

Discovery

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# CONTEXTUALIZING A MONUMENT OF ART HISTORY: *PORTRAIT OF COLOMAN DORNINGER AND HIS FAMILY,* PERNŠTEJN CASTLE, MORAVIA

## ABSTRACT

Located in Pernštejn Castle, not far from Brno in present-day Czechia, is a remarkable Renaissance panel painting. It portrays 23 people in front of a veduta of a town; presiding over them, enthroned on clouds, is God the Father and the dove of the Holy Spirit. The latest research has revealed that the painting is a previously unknown family portrait of the Steyr burgher and city judge (from 1522 to 1525, and then in 1531) Coloman Dorninger (died 1552), his deceased first wife Martha Trodl, his second wife Anna Oefferl, and their 20 children. The landscape in the background represents the oldest known view of the Upper Austrian town of Steyr. The work is thus a rare and valuable locus for historical and genealogical research. Building on such research, this article also acknowledges the panel painting's great art historical significance. I analyze the iconography, technique, and size of the object as typical of a culture of memorialization in which a strong desire existed for highly individual and recognizable memorial objects with a close connection to the location in which they were to be viewed. By exploring how the object was used, I investigate the organizing principles and interactions that shaped this multifaceted work. Such an examination—which places a work in the context of its functions, the motivations of its donor, and its spatial contexts—enables a richer and more realistic understanding of medieval and early modern pictures.

## KEYWORDS

Czechia; Austria; Steyr; 16th Century; Architecture; Counter-Reformation; Early Modern Europe; Local History; Networks Family; Painting; Portrait; Upper Austria; Panel Painting; Medieval; Donor Portrait

Located in Pernštejn Castle, not far from Brno in present-day Czechia, is a remarkable Renaissance panel painting from 1548. It depicts a paradisiacal garden in which 23 people are gathered in front of an expansive landscape and veduta of a town. God the Father sits above, enthroned upon clouds with the dove of the Holy Spirit (Fig. 1). This work found its way into the research literature as a Renaissance panel painting of a (noble) family at a table.<sup>1</sup> More rarely, it was also incorrectly identified as a picture of the family of Chief Counsel Schröffel.<sup>2</sup>

In early 2024, the art historian and monument conservator Zdeněk Vácha identified the coats of arms depicted at the bottom edge of the picture as belonging to the Dorninger, Trodl, and Oeffler families of Steyr. He subsequently attributed them to the Steyr burgher Coloman Dorninger (died 1552), his first wife Martha Trodl, and his second wife Anna Oeffler. In turn, this led to my discovery that the picture is the oldest known veduta of the Upper Austrian town of Steyr. In April 2024, we copresented the results of



**Fig. 1:** *Portrait of Coloman Dorninger and His Family, 1548, oil on wood, 94 × 126 cm. State Castle Pernštejn, inv. no. PE01880a, Národní památkový ústav [National Heritage Institute], Brno office (Photo: Martin Kučera).*

our supraregional research exchange in Steyr's town gazette, where the panel painting attracted the attention of both experts and the local public.<sup>3</sup> It was referred to as a "sensational find," with the townscape highlighted for its great potential to impact local historical research.<sup>4</sup>

Certainly, the panel painting tells us a lot about the early modern town and the relationships between its inhabitants, the (liturgical) objects they use, and the links between such objects and people. Rather than following the academic tradition of an art history mainly oriented towards the aesthetics of reception, this article will situate the panel painting as an object of wide-ranging cultural-historical relevance and significance. In the following article, I present the painting as closely connected to its former context, free from questions of style or artist. Taking its remarkable iconography as my point of departure, I will focus in particular on the work's function, provenance, and location at the time of production.

With this picture, Coloman Dorninger—placed in the center of the composition—chose a medium traditionally reserved for the interior of sacred settings. By representing both the living and deceased members of his family, he resorted to the creation of a so-called *Andachtsbild* [devotional or memorial picture] which, in accordance with the medieval idea of *memoria* (from the Latin for memory), already connected the need for representation with the concern for the salvation of one's own soul. Such paintings, donated to churches, became objects of endowment with a multilateral purpose and constituted an agreement between the benefactor himself, the parishioners, God, and the chosen saints. But in one aspect, the picture differs from others employing this tradition: Usually, the donors were depicted as kneeling believers with their hands raised in prayer. Only thus were they worthy of being represented against the more elevated religious background scenes of Christ's salvation.<sup>5</sup> However, in the Pernštejn panel painting, Coloman Dorninger (center), his first wife Martha Trodl (right), and his second spouse Anna Oefflerl (left) are portrayed seated behind a centrally placed table (Fig. 2). These three figures are surrounded by their 20 children, who engage with one another and the world around them as they collect various meadow and hedgerow flowers, carnations, red and white roses, placing them in their aprons or on the white tablecloth in front of their parents (Fig. 3).

