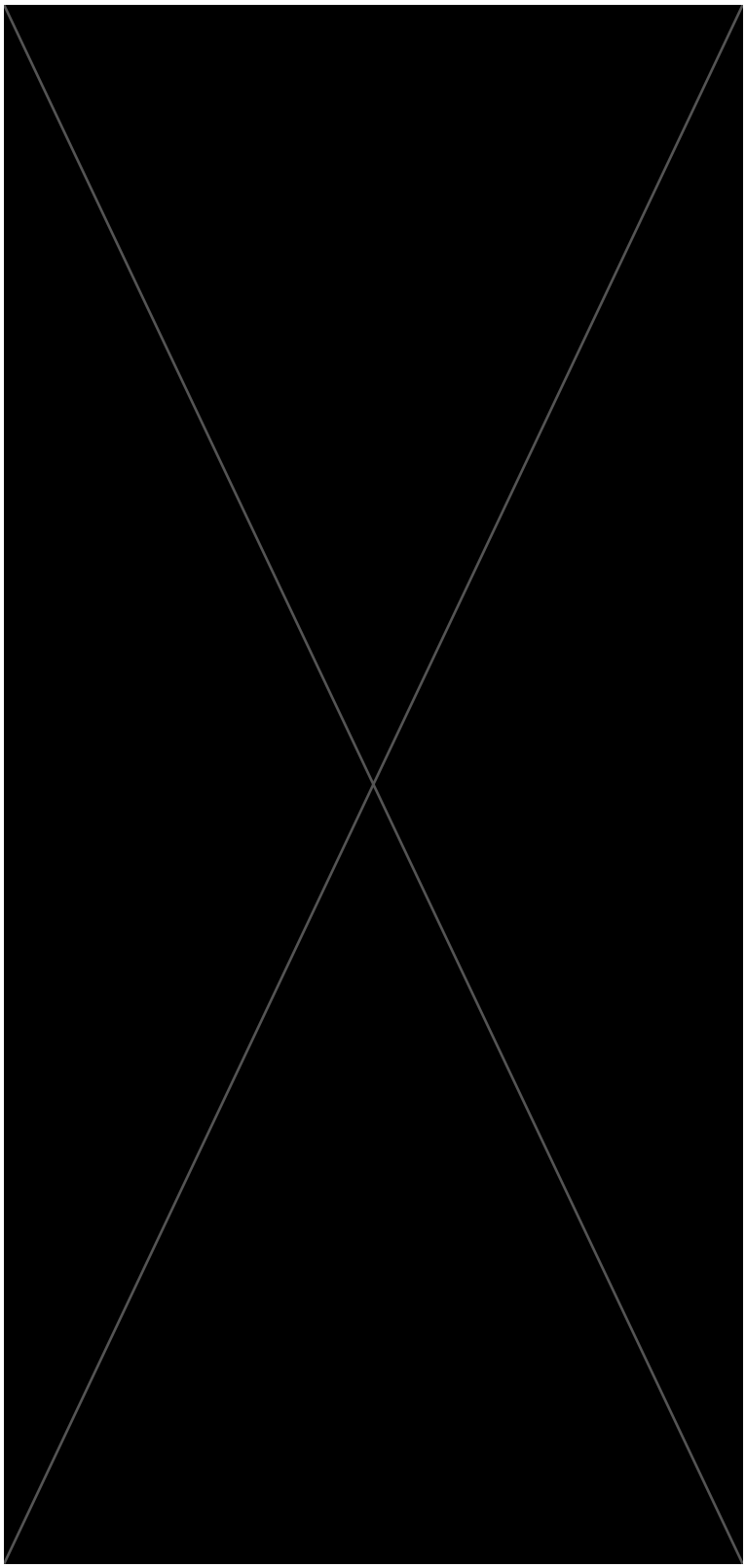

Fig. 114. Johannes Stabius, *Horoscopion omni generaliter Congruens climate,* Nuremberg, 1512. Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

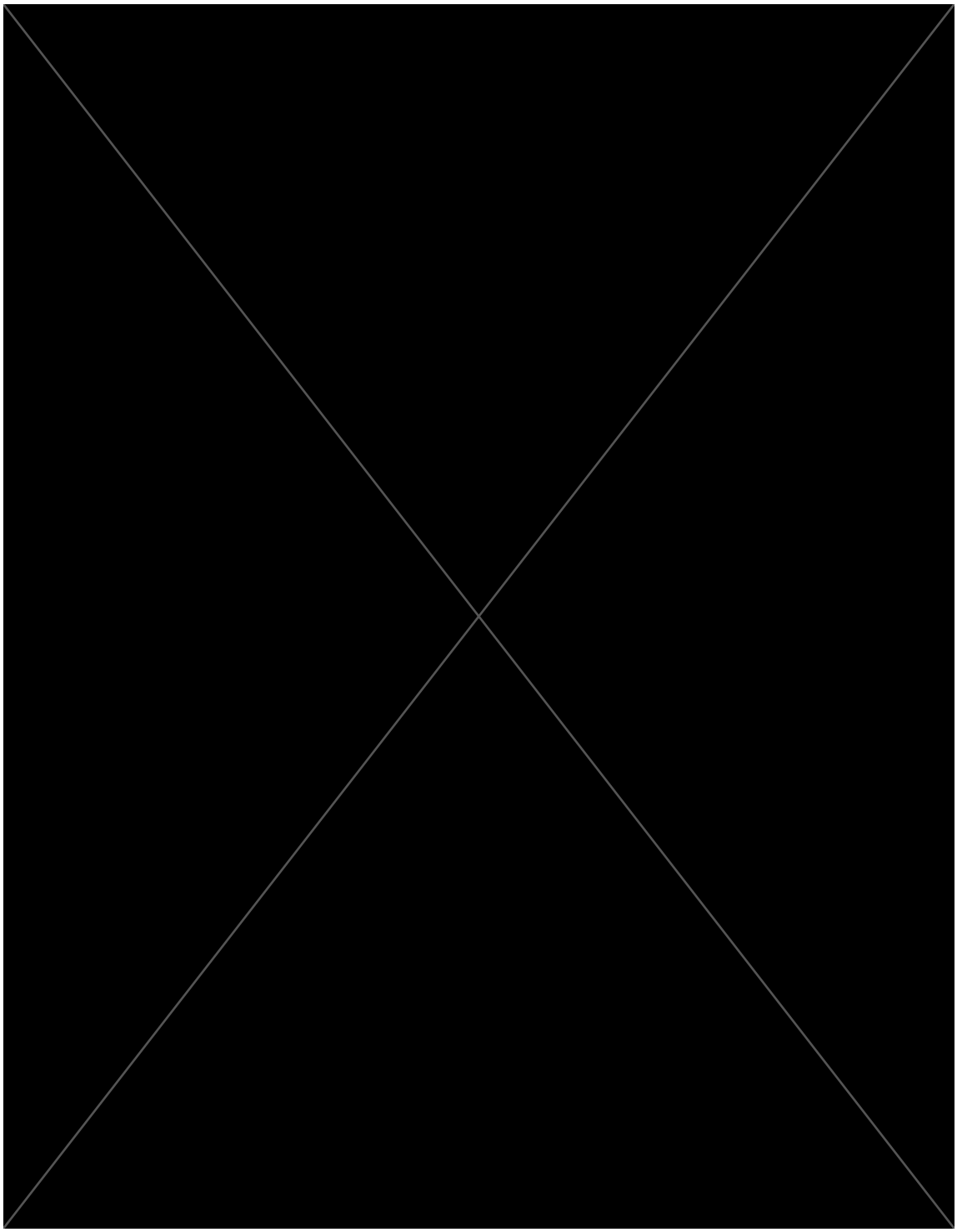

Fig. 115. Peter Apian, block probably cut by Hans Brosamer, *Folium populi,* Ingolstadt: Apian, 1533. Woodcut, 31cm x 24.5cm. Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

