THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT AND RELIGION: A CRUSADE AND HOLY WARFARE AGAINST THE AGE

An Analysis of the Artifacts by
William Morris and Johan Thorn Prikker

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The Arts And Crafts movement And Religion:
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Abbreviations

Museums and libraries

BMAG Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, United Kingdom

FM The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, United Kingdom

FAM Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States of America

GTM German Textile Museum, Krefeld, Germany

HT The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, United States of America

KMM Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

KOL Kolumba, Museum of the Archdiocese of Cologne, Germany

KWM Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld, Germany

LOC Library of Congress, Washington DC, United States of America

NPG National Portrait Gallery, London, United Kingdom

V&A Victoria and Albert Museum, London, United Kingdom

WMG William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow, London, United Kingdom

Other

app. Appendix

ARC The Ashgate Research Companion

SPAB Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

SDF Social-Democratic Federation

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- Johan Thorn Prikker, *The Blinds,* 1906, pencil, watercolor, indian ink on paper on canvas, 242 x 278 cm, KWM.

The typeface used for the titles of this thesis, entitled Golden, is designed by William Morris. It was the first of Morris's three typefaces, completed in 1890. It is based on a typeface of fifteenth-century Venetian printer Nicolas Jenson, called the Roman type.[1]

[1] Greensted and Sophia Wilson, *Originality and Initiative*, 14.

Fig. 1: Design by Philip Webb, made by John Garrett and Son, *Altar table*, 1897, oak, joined and carved, 95.5 cm x 145.7 cm x 66.2 cm, V&A.

Introduction

Introduction

In this thesis I will show that religion was an important source of inspiration for the Arts and Crafts movement, and that religious concepts are connected to some of the movement's most basic ideas. In order to do this, I have adopted a double case study approach for gaining additional in-depth information. The artists I have selected for my case studies are the Englishman William Morris (1834-1896) and the Dutchman Johan Thorn Prikker (1868-1932).

Characteristic of the Arts and Crafts movement was an attempt to combine the so-called 'higher arts' - in other words the visual arts and literature - with the 'lower arts,' also called the decorative arts or crafts. The key figures of the movement were dissatisfied with contemporary society and the consequences of the industrial revolution. This social awareness gave rise to an interest in other cultures, especially that of the Middle Ages, and also resulted in a social response resulting in the formation of guilds. The new social awareness led many Arts and Crafts artists to become interested or involved in socialism.

Religious motives are often closely connected with the desire to change society, and religious topics often appear in the work of the Art and Crafts movement. Even in 1916, when the movement had been weakened (see Chapter 1), a special autumn number of *The Studio* reviewing the work of Arts and Crafts students in the leading art schools in Great Britain and Ireland shows that of the 293 contributions, approximately 30 were intended to be used in a religious context. Examples include: a design for a parish hall, cartoons intended for ecclesiastical stained-glass, an altar design, another design for an altar frontal, designs for a candlestick and a pastoral staff, a design for a chapel mural, a design for stenciled hangings for organ curtains, bookbinding and metal work such as triptychs, a holy-water font, an alms-dish and several pendants, caskets, a beaker and a chalice.[2]

William Morris and Johan Thorn Prikker both created artifacts to be used in the context of worship. They thus created art with religious themes and refer in various ways to religious traditions, rituals, ideas and literature in their art. My purpose is to investigate why they did so. In other words, what is the meaning of the references Morris and Thorn Prikker made to religion in their works of art? In order to answer this question I will examine which references to religious traditions, rituals, ideas and literature can be distinguished in their artifacts.

[2] Holme, *Arts and Craft*, 31, 36, 45, 71–73, 75, 87, 94, 140–41, 149, 153, 166, 171, 181, 183, 198, 203.

The thesis also provides an answer to the sub-questions: how is political engagement connected to religious convictions? How do Morris and Thorn Prikker relate to religious traditions in their own publications and in their personal writings? This issue concerns the relationship between religion and what these artists considered to be the function of art and the role of the artist. Finally, I will shed light on the question of to what extent Morris and Thorn Prikker are representative of the entire Arts and Crafts movement.

William Morris and Johan Thorn Prikker were both influential artists of their time, and both represent different stages in the history of the Arts and Crafts movement. This enables me to depict different aspects of the relationship between art and religion in the Arts and Crafts movement over a period of time. These two artists also represent different geographical areas, and their influence went much further than national borders. Throughout Europe similar attitudes prevailed.

The term 'The Arts and Crafts movement' will be used in its broader sense. At the time the movement came into existence different terms were used for the same phenomenon and this ambiguity over the term Arts and Crafts, as well as other related terms such as Art Nouveau and Jugendstil, is still with us. This applies to both scholarly and popular approaches to the subject. Italo Cremona's Italian *Il Tempo dell'Art Nouveau,* for example, has been translated into other languages as: *De Wereld van de Jugendstil* (Dutch) and *Die Zeit des Jugendstils* (German). In addition, art historian Louis Gans introduced in 1960 the term *Nieuwe Kunst* as an equivalent for *Art Nouveau* and *Jugendstil.*[3]

This is hardly surprising, because a historical movement in art and culture is rarely if ever limited in time. There are always connections, hybrids and transitions.[4] Furthermore, individual works of art cannot always be captured in art-historical terms. Artifacts possess a variety of qualities reflecting the history of their creation, including style and form.[5] Arthur Heygate Mackmurdo (1851-1942) for example, combined Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau tendencies in his design for the title-page of his book, *Wren's City Churches* (1883).[6]

As I will investigate how Morris and Thorn Prikker relate to religion, it is important to explain what I mean by this term. In the field of religious studies various definitions of religion are to be found. From a social constructivist approach religion is a discursive and embodied tradition embedded in a certain context and set of institutions. Individual and

[3] Gans, *Nieuwe Kunst*, 8.

[4] Cremona, *Wereld van de Jugendstil*, x.

[5] Watkinson, *Pre-Raphaelite Art and Design*, 7.

[6] Spencer, *The Aesthetic Movement*, 115.

collective ethics, rituals, texts and practices constitute religion. Social constructivism allows for pluralism, and goes against more essentialist views that allow only particular forms of religion to be included in the term. Throughout this thesis I will concentrate on what the term religion means to both of these artists under analysis. I will discuss their ideas and definitions of religion, and however limited or wide-ranging their understanding, this will guide me in my analysis.

Using this approach I will be able to take into account not only the artifacts created for religious worship, but also socio-ethical ideals. In addition to providing insight into contemporary ideas on religion, I anticipate the results of this thesis to be exemplary for how religious beliefs were closely connected to views on society, the division of political power and the social environment of the time.

In addition to the discipline of religious studies, this study will also contribute to the field of art history. Surprisingly, scholarly attention has been paid to the spiritual aspect of the so-called avant-garde movements of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, such as for example symbolism, surrealism, expressionism,[7] but the role of religion in the art and writings of Arts and Crafts members has generally been overlooked in art history. This is striking because the Arts and Crafts movement was a highly relevant social factor around 1900.[8] The decorative arts played an important role in the public cultural life of late nineteenth century Europe, although they were mainly intended for the private sphere. Crafts in general are closely related to daily habits of life, and constitute a reflection of national cultural and economic identity, a source of popular tradition, as well as agents of social reform.[9]

I will also examine secondary literature and primary sources such as letters, treatises and works of art by Arts and Crafts artists. One of the most important primary sources on Johan Thorn Prikker is the collection of letters that he wrote to the writer and journalist Henri Borel (1869-1933) between October 1892 and March 1898. He wrote to his friend (who lived in China at that time, except when the first letter was addressed) almost every month. There are also two letters preserved from Thorn Prikker's fiancé to Borel, bringing the total amount to forty-three. In addition, forty-eight letters to other people and organizations have survived.[10]

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[7] Barlow, "Fear and Loathing of the Academic"; Bauduin, "Science, Occultism, and the Art"; Bauduin, *The Occultation of Surrealism*; Tuchman et al., *The Spiritual in Art*.

[8] Groups of philanthropists such as the Edinburgh Social Union (of which Traquair and Patrick Geddes were members) aimed to improve the physical environment and to reduce the social segregation of classes. Public art was thought to inspire and enlighten all. Cumming, *Hand, Heart and Soul*, 7, 169.

[9] Ogata, *Art Nouveau*, 21.

[10] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 61.

Some of these were published for the first time in 1895 in *Tweemaandelijksch Tijdschrift voor Letteren, Kunst, Wetenschap en Politiek,* a Dutch magazine on literature, art, science and politics. It appeared every two months after it was established in September 1894 by the authors Lodewijk van Deyssel (1864-1952) and Albert Verwey (1865-1937). Two years later the letters were published in book form.[11]

William Morris has left us four volumes of letters plus his own publications. Here I would like to make two remarks. First, I have quoted Morris, Thorn Prikker and others from the source texts, including any erroneous spelling, grammar or punctuation mistakes. Second, because it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a complete biography of either one of the chosen artists, I will make a selection from these letters and publications in order highlight certain aspects of their religious lives that I consider important to their development as artists and/or shed additional light on my main research question.

The first chapter of my thesis consists of essential background information. It is therefore a brief introduction to the history of the Arts and Crafts movement. I will elaborate on the roots of the movement and on the central ideals of honesty and integrity contributing to society, as well as on the artists' emphasis on handwork and its relation to nature. Finally, I will give an overview of the aesthetic, educational and philanthropic inheritance of the movement. In chapters 2 and 3 I will focus on the relationship between religion and the Arts and Crafts movement, examining my two chosen case studies. I will provide in-depth research into the oeuvres of William Morris and Johan Thorn Prikker. Both chapters begin with a short introduction to the artist, followed by a discussion and an explanation of the people and (religious) movements they were inspired by.

Although these sections are called 'influences,' I am aware of the difficulties of this term. In the case of Thorn Prikker in particular it is often a matter of what Michel de Certeau in *Arts de Faire* (The Practice of Everyday Life) called *braconnage.* In this book he maintains that *Lire, une braconnage* (reading as poaching) means that when people read they are eclectic, picking up items that appeal to them, taking them out of context and creating from them their own view of the world.[12] Claude Lévi-Strauss called a similar form of appropriation *bricolage:* the creative and syncretic construction of cultural practices.[13] We shall see just how Morris and Thorn Prikker constructed their own worldviews from different sources through such approaches.

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[11] Heynen, *Johan Thorn Prikker: Werke bis 1910*, 12.

[12] Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 165.

[13] Frijhoff, "Toeëigening: Van Bezitsdrang Naar Betekenisgeving," 113–14.

In the next section, the religious ideas of Morris and Thorn Prikker, and the consequences of them on their oeuvre will be dealt with. I will focus on the worldviews, inner convictions and the respective visions of these men on the role of the artist, as well as on the religious traditions they were part of. The third section of both chapters will examine those parts of their oeuvres that can be called 'religious art' in the sense that either the subject matter is religious, or the artifact was intended to be used in religious worship. In Chapter 4 I will compare both artists and draw some conclusions. Comparing the works of William Morris and Johan Thorn Prikker will show that the roots of the Arts and Crafts movement, as well as the movement's emphasis on social engagement, are essential to understanding the relationship between religion and the Arts and Crafts movement.

Fig. 2: Photographer unknown, Mary SetonWatts and assistants working on gesso panels for the Mortuary Chapel, Compton, Surrey, UK, c. 1906., photograph from the Watts Gallery in Compton, Surrey, UK.

Chapter 1: The Arts and Crafts movement

Chapter 1: The Arts and Crafts movement

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a group of artists with new ideals began to gain increasing importance in Britain. Although the roots of the Arts and Crafts movement can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century, at the end of the 1880's a small movement began in London and spread all over the British Isles by the 1890s.[14] It began as an urban movement in London, but soon spread to other cities such as Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow and Edinburgh. It also expended into rural areas. This was partly due to the fact that the supposed simplicity of the craft communities in the countryside was much appreciated by Arts and Crafts artists.[15] From its British beginnings the Arts and Crafts movement spread across continental Europe and the United States. In this chapter special attention will be paid to the influence of the movement on Dutch artists.

The development of the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain

Arts and Crafts artists claimed that the so called 'lesser arts,' also called the 'decorative arts' or 'crafts' should not be kept distinct from what was considered by many at the time as the 'higher arts.' Embroidery, bookbinding, stonemasonry, woodcarving and the creation of furniture, metal-work, embroidery, wallpaper design and stained-glass windows, among others, fell into the former category. Painting, poetry and architecture, for example, belonged to the latter. According to Arts and Crafts artists, art and handicraft should be united, as the name of the movement signifies.[16] The movement's name was coined by Thomas James Cobden-Sanderson (1840-1922), one of the founders of the society that was first called *The Combined Arts.* Cobden-Sanderson proposed the name *Arts and Crafts* instead.[17] Soon after this term became popular, and a large variety of craft activities was then termed *Arts and Crafts*.[18]

The Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society originated in 1888. Artists working in the fields of decorative and applied arts felt the need to organize their own exhibition to show their work to the public, because it had been shunned by the Royal Academy.[19] The most prominent artists of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society were Walter Crane (1845-1915), Charles

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[14] Barter, *Apostles of Beauty*, 10; Blakesley, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 77.

[15] Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds*, 7.

[16] Triggs, *The Arts & Crafts Movement*, 69.

[17] Ogata, *Art Nouveau*, 26, 182.

[18] Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds*, 7.

[19] Triggs, *The Arts & Crafts Movement*, 69.

Robert Ashbee (1863-1942), Thomas James Cobden-Sanderson and the Morrises. Indeed the total number of artists involved was over a hundred.[20] Other famous Arts and Crafts artists included Katharine Adams (1862-1952), Jane Burden (1839-1914), Georgina Gaskin (1866-1934), Ernest Gimson (1864-1919), Margaret Macdonald (1864-1933), Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), William de Morgan (1839-1917), May Morris (1862-1938), Louise Powell (1865-1956), Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912), Phoebe Anna Traquair (1852-1936), Charles Voysey (1857-1941) and Philip Webb (1831-1915).

Women

This list of famous Arts and Crafts artists shows that there were also many women artists. Some worked independently as professional artists, while others worked with male family members.[21] Many of the artists worked as husband-and-wife teams.[22] For example, not only William Morris's wife Jane Burden but also his daughter May Morris was involved in the movement.[23] The Arts and Crafts movement allowed women to be accepted in fields of craft-making that were previously reserved for men, such as metalwork, woodcarving or stained-glass window making.[24] Furthermore, one of the results of the plea for the unification of the arts and the crafts was a growing appreciation for what had traditionally been regarded as women's work. Embroidery and tapestry, for example, became much more valued than they had previously been.

Nevertheless the main theorists of the Arts and Crafts movement were still male.[25] Although women were allowed membership of some guilds, and had some guilds of their own, they were nevertheless denied access to others, such as the influential *Art Worker's Guild,* established in 1884. Women also received lower wages for their work because it was often regarded as *amateur.*[26] With the establishment of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies in 1897 and the Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882, however,

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds*, 18.

[22] Ibid., 88–89.

[23] Barter, *Apostles of Beauty*, 17.

[24] William Morris Gallery, *Women Stained Glass Artists*, 1.

[25] Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds*, 18.