In a recently published article, Zdeněk Vácha argues that the absence of Christ in the painting could be attributed to Antitrinitarian beliefs—that is, the rejection of the dogma of the Trinity of God adopted in 325 as a heresy—beliefs that spread widely with the rise of Humanism during the Reformation.<sup>6</sup> Vácha's essay references the prevalence of these beliefs in the areas of modern-day Switzerland, France, Germany, and Austria,



**Fig. 2:** Detail of the *Portrait of Coloman Dorninger and His Family with Coloman Dorninger* (center), Martha Trodl (right), and Anna Oefferl (left).



**Fig. 3:** Detail of the *Portrait of Coloman Dorninger and His Family with flower-strewn table*.

whilst also noting the Steyrians' penchant for the equally radical sermons of the Lutherans and Anabaptists.

However, Vácha has also made explicit reference to the flowers placed in the foreground of the Pernštejn panel painting. He has noted: "Plants, flowers, and fruit, strewn liberally across the table in this instance do not fulfill the role of a still life but may, if required, have a deeper symbolic meaning."<sup>7</sup> In the visual culture of the medieval and early modern period, roses were considered symbols of Christ's Passion and the soul's attendant immortality.<sup>8</sup> This symbolic meaning facilitates an alternative reading of Christ's presence in the picture, which goes beyond explicit representation. The reproduction of these particular flowers in the picture space suggests the subtle yet definitive presence of Christ, who, as "savior and healer," unites each individual family member as a communion of the living and the dead.<sup>9</sup> The direct reproduction of Christ in human form—as shown in other contemporaneous devotional pictures—was therefore unnecessary, as his presence and acts of sacrifice were already symbolically implied. To Steyr's highly educated wealthy and patrician families, this style of representation was very accessible. Connected to each other around the symbolic body of Christ, the portrayed family members become the picture's main protagonists, which, in the context of the era's nascent Humanism, seems particularly significant. Thus, the emphasis on the family collective and the elevation of the individual within a Christian context of salvation may have been chosen intentionally, in alignment with the period's Humanist ideals.

But this devotional painting was not made for the rooms of Pernštejn Castle where it is now displayed.<sup>10</sup> Rather, the exceptional pictorial composition, the detailed reproduction of the coats of arms along the bottom edge of the picture (Fig. 4), and the comparatively



**Fig. 4:** Detail of the *Portrait of Coloman Dorninger and His Family* with the coats of arms of the Oeffler, Dorninger, and Trodl families (from left to right).

large format (94 by 126 centimeters) suggest that Coloman Dorninger had the work made for a space that was accessible to the public. As a wealthy burgher and holder of important civil offices in Steyr, Dorninger would have wanted to demonstrate his social status and contribute to his family legacy. As with other medieval memorial objects, the depicted are highly recognizable for this reason. Lending the scene a certain expressiveness, this is particularly so with the detailed countenances of the two, then-living, heads of the family, portrayed facing each other, which suggests they were probably modeled after contemporary marriage or couple portraits (Fig. 5).<sup>11</sup> Through the picture, Dorninger enforced a concrete spatial and structural reality on the space in which the painting was installed, transferring his social status to the environment.<sup>12</sup>

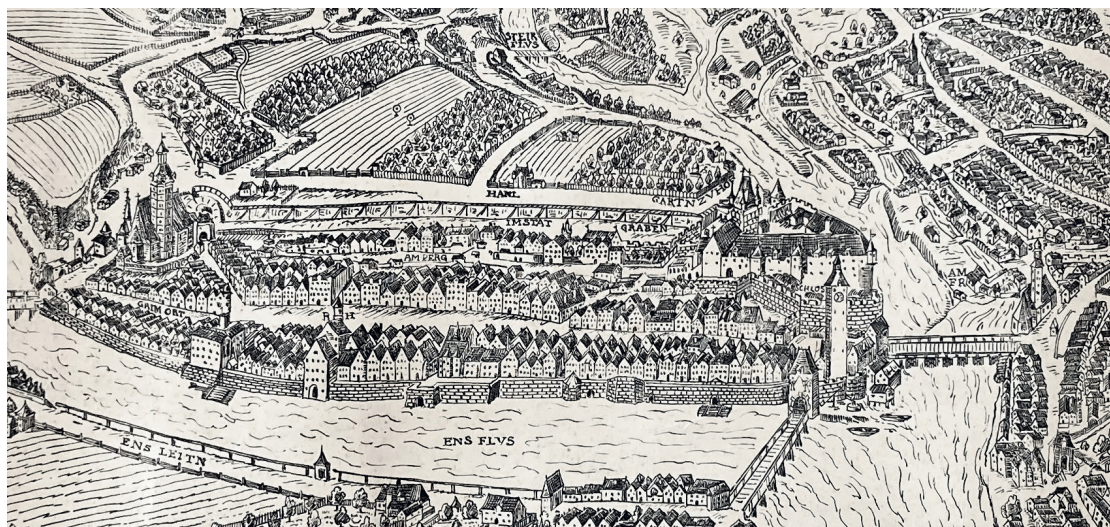
The location for which the panel painting of 1548 was produced is unknown. What is certain, however, is that the work reached the collection of the Mittrowsky von Mitrowitz family. It was first listed in an inventory from 1863 as part of the furnishings of their castle, Pernštejn in Nedvědice, Moravia, not far from Brno.<sup>13</sup> When, in early 2024, Vácha's research established the connection to the Dorninger, Trodl, and Oeffler families, it quickly became apparent that the picture originated in Steyr. This is also evident from