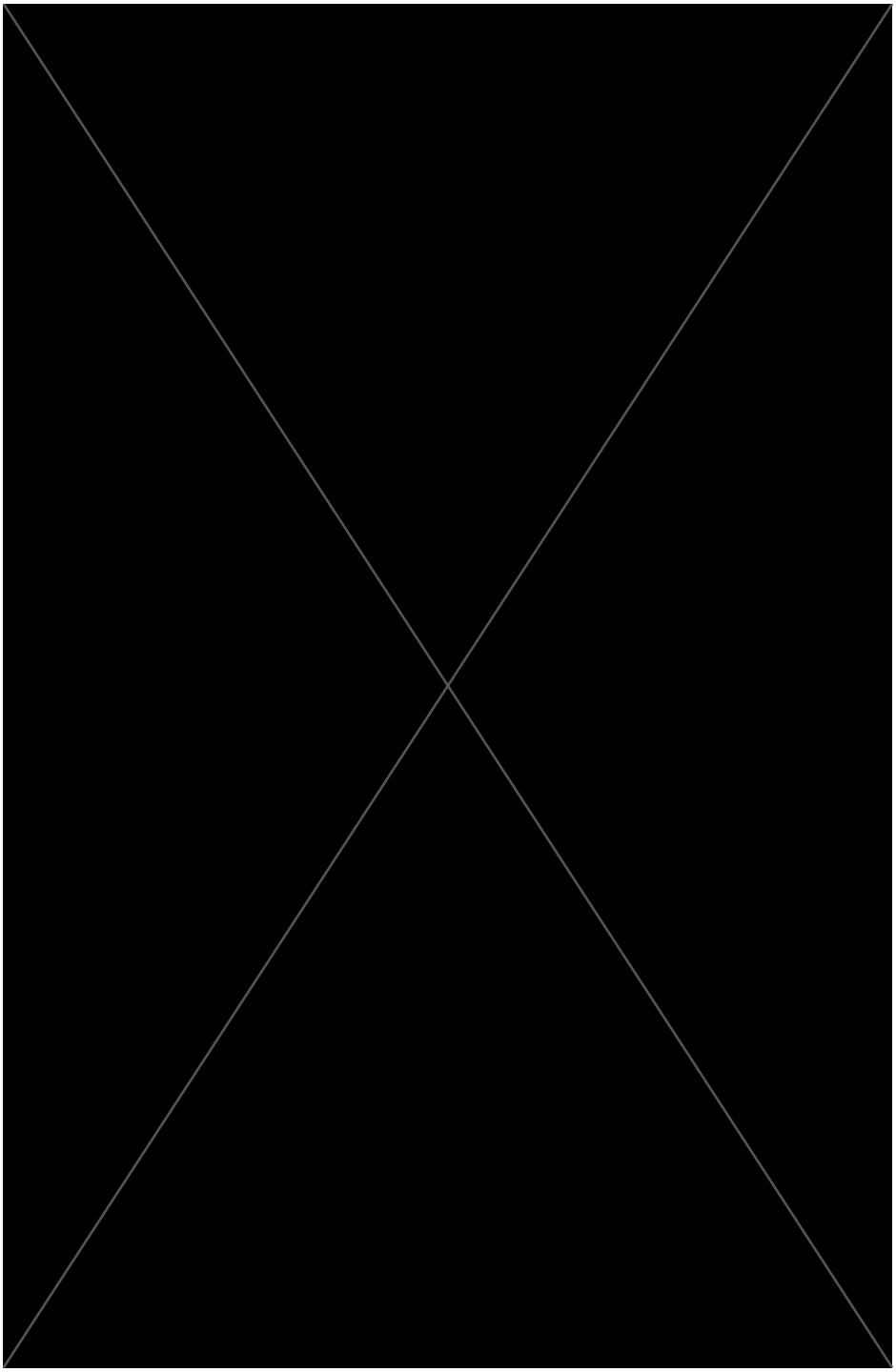

Fig. 116. Peter Apian, block probably cut by Hans Brosamer, Johann Wilhelm von Laubenburg's coat of arms, featuring poplar leaves. Woodcut from *Folium populi,* Ingolstadt: Apian, 1533, sig.Ai^{v}. Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

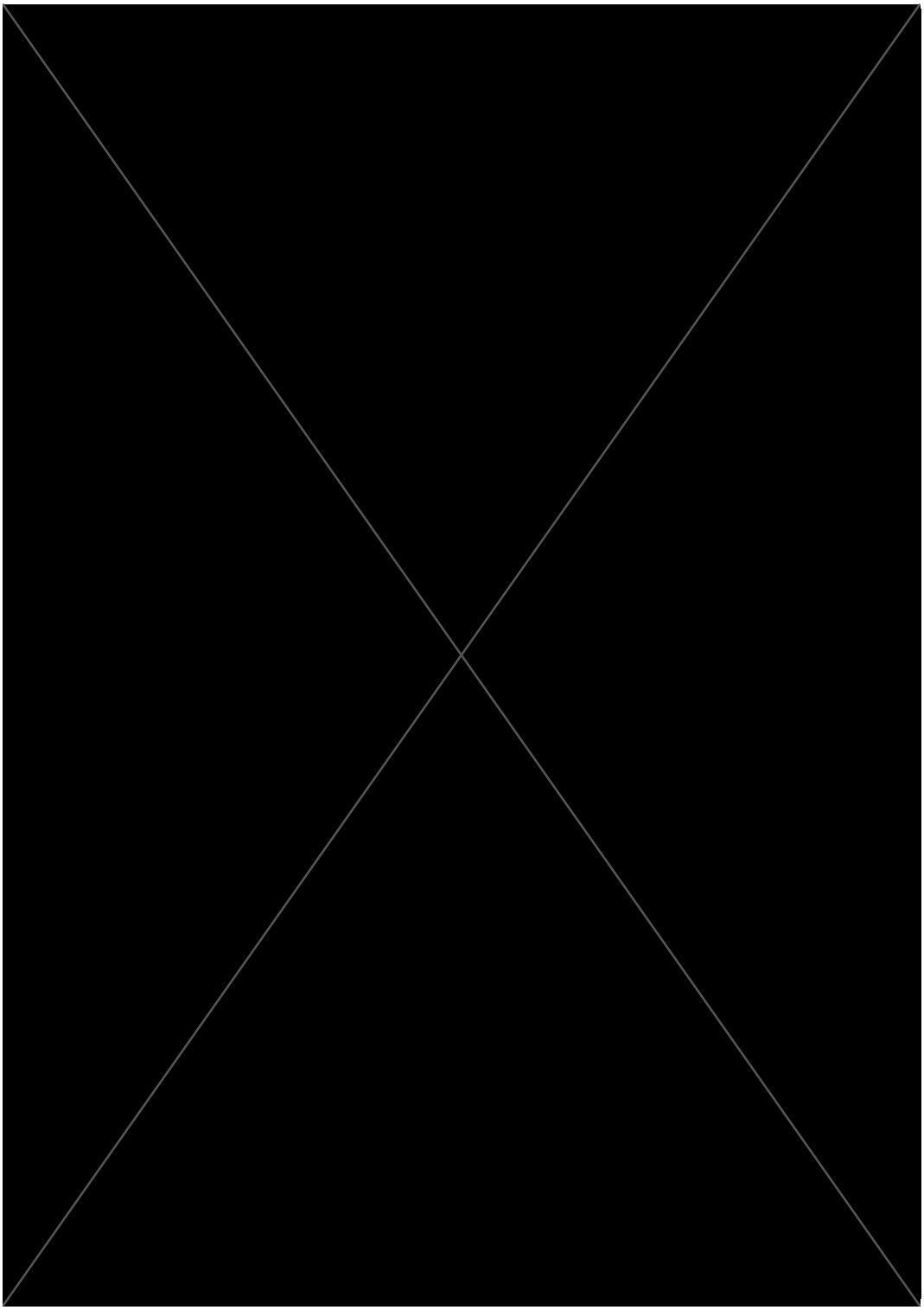

Fig. 117. Apian, Peter, *Horoscopion Apiani Generale Dignoscendis Horis Cvivscvmqve generis aptissimum,* Ingolstadt, 1533. Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

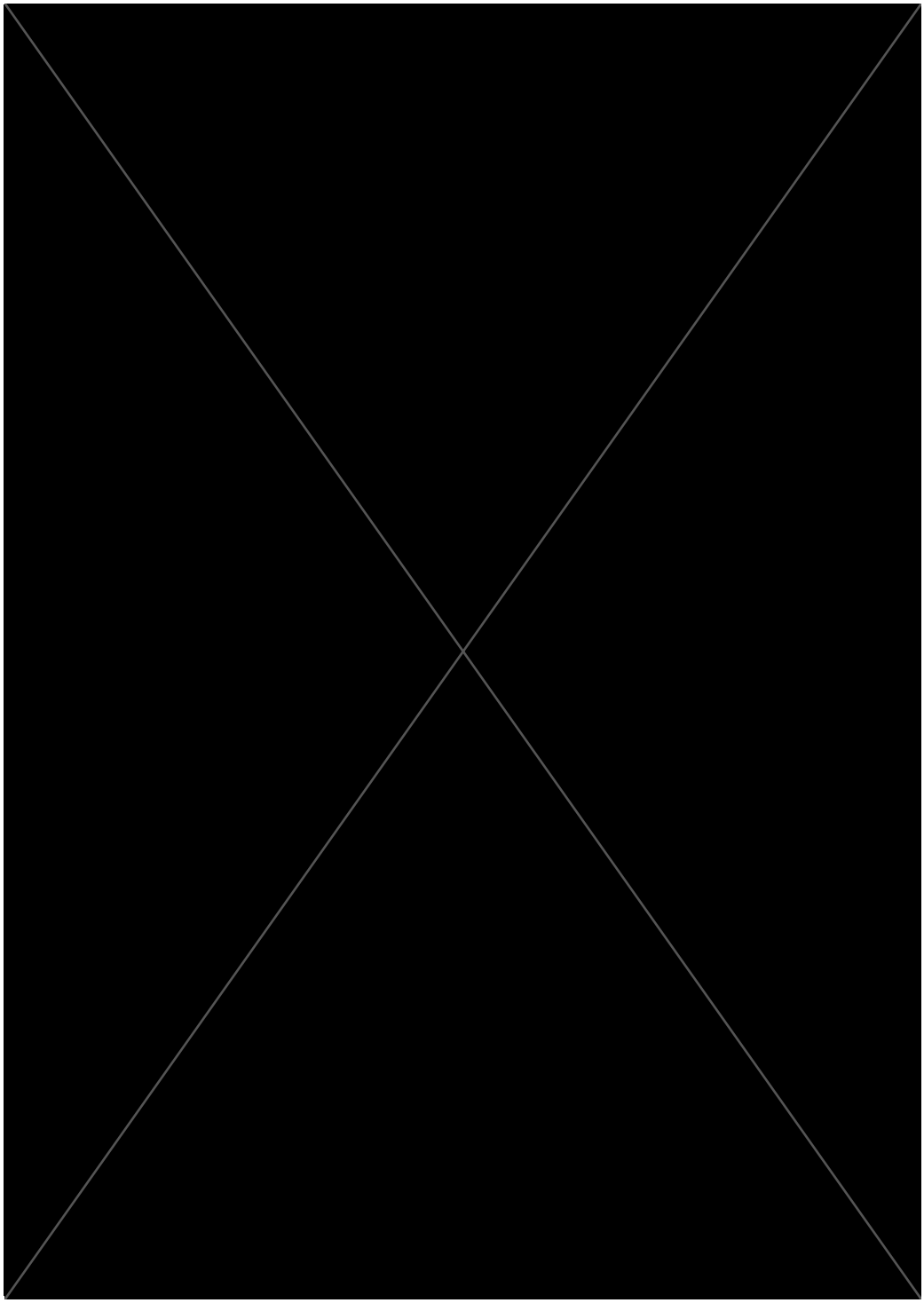

Fig. 118. Johannes Stabius, *Horoscopion omni generaliter congruens climati,* Nuremberg, 1512. Woodcut. Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