[26] Callen, *Angel in the Studio*, 15, 26.

women gained new rights, as well as opportunities to attend art schools. Several female Arts and Crafts artists were dedicated suffragettes, such as Evelyn de Morgan, Gertrude Jekyll and Ernestine Mills.[27]

This shift in gender roles can be attributed to one of the core attitudes of the Arts and Crafts movement: a strong aversion to modernity and industrialization. The separation of gender roles emerged alongside the creation of separate working spheres for men and women, with men working outside the house and women within it. Before industrialization, men and women usually worked together and the household was not separated from the workplace.[28]

Ideals

The aversion to industrialization was rooted in the ideas of Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812-1852), and John Ruskin (1819-1900) amongst others.[29] What these men had in common was the fact that they were inspired by the Middle Ages and tried to learn lessons from the period that were relevant for their own. Many intellectuals at the time were attracted to the Middles Ages because they were disaffected by and critical of their own times, especially by the new nation states, in which they believed the 'masses' reigned. The Middle Ages seemed to offer them a past in which manageable smaller scales and solidarity determined the way of life, or so they believed. In their opinion unity and servitude to each other were part of the feudal system, and from the period in which originality and authenticity were still valued.[30]

Carlyle

Thomas Carlyle was one of the first to write about what he experienced as the negative effects of industrialization and technology. Like him, many Arts and Crafts artists were afraid that technology would threaten not only the physical but also the spiritual wellbeing of mankind. In Carlyle's words: *Men are grown mechanical in head and heart, as well as in hand.*

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[27] Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds*, 18.

[28] Woodhead, *An Introduction to Christianity*, 250.

[29] Barter, *Apostles of Beauty*, 10, 12, 14.

[30] Raedts, *De Ontdeking van de Middeleeuwen*, 9, 123, 280.

They have lost faith in individual endeavour and in natural force of any kind.[31] He also wrote that: *British industrial experience . . . seems fast becoming one huge poison-swamp of reeking pestilence physical and moral; a hideous living Golgotha of souls and bodies buried alive.*[32] This aversion to industrialization resonated within the Arts and Crafts movement with an emphasis on handwork and functional design.[33]

Pugin

Pugin offered a solution to the negative effects of modernity. He was one of the key thinkers of the medieval revival.[34] This was the rediscovery, courtship and embrace of the Middle Ages, which manifested itself in England from the 1760s onwards. It took different forms as times changed and eventually its effects were felt in various areas. It first made its mark in a revival of medieval forms in literature and architecture. During the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), the English began to view these wars and the development of their own society and its political trajectory as part of a longer historical perspective. Later, in the 1830s, this revival started to affect both religion and the decorative arts.[35]

For Pugin the Medieval Revival embraced almost all spheres of life: architecture, politics, literature, philosophy, sociology, economics and religion.[36] He maintained that modern England was in every way inferior to medieval England.[37] He adored the Middle Ages and was attracted to Catholicism.[38] When he was young he attended the services of Edward Irving (1792-1834). Irving was one of the inspirational sources for the foundation of the Catholic Apostolic Church, an Anglican body that wished to return to the theology and worship of the Undivided Catholic Church prior to the Schism of 1054, when the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Western Roman Catholic Church had divided. Like the Oxford movement (see

[31] Quoted by Naylor, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 12.

[32] Quoted by Blakesley, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 13.

[33] Lambourne, *Utopian Craftsmen*, 3.

[34] Faulkner, *Against the Age*, 3–4.

[35] Alexander, *Medievalism: The Middle Ages in Modern England*, x, xviii, 173.

[36] Banham and Harris, *William Morris and the Middle Ages*, 1.

[37] Faulkner, *Against the Age*, 3–4.

[38] Barter, *Apostles of Beauty*, 10.

paragraph 2.2), the Catholic Apostolic Church was largely influenced by the Catholic revival.[39] The Catholic revival led to High Church initiatives and recalled Anglicanism to its roots in scripture and tradition.[40] However, Pugin drew different conclusions from this and converted to Catholicism in 1834.[41] This was a career-damaging move in Anglican England, as his conversion made it difficult for the Church of England to embrace his ideas.[42]

In Pugin's writings Gothic architecture became an expression of faith and principle rather than a mere expression of style. He longed for a revival of faith and for the restoration of the Christian spirit in the way it had inspired the people of the Middle Ages. According to Pugin: *Catholic England was merry England, at least for the humbler classes; and the architecture was in keeping with the faith and manners of the time-at once strong and hospitable.* He believed that the Reformation had put an end to the stability and order that were reflected in the human environment.[43] For Pugin, the Gothic world was one in which individual talent and craft were honored, and which resulted in great cathedrals dedicated to God. He believed that the medieval was purer and less corrupt than the time in which he lived. His designs were therefore larded with 'medieval' ornamentation.[44]

According to Pugin only a spiritual revival, a restoration of moral values, could recreate the ideal medieval society. His belief that the virtues of a building depend on the quality of the society that produced it prefigured the ideas of Ruskin and Morris.[45] Pugin influenced the Arts and Crafts movement in regard to the movement's idealization of the working conditions of the Middle Ages and the Gothic forms. In this sense the Arts and Crafts movement had some conservative aspects to it.[46]

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[39] Flegg, "Gathered Under Apostles," 9.

[40] Rowell, *The Vision Glorious*, 20.

[41] Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds*, 22.

[42] Lewis, *The Gothic Revival*, 84, 90.

[43] Naylor, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 13.

[44] Barter, *Apostles of Beauty*, 10.

[45] Banham and Harris, *William Morris and the Middle Ages*, 4.

[46] Faulkner, *Against the Age*, 3–4.

Ruskin

Ruskin was the first Professor of Art History at Oxford University. In his writings he combined a concern for the rapid social changes in society with a concern for art.[47] He wrote on the moral importance of architecture in famous publications such as *Modern Painters* (five volumes, 1843-1860) and *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849). He also wrote *The Stones of Venice* (three volumes, 1851-1853), of which the chapter *On the Nature of Gothic* later became the cornerstone of Arts and Crafts ideals. Ruskin claimed that architecture is the visible record of the society in which it is produced. He therefore insisted that Christian architecture was better than what he called *pagan architecture*.[48]

Moreover, Ruskin believed that created artifacts should show their human-made origin and reflect the humanity and individuality of the maker.[49] The result of this emphasis on the individuality of the maker was that symmetry, precision and perfection were not appreciated by Ruskin.[50] He contrasted Victorian England with the Middle Ages, and favored the latter. He argued against industrialization and the unacceptable price paid for mass production and mechanical finish. In his opinion this price was the freedom of spirit of working men, reduced by the system to the level of precision tools merely. Working in this system demanded constant precision and exactness of working method instead of being free to exercise their creative talents in their work. Ruskin firmly blamed industrialization for destroying this freedom. His solution was a return to the Gothic style and its principles, because its very irregularity was a sign *of the life and liberty of every workman who struck a stone, a freedom of thought*.[51] These principles would become some of the central ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement.

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[47] Ibid., 5.

[48] Naylor, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 27.

[49] Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art & Signs of Change*, 4.

[50] Naylor, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 27.

[51] Faulkner, *Against the Age*, 6; Banham and Harris, *William Morris and the Middle Ages*, 6.

Alternative ways of living

In its ideals, the Arts and Crafts movement deserves to be called radical, for it encouraged alternative ways of living and working.[52] This endeavor for a better world is reflected in the shared aversion of Arts and Crafts artists towards materialism and capitalism. They revolted, in Walter Crane's words, against *the competitive race for wealth,* and the movement represented *a protest against that so-called industrial progress which produces shoddy wares, the cheapness of which is paid for by the lives of their producers and the degradation of their users.*[53]

This aversion to industrialization, technology and capitalism was part of a broader counter-movement against modernity. Artists of the Arts and Crafts movement were also aware of and struggled against the division of labor caused by industrialization. [54] These ideals resulted in social action, by means of, for example, the formation of societies and guilds that aimed to establish democratic artistic communities for the common good. Within these fellowships, which ranged from exhibition associations to communes based on socialist and/or religious ideals,[55] people wished to eliminate the division between artists and artisans. This division had developed during the Renaissance, when artists first attended art academies for professional training, and craftsmen were taught through apprenticeships in guilds. The people working in these guilds also challenged the division of labor by insisting on the ideal of one person being both the designer and the creator of an artifact.[56]

The previous quotation by Walter Crane exemplifies the Arts and Crafts movement as being concerned with the well-being of the maker of the artifact. In this respect, the ideals of honesty and integrity were central to the movement; not only did honest work mean the advocacy of joy in labor and better working circumstances, but the honest use of materials was also promoted.[57] Morris, for example, asked his contemporaries to think about the conditions under which an artifact is created, because if you buy something, he reminded his

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[52] Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds*, 8.

[53] Morris, *Arts and Crafts Essays*, 13.

[54] Ogata, *Art Nouveau*, 25.

[55] Meggs, *A History of Graphic Design*, 204.

[56] Ogata, *Art Nouveau*, 25.

[57] Ibid., 26.

contemporaries, then *T is the lives of men you buy!* According to Morris, thoughtlessness made people partly responsible for the grief of the workmen who were forced to cater for the demand of useless things.[58] Instead, workmen should have the opportunity to do creative manual work, which would give them personal fulfillment.[59]

The honest use of materials was keenly propagated by the Arts and Crafts movement. This meant that artists needed to respect the materials concerning how they should be used, and to show how things were constructed. The ideal was never to make something look different from what it really was.[60] Instead of making what they saw as *cheap ornamentations*, they created work with simple lines and surface textures.[61] This ideal went against what Arts and Crafts artists called the *fashion of dishonesty,* which was common at the time. Instead they sought knowledge about the suitability of materials for different purposes.

The individual expression of the artist was also fostered by the Arts and Crafts movement. This non-conformist agenda resulted in individuality of style. Each artist was encouraged to give his own interpretation to the craft. In Scotland, for example, Arts and Crafts artists such as the *Glasgow Boys* were particularly involved in painting and sculpting.[62]

Politics

In politics, however, the Arts and Crafts movement held different views; a strong wish to contribute to society was central to the ideals of the movement. The idea that art should contribute to a better life resulted in the belief, for Arts and Crafts artists, that it was their duty to bring art closer to the lower social classes.[63] This emphasis on the moral duty of the individual artist within society is rooted in the ideals of the Enlightenment. Other aspects of the movement related to the Enlightenment include equality of the arts and the power of synthetic thought.[64]

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[58] Morris, *Art and Socialism*, 10.

[59] Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds*, 2.

[60] Blakesley, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 7.

[61] Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds*, 2.

[62] Cumming, *Hand, Heart and Soul*, xv.

[63] Ibid., xiv.

[64] Ibid.

The ideals of the moral duty of the artist led to various conclusions. Some Arts and Crafts artists became involved in the socialist movement, including Walter Crane and Charles Robert Ashbee. Ashbee often described himself as a *practical idealist*, which underlined the moral idealism in his work. As a professional description it incorporated the whole range of his activities.[65] Others were attracted to different political philosophies. Liberalism was a popular political philosophy amongst both Arts and Crafts artists and their patrons. Artists such as Charles Voysey (1857-1941) and Ernest Gimson (1864-1919), however, were more conservative in their political views. Nonetheless all shared a strong aversion to materialism and capitalism.[66]

Heritage

In addition to the Medieval period, Arts and Crafts artists were also inspired by their own national heritage as well as Eastern cultures. Arts and Crafts united with Celtic nationalism in the work of several artists, particularly in Scotland and Ireland. In Ireland the poverty in rural areas led much of the population to move to Dublin where, as a result, it became overcrowded with unemployed workers lacking means of hygiene and medical care. A growing opposition against the political union of Ireland with the Kingdom of Great Britain (1801) heightened social and political tensions even further, resulting in a revival of the crafts industries, which offered employment to both men and women and contributed to the promotion of Irish traditions and Celtic imagery.[67]

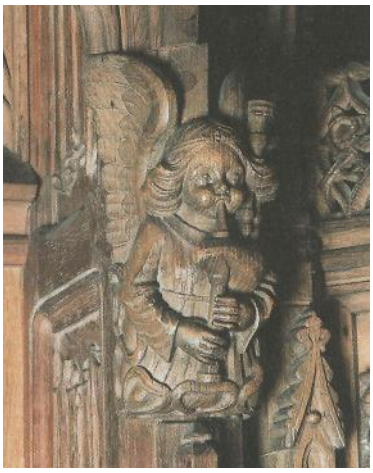

Fig. 2: William and Alexander Clow after a model by Louis Deuchars, *An Angel Playing the Bagpipe*, detail of Thistle Chapel, St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, Scotland 1911, woodcarving. Scottish example of the use of national symbols in Arts and Crafts works.

Celtic motifs and symbols, including shamrocks, portable harps (as used by Celtic bards) and Irish wolfhounds (which figure in several Irish sages) were extensively used, even in religious contexts. Although these symbols have no overt religious significance, they were nonetheless used within Irish

[65] Crawford, *C.R. Ashbee*, 10–11.

[66] Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds*, 17.

[67] Blakesley, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 94.

churches, because of the identification of nationalism with religion.[68] The use of Celtic symbols became prominent at pageants and masques. These events enabled people to display important aspects of their cultural heritage. More than six hundred artists, craftsmen, architects and their families dressed as Scottish and Celtic kings, Romans and Jacobites took part in the biggest of these events in 1908 [app. 1, 2].[69]

Arts and Crafts artists were not just interested in their own heritage, however. Most of them were fascinated by Eastern cultures, most significantly those of China, Japan and Persia. Sidney Howard Barnsley (1865-1926) studied Byzantine architecture abroad and used these as well as Islamic sources in his own artwork.[70] He was among others commissioned to build and furnish a church at Lower Kingswood in Surrey in 1891, in which he combined British with Byzantine traditions [app. 3, 4].[71]

When we consider the Netherlands, we see in particular that Indonesia was an important source of inspiration for artists.[72] The arts and crafts of these foreign cultures, ancient civilizations and of the European peasantry were considered to be humble, innocent and unspoilt by modernization. *Decoration* was seen as an instinctive expression.[73] Arts and Crafts artists believed that there was no essential difference between the different art forms of Eastern art.[74]

Nature

Another major source of inspiration for these artists was nature. In this they were inspired by John Ruskin, the leading art critic of the time. He supported the Pre-Raphaelites, both financially and by means of positive reviews.[75] It was through his writings that Morris and Burne-Jones first became aware of the Pre-Raphaelites.[76] His three-volume work *The Stones of Venice* (1851-1853) was an especially important influence on the Arts and Crafts

[68] Sheehy and Mott, *The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past*, 72.

[69] Blakesley, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 102.

[70] Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds*, 38–39.

[71] Greensted and Wilson, *Originality and Initiative*, 46.

[72] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 75.

[73] Ogata, *Art Nouveau*, 21.

[74] Parry, *Textiles of the Arts and Crafts Movement*, 11.

[75] Barter, *Apostles of Beauty*, 14.

[76] Watkinson, *Pre-Raphaelite Art and Design*, 162.

movement; the chapter *On the Nature of Gothic* [Fig. 6] indeed became the cornerstone of the movement's ideals.[77]

Ruskin discussed his thoughts on the natural world, his ideas on the economic and social conditions of his society, and linked these to his opinions on art and architecture. He argued that economic wealth was being prioritized over social welfare. The conditions of industrial mass production, he claimed, destroyed the human sensibility and the opportunity for a harmonious relationship with nature. This transformed the worker into a mere tool. The demand for perfection, he believed, went against the natural world around us. Nature shows that imperfection and imprecision are essential, because *[n]othing that lives is, or can be, rigidly perfect: part of it is decaying, part nascent*.[78] Instead of striving after perfection, precision and symmetry, artists should allow their created artifacts to show their human-made origin. Art should reflect the humanity and individuality of the maker, Ruskin maintained.[79]

The Arts and Crafts movement outside the United Kingdom

The Arts and Crafts movement was an immensely influential movement: at least half a million people in Britain practiced as either amateurs or professionals in some kind of Art and Crafts activity.[80] The influence of the Arts and Crafts movement extended to continental Europe in the 1880s.[81] British design was already extremely popular. British Arts and Craftsmen were invited to exhibitions organized by *Les Vingt* in Brussels and the Secessionists in Vienna.[82] Magazines such as *The Studio* (launched in 1893), *Architectural Review* (1896), *Country Life* (1898) and the *Arts and Crafts Magazine* (1904) reached a wide audience both in Europe and the United States in the 1890s. *The Studio* was widely read in intellectual and artistic circles in The Netherlands. German and French magazines appeared also: *Art et Décoration* (Art and Decoration, 1897), *L' Art Décoratif* (The Decorative Art, 1898) and *Deutsche Kunst und*

[77] Naylor, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 27.