**Fig. 5:** Hans Holbein the Younger, *Double Portrait of Jacob Meyer zum Hasen and Dorothea Kannengießer*, 1516, oil on limewood, 39.7 × 31.9 cm each (right panel height 39.5 cm). Kunstmuseum Basel, inv. no. 312 (Photo: Kunstmuseum Basel).

the view of the town in the background, a veduta which mirrors in form a popular practice from the fifteenth century: situating donors in their hometown. In particular, the mighty Styraburg Castle and the parish church of St. Aegidius and St. Coloman emerge as recognizable landmarks on the right and left sides of the picture respectively.<sup>14</sup> The size and quality of both architectures emphasize Steyr's great political, economic, and cultural importance. Due to its staple right to the iron from the Innerberg (now Eisenerz in the Styrian Erzberg), Steyr became the most important commercial center for ironware in the north of the Holy Roman Empire during the Middle Ages. The accompanying trade links brought the town wealth and prestige, leading to a golden age at the end of the fifteenth century and in the early sixteenth century. During this period, life in the town also experienced dynamic development.

The link to the Schröffl (also "Schröffel") von Mannsberg family, which acquired Pernštejn Castle in 1793 and was connected to the Mittrowsky von Mitrowitz family by marriage, reinforces the hypothesis of a direct relationship to Steyr, since this family also originated in the former merchant town.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, the Schröffl von Mannsberg family had ties to the Steyr-based—and titular—Mann (also "Man") von Mannsperg family, who in turn intersected with the Dorninger family.<sup>16</sup> Maria Waldner was the widow of



**Fig. 6:** Detail from Hauser copper engraving, *Condrauet der weit pekanten Stat Steir im Ertzhözogtvm Österreich ob der Ens mit ihren Vorstötn vnd Gassen* [Image of the Famous Town of Steyr in the Archduchy of Austria Above the Enns River with Its Suburbs and Lanes], reproduction ca. 1884, copper engraving from 1611, Stadtmuseum Steyr. Archive of Steyr parish church, box 3/B, Karten, Pläne und Porträts [maps, plans, and portraits], no inventory number. (Photo: author).



Coloman Dorninger (died in 1609), grandson and namesake of the picture's commissioner, who later married Cosman Mann.<sup>17</sup> Subsequently, the object could be transferred from the Mann family into the hands of the Schröffl family, whose descendant Ignaz Schröffel von Mannsberg received and displayed it in the rooms of his newly acquired castle.

But the question remains as to where in early medieval Steyr the painting was originally intended to be installed—and why? Due to its strikingly representative character, potential sites for original display include public spaces, particularly well-frequented and sacred ones, most notably the Bürgerspital hospital, portrayed on the left bank of the Steyr river in the Hauser copper engraving (Fig. 6), and the aforementioned parish church of St. Aegidius and St. Coloman (Fig. 7). In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, both architectures benefited from continuous donations from affluent burghers. In the case of the hospital, these donations took the form of money and material assets for the hospital's administration, as well as donations for the construction, furnishings, and liturgy of the associated Spitalkirche [Hospital Church].<sup>18</sup> However, significantly more was donated to the parish church, which, as the town's highest-ranking church, had also served as its



**Fig. 7:** Detail of the *Portrait of Coloman Dorninger and His Family* with parish church, clergy house, and cemetery chapels.

most important public meeting place for many years. To this day, a rich palette of surviving, high-quality works—including the so-called Renaissance window of 1523 and the epitaph of the master builder Wolfgang Tenk of 1513—testifies to the number of wealthy (and, less frequently, aristocratic) burghers who donated to the establishment and utilization of the sacred building. Furthermore, due to the wealth of records and archival materials available, extensive written information on the various donations to the parish church complex have survived,<sup>19</sup> suggesting that donations of this nature were used to secure the salvation of one's soul and demonstrate social status and piety, among other things.