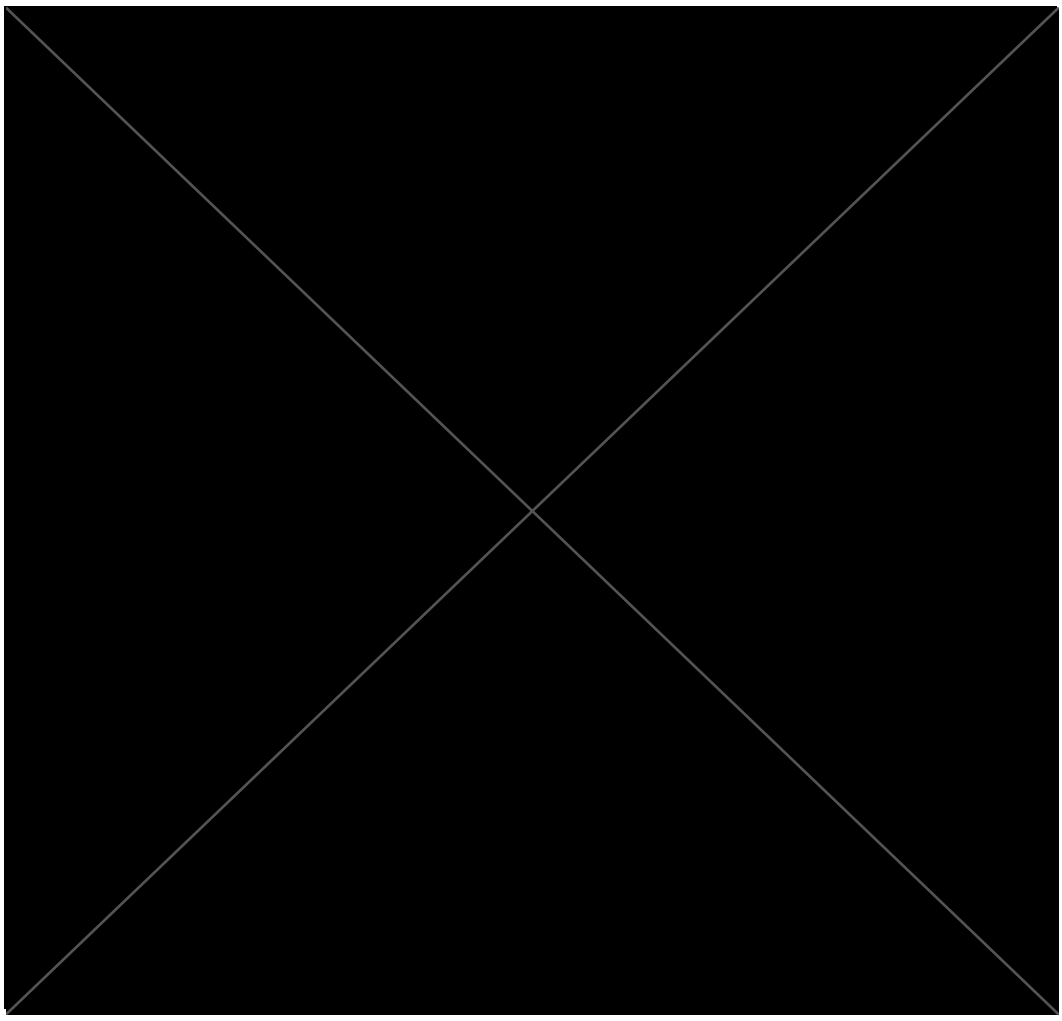

Fig. 119. Peter Apian, *Instrumentum primi mobilis,* Nuremberg: Johannes Petreius, 1534, sig.b[1]^{v}.

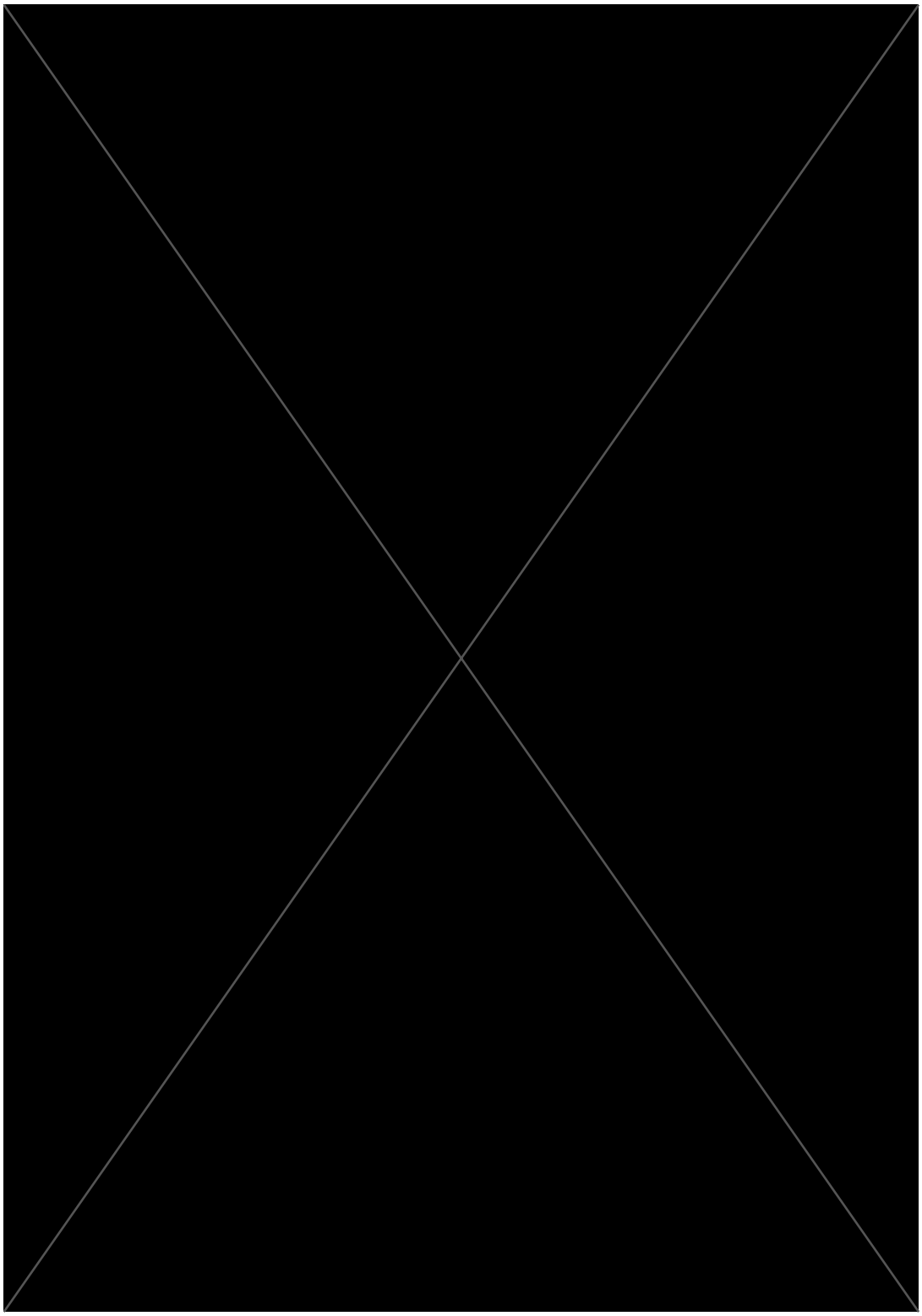

Fig. 120. Christoph von Stadion's *Coat of Arms,* from *Instrumentum primi mobilis,* Nuremberg: Johannes Petreius, 1534, sig.a2^{r}. Woodcut. Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

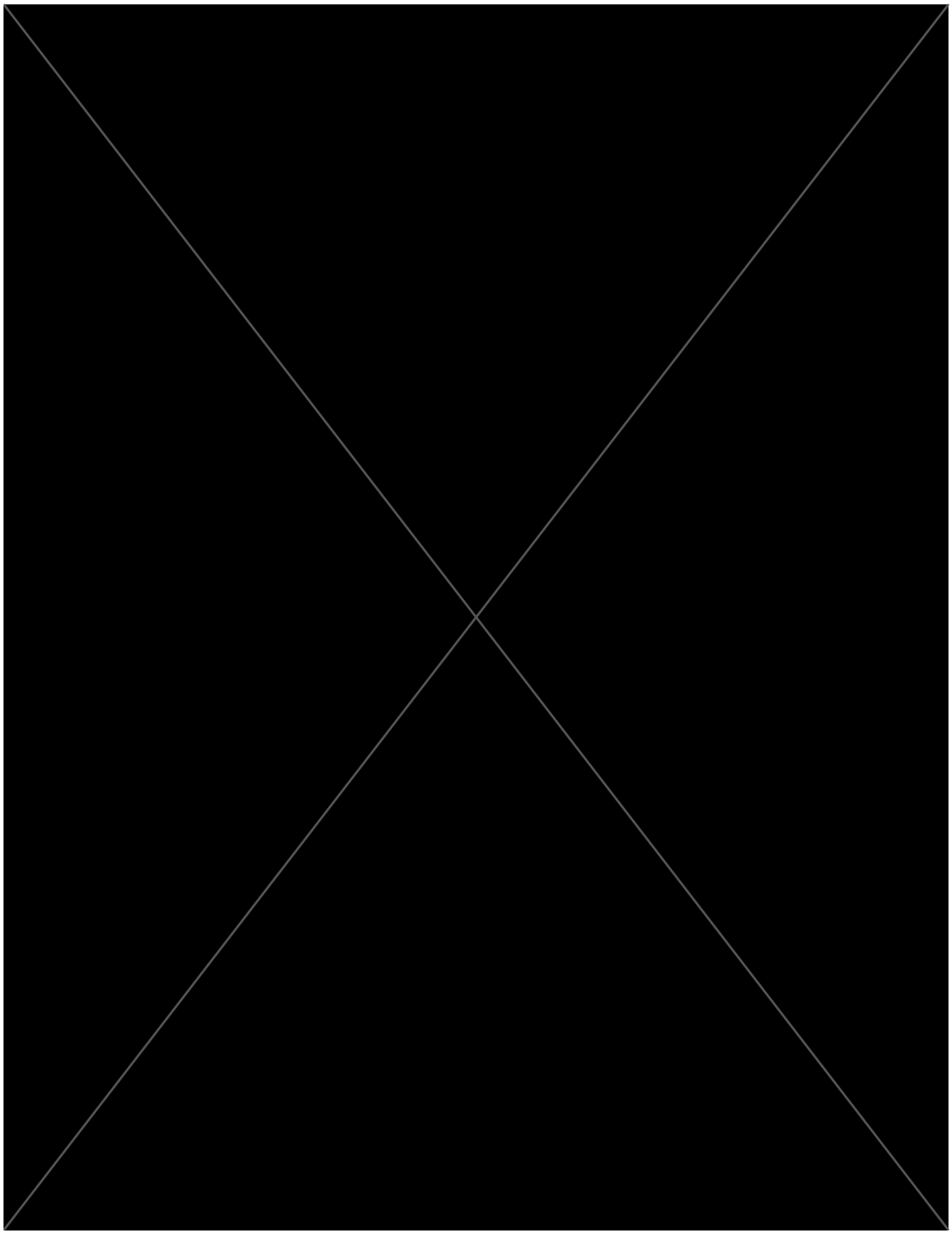

Fig. 121. Anon artisan from southern France, astrolabe quadrant, 1291-1310. Brass, 15cm x 14cm (in case). Sold by Christie's, London, 11th December 2019.