[78] Quoted in Palmer, *Fifty Key Thinkers on the Environment*, 119.

[79] Naylor, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 27.

[80] Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain*, 19.

[81] Blakesley, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 77.

[82] Barter, *Apostles of Beauty*, 39.

Dekoration (German Art and Decoration, 1898) all contributed to additional exposure of new British design.[83]

Furthermore, the work of William Morris and others was translated into different languages. Influential non-British artists and art critics such as the German architect and art theorist Gottfried Semper (1803-1879) and the French architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879) wrote on the movement.[84] Belgian artist Henry van de Velde (1863-1957) also promoted ideas and art forms from Britain. He praised Morris in his lectures, but also followed him in his actions. Van de Velde decorated his house with Morris fabrics and wallpapers and became an entrepreneur. He executed several interiors in the houses of some wealthy Brussels families. He sold his furniture amongst others to the influential art gallery of Samuel Bing (1838-1905), called *L'Art Nouveau,* in Paris.[85] Viennese Secession designer and architect Josef Hoffmann (1870-1956) also took inspiration from British examples and explicitly called Morris his master.[86] The Arts and Crafts movement even influenced the *Mingei* (Folk Crafts) movement in Japan. In The Netherlands, closer to its birthplace, the terms 'art' and 'crafts' were combined for the first time in 1877 at an exhibition in Amsterdam, entitled *Kunst toegepast op Nijverheid* (Art applied on Industry).[87]

The end and the legacy of the Arts and Crafts movement

The movement had an impact upon many other art movements, including Art Nouveau designers, who often embellished nature by representing plants more elegantly in organic, sensual movements. Arts and Crafts artists, on the contrary, depicted flora in a more natural way. Nevertheless some general motifs such as lilies, peacocks and other birds can be found in both movements.[88]

Other art movements that were influenced by Arts and Crafts were Art Deco*, De Stijl* and Expressionism. Vincent Van Gogh, Edvard Munch, Pablo Picasso and Wassily Kandinsky were

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[83] Ibid., 40; Gans, *Nieuwe Kunst*, 10; Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain*, 19.

[84] Boele and Bijl, *Art Nouveau Under the Last Tsars*, 19–20.

[85] Sembach, *Jugendstil: De Utopie van de Verzoening*, 54.

[86] Ibid., 218.

[87] Gans, *Nieuwe Kunst*, 10–11.

[88] Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds*, 12, 16.

among others inspired by the work of the Arts and Crafts artists.[89] The German art school *Bauhaus* followed the Arts and Crafts ideal of the union of crafts and fine arts.[90] The founder of the *Bauhaus*, Walter Gropius (1883-1969), wrote the following, in which Morris's voice clearly resonates, It is from the Bauhaus Manifesto of 1919:

> *Let us then create a new guild of craftsmen without the class distinctions that raise an arrogant barrier between craftsman and artist! Together let us desire, conceive, and create the new structure of the future, which will embrace architecture and sculpture and painting in one unity and which will one day rise toward heaven from the hands of a million workers like the crystal symbol of a new faith.*[91]

The Arts and Crafts movement would dominate British crafts and design until at least the First World War.[92] An observation made by Charles Robert Ashbee when he left Jerusalem for a brief visit to London in 1921 describes the post-war situation:

> *The old buoyancy is broken – Strang is dead, Gimson is dead. Roger Fry's Omega Workshops are closed down. The Private Presses have stopped work. Rothenstein has given up his Gloucestershire home. The Daneway colony, like our Guild, is no more, except in each case for a few stragglers.*[93]

Ashbee here refers to the *Daneway colony,* which was an initiative by Ernest Gimson and Ernest and Sidney Barnsley. This guild was similar to the *Guild* and *School of Handicraft* he himself had begun in London in 1888, which was inspired by socialism and soon moved to the Cotswolds. Within this guild, which was much smaller than Ashbee's initiative, people baked their own bread, brewed cider and sloe gin, kept livestock such as hens and goats, and worked on artifacts in the workshops. Arts and Crafts architect Philip Webb called the place *a sort of vision of the New Jerusalem*.[94] After the First World War, most of these 'divine' places no longer existed.

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[89] Weiss, "Kandinsky and the 'Jugendstil' Arts and Crafts Movement," 270.

[90] Barter, *Apostles of Beauty*, 186.

[91] Geary and Klaniczay, *Manufacturing Middle Ages*, 247.

[92] Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds*, 7.

[93] Ibid., 140.

[94] Hardy, *Utopian England*, 119, 129; Meggs, *A History of Graphic Design*, 211.

By 1915 the wider aims of the Arts and Crafts movement became more limited in scope. There was no longer an evangelical or socialist impulse to change the daily life of the people and of society as a whole. All that remained was individual creativity and expression. Nevertheless in 1916, in the middle of the war, the *Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society* held its largest show. In this year the Society was also allowed to host an exhibition in the Royal Gallery for the first time. This success notwithstanding, the majority of the guildsmen left their communities during this period. Ashbee left his own Guild of Handicraft in 1919, leaving a small group of craftsmen behind.[95]

In addition to the aesthetic inheritance of the movement, there is also the legacy of its educational and philanthropic aspects. These had an impact on quality of life, which was enhanced by the Arts and Crafts artists, and also concerns the protection of the environment, sustainable production, and work/life balance, all highly relevant issues at present.[96] Moreover, these ideals also resulted in the emergence of a new profession, now called occupational therapy.[97] The Arts and Crafts movement is also related to the Garden City movement (a method of urban planning developed in 1898), and to many later anarchist and cooperative ideas.[98]

Conclusion

The influence of the Arts and Crafts movement has been examined less thoroughly than other art movements. Furthermore, its influence has been underrated. As far as it has received any scholarly attention, little has been paid to the religious commitment of Arts and Crafts artists. As well as spearheading the unification of the arts and crafts, the was also a reaction against modernity. The emphasis on manual craft, and its central ideals of honesty and integrity are a consequence of its strong aversion to industrialization, the division of labor and capitalism. These ideals often tend to have religious underpinnings. In the following two chapters, and focusing on two particular artists, these ideals will receive further attention. In Chapter 2 I will concentrate on William Morris. After shedding light on certain biographical issues, I will focus on the references Morris made to religious traditions, rituals, ideas and writings in his art and publications and I will examine the purpose of these references.

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[95] Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds*, 140–42.

[96] Ibid., 19.

[97] Levine, "The Influence of the Arts-and-Crafts Movement," 250.

[98] Parker, Fournier, and Reedy, *The Dictionary of Alternatives*, 196–97, 111.

Fig. 4: Illustration by Edward Burne-Jones, borders by William Morris, *When Adam delved and Eve span, Who was then the gentleman?*, 1892, woodcut, 20.7 x 15 cm, in *A Dream of John Ball* by William Morris, London: Kelmscott Press, 1892.

Chapter 2: William Morris

Chapter 2: William Morris

In this chapter I will focus on the religious ideas of William Morris (1834-1896). By way of introduction I will also provide some biographical background. In the second paragraph I will discuss the people and (religious) movements that influenced him. Thirdly, I will focus on his own religious ideas and the consequences of these for his life and work. I will also demonstrate how his beliefs developed over time. I will finally discuss a selection of artifacts made by Morris that have explicitly religious (Christian) subject-matter. This includes some of the ecclesiastical commissions he received, as well as some of his work concerning the Holy Grail.

Fig. 5: William Morris, Detail of: *La Belle Iseult*, c. 1858, oil paint on canvas, 72 x 50 cm, Tate, London,.

§ 2.1 Introduction

§ 2.1 Introduction

In the words of fellow Arts and Crafts artist and socialist Walter Crane (1845–1915), William Morris escaped the: *ecclesiastical influence of Oxford and a Church career, his prophets being rather John Ruskin and Thomas Carlyle, he approached the study and practice of art from the architectural side under one of our principal English Gothic revivalists, George Edmund Street.*[99]

A journalist described Morris in an interview in 1885 as: *not only a high priest of Socialism, but also one of the most finely gifted men of this time . . . William Morris, poet, all men know; William Morris, preacher of a new social gospel, poet and prophet (vates) in one, according to antique ideal, fewer know.*[100]

William Morris was an accomplished person, extremely versatile and enthusiastic.[101] He was born in Walthamstow (currently part of greater London) and grew up in a wealthy family. He had four brothers and four sisters.[102] At the age of nineteen, he went to Oxford with the intention of taking Holy Orders. Even though his interests changed (see § 2.2 Influences), Morris's early interest in a priestly vocation had inflamed his curiosity for Gothic architecture.[103] However, the profession of architect turned out not to be Morris's ideal choice either, and he turned to other arts such as painting, book-binding, stained-glass making, embroidery, as well as designing for furnishings, wallpapers, tapestries, carpets and other textiles.[104] In 1861 he co-founded the firm *Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co.*[105] Later in life he became involved in political activities and emerges as a public figure.

All his life, Morris felt a deep love for the Middle Ages. In 1889, seven years before his death, he asked the audience, during the twelfth annual meeting of the *Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings* (SPAB), to remember the London of the fourteenth century. Mediaeval London was a small town with a large Gothic church at the center, *with a forest of church towers and spires, besides the cathedral and the abbeys and priories.* Morris asked his

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[99] Crane, *William Morris to Whistler*, 21.

[100] Pinkney, *We Met Morris*, 24.

[101] Cremona, *Wereld van de Jugendstil*, 64.

[102] Faulkner, *Against the Age*, 3.

[103] Barter, *Apostles of Beauty*, 16.

[104] Cremona, *Wereld van de Jugendstil*, 64; Faulkner, *Against the Age*, ix.

[105] Triggs, *The Arts & Crafts Movement*, 74.

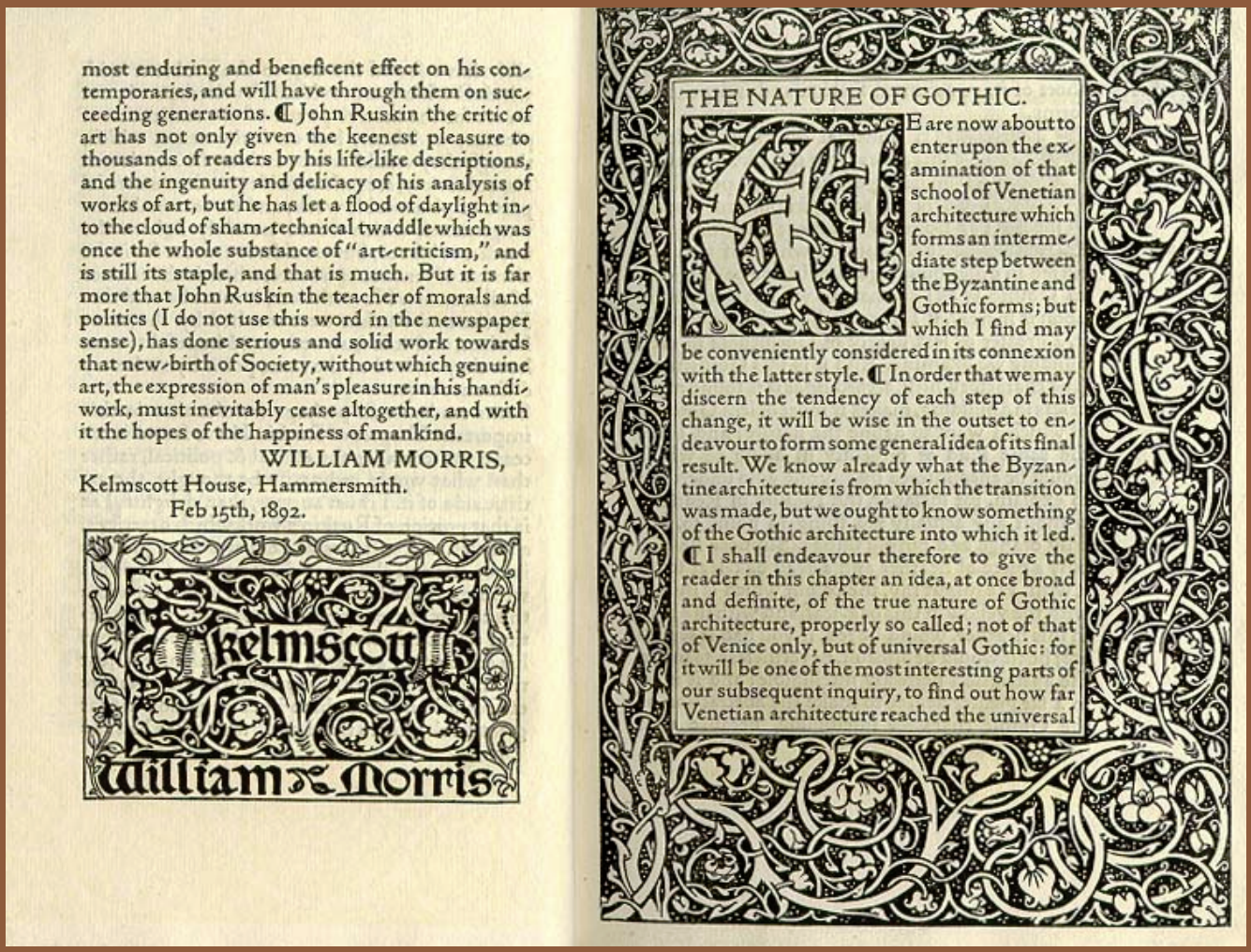
listeners consider the contrast between this image, and the London of their own time.[106] He maintained that it was important to study the arts of the Middle Ages because it would provide understanding of how Western culture had developed. The working conditions of this period in particular appeared to him a desirable alternative to the conditions under which his contemporaries were forced to work as a result of industrialization, the division of labor and capitalism.[107]

Morris married the Pre-Raphaelite model Jane Burden (1839-1914, also called Janey) in 1859. They had two daughters: Jane Alice ('Jenny,' 1861-1935) and Mary ('May,' 1862-1938).[108] Morris's wife is depicted in a mediaeval dress in *La Belle Iseult* (1858) [Fig.5].

[106] The SPAB was co-founded by Morris in 1877, see § 2.4 Religious art. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, 271.

[107] Kinna, *William Morris: The Art of Socialism*, 40.

[108] Ibid., 6.



most enduring and beneficent effect on his contemporaries, and will have through them on succeeding generations. ¶ John Ruskin the critic of art has not only given the keenest pleasure to thousands of readers by his life-like descriptions, and the ingenuity and delicacy of his analysis of works of art, but he has let a flood of daylight into the cloud of sham-technical twaddle which was once the whole substance of "art-criticism," and is still its staple, and that is much. But it is far more that John Ruskin the teacher of morals and politics (I do not use this word in the newspaper sense), has done serious and solid work towards that new-birth of Society, without which genuine art, the expression of man's pleasure in his handiwork, must inevitably cease altogether, and with it the hopes of the happiness of mankind.

WILLIAM MORRIS,

Kelmscott House, Hammersmith.

Feb 15th, 1892.

Kelmscott

William Morris

THE NATURE OF GOTHIC.