Useful in determining the former location of the Dorninger panel painting is the site of the now-missing gravestone of the painting's donor, which was later recorded by the Steyr town chronicler Valentin Preuenhueber (died 1642) as "in the choir of the [parish] church."<sup>20</sup> Preuenhueber also recorded that Coloman's father, Pankraz Dorninger (died 1511), had already been interred (*sepultus*) there. At that time, the right to be interred within the church—and particularly in the presbytery—was restricted to the politically significant upper classes, such as nobles, clerics, "ratsfähig"<sup>21</sup> burghers and patrician families.<sup>22</sup> Almost all of the graves in the eastern section of the church can be attributed to these social strata (Fig. 8).<sup>23</sup> In the microcosm of Steyr parish church, the decision to situate a grave in the choir was a clear sociopolitical statement: a worthy location for Coloman Dorninger who, as city judge from 1522 to 1525 and then in 1531, as well as *Stadthauptmann* [town's captain] in 1529, must have been counted among Steyr's social elite.<sup>24</sup> Also notable is Preuenhueber's choice of the word "sepultus" for the paternal grave, since it clearly indicates that this is the family's actual burial place, that is, the site where their mortal remains were interred. Thus, it can be assumed that Coloman Dorninger's "Leichstein," a flat tomb slab with his coat of arms on the top, lay directly on the floor of the church and was probably made of red limestone.<sup>25</sup> The flat construction of sepulchral sculptures of this type made them difficult to see from a distance, and so they were often supplemented with chiseled, cast, or painted epitaphs installed on the walls or columns of the church to attract the attention of churchgoers.<sup>26</sup>

Notably, several painted epitaphs from Steyr parish church have been recorded in writing, two of which—that of Hanns Pilchinger (died 1500) and Paul and Margarethe Kriechbaum (inscription dated 1494)—were even located in the choir.<sup>27</sup> The Kriechbaum epitaph in particular, offers an additional insight into the panel painting discussed in this article. This epitaph was not only installed in the most distinguished place in the church, but also on the wall directly beside the Kriechbaum family grave. I therefore propose that the Dorninger panel painting, completed four years before Coloman Dorninger's death, may have been produced as an addition to or an expansion of the memoria for his family

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### No. 1

**Friedrich Forster** 1498\*  
 Wolf Urkauff (1588)

### Nos. 2–4 (ascending in the listed sequence from No. 2)

Bernhart and Thoman Lueger (1415/1451/1509)  
 Leonhard Lueger (?)  
 Hans Lueger (1551)  
**Michael and Margarethe Hainberger** (1521/1528) and  
**Hans Hainberger**  
 Wolfgang Flädam (1461)  
 Michael Graf (1513)  
 Stephan Graf (1523)  
 Georg Hirsch (1543)  
 Georg Moser (1505)

**Nikolaus de Prostana** (1477) (C)  
 Hans Rottaler (1558/55?) (C)  
 Hans Winckler (1552) (C)  
**Stephan Engl zu Wagrain** (1573) (C)  
 Lazarus Scheuchl (1561) (C)  
 Hans Strasser (1563) \* (C)  
**Hans and Anna Forster** (1555) (C)

### No. 9

**Adam Hoffmann and Elisabeth von Salm** (1557/1573)\*  
**Peter and Andren Casal aus Crabatten** (1490)  
**Johann Friedrich zu Sachsen** (1590)

### Nos. 10–12? (ascending in the listed sequence from No. 10)

**Dietrich and Matheus Reischko and Felicitas Groß von Augspurg** (1508/1579/1596) \*  
 Pankraz Dorninger (1511)  
 Coloman Dorninger (1552)  
 Hieronimus Verckhaussen? (1526)  
**Wolf Händl zu Rämblingdorf** (1595)

### No. 13?

Mart Fuchsberger (1498)  
 Georg and Margareth Prandstetter (1490/1497)

### Nos. 1–9

**Hanns Pilchinger** (1500)

### Nos. 16–17 (ascending in the listed sequence from No. 16)

**Stephan Grätl** (1509) \*  
**Wolfgang Wotzhammer von Yschl** (1539)  
 Friedrich Traindt (1470)  
 Andre and Sigmund Grünthaler (1467/1478/1494?) \*  
 Sigmund Khappenfuss (1474) \*  
 Bartlmä Kriechbaum (1450/1494) (W)  
**Anna Leschenbrandt nee Lueger** (1518)  
 Hans Preuenhueber (1561)  
 Katharina Schwab, **Joachim Händl**, and Dionisien Attaller (1572/1550) (C)  
 Hans, Barbara, and Sigmund Schwab (1504)