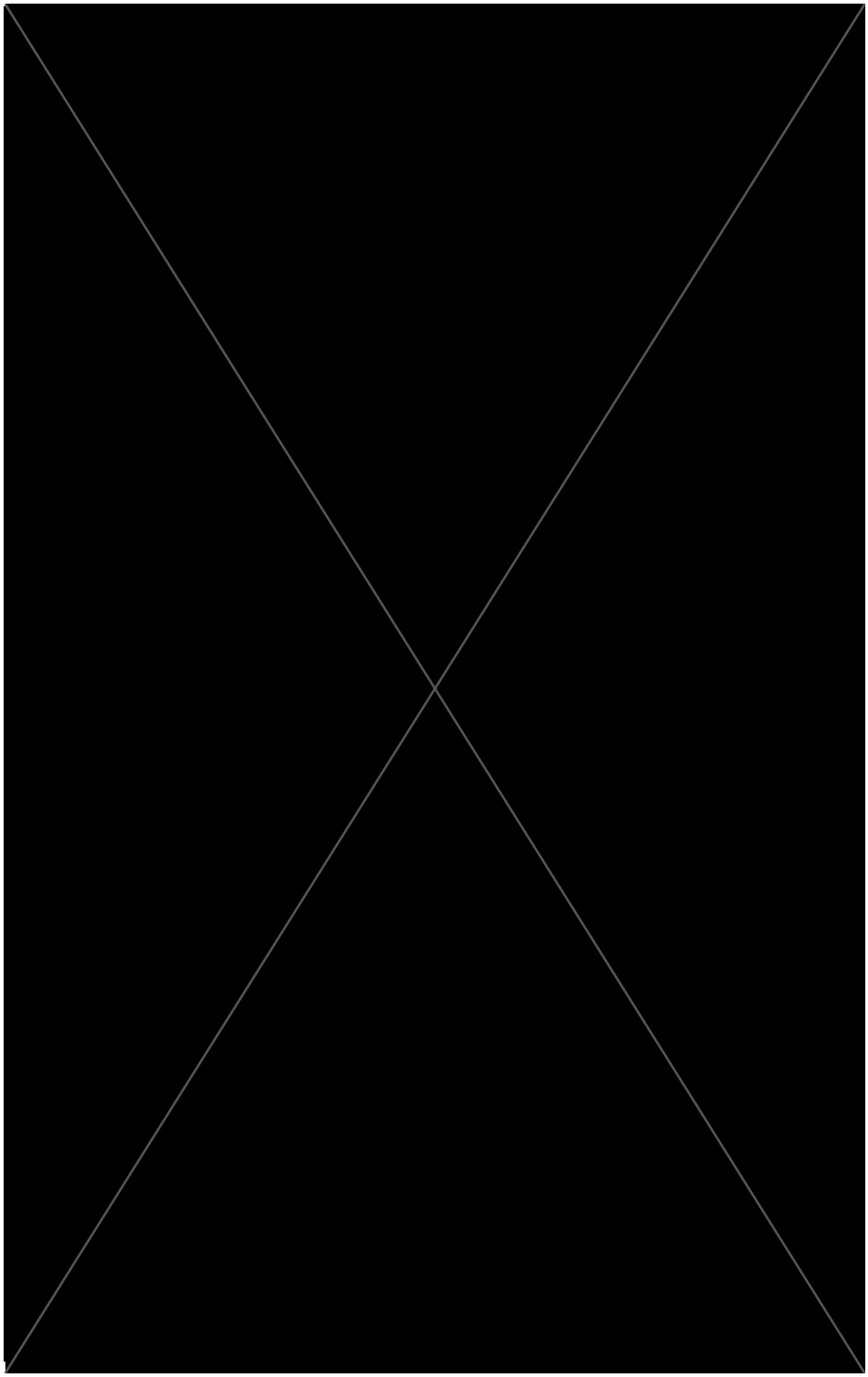

Fig. 122. Frontispiece for *Instrumentum primi mobilis,* Nuremberg: Johannes Petreius, 1534. Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

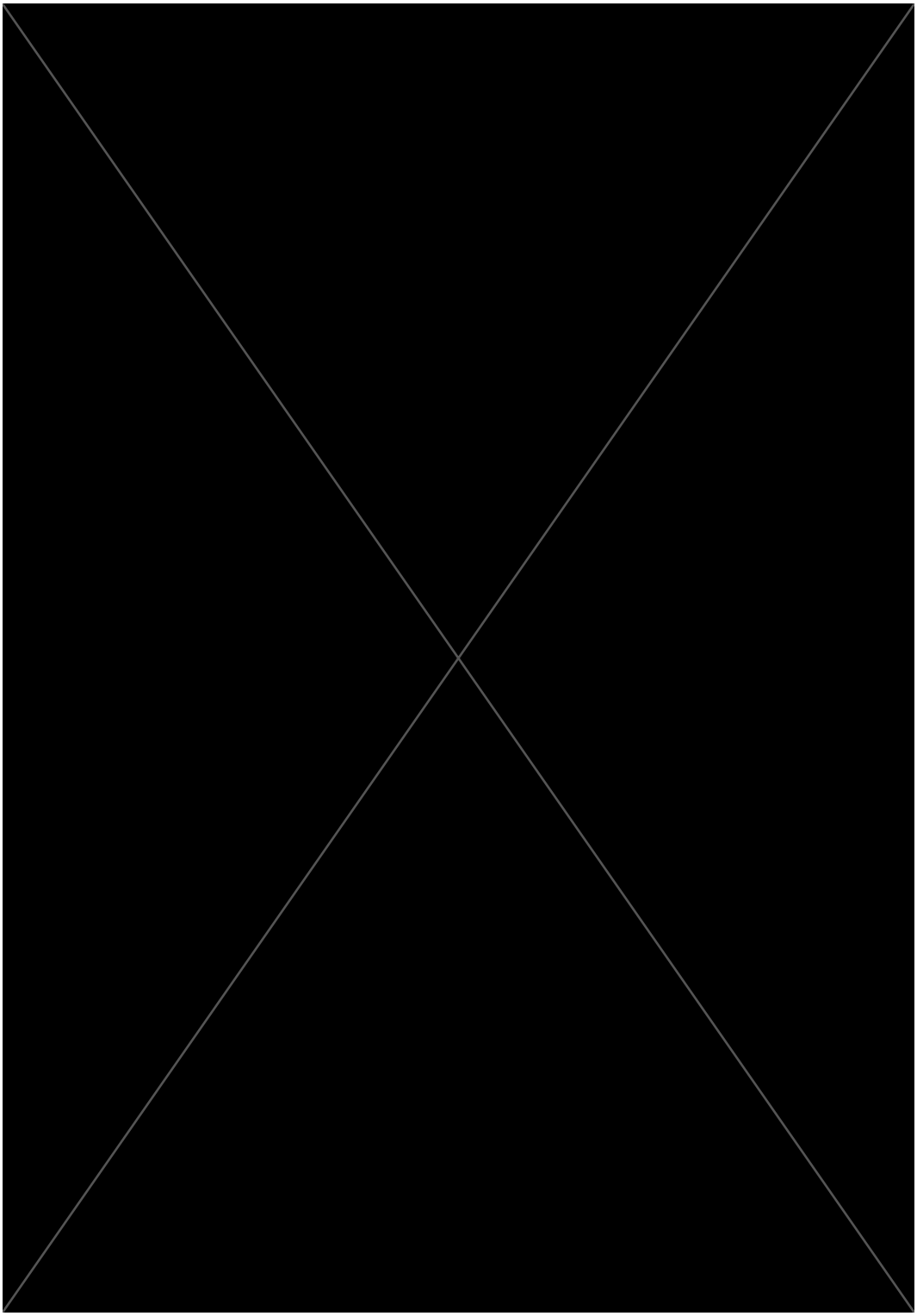

Fig. 123. Woodcut coat of arms of Joachim Vadianus, from *De Vadianorum familiae insignibus,* 1515. Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

