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Author(s): Christopher S. Wood
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  Die Fuggerkapelle bei St. Anna in Augsburg. by Bruno Bushart
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Hieronymus who is portrayed in his *Feast of the Rose Garlands* (1505-06) in Prague. While skeptical of adding to Dürer’s oeuvre, particularly in the face of Katherine Luber’s equally controversial hypothesis that the artist made only one trip to Venice — a prospect that would necessitate the redating of a host of works to 1505-07 — Bushart makes the seemingly unthinkable at least worth considering.

One of the great virtues of this book is its comprehensiveness. Bushart addresses all aspects of the decoration through a perspective that allows him to demonstrate the interrelationships of the different parts. Chapter nine offers a useful overview of the state of the chapel in 1509, 1517, around 1522, and around 1530. Other chapters focus upon the epitaphs, the brass grille, the altar, the organs with their painted wings, the choir stalls, the numerous statuettes of putti, and the art historical position of the Fugger Chapel in relation to other contemporary burial chapels. Again the clarity of each discussion is admirable even when one disagrees with his conclusions, the most notable of which attributes the major sculptures to Hans Daucher. For the first time ever, the Fugger Chapel has a fitting monograph.

JEFFREY CHIPPS SMITH
University of Texas, Austin


The burial chapel of the Fugger family, in the Evangelical church of St. Anna in Augsburg, is by far the most important and original monument of the early German Renaissance. The chapel was constructed between 1509 and 1512, when St. Anna was still a Carmelite foundation, and over the next decade-and-a-half was outfitted with a sculpted altarpiece, four huge marble wall epitaphs carved in low relief, elaborate choir stalls with wooden busts of prophets and sibyls, a pipe organ with splendid painted shutters, a brass grill by the Vischer family of Nuremberg which in the end was never installed, and finally a marble balustrade to replace the rejected grill. The total cost to the three Fugger brothers, Ulrich, Georg, and Jakob (the Rich), amounted to approximately 15,000 gulden. Albrecht Dürer’s magnificent altarpiece panel for Jakob Heller of Frankfurt, by comparison, cost only 200 gulden.

Contemporaries were impressed by this stylish chapel, which was an unprecedented display by a bourgeois family. The architecture and accoutrements brilliantly synthesized southern German tradition and northern Italian novelties. But to the frustration of scholars, there is almost no documentation of the building process. The desire to attribute this crown jewel of the German Renaissance to an important artist, indeed to any artist, has generated an enormous and sometimes comic literature. The sculpted Corpus Christi group on the altar, for example, has been credited to no less than six local and not very prepossessing names; the relief epitaphs, meanwhile, have been given to nine different masters.

Until now, the deepest analysis of this muddle was to be found in Norbert Lieb’s *Die Fugger und die Kunst* (1952). Bruno Bushart’s new monograph, however, is now the standard work on the topic, and will hold up for
at least another generation.

Bushart is the former director of the Städtische Kunstsammlungen in Augsburg and a prominent authority on southern German art. He has produced a handsome and imposing volume, weighty in tone, scrupulous in argument, measured in judgment. The book treats the architecture of the chapel and all its trimmings in ponderous sequence. The resulting "Gesamtkunstwerk" is considered as an entirety, at various chronological cross-sections of the building campaign. Bushart patiently works through all the knotty problems occasioned by the periodic renovations and destructions over the centuries, along with iconographic puzzles such as the presence of four epitaph reliefs for only three brothers. The book closes with a survey of comparable funerary installations in Germany and the rest of Europe. There are over 230 photographs and plenty of documentation, including comparative material otherwise hard to track down.

Bushart advances no wild or sensational theories about the chapel. But the book does make several important new arguments. One that might find some supporters is his adamant attribution of the altarpiece to Hans Daucher, an Augsburg sculptor of small limestone reliefs, whose later work, influenced as it was (Bushart hypothesizes) by an Italian journey, is consistent with the altarpiece's style. Thomas Eser, however, the author of the most extensive monograph on the artist (Diss. Augsburg, 1993), is reluctant to take that step without actual evidence of large-scale work by Daucher. Bushart stresses more than previous commentators the connections between the Fuggers and their emperor, Maximilian I. He argues that the choir stalls may have been designed by the imperial artist Hans Burgkmair; it is hard to tell, since the stalls were destroyed in 1817 almost without a trace. And he firmly links the iconography of the organ shutters with the famous court musician Paul Hofhaimer, according to Paracelsus the "Albrecht Dürer of organists."

Most tendentious and intriguing is Bushart's conviction that the real mastermind behind the chapel was indeed none other than Albrecht Dürer. It is well known that Dürer designed the two central epitaphs, perhaps as early as 1506. But Bushart pushes the commission back to 1505, even before Dürer's second trip to Venice. He also attributes the original architectural drawing to Dürer (the extant drawing, initialed SL, would thus be a later copy). Certainly it is satisfying, at last, to envision the Fuggers chapel safely in the hands of the outstanding artistic imagination of the day.

CHRISTOPHER S. WOOD
Yale University


This is the latest in a series of five exhibition catalogues devoted to the British Museum's collections of German graphic art. The author, who is curator of German prints and drawings, assisted John Rowlands with an earlier catalogue in the series, the two-volume Drawings by German Artists: The Fifteenth Century and the Sixteenth Century by Artists Born Before 1530 (1993). The present volume is superbly printed on coated stock, and is based on the latest available research, includ-