### No. 18

Wolfgang and Ursula Wiener (1445) \* (W)  
 Wolfgang and Coloman Lyst (1451)  
**Floriani Ostermeyr** (1586) (M)  
 ? **Tauffkircher** (1571)  
 Ulrich and Margareth Lichtenberg (1569/1570)

### No. 24

Hans Fuchsberger and Barbara Eggenbergerin von Graz (1542)  
**Michael and Wolf Pfefferl zu Biberbach and Lucretia Eggerin von Neuhaus** (1559/1556) \*

### No. 25

Wolfgang Öfferl (1513)

### Unlocated graves

Wolfgang Rumpel (1538)  
 Jakob and Ursula Welsler (1548/1563)

### Nobles

### Clerics

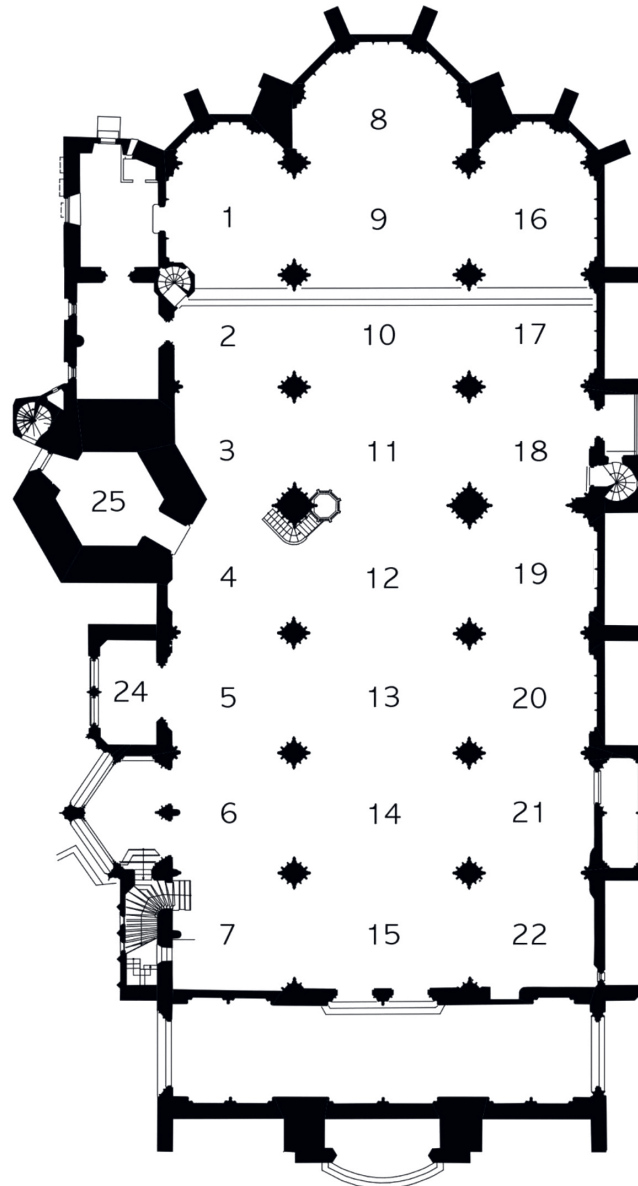
"Ratsfähig" burghers and patricians

### Unassigned

\* preserved

(C) Column

(W) Wall



**Fig. 8:** Site plan of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century sepulchral monuments inside the parish church of St. Aegidius and St. Coloman in Steyr, reconstructed according to the description of V. Preuenhueber, ca. 1630 (Drawing: Jakob Kreamsner and author).

in the church. It would thus have served simultaneously as a means of linking his pious request for salvation with his burial place and installing his likeness in a public location. As with most flat epitaphs of this format, it was likely installed on the walls of the side aisles or columns,<sup>28</sup> while the position of the coat of arms on the lower edge of the picture suggests the possibility that it was positioned at the viewer's eye level and supplemented by a banner bearing a brief petition for grace.

In 1590, 38 years after Coloman Dorninger's death, the Counter-Reformation began in Steyr which led to the removal of numerous burial sites from the church.<sup>29</sup> A large number of Protestant graves were removed from the parish church under Abbot Anton von Garsten, and the church was subsequently repaved. According to the historian Franz Xaver Pritz (1791–1872), the renovation works were completed at the end of 1630.<sup>30</sup> Although the religion of Coloman Dorninger in life was not recorded, his eponymous grandson—in whose lifetime the removals took place—was Protestant.<sup>31</sup> Since the male line of the Dorninger family died out with the latter Coloman,<sup>32</sup> it seems likely that the memorial slabs of Pankraz and Coloman Dorninger were removed from the church between 1628 and 1630 due to the religious affiliation of their descendants.<sup>33</sup> The potential tomb slab must have been removed already at an earlier date, at least after the death of the last male head of the family and before 1628, as it is no longer mentioned in Preuenhueber's records. It may have been returned to the last living relatives, namely the widow Maria Waldner and her new husband Cosman Mann.<sup>34</sup> Through her, the portrait evidently escaped destruction and remained, for the most part, within the family, whereby it ultimately arrived in Moravia.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the Dorninger panel painting represents a rare example of a rediscovered regional memorial. As well as offering a new perspective on existing local research, it is also a striking example that contributes to research conducted in recent decades on the motivations of those who donated paintings and the function of their pictures. The picture's unique composition encourages engagement with the conditions at the time of the work's production. Finally, it highlights the importance of understanding medieval and early modern pictures in the context of their functions, donors' motivations, and spatial contexts.