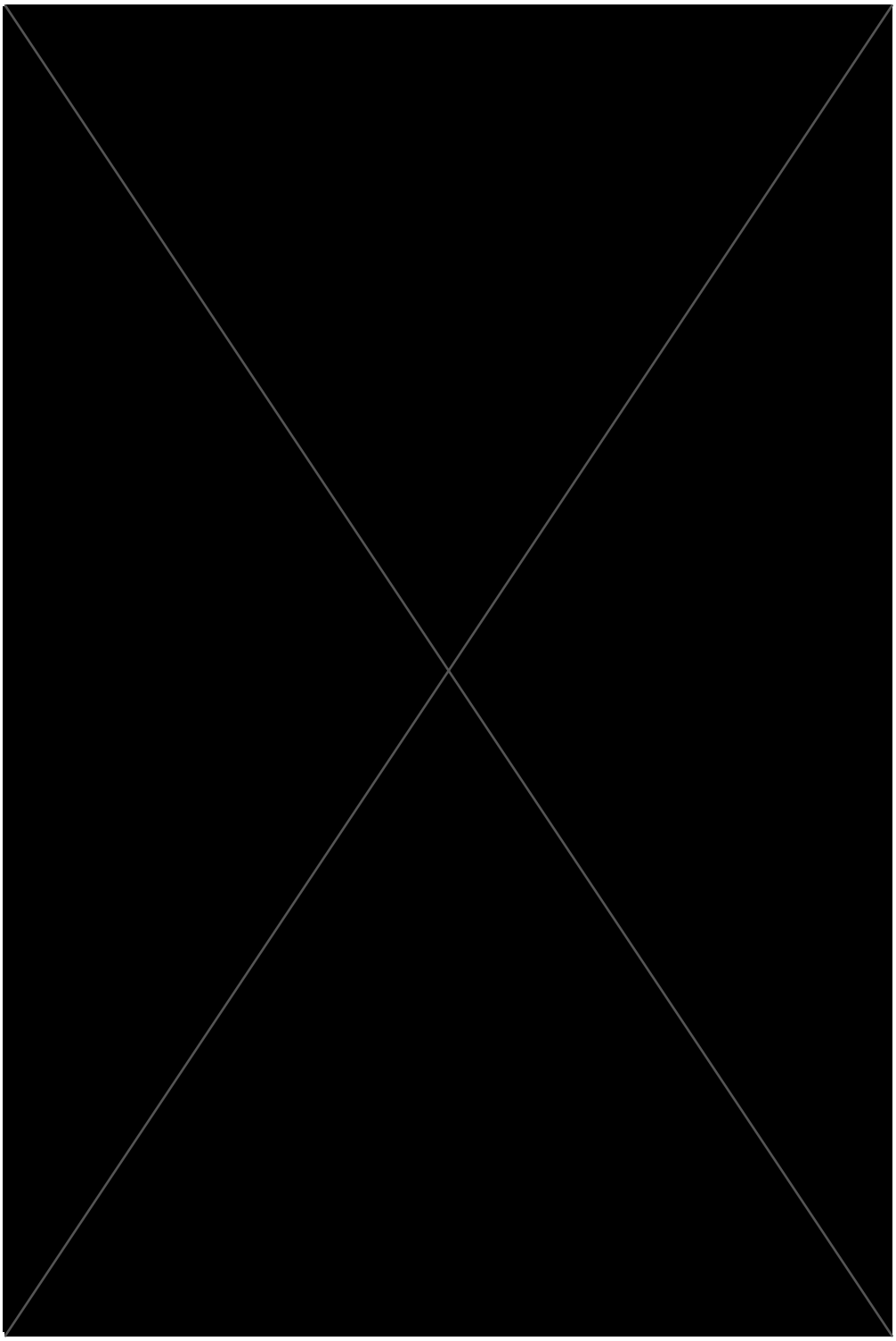

Fig. 124. Woodcut illustration in Conrad Celtis, *Quattuor libri amorum,* Nuremberg: Sodalitas Celtica, 1502, fol.7^{r}.

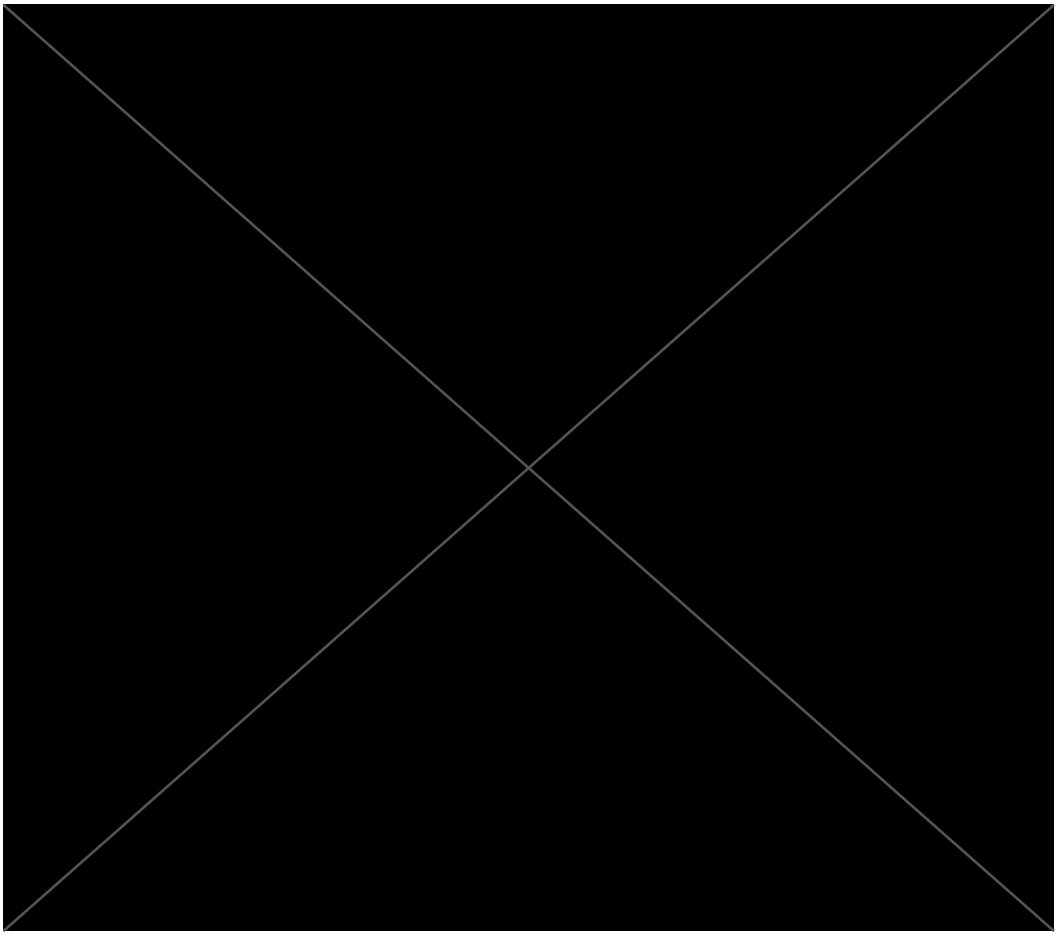

Fig. 124. Detail from Hans Burgkmair, *Venus and Mercury,* 1520-25. Etching, 18.3cm x 13.2cm. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

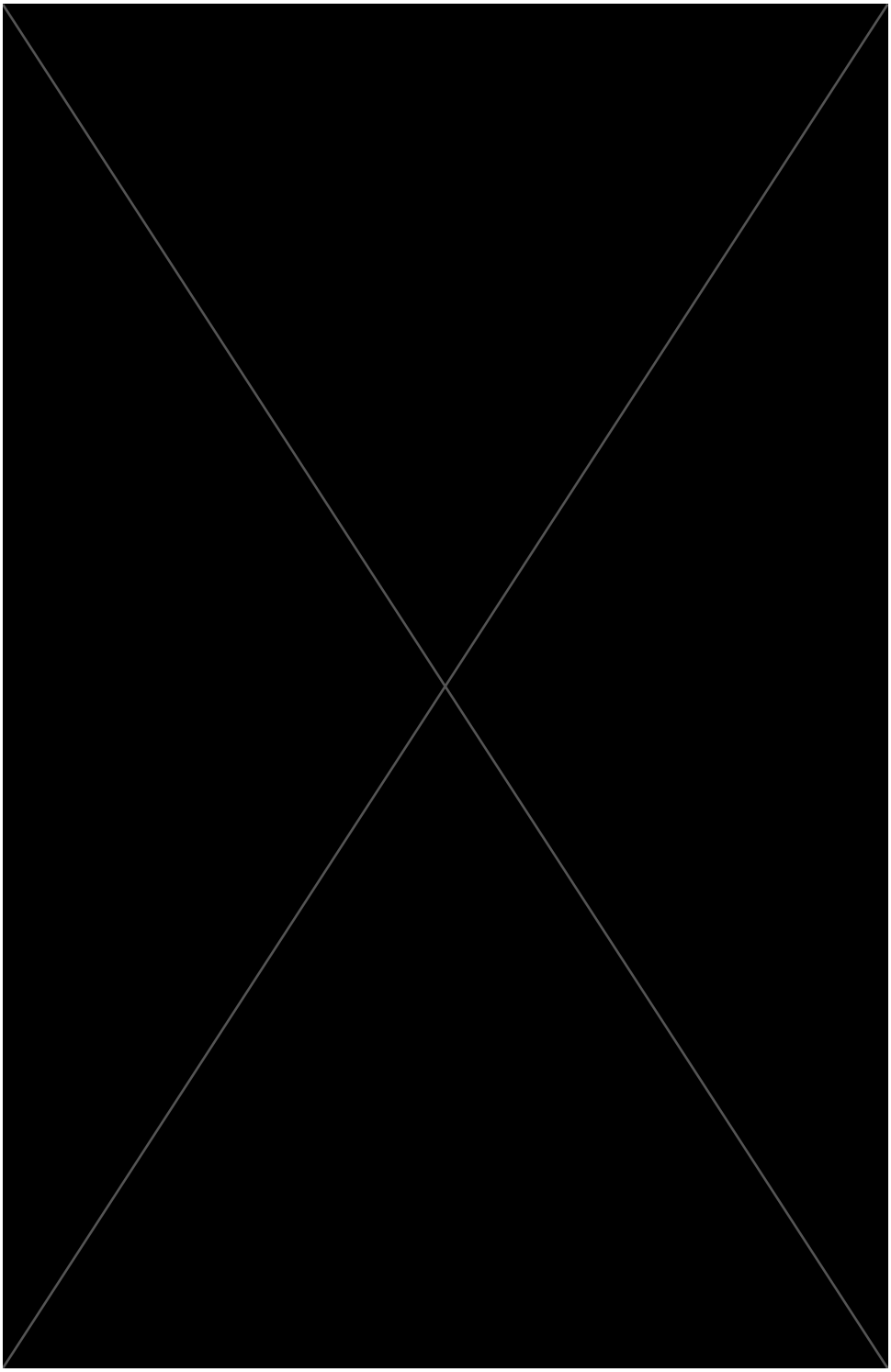

Fig. 126. Attrib. Hans Suess von Kulmbach, Tolhopf's Coat of Arms, c.1500. Woodcut, 26.4cm x 15.7cm (block). Vienna: Albertina.