WE are now about to enter upon the examination of that school of Venetian architecture which forms an intermediate step between the Byzantine and Gothic forms; but which I find may be conveniently considered in its connexion with the latter style. ¶ In order that we may discern the tendency of each step of this change, it will be wise in the outset to endeavour to form some general idea of its final result. We know already what the Byzantine architecture is from which the transition was made, but we ought to know something of the Gothic architecture into which it led. ¶ I shall endeavour therefore to give the reader in this chapter an idea, at once broad and definite, of the true nature of Gothic architecture, properly so called; not of that of Venice only, but of universal Gothic: for it will be one of the most interesting parts of our subsequent inquiry, to find out how far Venetian architecture reached the universal

Fig. 6: John Ruskin, with preface by William Morris – *The nature of Gothic*, a chapter of *The stones of Venice*, 1892, London: George Allen. Printed by the Kelmscott Press.

§ 2.2 Influences

§ 2.2 Influences

In the first section brief mention was made of the young Morris losing interest in a vocation as priest. In this section, I will describe his youth and education, and how his religious thoughts developed over time. I will also discuss some of the most influential people and (religious) movements on his beliefs and art.

Youth and education

Morris was raised in a wealthy, conventional Anglizan evangelical middle-class family. Anything other than their own brand of Anglicanism was dismissed either as popery or dissention; the Morris children were not allowed to mingle with dissenters. Quakers were the only exception, because their father was a partner in a Quaker firm, and some family members were also Quakers.[109]

After growing up in an environment that allowed for only a limited perspective on religious belief, or with only Low Church perspectives, Morris went to Marlborough College from 1845-1851. Here his religious perspective was broadened. The school had been founded by a group of clergymen, country gentlemen and lawyers five years before the thirteen year old Morris had arrived. It was intended as the main Church of England school for Southern England, with at least two thirds of the first students being the sons of clergymen.[110] The school library provided Morris with works of archeology and ecclesiastical history.[111] The newly built school was badly organized and received insufficient funds. Following an organized rebellion of school boys in November 1851 it was arranged that Morris would leave Marlborough College that Christmas.[112] Although previous literature has suggested that Morris was one of the leaders of this rebellion, there is insufficient evidence of this.[113]

After Marlborough College the next logical step for someone pursuing a church vocation would be to go to Exeter College, Oxford. Morris, however, who knew a great deal about *silk-worm's eggs and old churches*, was not ready to study Theology at Exeter College. In the interval between colleges, he read with Reverend F. B. Guy, a High Churchman who became his tutor.[114] By 1853 it was time for Morris to continue his education in Oxford. His choice of theology was partly due to his favorite sister, Emma. Touched by the wave of religious revival

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[109] Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, 1: 2, 10; Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, 50.

[110] MacCarthy, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time*, 29–30.

[111] Faulkner, *Against the Age*, 3–4.

[112] Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, 1: 15, 25.

[113] Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, 51.

[114] Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, 1: 15, 25.

at that time, as well as the High Church movement, they shared an interest in church festivals and church music, and were very close.[115] During his bachelor's degree however, Morris had doubts about his chosen path. In October 1855 he decided that a church vocation was not something he wished to pursue. To Cormell Price, his undergraduate friend, he wrote that he believed they would not let him pass anyway:

> *I don't think even if I get through Greats that I shall take my B.A., because they won't allow you not to sign the 39 Articles unless you declare that you are "extra Ecclesiam Anglicanam" which I'm not, and don't intend to be, and I won't sign the 39 articles.*[116]

Morris did not wish to subscribe to the thirty-nine articles of faith of the Church of England, which was compulsory at Oxford until 1871. The alternative was make a declaration of *extra Ecclesiam Anglicanam*, which means "outside the church of England." Morris did not wish to declare this either, perhaps because of his affection for church music and architecture.[117]

About a month after the letter to his friend, Morris wrote to his mother about his decision and explained his next plan:

> *I wish to be an architect, an occupation I have often had hankering after, even during the time when I intended taking Holy Orders, the signs of wh[ich]: hankerings you yourself have doubtless often seen.*[118]

He anticipated that his decision might disappoint the family, and explained why the money spend on his studies was not wasted.[119] Whether Morris changed his mind about finishing his bachelor's degree, or whether his family persuaded him, remains unclear, but he made the best of a bad bargain and took his pass degree that autumn and his BA in 1856. On graduation he signed the articles of the Anglican Church.[120]

After receiving his BA degree Morris started to work at the office of George Edmund Street (1824-1881) in January 1856 in order to pursue his studies in architecture. Street was known

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[115] Ibid., 1: 24–25.

[116] Kelvin, *The Collected Letters of William Morris*, 1984, 1 (1848-1880): 23.

[117] Blair, *Form and Faith in Victorian Poetry and Religion*, 121.

[118] Kelvin, *The Collected Letters of William Morris*, 1984, 1 (1848-1880): 24–25.

[119] Ibid.

[120] MacCarthy, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time*, 98.

as one of the best architects of the Gothic revival and had been diocesan architect at Oxford. Street believed that an architect should have all-round knowledge of the crafts that contribute to interior decoration.[121] His habit of intertwining religion and the arts came to fruition in August Pugin's writings. When still at Marlborough College Morris read, amongst other works, *Contrasts* by Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812-1852), who was to have a major impact on Morris's views on art, religion and society.[122] Like Pugin, Morris rebelled against his own age and turned instead to the Middle Ages, on which he drew more consistently than most of his contemporaries,[123] as will be further explained in paragraph 2.3.

High Church theology and the Oxford movement

Morris had been introduced to High Church forms of service while staying at Marlborough College. Although the college was not founded on any particular denominational or theological basis, it had a distinctly High Church character.[124] The theology of the High Church movement emphasized priesthood and the sacraments. Therefore ritual and the liturgy were highly valued. This also appealed to the young Morris, who was further encouraged in this direction by his sister Emma and his tutor F. B. Guy.[125]

At Marlborough College Morris read the *Tracts for the Times*, a series of ninety theological publications written by members of the Oxford movement.[126] The Oxford or the Tractarian movement focused on the spiritual autonomy of the church, and wished to return to the early church fathers and focus on the sacraments. The Oxford movement, combined with an emergent trend towards ritualism, later fused into the Anglo-Catholic tradition. Anglo-Catholicism became well-known for viewing the sacraments as central and for placing an emphasis on personal devotion.[127] As a result of this movement new churches were built and old churches were redecorated. Stained-glass, tiles, altar cloths and other sorts of furnishings and decoration were now in much demand.[128]

However, by the time Morris went to Exeter College, Oxford in January 1853 with the intention of taking Holy Orders, the Anglican High Church movement and the Tractarian

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[121] Watkinson, *Pre-Raphaelite Art and Design*, 163, 196.

[122] Faulkner, *Against the Age*, 3–4.

[123] Banham and Harris, *William Morris and the Middle Ages*, 2.

[124] Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, 1: 17.

[125] Faulkner, *Against the Age*, 4.

[126] Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, 1: 37–38.

[127] Leech, *The Radical Anglo-Catholic Social Vision*, 2.

[128] Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, 1: 146.

movement had both passed their prime. Although some of their members and the effects continued to be felt at Oxford in the early 1850s. Morris's best friend Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) described the situation as being a cause for *gloomy and angry disappointment and disillusion*.[129]

Nevertheless, Morris was highly attracted to the social values of John Henry Newman (1801-1890).[130] Newman was a former Anglican clergyman who converted to Roman Catholicism in 1845 in the search of a purer expression of faith.[131] His work would influence Morris for most of his life. Following Newman, Morris traced the origins of Puritanism and Protestantism back to the end of the fifteenth century. He believed that the *individualistic ethics of Early Christianity* came to dominate the *corporate ethics* of the medieval church and that Protestantism *became a useful servant of Commercialism*.[132]

Morris became a socialist in the 1880s, and Puritanism and Protestantism were associated, he came to feel, with an inflexible and hypocritical morality as well as with an unjust social system. Hard work, providence and sobriety were valued by Puritans. The hypocrisy of it was, according to Morris, that they lived in societies that fostered laziness and poverty and which sanctioned untold punishments on those who broke the rules. Socialism, Morris believed, was the only alternative moral vision.[133] Morris's socialist views are closely related to his love for the Middle Ages, which was inspired not only by Pugin but also by John Ruskin.

Ruskin

John Ruskin (1819-1900) was perhaps the most important single influence on Morris, who read the first two volumes of Ruskin's *Modern Painters* at Exeter College in Oxford.[134] Morris especially valued Ruskin's anti-industrial, pre-capitalist communalism. Communalism is a system in which public ownership and federations of local communities are combined, often embodying utopian agenda. Ruskin's writings informed Morris's utopian novel *News from Nowhere (1890).*[135] Morris also followed Ruskin in claiming that everything man-made is beautiful if it is in accord with nature, and when it is not in accord with nature then it is

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[129] Banham and Harris, *William Morris and the Middle Ages*, 10.

[130] Kinna, *William Morris: The Art of Socialism*, 35.

[131] Barter, *Apostles of Beauty*, 10.

[132] Kinna, *William Morris: The Art of Socialism*, 36–37.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Faulkner, *Against the Age*, 5.

[135] Brantlinger, "A Postindustrial Prelude to Postcolonialism," 468.

ugly.[136] Nature was the most important source of inspiration for Morris's patterns. He was particularly attracted to the natural beauty of the Cotswolds, where he had the opportunity to use old vegetable recipes for textile dyes.[137]

Morris later wrote that Ruskin's writings *corrected* the influence of the Oxford movement and that Ruskin's writings came to him *as a sort of revelation.* After reading Ruskin, he wrote, he rejected Newman's asceticism. He claimed that Newman inhabited the *tub of Diogenes*. Diogenes of Sinope was a Cynical philosopher who despised earthly possessions so much that he decided to live in a barrel.[138] Morris had met Ruskin after he had just entered Oxford. Morris was fifteen years younger and greatly admired the author of *The Stones of Venice* (1851-1853). What he found most inspiring were Ruskin's social beliefs and Morris always referred to Ruskin's book as the first statement of the doctrine that art is the expression of man's pleasure in labor.[139]

Kingsley

Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) was another source of inspiration for Morris, although Morris later claimed that he appreciated Kingsley less than Ruskin and the Oxford movement.[140] Kingsley, like Ruskin, wrote about the social changes that were so rapidly taking place.[141] Kingsley was a naturalist, a novelist and a historian who was preoccupied with masculinity. This led him to not only frequently write about manliness, but it also concerned most of his activities and actions. According to Kingsley, masculinity equated with boldness, plainness, honesty, defiance of authority, violent energy and stoical patience.[142]

Kingsley was one of the co-founders of the Christian Socialist movement (1848), and famous for his *muscular Christianity*. Christian Socialism aimed to save society from exploitative commercialism by restoring the ethics of Christianity, while muscular Christianity is a form of Christianity win which the physical health of 'real men' is linked to piety.[143] Kingsley believed that godliness was fully compatible with manliness and that the Anglican Church had been weakened by a culture of effeminacy, what he called the *most insidious*

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[136] Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art & Signs of Change*, 4.

[137] Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds*, 6.

[138] Kinna, *William Morris: The Art of Socialism*, 35.

[139] Triggs, *The Arts & Crafts Movement*, 43.

[140] Kinna, *William Morris: The Art of Socialism*, 34.

[141] Faulkner, *Against the Age*, 5.

[142] Hall, *Muscular Christianity*, 18–19.

[143] Faulkner, *Against the Age*, 5; Kinna, *William Morris: The Art of Socialism*, 34.

weapon of the Tractarians. Muscular Christianity was therefore a response to the puritanical and ascetic religiosity of the Oxford movement.[144]

Kingsley described his ideal man in what is generally regarded as his first muscular novel, *Two Years Ago* (1857). In this he contrasted the broad-shouldered character Tom Thurall with the fragile and affected character of Elsley Vavasour, and clearly favored the former. This ideal of the well-muscled male quickly replaced the eighteenth century ideal of manliness which had emphasized politeness, conversation and 'decorous' behavior in the company of women. Decorous gestures, stances and expressions were less valued than before.[145]

The plurality of masculinity that can be recognized in the art and literature of the Pre-Raphaelites (who Morris admired in the beginning and with which he later became identified), who are often defined against normative perceptions of masculinity or manliness. However, they cannot always be regarded as unsettling the current gender roles; sometimes these masculine models were positively embraced, while at other times they were undermined.[146] The first version of William Holman Hunt's *The Light of the World* (1851-1853) displayed for example an androgynous image of Christ. Hunt used both male and female models, including Christina Rossetti and Elizabeth Siddal, to create the head of Christ. Furthermore, Hunt portrayed Christ wearing elaborate sacerdotal garments and many jewels, inviting suspicions of having Romanist and Tractarian tendencies. Carlyle, for example, called this work *a mere papistical fantasy.*[147]

The first version of *The Light of the World* did not celebrate the beauty and perfection of the male form that Kingsley promulgated. Neither did it express the ideal of masculine strength and the corresponding ideas of national and moral superiority central to muscular Christianity. Later versions of this painting, however, do incorporate these elements and show how ideas on masculinity, imperialism and race changed over time.[148] Hunt was not the only Pre-Raphaelite artist who was accused of being too effeminate. Rossetti also presented various kinds of masculinity in his works, some of which explicitly challenged prevailing Victorian gender ideologies. Likewise, in the poem *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs* (1876), Morris subtly transformed the social and political meaning of manliness, steering it away from identification with courage and success into a vision in which

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[144] Watson, Weir, and Friend, "The Development of Muscular Christianity," 1–2.

[145] Park, "Muscles, Symmetry and Action," 1607, 1609.

[146] Yeates and Trowbridge, *Pre-Raphaelite Masculinities*, 7.

[147] Ibid., 191–92, 194–95.

[148] Ibid., 191, 196, 198.

both men and women can be manly in the sense that they can possess the ability to recognize the inadequacies of life. People, according to Morris, should have the will to endure these inadequacies but should also take action to change them.[149]

Although the ideals of manhood in muscular Christianity were not always shared by Morris and his Pre-Raphaelite friends, Morris was attracted to Kingsley's principles of brotherhood and equality. He valued Kingsley for the same reason as he appreciated the Oxford movement; as a *reaction against puritanism*. Some decades later, in the late 1880s, he again stated that the *Anglo-Catholic movement . . . was supported by many who had no special theological tendencies, as a protest against . . . Protestantism*.[150]

Kingsley believed that the improvement of the social and economic conditions of the people and Christian education were more urgent than conferring political power on them. He was against commercial competition and the accumulation of wealth. He preferred sanitary reforms and expanded the ideas of brotherhood and equality.[151]

Morris's anti-Puritanism and anti-Protestantism was fed by Ruskin, Newman and Kingsley, although they held very different religious and political convictions. Nonetheless, all three despised what they believed to be the dull utilitarianism of Victorian society, and the self-assured and self-interested morals and manners underlying it.[152]

Friends

Morris also had a small number of friends whose influence on his thinking and on his actions are important. Some them he met in Oxford, and they remained friends for his whole life.

On his first night in Oxford Morris began a tradition. Burne-Jones noted that after dinner, *Morris came tumbling in, and talked incessantly for the next seven hours or longer.*[153] After this the habit of reading and discussing texts together gradually became established. Morris often read aloud to Burne-Jones. To begin with these texts were mainly on theology, ecclesiastical history and ecclesiastical archeology. Together they read, amongst other works: *History of the Eastern Church* by John Mason Neale (1818-1866), *Latin Christianity* by Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868), as well as large parts of the *Acta Sanctorum* (*Acts of the Saints),* in which the lives of saints were recounted.

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[149] Ibid., 19, 35, 38–39.

[150] Kinna, *William Morris: The Art of Socialism*, 36.

[151] Ibid., 34.

[152] Ibid., 36.

[153] Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, 1: 37.