## NOTES

1 “renesanční deskový obraz rodiny” [“Renaissance panel painting of a family”]; “deskovým renesančním obrazem šlechtické rodiny u stolu” [“Renaissance panel painting depicting a noble family at a table”]. The painting is first mentioned in an 1863 inventory of Pernštejn Castle. Here, the painting is described as “Velký zdobený zlatý rám obraz rodiny s 23 hlavami malovaný na dřevě s letopočtem 1548” [“large, decorated golden frame, a family portrait with 23 people, painted on wood, with the year 1548”]. See Zdeněk Vácha, “Nová zjištění k renesančnímu portrétnímu obrazu z mobiliáře hradu Pernštejna,” *Průzkumy památek* 31 (2024): 89–103, 90. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the Czech are by Zdeněk Vácha and Anna-Marie Kroupová and translated from the German by Jessica West.

2 “čestnou rodinu horního rady Schröfla” [“large family of Upper Councilor Schröfl”]. Zdeněk Vácha has theorized that the painting’s designation as a portrait of the Schröffel family, acquired by the residents of Pernštejn Castle in 1793, can be traced back to the castle inventory of 1828. This portrait could be linked, incorrectly, with the panel painting of 1548. On this basis, the designation to the Schröffel family was mentioned in a number of subsequent popular science publications. See Vácha 2024, 90 (see note 1).

3 See Sophie Morawitz and Zdeněk Vácha, “Sensationsfund einer neuen Bildquelle zur Stadtgeschichte: Älteste Stadtansicht Steyrs von 1548 in Mähren aufgetaucht,” *Amtsblatt der Stadt Steyr* 4 (2024): 16–17; Sophie Morawitz, “Die älteste Stadtansicht von Steyr gibt Rätsel auf,” interview by Karin Cerny, *ÖAW Nachrichten*, May 5, 2024, <https://www.oeaw.ac.at/news/die-aelteste-stadtansicht-von-steyr-gibt-raetsel-auf>; Sophie Morawitz, “In einem Land vor unserer Zeit: Die Steyrer Stadtveduten von 1548 bis 1786,” *PhDiary @dshcs* 2 (2024): <https://dshcs.univie.ac.at/ueber-uns/phdiary-dshcs/sophie-morawitz-in-einem-land-vor-unserer-zeit-die-steyrer-stadtveduten-von-1548-bis-1786/>; and Vácha 2024 (see note 1).

4 Morawitz and Vácha 2024 (see note 3).

5 Frank O. Büttner, *Imitation Pietatis: Motive der christlichen Ikonographie als Modelle zur Verähnlichung* (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 1983), 12. Comparable painted epitaphs containing kneeling believers in the foreground and landscape, healing scenes, and vedute in the background can be found in the Regionalgeschichtliche Sammlung der Lutherstadt Eisleben [The Regional History Collection of Lutherstadt Eisleben]. Particularly see the epitaphs of Georg Feuerlein (<https://st.museum-digital.de/object/1853>) and Jacob Heidelberg (<https://st.museum-digital.de/object/1852>) from the second half of the sixteenth century.

6 Although Zdeněk Vácha refers only to the absence of Christ in the reproduction of God the Father and the Holy Spirit enthroned on high, the aforementioned absence of other potential representations of the Son of God is also implied. See Vácha 2024, 97–98, 102 (see note 1).

7 “Rostliny, květiny a plody volně a řídké rozházené na stolu, úlohu zátiší v tomto případě nemají, mohou ale případně mít i hlubší symbolický význam.” Vácha 2024, 98 (see note 1).

8 Silvia Preis-Maier, “Der Garten in der religiösen Bilderwelt des Mittelalters” (MA diss., University of Klagenfurt, 2009), 29–44.

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9 “erlöser und hailmacher.” Birgitta von Schweden, *Das puch der Himlischen offenbarung der heiligen wittiben Birgitte von dem künigreich Sweden* (Nuremberg: Koberger, 1502), 2 recto.