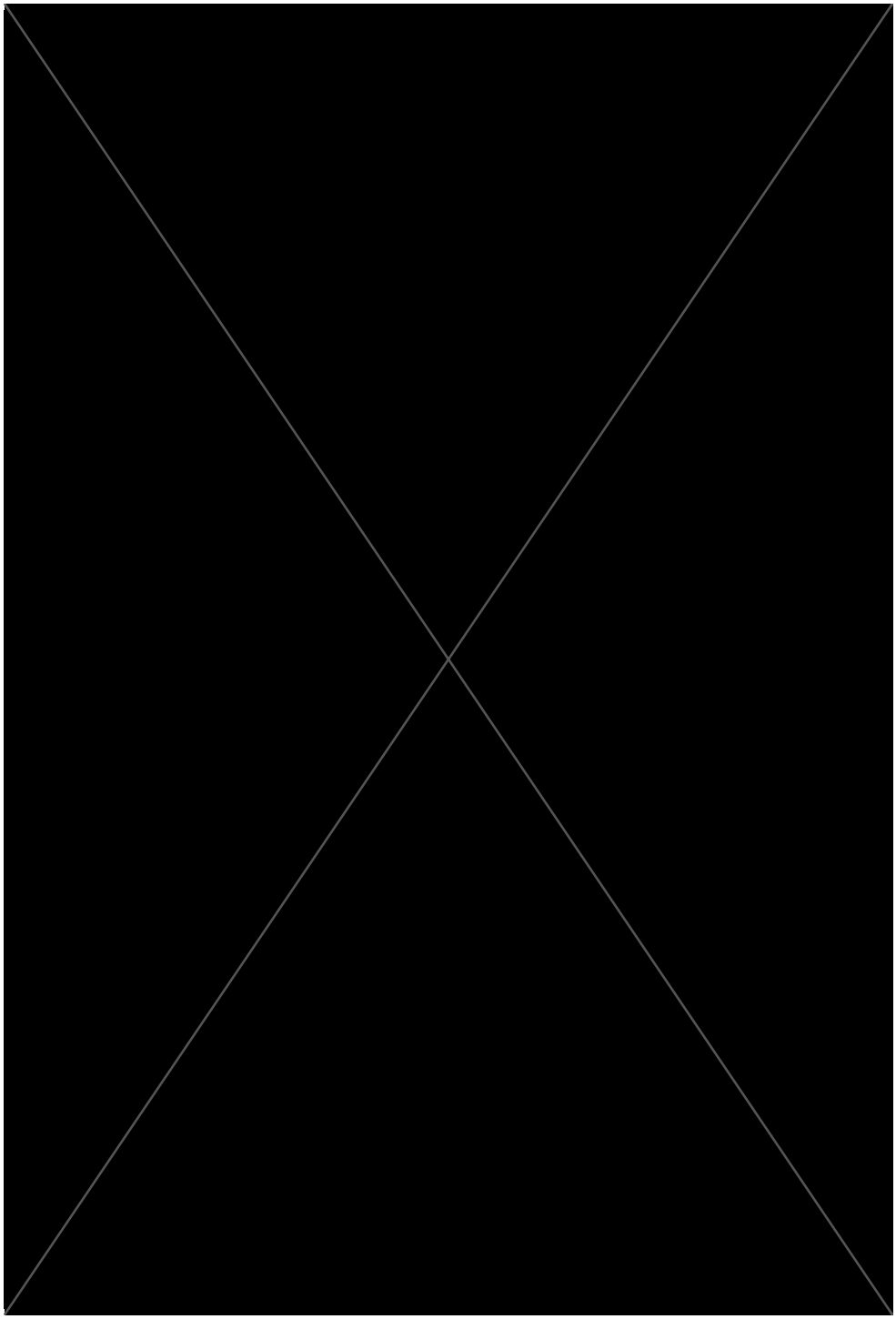

Fig. 127. Anon, *Hercules germanicus,* c.1496. Woodcut, 26.5cm x 16.5cm (block). London: British Museum.

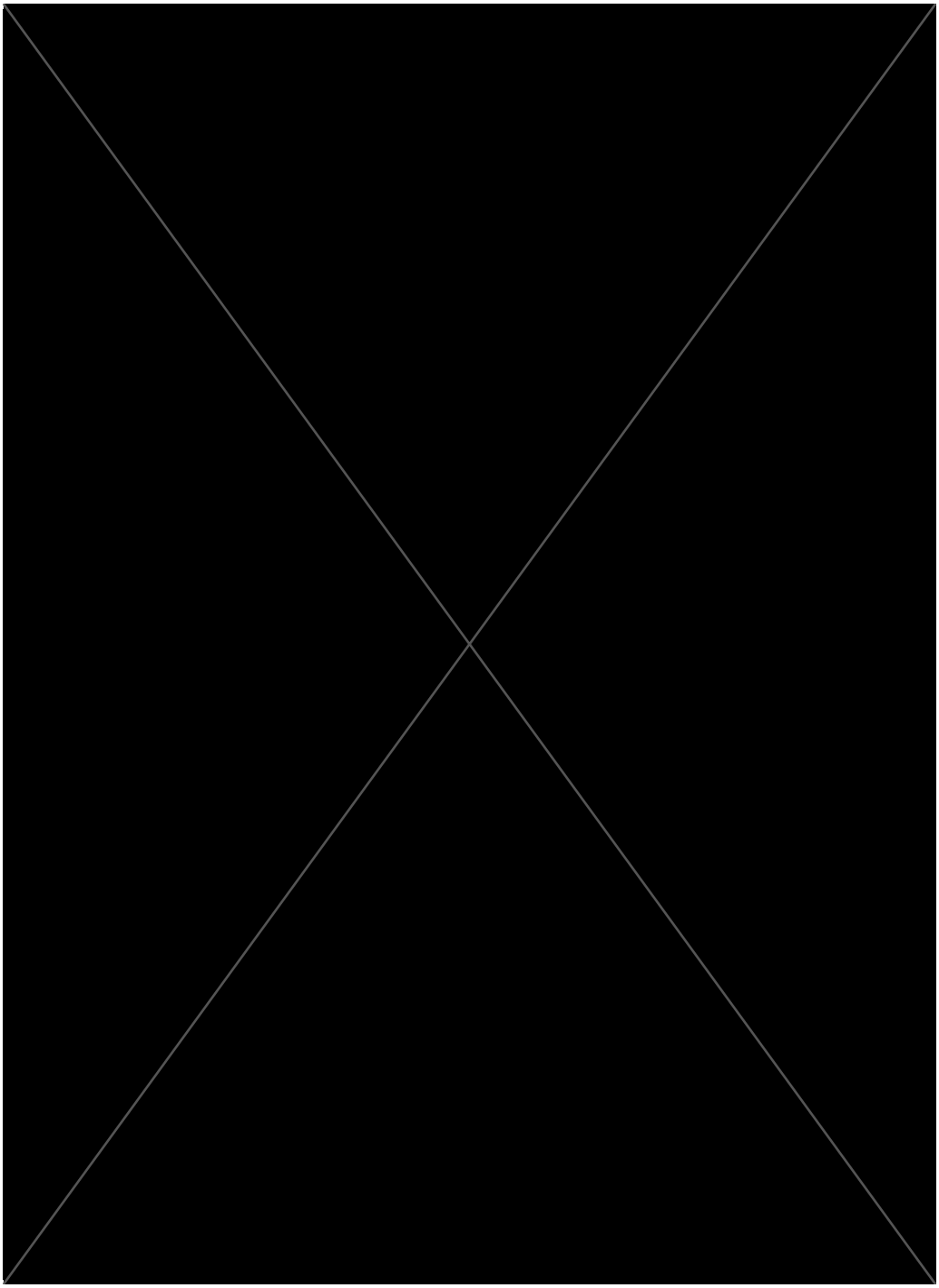

Fig. 128. Hans Burgkmair, *Allegorical Imperial Eagle,* 1503/4 [According to Luh, but according to BM 1507). Woodcut, 35.2cm x 25cm (sheet). London: British Museum.

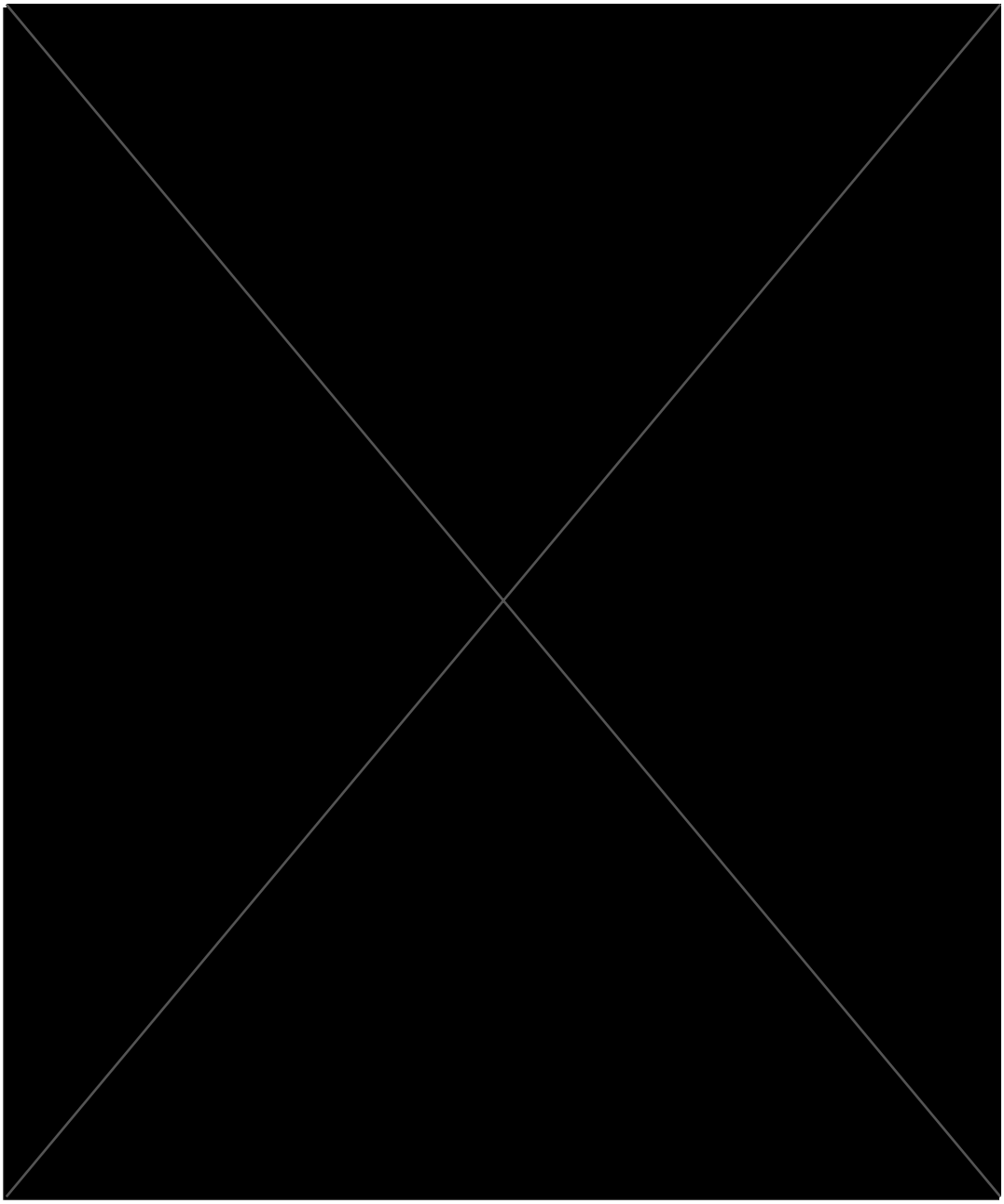

Fig. 129. Michael Ostendorfer, Coat of arms of Peter Apian. Woodcut, 34.9cm x 28.9cm. Berlin: Kupferstichkabinett.