In addition, they read many medieval chronicles and ecclesiastical Latin poetry. Together they read treatises on the Eucharist, Baptism and the Incarnation written by High Church party member Samuel Wilberforce (1805-1873). Separately, they read and admired Kenelm Henry Digby's *Mores Catholici, or Ages of Faith*.[154] Digby (1800-1880) collected in this eleven-volume work original sources on the religious, artistic and social life of the Middle Ages. At first Morris and Burne-Jones felt too embarrassed to admit to each other that they were both reading and admiring this work. This could have been because of its exorbitant romanticism, or because of the avowed Catholicism of Digby.[155]

Fig. 5: Detail of: Frederick Hollyer, *William Morris* (right) *and Edward Burne-Jones* (left), 1874, platinum print, 13.5 x 9.6 cm, NPG.

Reading the writers of the Catholic and Anglo-Catholic revivals, combined with publications by Ruskin, made Morris and his friends consider the foundation of a brotherhood and monastic order.[156] This idea arose even before they became familiar with the more famous Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.[157] The Pre-Raphaelites were longing to return to the arts of the Pre-Renaissance period, when art was an expression of the individual artist. Morris shared these ideas, and he became a member of the Pre-Raphaelite circle after Burne-Jones introduced him to the poet and painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) while he was still studying at Oxford. Rossetti encouraged Morris to paint and the three of them were commissioned to paint the murals in the Oxford Union in 1857.[158]

The first Pre-Raphaelites started their careers in the 1840s, when the destruction by fire in 1834 of the Medieval Palace of Westminster (also known as the Houses of Parliament) had resulted in a great opportunity for state patronage of the arts. The press began to promote religious subject matter as a way of inspiring, educating and raising moral standards. The first re-Raphaelite works to be exhibited widely conformed to the categories of the competition

[154] Ibid., 1: 37–38.

[155] Banham and Harris, *William Morris and the Middle Ages*, 7.

[156] Ibid., 8.

[157] Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, 54.

[158] Prettejohn, *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites*, 211–12.

for new cartoons (preparatory models/studies, usually on a smaller scale) in Westminster Abbey: English history and literature, and the Bible.[159]

During the Brotherhood years (1848–1853), the Pre-Raphaelites generally focused on religious subject matter because they were looking for sincerity in art. Although they focused on the art and not on the religious belief per se, they used the symbolic language of Christian iconography.[160] Furthermore, the Pre-Raphaelites were concerned with nature and reality.[161] They adopted the doctrine of *truth to nature* from Ruskin's writings.[162] The trend of *beauty without realism* or *art for art's sake* only began following the art of the Pre-Raphaelites. Nevertheless some of the Pre-Raphaelite figures such as Rossetti, Whistler and Burne-Jones would later become involved in this trend.[163]

Founding a monastery

Direct inspiration for the founding of a monastery and a life of chaste brotherhood also came from Newman's well-known settlement in Littlemore. In 1853 Morris considered fully realizing their ideals and spending his entire fortune on the cause. He intended to model their monastic life on that of Newman's settlement.[164] The idea of founding a monastery was not uncommon at this time: similar communities arose throughout the country.[165] In 1846 his master-to-be George Edmund Street (1824-1881) was involved in a similar idea. He was engaged in a scheme for the foundation of an institution that combined college, monastery and workshop. It was intended for students of religious art. Morris had not yet met Street personally. Since 1852 however, Street had been the architect of the diocese in Oxford, and he also lived there. Moreover, this early project, as well as other similar projects, had received much attention.[166]

The first reference to this aspiration of Morris and his friends can be found in a letter from Burne-Jones to a schoolfellow. On the first of May 1853 he wrote: *I have set my heart on founding a brotherhood. Learn '*Sir Galahad' *by heart; he is to be the patron of the order.* Some months later he wrote: *We must enlist you in the Crusade and Holy Warfare against the*

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[159] Ibid., 63–64.

[160] Ibid., 67.

[161] Prettejohn, *After the Pre-Raphaelites*, 2.

[162] Prettejohn, *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites*, 67.

[163] Prettejohn, *After the Pre-Raphaelites*, 4, 6.

[164] Kinna, *William Morris: The Art of Socialism*, 35.

[165] A generation earlier, a similar community was founded in Rome by the German painters Cornelius and Overbeck. Here, the artists lived in a Roman palace under a sort of monastic rule. Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, 1: 62–63.

[166] Ibid.

age.[167] Morris and his friends formed the idea of founding a sacred brotherhood upon medieval lines. It would comprise a small group of friends, celibate and dedicated to the purity of art and religion, with Galahad as their patron.[168] Sir Galahad is one of the knights of the Round Table of Arthurian legend. With two other knights, he embarks on the quest of the Holy Grail.[169]

In October 1854 Burne-Jones wrote the last letter in which he refers to the monastery. Due to a cholera epidemic, term had been postponed for a week. *It made me very angry, for I was sick of home and idleness and longed with an ardent longing to be back with Morris and his glorious little company of martyrs - the monastery stands a fairer change than ever of being founded; I know that it will be some day.*[170] However, Morris shifted away from his ideal to return to a purer form of religion. In May 1855 Cormell Price, an undergraduate friend, noted: *Our Monastery will come to nought, I'm afraid . . . Morris has become questionable in doctrinal points, and Ted [Burne-Jones] is too Catholic to be ordained. He and Morris diverge more and more in views though not in friendship.*[171] In about a year their idea shifted from the formation of a monastery to that of a social brotherhood.[172]

In the same period Morris's enthusiasm for the story of the Holy Grail led him to publish his Arthurian poems in 1858. Immediately preceding this he contributed to Oxford Union murals commissioned by Ruskin. Morris's poem on Sir Galahad echoes the poem by Tennyson (published in 1842) in that both poets depict a hero conscious of his chastity. Tennyson's Galahad, however, does not long for any form of sexuality. Morris's Galahad, on the other hand, contrasts the loneliness and emptiness of his quest with the warm and pleasurable feelings that accompany thoughts of love. Morris's Galahad does find some comfort in a vision of Christ. In the end, however, he and his fellow knights are unable to fulfill their quest. Some knights passed away, others survived but *struggle[d] for the vision fair* in vain. In this sense Morris's vision of Sir Galahad seems to be autobiographical. It reflects Morris's own struggle to decide between a church vocation and the life of an artist, finally choosing in favor of art.[173]

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[167] Ibid., 1: 63–64.

[168] Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, 54.

[169] Barber, *The Holy Grail*, 56–57.

[170] Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, 1: 63–64.

[171] Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, 56.

[172] Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, 1: 62.

[173] Barber, *The Holy Grail*, 267.

Fig. 8: Detail of: Morris & Co, *Quest for the Holy Grail Tapestries*, panel 6, T*he Attainment; The Vision of the Holy Grail to Sir Galahad, Sir Bors and Sir Percival*, version woven 1895-96, wool, silk, mohair and camel hair weft on cotton warp, 695 x 244 cm, BMAG.

§ 2.3 Religious ideas and their consequences

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In the previous section it became clear which people inspired Morris in his religious and artistic thinking. In this section, Morris's own religious ideas and their consequences will be explored. Special attention will be paid to his views on the purpose of art and the role of the artist, his love for the Middle Ages, and what he called his *conversion to socialism.*[174]

The role of the artist and the purpose of art

In his early writings Morris acknowledged two kinds of art, based on their purpose:

> *[O]ne of them would exist even if men had no needs but such are essentially spiritual, and only accidentally material or bodily. The other kind, called into existence by material needs is bound no less to recognize the aspirations of the soul, and receives the impress of its striving towards perfection.*[175]

Taking the division between art that accommodates spiritual needs and art that is created for material needs as his starting point, Morris made a distinction between the *higher* and the *lesser arts*. Morris reckoned among the latter architecture, furniture-making, dress-making, pottery, glass-making, dyeing and weaving, and printing designs on cloth and paper. Although many of his contemporaries did not consider these so-called *lesser arts* worth considering, he believed that rejection of the *lesser arts* injured the community. Because these arts occupied in one way or another the lives of millions of his contemporaries, Morris maintained that *the necessity for them should be felt by those that allow them to be carried on; for surely wasted labour is a heavy burden for the world to bear.*[176]

For Morris, who called *fearless rest and hopeful work* the two blessings in life, work could awaken a feeling of compliance and fulfillment. After our daily struggles, the work that we were born to do could make us feel worthy of life. Morris wished all men could share these feelings: *to have space and freedom to gain such rest and such work is the end of politics; to learn how best to gain it is the end of education; to learn its inmost meaning is the end of*

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[174] Vallance, *The Life and Work of William Morris*, 313.

[175] Morris, William, *The Collected Works of William Morris*, 2012, 22: Hopes and Fears for Art: 236–37.

[176] Ibid., 235, 240, 241, 266.

religion.[177] He therefore strongly advocated the *lesser arts* and shared his knowledge of them during his lectures.[178]

In order to be able to create art in either of the two art forms the first step for the artist is, according to Morris, *devoting yourself to art.* Furthermore, an artist should *understand what Art means,* whether he or she is capable of expressing this vision or not. However, all of these things are without purpose if someone does not *follow on the path which that inborn knowledge has shown to you; if it is otherwise with you than this, no system and no teachers will help you to produce real art of any kind, be it never so humble.*[179] According to Morris artists have no choice but to stand apart *as possessors of some sacred mystery which, whatever happens, they must at least do their best to guard.*[180]

In contrast to many of his contemporaries, who believed that genius arose when the artist was somewhat distanced from society, Morris was convinced that this isolation is harmful for the life and work of the artist.[181] His views on the role of the artist also differed from that of some of his closest friends and Pre-Raphaelite colleagues. In the 1840s Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Everett Millais (1829-1896) and William Holman Hunt (1824-1879) agreed that the *office of the artist should be looked upon as a priest's service in the temple of Nature.*[182] Rossetti (and Ruskin before him) regarded art as something divine. Morris, however, regarded it as something human. He insisted on joyous work (an addition to Carlyle's doctrine of work).[183]

> *It is the province of art to set the true ideal of a full and reasonable life before him, a life to which the perception and creation of beauty, the enjoyment of real pleasure that is, shall be felt to be as necessary to man as his daily bread, and that no man, and no set of men, can be deprived of this except by mere opposition, which should be resisted to the utmost.*[184]

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[177] Ibid., 269.

[178] Ibid., 235.

[179] Ibid., 28.

[180] Morris, *William Morris on Art and Socialism*, 111.

[181] Ibid.

[182] Woodring, *Nature into Art*, 149.

[183] Ibid., 164.

[184] s.n., *How I Became a Socialist*, 22.

Art, to Morris, was the expression of joy in work – a socialist ideal. The following section will discuss Morris's socialist views and relate these to his love for the Middle Ages.

The Middle Ages

Morris was one of the leading exponents of the Medieval Revival, which influenced public taste in Britain during the greater part of the nineteenth century. It influenced not only literature, art and architecture but also religion, politics, economics, sociology and philosophy. At its peak there was hardly any aspect of life that remained untouched by it. Compared to Victorian modernity, with all the negative effects of industrialization, the Middle Ages was seen as the golden age of faith, stability and creativity. Nevertheless, the resurrection of the Medieval Church was a sensitive topic. The poor reputation of the Church of England in the mid-nineteenth century, however, did encourage some, including the spokesmen of the Oxford movement, to show a kind-hearted indulgence towards the ideals of the Medieval Church.[185]

Morris believed that studying the arts of the Middle Ages would offer insight into the way that culture developed. At this time in Morris's view, was art produced by craftsmen who enjoyed their work and worked together as equals. Ordinary people also produced *common household goods,* and all this was also art. Nothing was wasted, it was made to be used with pleasure.[186] Morris was even so optimistic to declare that: *It cast down the partitions of race and religion also. Christian and Mussulman were made joyful by it; Kelt, Teuton, Latin raised it up together; Persian, Tartar, and Arab gave and took its gifts from one another.*[187]

Morris's aversion to his own age and his adoration of the past led him to write *A Dream of John Ball,* published in 1886. The front page of Chapter two of this thesis [fig. 4] shows the frontispiece of the book with the slogan *When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?* The quotation derives from the English priest John Ball (1338-1381), who was imprisoned during the Peasant's Revolt (1381) because of his teachings on social equality. He also emphasized the need for simplicity of life for the priesthood and for monastic orders. According to the chronicler Thomas Walsingham (died 1422), he preached the famous words:

> *'Whan Adam dalf, and Eve span, Who was thanne a gentilman?' . . . from the beginning all men were created equal by nature, for servitude had been introduced by the unjust*

[185] Banham and Harris, *William Morris and the Middle Ages*, IX, 1-2, 18.

[186] Kinna, *William Morris: The Art of Socialism*, 40.

[187] Morris, William, *The Collected Works of William Morris*, 2012, 22: Hopes and Fears for Art: 158.

> *and evil oppression of men, against the will of God, who, if it had pleased Him to create serfs, surely in the beginning of the world would have appointed who should be a serf and who a lord.*[188]

Morris used the version of the story of medieval author Jean Froissart (c. 1337-c. 1405) as his main source, although Morris did not use the same incidents in or assume the same the same tone of this work. The dreamer and narrator in Morris's story lives in the fourteenth century, just before the revolt. John Ball preaches revolution, but the narrator is able to predict in what ways Ball's ideas will be betrayed. However, predictions notwithstanding, the book ends with a prophecy of the final victory of labor. Morris described John Ball and his fellows as counterparts of the socialists of his own age.[189]

Socialism

Morris began to lecture on art and society from 1877 onwards and thereby had a life-long career as a platform speaker. However, it was not until 1883 that he read Marx [app. 11] and declared himself a socialist. That same year he joined the Social-Democratic Federation (SDF). He left the party the following year after an argument with foreman Henry Mayers Hyndman (1842-1921) and founded his own party, the Socialist League. This, however, split twice. On the second occasion, Morris withdrew and joined the Hammersmith Socialist Society.[190] Morris's aesthetic ideals, like those of Ruskin, had always been socio-political. A strong aversion to modern civilization was central to both.[191] In Morris' words: *Apart from the desire to produce beautiful things, the leading passion of my life has been and is hatred of modern civilization.*[192]

The principle of socialism, however, was already at the base of Morris´s handicraft. He grew up under similar circumstances as Ruskin; well-to-do but nevertheless yearning for social contact. The first time Morris experienced any kind of community spirit was during the formation of the Brotherhood in Oxford. At the outset the Brotherhood at Oxford University was conceived as a semi-monastic order, devoted to the higher life, but gradually changed to a social crusade against the age, with Carlyle and Ruskin as their accepted leaders. Later, the

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[188] Kümin, *The Communal Age in Western Europe*, 70.

[189] Banham and Harris, *William Morris and the Middle Ages*, 222.

[190] Kinna, *William Morris: The Art of Socialism*, 5–6, 8.

[191] Hughes, *The End of Work*, 117.

[192] s.n., *How I Became a Socialist*, 20.

establishment of *Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co* in 1861 carried out protests against the economic and business methods at the time.[193]

Central to Morris's political beliefs were reorganization of labor and the decentralization of power; two ideals also expressed in his utopian masterpiece *News from Nowhere* (1890). It was written as a counter-reaction to Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward: 2000–1887* (published in 1888). In *News from Nowhere* Morris recommends a simple, pastoral life. In order to accomplish this, co-operation in labor and pleasure in life is required. This simplicity differs from Bellamy's complex state socialism, centralization and machinery.[194]

Nonetheless Morris wished for the end of the capitalist system.[195] Like Ruskin, he saw commerce as something that imposed unacceptable conditions on the workmen. He regarded commerce as a system of production, a form of slavery based on the ownership and non-ownership of property. The purpose of commerce, he wrote, is not to produce beautiful or useful things, but to produce *what on the one hand is called employment, on the other what is called money-making.*[196]

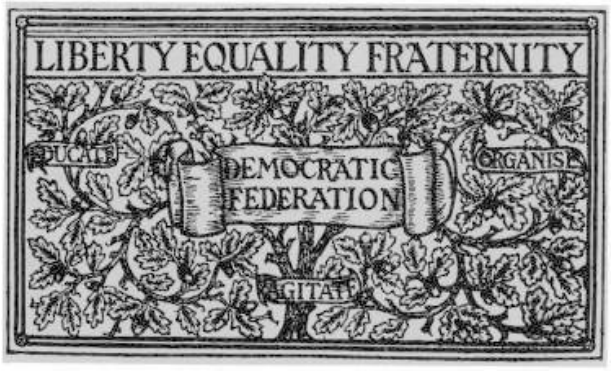

Fig. 7: William Morris, *Democratic Federation Membership Card*, 1883. From: H. W. Lee and E. Archbold, *Social Democracy in Britain: Fifty Years of the Socialist Movement*, London: SDF, 1935.