10 Different dimensions for the picture are in circulation. See Vácha 2024, 90 (see note 1).

11 At this time, the man was usually portrayed on the left and the woman on the right; therefore, the double portrait of Barbara Ehem and Hans Schellenberger by Hans Burgkmair the Elder may be of interest (1505 and 1507, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud, Cologne, inv. nos. WRM 0850 and WRM 0851). This painting—in accordance with the Dorninger picture—shows the woman on the left and the man on the right. This arrangement may be traced back to the fact that the picture of the wife was adapted only later to match the composition of the individual portrait of the husband. For more on the latter double portrait, see Guido Messling and Jochen Sander, eds., *Renaissance im Norden: Holbein, Burgkmair und die Zeit der Fugger* (Munich: Hirmer, 2023), 299.

12 The coats of arms of the Dorninger and Öfferl families are recorded in the town chronicle of Valentin Preuenhueber. The third coat of arms may be that of the Trodl family, of which there are no recorded drawings or descriptions. See Valentin Preuenhueber, *Annales Styrenses, samt dessen übrigen Historisch- und Genealogischen Schriften* (Steyr: Johann A. Schmidt, 1740), 186, 201; and Vácha 2024, 93–97 (see note 1).

13 For further information, see note 1.

14 Now named the Stadtpfarrkirche [City Parish Church].

15 Pernštejn Castle became the property of Ignaz Schröffel von Mannsberg in 1798. His daughter Josepha married Wilhelm Graf Mitrowsky von Mitrowitz und Nemischl in 1813. In 1828, he also acquired the second half of the castle property from his wife’s sister. See Památkový ústav, ed., *Pernštejn: A Moravian Medieval Castle* (Brno: Heritage Institute Brno, 1996), 13; and Vácha 2024, 96–97 (see note 1). For more on the Schröffl family, see note 16.

16 The Schröffl family’s presence in Steyr is noted from the sixteenth century. The merchant Abraham Schröffl (1569–1636) was married to Elisabeth Mann. Their son Gottlieb received the title “von Mannsperg” in 1655. See Hans Stögmüller, *Adel in Steyr: Markgrafen, Patrizier, Bierbarone. Ein genealogisches Lexikon* (Vienna: Verlag Geschichte, 2021), 437–438.

17 Stögmüller 2021, 276–277 (see note 16); Preuenhueber 1740, 95 (see note 12).

18 The Spitalkirche [Hospital Church] was later named the Vorstadtpfarrhof [Suburban Parish Courtyard]. For more on the Bürgerspital, see Josef Ofner, “Kunstchronik der Stadt Steyr: Architektur, Bildhauerei und Malerei (2. Fortsetzung),” *Veröffentlichungen des Kulturamtes der Stadt Steyr* 26 (1965): 41–52.

19 Information about donations to the parish church complex are now held in the Stadtarchiv Steyr [Steyr City Archives] and the archives of the parish church. There are also numerous chronologies from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries that offer insights into the history of the town. These include Preuenhueber 1740 (see note 12); Wolfgang Lindner, *Die Annalen (1590–1622)* (Linz: Dr. Konrad Schiffmann, 1910); and Franz X. Pritz, *Beschreibung und Geschichte der Stadt Steyr und ihrer nächsten Umgebung* (Linz: Haslinger, 1837).

20 “in der Kirchen im Chor.” Preuenhueber 1740, 185 (see note 12).

21 “Ratsfähig” means that the families were allowed to send up members to the ruling Council of the city.

22 Mark Hengerer, ed., *Macht und Memoria: Begräbniskultur europäischer Oberschichten in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne/Vienna: Böhlau, 2005); Hauke Kenzler, "Totenbrauch und Reformation: Wandel und Kontinuität," *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Archäologie des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit: Religiosität in Mittelalter und Neuzeit* 23 (2011): 9–34, 19; Corine Schleif, *Donatio et Memoria: Stifter, Stiftungen und Motivationen an Beispielen aus der Lorenzkirche in Nürnberg* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1990), 150.

23 The attribution to social classes originates in particular from the handwritten description of the tombstones of the parish church and its former cemetery by Johann Wussin from 1876 (with a few addenda from 1886) and also from the accounts of Valentin Preuenhueber. See Preuenhueber 1740 (see note 12); and Johann Wussin, *Die Grabdenkmale der Stadtpfarrkirche in Stadt-Steier und ihres ehemaligen Friedhofes* (1876, with addenda from 1886; this manuscript has been lost for several years, but its contents has survived thanks to a microfilm recording in the Stadtarchiv Steyr).

24 Preuenhueber 1740, 185, 244 (see note 12).

25 Since most of Steyr's surviving fifteenth- and sixteenth-century sepulchral monuments are made from Adnet colored limestone or light carbonate rock (known as "Untersberger Marble"), it is highly likely that the same materials were used for Dorninger's grave.