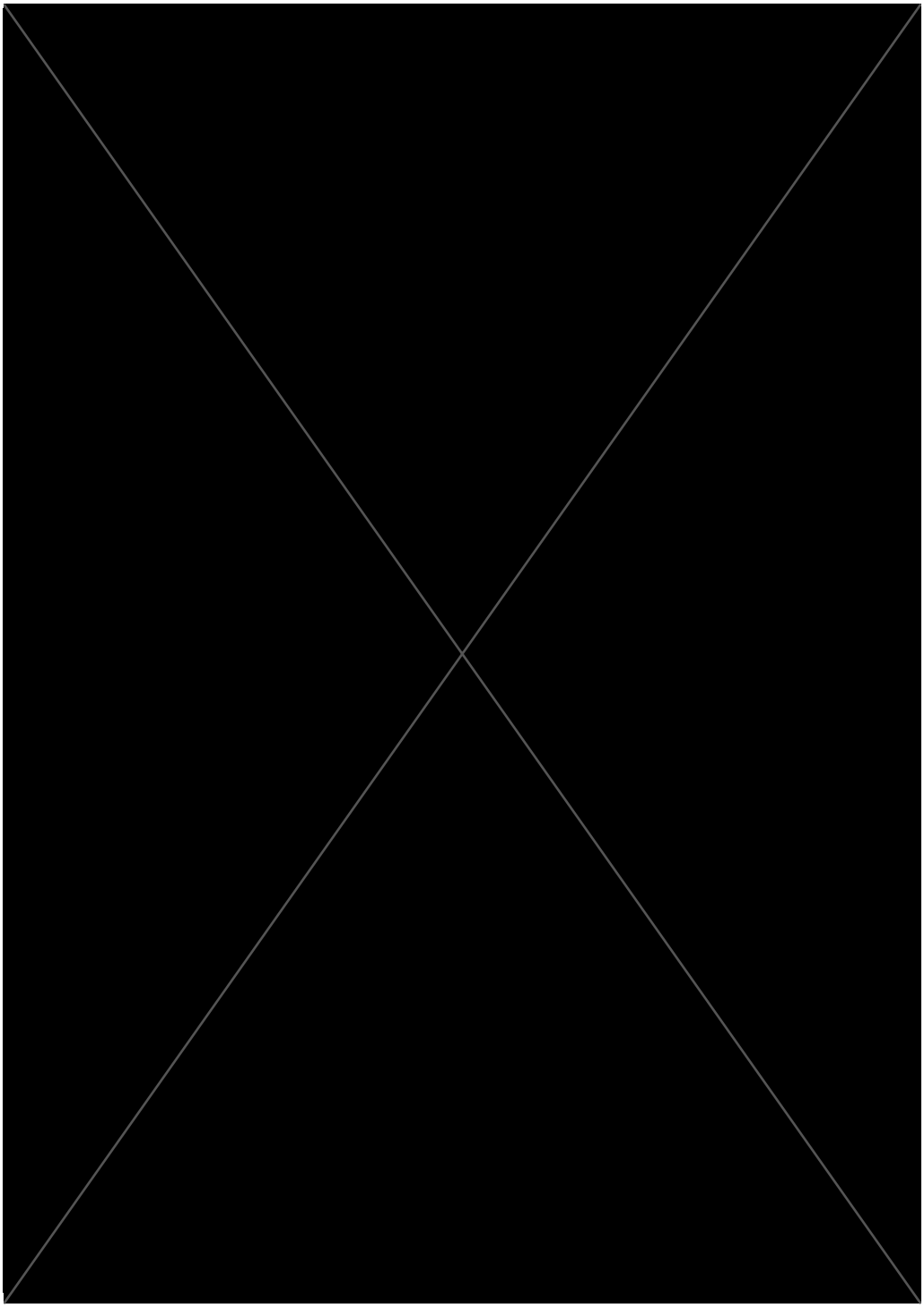

Fig. 130. Hans Brosamer, *Coat of Arms of Georg Tanstetter*, 1532. Woodcut, 14.8cm x 10.1cm (block). Vienna: Albertina.

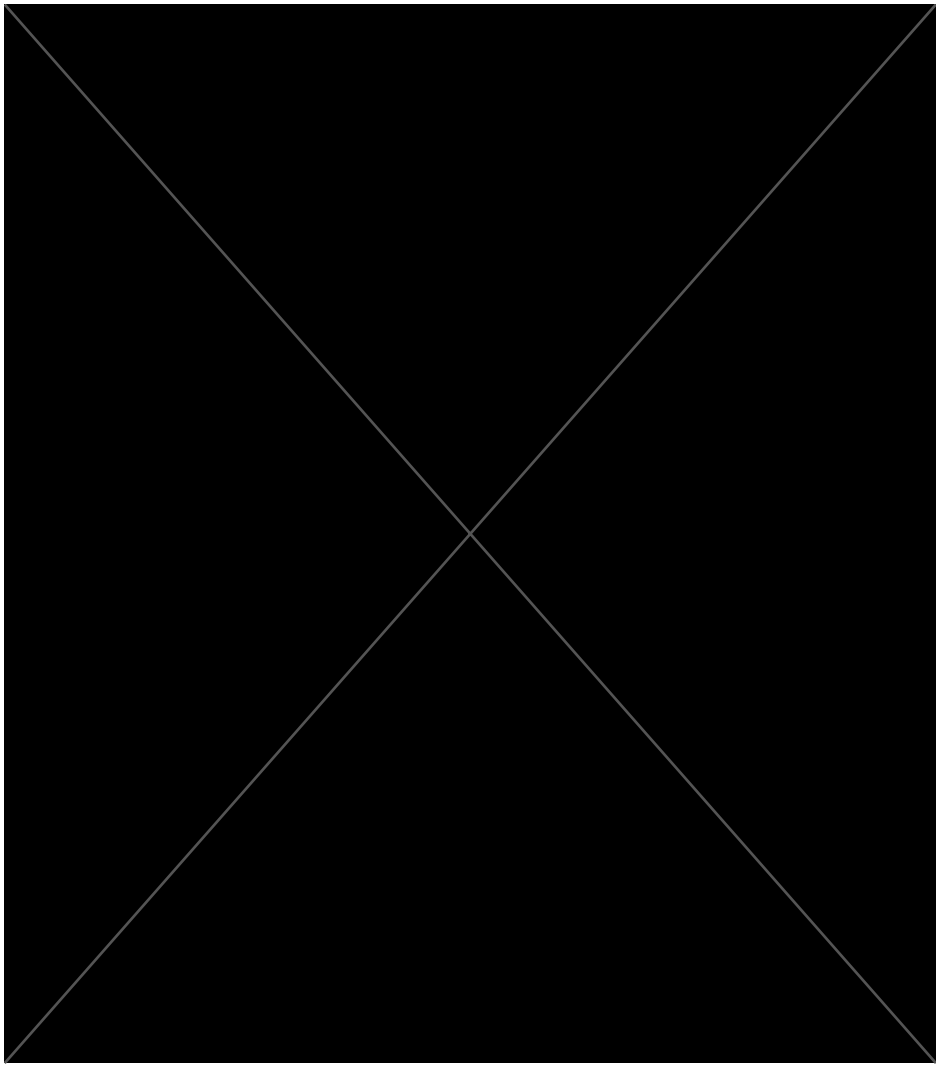

Fig. 130. Bavarian heraldry, illustration in *Wernigeroder Wappenbuch,* last quarter of the fifteenth century. Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod.icon.308n, fol. 18^{r}.