Morris wished to go back to the *freedom of hand and thought,* that he believed workmen of the Middle Ages possessed. In Morris's understanding the mediaeval guilds provided a *rallying-point* for the workmen, who became free in their work. This brought the architectural arts to new heights, he claimed.[197] He maintained that freedom of hand and thought had come to an end during modernization and industrialization and that workers had gradually ceased to be craftsmen after the as a consequence of this. This was a very bad development for the workers, because according to Morris:

[193] Triggs, *The Arts & Crafts Movement*, 74.

[194] Ibid., 91.

[195] Kinna, *William Morris: The Art of Socialism*, 25.

[196] Ibid., 41.

[197] Morris, *Art and Its Producers*, 6.

> *In his leisure hours an intelligent citizen (perhaps), with a capacity for understanding politics, or a turn for scientific knowledge, or what not, but in his working hours not even a machine, but an average portion of that great & almost miraculous machine . . . the factory; a man, the interest of whose life is divorced from the subject-matter of his labour, whose work has become "employment", that is, merely the opportunity of earning a livelihood at the will of someone else.*[198]

In this quotation we also find Morris's socialist ideal of joy in work already discussed in the connection with his views on the role of the artist. Furthermore, he emphasizes here that workmen have been downgraded to something less than a machine. Art produced by machinery was favored at this time over the *honest work of hand* (Thackeray 1840) by the general public.[199]

Instead of capitalism Morris preferred fellowship and social equality.[200] In his poem *The God of the Poor* (first published in 1868) [app. 10], Morris mocks the self-indulgence of the wealthy lord Maltete who, instead of looking out for the poor, is self-centered, hypocritical and greedy. This is exemplified in the second stanza:

> *With a grace of prayers sung loud and late*
> *Many a widow's house he ate;*
> *Many a poor knight at his hands*
> *Lost his house and narrow lands..*
> *Deus est Deus Pauperum.*[201]

Within the poem Morris repeats, after every stanza – a total of fifty refrains - that God is a God of the poor: *Deus est Deus Pauperum.*

He wrote not just about the Christian God, but also about the Greek, Germanic and Norse gods, and he contrasted in his writings earthly uncertainty and instability with paradise. Although he suggests that the earth was once a place of hope and perfection, it is now a place of misery and despair. Paradise in his stories is not a sacred or reverential place, although it is the home of the gods and the final resting place for the heroic dead. It is

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[198] Ibid., 7, 9–10.

[199] Woodring, *Nature into Art*, 26.

[200] Kinna, *William Morris: The Art of Socialism*, 26.

[201] Morris, William, *The Collected Works of William Morris*, 2012, 9: Love is Enough: 156.

however a constantly beautiful place, reflecting the power of the gods who are immortal and omniscient. Moreover, it has the rural charm of Arcadia, the utopian place in Greek mythology in which people lived in harmony with nature. Morris combined this with the plenty of the Land of Cockaigne, a land of Medieval myth in which all needs are satisfied. Morris's paradise, however, is not a place of indulgence, because desire here is transcendent.[202]

The characters in Morris's stories respond to the loss of paradise in three different ways: by denying the loss and searching for mythical worlds promising eternal life; by accepting the evil of the world with resignation; or by accepting the separation as an exclusion rather than an expulsion. The latter, in Morris's eyes, suggests that people are creatures of love rather than of sin. People filled with goodness feel devotion and love for their gods because of the earth's creation. For others, loyalty to their gods is motivated by fear, or it is born from the desire to find relief from the uncertainty of life. In *Love is Enough* (1872) Morris confounded Christian beliefs by reversing religious priorities: God is not Love, Love is God.[203]

Morris believed that ideas could transform society. According to him, the movement of ideas described two processes. The first was a cumulative movement in which ethical ideas developed together with material changes. For this Morris provided a religious example. He maintained that faith is formed by social, political and economic circumstances that are forced upon it. The second process is that history constantly repeats ideas, which has led, for example, to a tradition of utopian thought.[204] Morris analyzed Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) and argued that it was a product of its time; he found in it *a steady expression of the longing for a society of equality of condition.* In his own *The Dream of John Ball* (1888) his main character claims that *fellowship is life, and lack of fellowship is death.*[205]

Morris, however, lost some of his own friends due to his political ideals. Socialism was at that time associated with *lawlessness and folly.*[206] For this reason Morris's political views placed great strain on many of his friendships.[207] While his designs were much appreciated by contemporaries, his socialist ideals were frowned upon by even his closest friends and

[202] Kinna, *William Morris: The Art of Socialism*, 70–71.

[203] Ibid., 74–76.

[204] Ibid., 111–12.

[205] Ibid., 113–14.

[206] Compton-Rickett, *William Morris*, 225.

[207] Ibid.

colleagues. In the preface to the first edition of the magazine of the Century Guild, the *Hobby Horse,* Mackmurdo wrote about Morris:

> *As an art craftsman he is our master; but we hesitate to follow him in his endeavour to agitate for state intervention as a possible panacea of poverty; or to accept his belief in parliament as an apportioner of poverty. Poverty, injustice and crime are to us the natural result of class character, and class character like individual character acts automatically according to its bulk of higher human elements; which bulk cannot be increased artificially.*[208]

Morris's ideals even estranged him from Burne-Jones. His sense of justice not only cost him his friendships, but his socialist views even occasionally resulted in the withholding of commissions.[209] Morris did not perhaps care too greatly about this. His business manager Warrington Taylor once wrote the following concerning an estimate for church decoration:

> *To providing a silk and gold altar cloth: 'Note - In consideration of the fact that the above item is wholly unnecessary and inexcusable at a time when thousands of poor people in this so-called Christian country are in want of food - additional charge to that set forth, ten pounds.*[210]

Morris laughed about it and declared that he was happy to turn Taylor into a socialist.[211]

He found new friends and acquaintances who shared his socialist ideals during the period in which he became an active member of socialist parties. Morris also had a warm and friendly regard for the Russian anarchist-theoretician Prince Peter Alexeivich Kropotkin (1842-1921). On several occasions Morris asked Kropotkin to lecture at the Hammersmith Branch. Morris himself, however, was against theoretical anarchism and he felt some antipathy towards the anarchists within the Socialist League.[212] In May 1887 he wrote in a letter to a friend that:

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[208] Mackmurdo, "The Guilds Flag's Unfurling," 11.

[209] Compton-Rickett, *William Morris*, 225.

[210] Euler, *Arts and Crafts Embroidery*, 11.

[211] Ibid.

[212] Kelvin, *The Collected Letters of William Morris*, 1987, 2 (1885-1888): 536.

> *I distinctly disagree with the Anarchist principle, much as I sympathise with many of the anarchists personally, and although I have an Englishman's wholesome horror of government interference & centralization . . . I agree that it would be not so much impolitic as impossible to pronounce on the matters of religion & family. Peoples instincts are I think leading them in the right direction in these matters; and yet the old superstitions, as they have now become, have such a veil of tradition & literature about them that it is difficult to formulate the probabilities (they can be no more) of the new order in words that ~~can~~ will not be misunderstood, & so cause offence.*[213]

With journalist, philosopher and socialist Ernest Belfort Bax (1854-1926) he wrote, amongst other things, the *Manifesto of the Socialist League,* which included several political comments. This manifesto was adopted during the General Conference of the party in July 1885.[214] As one of the connotations of this, they wrote:

> *A new system of industrial production must necessarily bear with it its own morality. Morality, which in a due state of Society, should mean nothing more than the responsibility of the individual man to the social whole of which he forms a part, has come to mean his responsibility to a supernatural being who arbitrary creates and directs his conscience and the laws which are to govern it; although the attributes of this being are but the reflex of some passing phase of man's existence, and change more or less with that phase. A purely theological morality, therefore, means simply a survival from a past condition of Society; it may be added that, however sacred it may be deemed conventionally, it is set aside with little scruple when it clashes with the necessities (unforeseen at its birth) which belong to the then existing state of things . . . The economical change which we advocate, therefore, would not be stable unless accompanied by a corresponding revolution in ethics, which, however, is certain to accompany it, since the two things are inseparable elements of a whole, to wit social evolution.*[215]

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[213] Ibid., 2 (1885-1888): 658–59.

[214] Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, 849.

[215] Ibid., 856.

This makes clear that Morris's religious views changed over the years. He moved away from a theological form of morality, replacing this with the teachings of what he called the *religion of socialism*. In May 1885, Morris wrote:

> *[A]ll we ask is that people should hold that their actions are to be regulated by their responsibility to each other as social human beings; this is the religion of Socialism; if it does not square with the dogma's of 'religion' so much worse for the latter, I say. Meantime undoubtedly we do not want to interfere with the* speculative belief *of any man: 'by their fruits ye shall know them': if the dogmas of any religion lead to the practical support of oppression and injustice, there must be something wrong with them. Otherwise it is possible that at the worst they represent some tendency in human taste, past or present and were at any rate alive once.*[216]

According to Morris, religion had been an important factor in the past, and he acknowledged that it could be important even in his own time, but he warned that it should not lead towards domination or other forms of injustice. Three years later, in 1885, Morris explained what the term religion meant to him:

> *Religion to me means a habit of responsibility to something outside myself, but that something does not always clothe the claim to my responsibility in the same form: if I had lived in former times, I mean, I should have felt the responsibility, but the rules of conduct would not necessarily have been the same; or perhaps not to engage in a logomachy I should not have expressed them in the same way.*[217]

Here he relates responsibility to something beyond religion itself. This responsibility was heartfelt, and helped him to achieve many of his contributions to society.

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[216] Kelvin, *The Collected Letters of William Morris*, 1987, 2 (1885-1888): 431.

[217] Ibid., 2 (1885-1888): 777.

Fig. 10: Design by Morris. Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co, detail of: *Three Maries at the Sepulcher,* 1862, Stained glass windows, South aisle east window of the St Michael and All Angels Church, Brighton, Sussex.

§ 2.4 Religious art

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In the former section I described how Morris was inspired by socialism and the Middle Ages. During the medieval period stained-glass windows and embroidery were considered to be two of the highest art forms.[218] Morris and his companions contributed to the revival of both of these arts in their own period.

Stained-glass windows and the protection of Christian heritage

A renewed interest in stained-glass windows followed the Gothic revival in architecture. Due their medieval associations, they became popular once again.[219] Given the passion of Morris and his friends for the Middle Ages it is not surprising that they contributed this resurgence.[220] In 1861 the firm *Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co* was established with the purpose of designing and creating fine art fabrics.[221] The company was reorganized the following year as *Morris & Co* (also called *The Firm*) and was comprised of seven partners: William Morris himself, Edward Burne-Jones, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Philipp Webb, Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893), Peter Paul Marshall (1830-1900) and Charles J. Faulkner (1806-1884).[222] The collaboration of these partners enabled each of them to grow and their work made a very powerful impression on the public.[223]

Morris had acted as manager since the establishment of the company. He directed the employees as well as the people who worked at home for the company, oversaw the production, dealt with clients and dispatched finished items. Moreover, he coordinated and contributed to the design process. He also traveled around to discuss the requirements of clients. Even though the partners met every Wednesday evening, Morris was more regularly at *The Firm* in order to take care of day-to-day business.[224] These weekly meetings were usually chaired by Burne-Jones or Madox Brown [app. 13]. Faulkner had the responsibility of keeping detailed accounts.[225]

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[218] Euler, *Arts and Crafts Embroidery*, 10.

[219] Banham and Harris, *William Morris and the Middle Ages*, 32.

[220] MacCarthy, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time*, 17.

[221] Triggs, *The Arts & Crafts Movement*, 54.

[222] Blakesley, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 35.

[223] Watkinson, *Pre-Raphaelite Art and Design*, 195.

[224] Bennett and Miles, *William Morris in the Twenty-First Century*, 67.

[225] Harvey and Press, *William Morris: Design and Enterprise in Victorian Britain*, 39–40.

In the early days the company's income came largely from stained-glass windows [app. 16 t/m 20].[226] *The Firm* received several important commissions for the decoration of churches built by Gothic revival architects such as William Butterfield, George Gilbert Scott, George Edmund Street and George Frederick Bodley.[227] Morris shared an interest in the Gothic style with these early patrons, as he had become fascinated by Gothic architecture from a very young age. When he was eight years old his father took him to Canterbury Cathedral. He later stated that he admired the cathedral so much that he felt as if the gates of heaven had been opened for him.[228]

The earliest glazing scheme executed by *Morris & Co*. can be found in All Saints Church, Selsley, Gloucesterhire. The design is based on late thirteenth century prototypes, in particular the chapel windows at Merton College, Oxford. Old and New Testament subjects are combined in a way that is typical for medieval iconography. The design of the windows was carried out by Burne-Jones, Morris, Rossetti, Madox Brown, Webb and possibly also by George Campfield, but the design gives a unified impression nonetheless, thanks to the planning and control of Morris and Webb.[229]

As most of the partners were beginners or mere amateurs in the decorative arts, with only the limited experience of Burne-Jones and Madox Brown in designing stained-glass windows, they began the business relying heavily on the craftsmanship of their employees. One of their first designs contains shapes that are almost impossible to cut in glass. This shows how little they knew about the technical aspects. It was the task of the craftsmen of the studio to translate these designs into actual artifacts. The glass they worked with was bought from other firms.[230] As a matter of fact, these methods went against the Arts and Craft movement's principle of the unification of the design process and execution by a single artist-craftsman. Morris, however, believed that *a good craftsman was not necessarily a great artist.*[231]

Although he lacked practical experience in glass making when the firm received its first commission, Morris soon began to learn the craft and became responsible for the color schemes of all the glass paintings made by the firm.[232] Morris's own share in window design has been underestimated by many previous scholars, for he created about 150 designs. Many

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[226] Blakesley, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 35.

[227] Banham and Harris, *William Morris and the Middle Ages*, 147.

[228] MacCarthy, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time*, 18.

[229] Banham and Harris, *William Morris and the Middle Ages*, 148.

[230] Sewter, *The Stained Glass Windows of William Morris and His Circle*, 1: 17–18.

[231] Ibid., 1: 22.