26 Renate Kohn, "Zwischen standesgemäßem Repräsentationsbedürfnis und Sorge um das Seelenheil: Die Entwicklung des frühneuzeitlichen Grabdenkmals," in Hengerer 2005 (see note 22): 20–43. In the introduction to the aforementioned volume, Mark Hengerer emphasizes that "ein durchschnittliches Epitaph [...] nicht oder kaum geeignet ist, Statusdifferenzen so zum Ausdruck zu bringen, daß flüchtigere Betrachter sichere Zuordnungen treffen konnten." ["an average epitaph [...] is not or was scarcely suitable for expressing differences in status in a way that permitted reliable assignment by more cursory observers."] Therefore, they needed to be elevated to be seen. See Mark Hengerer, "Einleitung: Perspektiven auf die Bestattungskultur europäischer Oberschichten," in Hengerer 2005 (see note 22): 1–18, 7.

27 For more on the epitaphs and sepulchers of the Philchinger and Kriechbaum families, see Preuenhueber 1740, 169, 172 (see note 12); and Valentin Preuenhueber, *Styra antiqua et praesens, das alte und gegenwärtige Steyr* (1642), 34 verso (today in the Stadtarchiv Steyr, AT 40201-AR-4-SCHR-3-4). Also recorded are those of Nicolaus de Prostana (German von Proßnitz, died 1477), Wolfgang Rumpel (died 1538), Hieronymen Verckhaussens? (painted 1526), the Wiener family (renovated 1520), and the Lueger family (erected 1509), as well as those erected by Catharina Schwab for her three husbands, Joachim Händl, Hanns Preuenhueber, and Dionisien Attaller (died 1572/1550). The circumstances of a series of *Tafeln und Epitaphia* [Plaques and Epitaphs], subsequently found on the columns by Preuenhueber, is also unclear. See Preuenhueber 1740, 86, 130–131, 220, 271 (see note 12); Preuenhueber 1642, 33 verso, 34 verso (see note 27).

28 See note 23 and Fig. 4. The Kriechbaum plaque was installed on the wall of the south aisle, for example.

29 For more on the first Counter-Reformation in Steyr, see Günther Merz, "Das Ende des evangelischen Steyr: Ein Überblick," in *Steyr Stadt der Reformation: Das evangelische Jahrhundert von 1517 bis 1627*, ed. Gerold Lehner and Raimund Ločičnik (Linz: Wagner, 2018), 199–213.

30 Pritz 1837, 278 (see note 19).

## *Contextualizing a Monument of Art History*

**31** Coloman Dorninger (died 1552) is named on several occasions in his function as mayor in connection with events that prove he belonged to the Protestant faith. Cosman Mann is also recorded as a Protestant, however converted to Catholicism to avoid banishment. See Ilse Neumann, *Steyr und die Glaubenskämpfe*, vol. 1, Publications of the Steyr Cultural Office (Steyr: Cultural Office, 1952), 74–76; Preuenhueber 1740, 224 (see note 12); Stögmüller 2021, 276–277 (see note 16).

**32** Coloman Dorninger had five sisters and one daughter. Preuenhueber 1740, 185 (see note 12). In the testament of Coloman Dorninger of 1608, the sole heir was named explicitly as his wife. See the Stadtarchiv Steyr, Testaments, KXI L14, Coloman Dorninger, 1608.

**33** Preuenhueber states that everything he describes was still present in 1628: “Waß massen aber vilbesagte Pfarrkhürchen inwendig, und zwar noch im Jahr 1628 mit neben Capellen, Altäm, berührten Grab- / stainen und Epitaphis beschaffen gewest, solches wie michs vor der Zeit nit verdrossen hat, zur nachrichtlichen Gedechnuß selbsten abzuaichnen.” [“However, as far as the interiors of the oft-mentioned parish churches are concerned—and indeed even in the year 1628, with their associated chapels, altars, tombstones, and epitaphs—just as it did not offend me back then, I recorded it for future memory as an informative reminder.”] See Preuenhueber 1642, 30 recto (see note 27).

**34** In instances where donor families still had direct descendants, no donations could generally be removed without their consent, as anything once donated to the church needed to remain, even if no longer used according to previous provisions. This also applied, in particular, to memorials. Although the Dorninger family had died out, it was still possible (and also necessary on account of maintenance costs) to remove objects donated by its members from the church.

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*Issue 2 cover illustration: Circumcision of Christ* (detail), front side of the altar panel of the Florian Altarpiece in Graz, ca. 1490. Archdiocesan Museum in Wrocław, inv. no. 147 (Photo: Małgorzata Kujda).