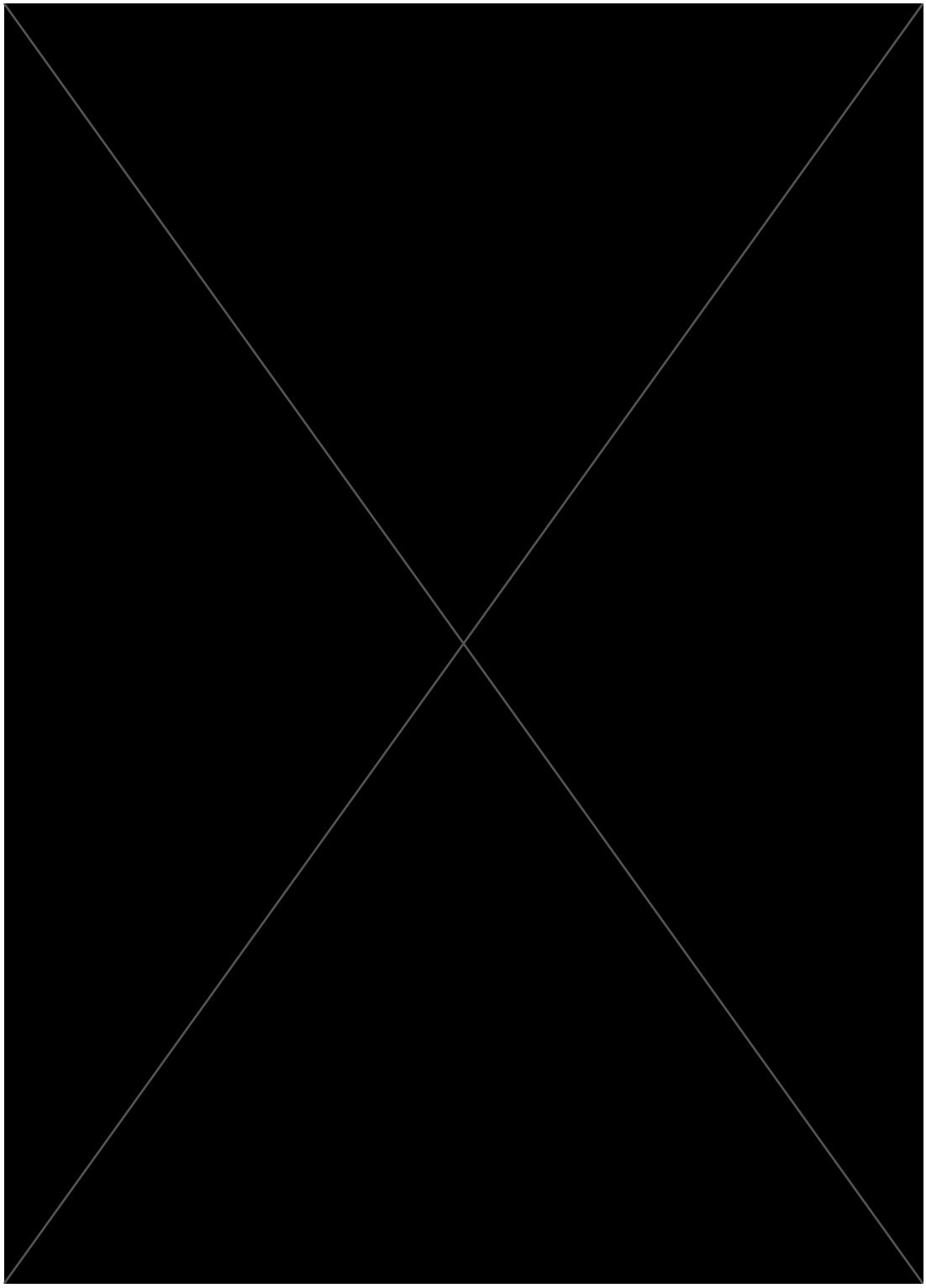

Fig. 132. Wappenturm, St George's Cathedral, Wiener Neustadt, 1440-1460.

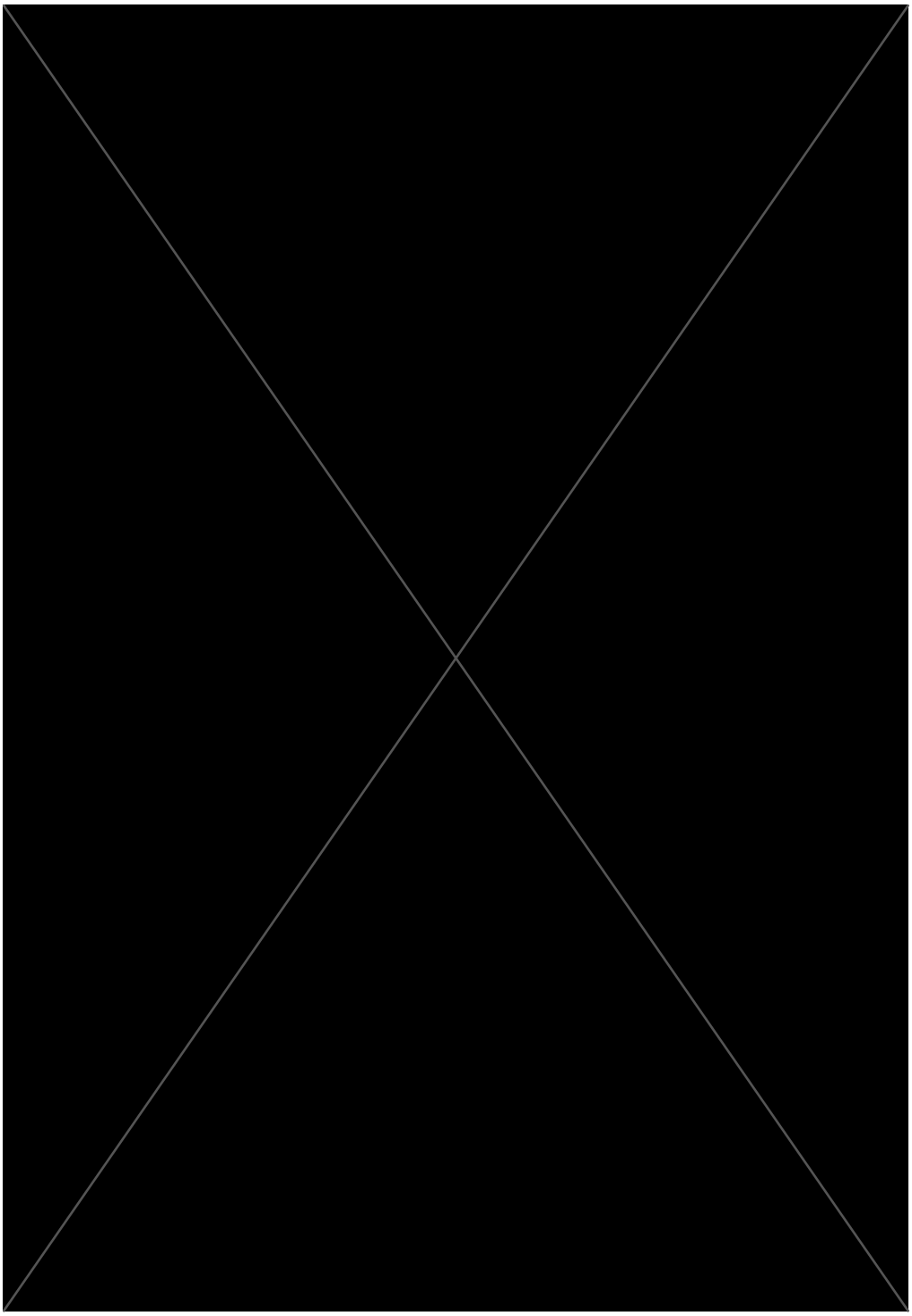

Fig. 133. Hans Burgkmair, *Ottpert with a peacock emblem*, 1509-1512. Woodcut, 22.4cm x 15.5cm (sheet). Dresden: Staatliche Kunstsammlung.

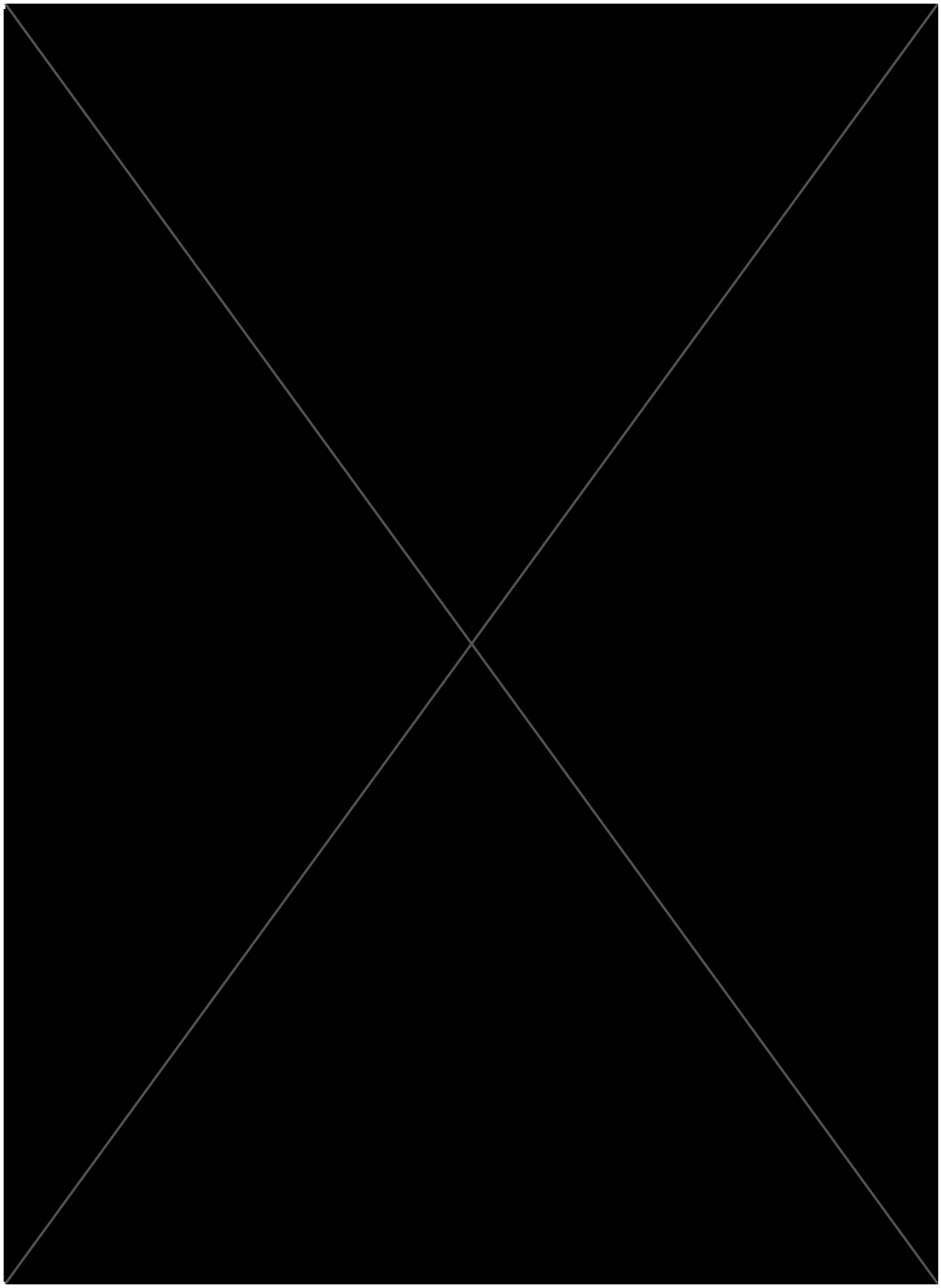

Fig. 134. Anon. artist, satirical image of Abbot Trithemius, in Johannes Stabius, *Conclusiones super genealogiis domus Austriacae,* 1515. Manuscript illumination, 31.5cm x 21.8cm. Vienna: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Number 3327, fol. 6^{r}.

Coat of Arms with a Lion and a Hen, mixed media, feat.
performance by Giotto the Bantum, 2020.
Produced during the first COVID-19 lockdown.
Author's Photograph.