[232] Vallance, *The Life and Work of William Morris*, 64–65.

of them are small minstrel angels for tracery lights [see cover]. Others are designs for larger figures and compositions of multiple figures. In the latter category he designed *The Annunciation, The Presentation in the temple, St Paul Preaching, The Marriage Feast at Cana, The Last Supper, The Ascension,* and others. Among the figures depicted on their own are: *St Catharine, St Cecilia, St Jacob, St James the Greater, Joseph, St Luke, Martha,* several *Mary Magdalenes*, two *Ruths, St Thomas and Zacharias*.[233] Furthermore, he was one of the first artists to experiment with patterned and foliage backgrounds, and he designed many borders, rolls and inscriptions for the other partners.[234]

In total the firm produced several thousand stained-glass windows with subjects such as *Abraham's Sacrifice, Noah building the Ark, Enoch and the Angel, Daniel in the Lion's Den, Christ Healing the Woman with an Issue of Blood* and *Christ Walking on Water*.[235] Burne-Jones contributed the majority of the designs. After becoming a partner of *Morris & Co*. in 1861 he designed exclusively for the firm. Madox Brown produced some 130 designs also but Rossetti felt disdain for the medium and only created about three dozen. The remaining partners only designed a small number of panels.[236]

The stained-glass windows made by *Morris & Co*. were different from other Gothic revival works in the sense that they were fresh and spontaneous, with imaginative and unconventional reinterpretations of medieval sources.[237] The designs also show a deep knowledge of the biblical stories depicted, although they are generally depicted in landscapes familiar to their contemporaries.[238] The company received many commissions for stained-glass windows in ancient churches and other buildings throughout the country, but Morris and his partners turned down many of these commissions for idealistic reasons.[239]

In 1877 Morris co-founded the *Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings* (SPAB), also called *Anti-scrape*.[240] He felt that an association was required that went against the *so-called restoration* that followed the uprising of ecclesiastical zeal.[241] According to Morris:

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[233] Sewter, *The Stained Glass Windows of William Morris and His Circle*, 1: 59–61.

[234] Ibid., 1: 31, 33, 61.

[235] MacCarthy, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time*, 12.

[236] Banham and Harris, *William Morris and the Middle Ages*, 36.

[237] Ibid., 148.

[238] MacCarthy, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time*, 12.

[239] Blakesley, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 14.

[240] Stansky, *Redesigning the World*, 58.

[241] Morris, William, *The Collected Works of William Morris*, 2012, 22: Hopes and Fears for Art: 19.

> *[A]n association should be set on foot to keep a watch on old monuments, to protect against all 'restoration' that means more than keeping out wind and weather, and, by all means, literary and other, to awaken a feeling that our ancient buildings are not mere ecclesiastical toys, but sacred monuments of the nation's growth and hope.*[242]

The society protested against this so-called 'restoration' and tried to prevent the destruction of monuments. They also attempted to halt the demolition of Christopher Wren's (1632-1723) churches in London. Morris wrote to *The Times* in April 1878:

> *Surely an opulent city, the capital of the commercial world, can afford some small sacrifice to spare these beautiful buildings in the little plots of ground upon which they stand. Is it absolutely necessary that every scrap of space in the City should be devoted to money-making, and are religion, sacred memories, recollections of the great dead, memorials of the past, works of England's greatest architect, to be banished from this wealthy city?*[243]

The SPAB grew out of the prevalent historicism of the period, in opposition to the belief that society as it is at present, rather than as it had been in the past, was superior.[244] The Society mainly occupied itself in protesting to the authorities against demolition and the so-called restoration of buildings.[245]

Because of his activities for the SPAB, Morris no longer accepted commissions for older churches from April 1877 onwards.[246] He stated that *it is impossible to restore the living spirit which was an inseparable part of the religion, thought and manners that produced the buildings of the past*.[247] He consequently believed that it was not a good idea to make an imitation mediaeval window, although placing a modern window in a mediaeval church would certainly harm the integrity of the art of the past. For this reason Morris refused to make windows for the mediaeval churches he adored, although he accepted commissions for Baroque and Palladian buildings, the styles of which he detested. For example, he turned

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[242] Morris, *William Morris : Artist, Writer, Socialist*, 1: The Art of William Morris: 106–7.

[243] Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, 270.

[244] Stansky, *Redesigning the World*, 113.

[245] Morris, *William Morris : Artist, Writer, Socialist*, 1: The Art of William Morris: 113–14.

[246] Blakesley, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 49.

[247] Vallance, *The Life and Work of William Morris*, 273–74.

down a commission to create windows for Westminster Abbey. Morris's idealistic decision not to design windows for ancient buildings deprived him of many of the most challenging and lucrative stained-glass commissions.[248]

Furthermore, his ideals caused conflicts with several clergymen. While arguing with the vicar of Burford, a medieval town in the Cotswolds, the vicar declared that it was his own church and that he could stand on his head in it if he wished to. Moreover, in 1877 the Dean of Canterbury accused Morris in *The Times* of being unaware of the true purpose of the cathedral: *Mr. Morris's Society probably looks on our Cathedral as a place for antiquarian research or for budding architects to learn their art in. We need it for the daily worship of God.* Morris replied to this accusation by returning to his childhood memories:

> *Remembering well the impression that Canterbury Cathedral made on me when I first stood in it as a little boy, I must needs think that a great building which is obviously venerable and weighty with history is fitter for worship than one turned into a scientific demonstration of what the original architects intended to do.*[249]

Textiles

Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. had been founded just at the right time. Worried about declining church attendance in the 1840s and 1850s, the Church of England was eager to build new churches and to remodel old ones. The firm received many commissions for ecclesiastical work. From the outset, embroidery was an important part of the firm. By the end of the 1860s, however, the number of ecclesiastical commissions had decreased and Morris was obliged to focus on private commissions.[250]

Morris's firm produced a large variety of textile products such as linen, silk, wools, printed cottons, tapestries [app. 8], embroideries and hand-knotted and machine-woven carpeting.[251] Furthermore, they created different kinds of utensils, including those used in churches. For example, one of the first churches to commission work from them, St Martin's-on-the-Hill (Scarborough, England), asked them to glaze the entire church. Moreover, St Martin's also

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[248] Sewter, *The Stained Glass Windows of William Morris and His Circle*, 1: 55–56.

[249] Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, 270.

[250] Euler, *Arts and Crafts Embroidery*, 11.

[251] Parry, *Textiles of the Arts and Crafts Movement*, 28.

requested an embroidered altar frontal, a pulpit with painted panels and murals within the screen.[252]

In the creation of such embroideries Morris's entire family was sometimes involved. Henry James wrote to his sister in 1869, telling her that he had watched the Morrises embroider:

> *Morris's poetry, you see, is only his sub-trade. To begin with, he is a manufacturer of stained-glass windows, tiles, ecclesiastical and medieval tapestry, altar-cloths, and in fine everything quaint, archaic, pre-Raphaelite and I may add, exquisite . . . But more curious than anything is himself. He designs with his own head and hands all the figures and patterns used in his glass and tapestry, and furthermore works the latter, stich by stich, with his own fingers aided by those of his wife and little girls.*[253]

Morris's daughters were seven and eight years old at this time. At the outset female family members of the company were mainly responsible for the embroidery. Jane Burden and her sister Elizabeth (known as Bessie), Georgiana Burne-Jones, Kate and Lucy Faulkner, all were involved. After the business expanded the firm took on workers who were managed by Jane and Bessie. Although Morris encouraged the embroiderers to contribute to the design of the work, he soon realized the importance of branding and ensured everything harmonized well.[254]

In 1885 Jane's daughter May Morris took over the embroidery department at the age of twenty-three. This was one of the most important departments in the firm at the time, and as May was capable of both designing and embroidering, she was just the right person for the job.[255] A pair of ecclesiastical gloves depicting golden ears of wheat [app. 26] is an example of this. The gloves were exhibited at the 1899 Arts and Crafts Exhibition.[256]

Conclusion

In this chapter I have described how the people who surrounded Morris during his life brought him into contact with religious movements such as the High Church and the Oxford movements, as well as with political movements such as the Christian Socialist Movement.

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[252] Banham and Harris, *William Morris and the Middle Ages*, 148.

[253] Euler, *Arts and Crafts Embroidery*, 10.

[254] Ibid., 11.

[255] Ibid., 13.

[256] Parry, *Textiles of the Arts and Crafts Movement*, 77.

Nevertheless, Morris drastically changed his career path, turning to the arts while maintaining his desire to form a brotherhood, and also maintaining his interest in culture and society. In this way he rebelled against his own age, discovering in the Middle Ages greater insight into how the culture in which he lived had developed. Morris, as one of the leading exponents of the medieval revival, compared the Middle-Ages to modernity – and always remained committed to the former. He strongly disliked modern society with its capitalist work ethic. Instead he stressed the values of fellowship and social equality, the need to reorganize labor and to decentralize power, and the importance of freedom of hand and thought for the workmen.

Morris's love for the Middle-Ages was closely bound up with his socialist views. He insisted upon joyous work, social equality and the need for a new economic and socio-political system. His opinions on the role of the artist were inseparably related to this, and they were the complete antithesis of those of some of his contemporaries. Instead of supporting the popular *L'art pour l'art* (art for art's sake) philosophy, which asserted that the intrinsic value of art is separate from its moral, didactic or utilitarian functions, Morris ascribed both a moral and educative role to art. According to Morris, art was not something divine, but something human.

Nevertheless his company *Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co* received many commissions for ecclesiastical work. From the outset, the firm relied on these commissions for its income. Morris and his partners established the firm at the right moment in time: the numbers of new churches built and of old churches remodeled by the Church of England increased steadily due to the decline in church attendance. Meanwhile, the Gothic revival led to a renewed interest in stained-glass windows. The lack of experience of the partners did not prevent them receiving thousands of commissions. These windows depicted a variety of Christian themes in unconventional ways. From the foundation of the SPAB onwards, however, the firm turned down several commissions as a protest against the demolition and so-called restoration of older buildings. The firm also produced a large variety of textile products for ecclesiastical use, such as altar frontals and bishop's gloves.

Fig. 11: Johan Thorn Prikker, Detail of: *Descent from the Cross*, c. 1892, oil on canvas, 88 x 147 cm, signed lower right: J. Thorn Prikker, KMM.

Chapter 3: Johan Thorn Prikker

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In this chapter I will focus on the Dutch artist Johan Thorn Prikker, who was considerably younger than William Morris. The difference in age (thirty-four years) between these artists is consistent the Arts and Crafts movement reaching The Netherlands almost a decade after it had first developed in Britain. In The Netherlands the art and the writings of Morris and other Arts and Crafts artists became known only in the 1890s.

Fig. 12: Detail of: Photograph of Johan Thorn Prikker finishing his mural *The Construction of the Dikes* in the town hall of Rotterdam, 1927.

§ 3.1 Introduction

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In September 1902 art critic and painter Philippe Zilcken (1857-1930) praised his friend and colleague Johan Thorn Prikker in the magazine *Elsevier's Geïllustreerd Maandschrift* with the following words:

> *In his manners, he is extremely normal, with his suit similar to that of a cyclist. But when you start a conversation with him, he is inexhaustibly versatile. Always surprising because of his fine ingenuity and clear vision on all sorts of things, each time touching very difficult social issues, capitalism and socialism, - or medical or literary or artistic, in turn glorifying the art of Van Eyck, Vermeer, Maris, or Versters, in order to continue with the passionate description of a football match, of miserable conditions within our society, or to indulge in chemical definitions of dyes and processes, which he studies for his diverse work - or to dwell with the purity of ancient Chinese or Hindu philosophy.*[257]

Johan Thorn Prikker was born on the sixth of June 1868 in The Hague, The Netherlands. He was the third child of Maria van Geyzelen and Hendrik Philippus Thorn Prikker, who was a house and glass painter and owned a store dealing in artists' supplies.[258] His brother Eduard Thorn Prikker wrote novels about the art world. His *Kunstmenschen* (Artists, 1902) was based on his brother, Johan Thorn Prikker.[259]

Thorn Prikker was raised within a protestant family. Protestantism was the dominant religion in the northern and western parts of the Netherlands, including The Hague, the city Thorn Prikker was registered as belonging to the *Nederlands Hervormde Kerk* (Dutch Reformed Church.)[260] From his adolescence onwards he was not an active church-goer,

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[257] Original: *In zijn manieren is hij uiterst gewoon, met zijn pak, gelijk aan dat van een wielhardrijder. Maar begint men een gesprek met hem, dan is hij onuitputtelijk gevarieerd, altijd verrassend door zijn fijn vernuft en scherpen blik in allerhande zaken, telkens aanrakend zeer moeiljke, sociale kwesties, kapitalisme en socialisme, - of weer medische of literaire of artistieke, beurtelings ophemelend de kunst van Van Eyck, Vermeer, Maris, of Versters, om dan weer te vallen in de hartstochtelijke beschrijving van een football match, van misereuse toestanden onzer maatschappij, of om zich te verdiepen in scheikundige definities van verfstoffen en procédés, die hij bestudeerd voor zijn uiteenlopende arbeid, - of te dweepen met de reinheid der oud-Chineesche of Hindoesche philosopie.* Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 8.

[258] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 33.

[259] Zonen, "Ed. Thorn Prikker (Ed. Verburgh). Kunstmenschen.," 382.

[260] Greer, "Johan Thorn Prikker's Mural for De Zeemeeuw," 13.

although he later used many religious themes in his art. He also made reference to various forms of spirituality in his writings.

At the age of fourteen, Thorn Prikker attended the *Koninklijke Academie voor Beeldende Kunsten* (Royal Academy of Art) in September 1881 in The Hague. He would remain there until he was suspended in November 1887 for violations of the rules. It is not known what exactly caused this suspension.[261] Immediately following this he joined the *Haagsche Kunstkring* (Art Circle of The Hague) at the age of twenty. However, by March 1893 he felt so dissatisfied with this association that he insulted the chair as well as another member of the *Haagsche Kunstkring* during a meeting. This again resulted in suspension, but Thorn Prikker decided to terminate his membership before they actually excluded him.[262]

In The Netherlands Thorn Prikker had a difficult time. His work received harsh criticism from other artists and the press and he also had struggled financially. He even became involved in illegal arms trafficking in 1893.[263] However, he was not only struggling with others, but also within himself. In June 1893, he wrote to journalist and writer Henri Borel (1869-1933) and said that he did not find anything beautiful anymore, not even the art of Thijs Maris (1839-1917). Everything appeared cold, harsh and ugly to him. He had also lost all faith in himself as an artist:

> *God, no, i have no emotions left about anything, ive become like stone, im no different whether its evening or morning, always the same, even without willpower, indifferent, wretched. I no longer have contact with anyone, i dont even see them any more, only the biggest ninnies still appeal to me, to chat to now and then, and tell them nonsense.*[264]

In December 1893 he still did not feel much better:

> *Now this may be because i myself have been feeling very sad the last few days. Id like to weep for days on end. And i no longer work* very *hard the way i used to. But i hope*

[261] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 33.

[262] Kalmthout, van, *Muzentempels*, 402.

[263] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 149.

[264] The unorthodox English spelling reflects what well may have been deliberately unorthodox spelling in the original Dutch text. Original: *God, neen, ik heb geen emoties meer van iets, ik ben als steen geworden, of het avond is of ochtend ik ben eender, altoos gelijk, zonder wil zelfs, onverschillig, beroerd. Ik ga met niemand meer om, ik zie ze geeneens meer, alleen de grootste koekebakkers vind ik nog wel wat, zoo eens om mee te kletsen, onzin vertellen tegen hen.* Ibid., 127.

> *this will pass and i can start again in the regular way. To tell the truth, you know, there was a time when i could no longer think, no longer had an opinion about anything, saw everything passing me by in a dirty grey colour, with now and again those terribly jolly moods, when you feel very jolly (not happy). But now i feel thats getting a bit less. Now ive got some idea again about what im going to do. But not as much as i used to feel.*[265]

Equally unhappy was his personal life. Thorn Prikker met his first wife, Helena Charlotte (Lena) Sprée (1867-1899), possibly at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague, where she was enrolled from 1884/1885 until October 1888. They became engaged in 1885 and were married in 1898. Lena Sprée died less than a year later following a miscarriage.[266] In the summer of 1903 Thorn Prikker married his second wife, Berta Cramer (1847-1954). He and Berta had met two years earlier in Visé, Belgium. After his marriage, he moved to Rijswijk but lived there only for a short time. One year later he left The Netherlands permanently.[267]

In the summer of 1904 he moved to Krefeld in Germany to start work as a teacher at the *Kunstgewerbeschule* (School of Arts and Crafts).[268] Krefeld had been one of Europe's leading centers of textile production since the seventeenth century. Here, as in the rest of Germany, Dutch artists were much appreciated. While Thorn Prikker was not very much appreciated in The Netherlands, German art critics made him the most important representative of *Jung-Holland* (young Holland).[269] Following the First World War he became a German citizen and worked in Überlingen (1919-1920) and Munich (1920-1923). In 1923 he went to Düsseldorf as a professor of glass painting and mosaic, before moving to Cologne (1926-1932).[270] He died on May 5th 1932 in Cologne, at the age of sixty-three. Exhibitions were organized in his memory in Cologne, Krefeld and Utrecht.[271]

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[265] Original: *Nu kan het wel dat dit komt omdat ikzelf de laatste dagen me heel verdrietig voel. Ik zou wel willen huilen dag en achter elkaar. Ik werk ook niet héél veel zooals vroeger. Maar ik hoop dat dit zal overgaan en dat ik weer geregeld kan beginnen. Waarachtig zeg, ik heb een tijd gehad dat ik niet meer denken kon, dat ik geen oordeel meer had, dat ik alles al in een vuile grijze kleur langs me zag gaan, zoo nu en dan van die erge vrolijke buien, dat je je zoo heel vroolijk (niet gelukkig) voelt. Ik geloof dat die toestand nu wel minder sterk wordt. Ik heb nu weer een idee over het geen ik doen zal gaan gekregen. Maar nog niet zoo sterk als ik het vroeger wel voelde.* Ibid., 159.

[266] Ibid., 317.

[267] Bionda et al., *The Age of Van Gogh*, 218.

[268] Heynen, *Johan Thorn Prikker: Werke bis 1910*, 15.

[269] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 129, 135–36.

[270] Ibid., 7.

[271] Heynen, *Johan Thorn Prikker: Werke bis 1910*, 19.

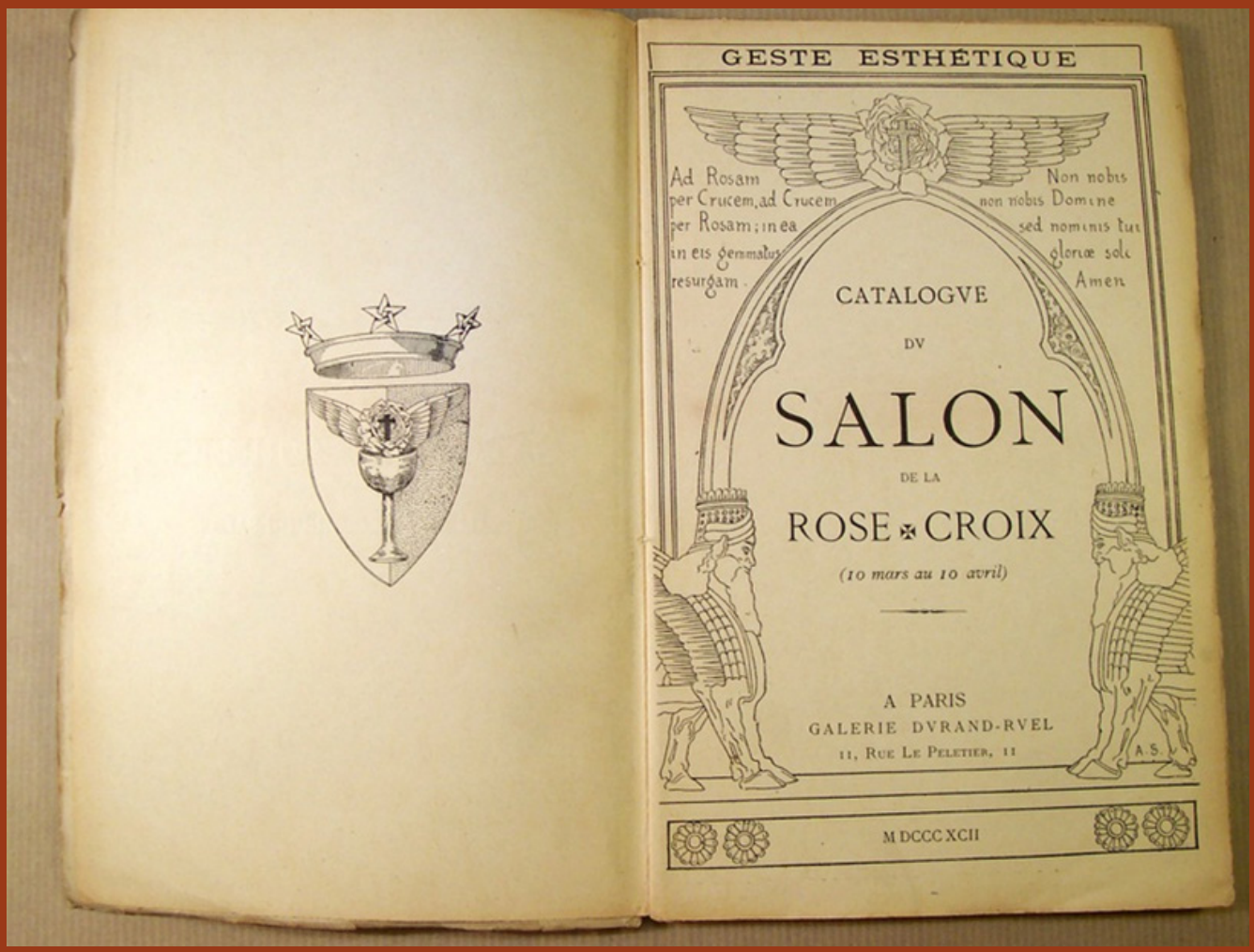

Fig. 13: Joséphin Péladan, *Catalogue du Salon de la Rose † Croix (10 Mars au 10 avril)*, Paris: Galerie Durand-Ruel, 1892.

§ 3.2 Influences

§ 3.2 Influences

Although Thorn Prikker was influenced by highly oppositional elements, he was capable of integrating these conflicting ideas into his art. In this chapter I will describe some of his most important influences in chronological order. Over many years he was influenced by the Dutch avant-garde literary group the *Tachtigers,* in particular by Henri Borel, who introduced him to the other members, became his best friend and shared with him a mutual interest in Eastern religion. He was also influenced by the writings of Morris and Ruskin on the social engagement of the artist, by the Belgian art society *Les Vingt*, anarchism, and by mysticism and theosophy.

Tachtigers

Around 1880 Thorn Prikker came into contact with the *Tachtigers,* also called the *Beweging van tachtig* (movement of eighty). This group, which had arisen from literary circles, belonged to the Dutch intellectual avant-garde of that time.[272] Thorn Prikker described his meetings with, amongst others, Willem Kloos (1859-1938), Lodewijk van Deyssel (1864-1952), Willem Witsen (1860-1923) and Hein Boeken (1861-1933) in his letters.[273] The *Tachtigers* were anti-theoretical non-conformists and they stressed the importance of the feelings of the individual artist, which greatly interested Thorn Prikker.[274]

In 1885 the *Tachtigers* founded *De Nieuwe Gids*, a magazine that helped to spread their *l'art pour l' art* (art for art's sake) philosophy. The term *l'art pour l'art* was the motto of Théophile Gautier (1811-1872) and this ideology, which emphasized the intrinsic value of art, was especially influential from the 1880s to the 1890s. According to this idea, art has no moral, didactic or utilitarian function. The motto of Willem Kloos, one of the most prominent figures of the movement, was *Art is passion (Kunst is passie)*. His view did not release the artist from his role as an outsider, but he emphasized rather that artists are particularly sensitive people.[275]

However, not all members of the *Tachtigers* agreed with the art for art's sake philosophy. Thorn Prikker's best friend, author, poet, journalist and sinologist Henri Jean François Borel (1869-1933) did not support it. In an interview in 1929 he declared: *I find "l'art pour l'art" . . . horrible. Art has to have for me, what the Hindu calls "bhakti," that means religious devotion,*

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[272] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 35.

[273] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 76, 202.

[274] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 35.

[275] Ibid.

complete surrender of the impersonal.[276] Thorn Prikker removed himself over the years further and further from the idea that art should not have any function.[277]

Borel and Thorn Prikker first met in December 1890. It was Borel who introduced him to other members of the movement. He also introduced him to Frederik van Eeden (1860-1932), who would later become Thorn Prikker's second best friend.[278] Van Eeden was a psychiatrist and writer whose social concern led him to the establishment of the artists' colony called *Walden* in Laren. This alternative way of living attracted, amongst others, Adriaan Roland Holst (1888-1976) and Piet Mondriaan (1872-1944).[279] Van Eeden also made plans for the ideal city in the form of a mandala, in which the *House of God*, a temple without any references to specific religions, would be at the center surrounded by eight temples devoted to what Van Eeden believed to be the eight greatest religions.[280] Van Eeden's interest in religion led him to lecture on the topic of *Theosophy in England*, on February 21th 1892 in Leyden. Borel mentioned this event many times in his diary.[281]

Borel described theosophy, which he also called *Neo-Buddhism,* as *a new philosophy* that he found *very, very important.* According to Borel theosophy is about *the now almost proven fact that for centuries some people were genuinely in union with God, and initiated into the highest mysteries.* These adepts included Vishnu, Buddha, Jesus Christ, St Paul, Moses, Pythagoras and Plato. He also claimed that the pioneers of theosophy, which he called *the religion of the future,* were two women.[282] It remains unclear however whether or not Thorn Prikker attended this lecture. If not, then it is very likely that Borel or Van Eeden told him about the event, especially as the lecture encouraged Borel to start reading about Buddhism.[283]

The *Tachtigers* were not only interested in eastern religions. Like many artists and writers throughout Europe during this period, they were attracted to Catholicism, and in particular for aesthetic reasons. The central figure in Joris-Karl Huysmans's (1848-1907) *À Rebours* (Against the Grain, 1884) the Duke Jean Floressas des Esseintes, for example, was strongly

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[276] Original: *Ik vind l'art pour l'art . . . afschuwelijk. Kunst toch moet voor mij hebben, wat de Hindoe noemt "bhawti," dat wil zeggen: religieuze devotie, geheele overgave van het onpersoonlijke.* Annelén, "Op Zijn Zestigste Verjaardag," 1.

[277] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 20.

[278] Ibid., 35.

[279] Grave, Sprengel, and Vandevoorde, *Anarchismus Und Utopie in Der Literatur Um 1900*, 56.

[280] Gamwell and deGrasse Tyson, *Mathematics and Art*, 247; Koetsier and Bergmans, *Mathematics and the Divine*, 558.

[281] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 12.

[282] Borel is here referring to Anna Kingsford (1846-188) and Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891). Ibid., 42.

[283] Ibid., 42–43.

against the institution of the Church, its laws and dogmas, but was simultaneously attracted to ecclesiastical art, its rituals and ceremonies, and its library filled with Greek and Latin works. Huysmans used a quotation by the fourteenth century mystic Jan van Ruusbroec (1293-1381) as the motto of his novel *À Rebours*.[284]

Eastern Religions

The friendship between Borel and Thorn Prikker was based on a *mutual appreciation and adoration of beautiful things*. Borel called it in his writings an *artistic friendship*.[285] Occasionally Borel would invite some friends to his intimate *art evenings*. During a meeting of October 9th 1891, for example, when Thorn Prikker was also present, they admired some Japanese prints by, amongst others, Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849). They also examined eight drawings by Thorn Prikker himself, after Gustave Flaubert's (1821-1880) *Trois Contes* (Three Tales, 1877). They also listened to Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), Georg Friederich Händel (1685-1759) and Richard Wagner (1813-1883), and read poems by Paul Verlaine (1844-1896) and Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861).[286]

Thorn Prikker, in the words of Borel, *revealed* several visual artists to him in the museums that they visited together.[287] Moreover, Borel and Thorn Prikker mutually appreciated each other's work. Borel valued Thorn Prikker's art and called him the successor of Rembrandt, Holbein and Van der Weyden in his diary.[288] Borel, however, was not very familiar with Buddhist art, despite his intention to become a Chinese interpreter. Borel saw small Buddhist statues for the first time in December 1891 in The Hague, although it seems like he was not very interested in eastern art at first. Japanese prints were an exception to the rule, but these were very popular at the time and had almost been subsumed into the Western heritage.[289]

The theosophy lecture by Van Eeden in 1892 was the first time that Borel had come into contact with Buddhist teachings. From the outset, he shared this new interest with Thorn Prikker. About a week after this lecture, on February 29th, Borel noted in his diary

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[284] Nissen, *Een Zachte Aanraking van Zijn Zieleleven*, 11–13.

[285] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 28.

[286] Ibid., 34.

[287] Ibid., 12, 32.

[288] Parts of Borel's diary are published in *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*. This fragment is from 15 March 1892. Ibid., 43.

[289] When Borel and Thorn Prikker visited the *National Museum of Antiquities* in Leyden in August 1892, they went to the Greek and Egyptian departments. Borel described this visit in a letter to a friend. Either he did not find it worth mentioning that they had also visited the Chinese and Hindu-Javanese sections, or they did not visit these departments at all. This indicates how little interest Borel had in non-western art. Ibid., 11–12.

that he had borrowed *A Manual of Buddhism in its Modern Development* (1860) by Robert Spence Hardy (1803-1868) from the library. Two weeks later, on March 15th, he remarked that he was translating fragments of the book for Thorn Prikker, because he was very interested in these matters but his English was not sufficient. The same day Borel observed that writings on Buddhism were very popular.[290] Borel pursued his own study of Buddhism and read *Buddhism, in its Connexion with Brahmanism and Hinduism, and in its Contrast with Christianity* (1889) by Monier-Williams. On March 24th he arrived at the conclusion that the assertions of Blavatsky and Kingsford *that all religions derive from One origin and have one Essence*, are strengthened by this book.[291]

By the end of August 1892 Borel started work as a correspondent in China, where he wrote, among other things, *Kwan Yin, Een Boek van de Goden en de Hel* (Guanyin, A Book about the Gods and Hell, 1897), *Van de Engelen* (About the Angels, 1901) and *De Godsdienst van het Oude China* (The Religion of Ancient China, 1911).[292] After Borel moved to China Thorn Prikker frequently corresponded with him.[293] They exchanged photographs as well as letters, and on Borel's request Thorn Prikker also sent him books. In 1893 Borel ordered, a book on Buddhism, possibly Alfred Percy Sinnett's (1840-1921) *Esoteric Buddhism* (1889).[294]

Thorn Prikker learned much from Borel's stories, such as the one about the Hindu temple in Canton. This temple had statues of five hundred *arhats* (persons who have reached the highest stage of perfection). Thorn Prikker learnt from this story that several types of Buddhas exist, not just the speaking Buddha who stands or sits with his legs folded. The dying Buddha particularly intrigued him. He believed that such a faithful Buddha must be the happiest of beings, because pain and poverty do not matter when you are certain on resurrection after death. For a believer, dying is only a change of your temporary body, he wrote.[295]

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[290] Ibid., 11–12, 42–43, 56–57.

[291] Original: *En even opmerken: dat (veel later ook) de Grieken ook al de Zon zich voorstelden als een God Helios, in een wagen met Rossen. - Dát, en dat Kindje, en die moeder, die lotussen en lelies enz enz, alle wel geen directe bewijzen, maar toch sterke steun voor de bewering van Mevrouw Blavatsky en Anna Kingsford (zie v. Eeden's lezing over "Theosophie") dat alle godsdiensten uit Eene oorspronkelijke zijn afgeleid, ééne Essence hebben.* Ibid., 45.

[292] Ibid., 17, 173, 216.

[293] Heynen, *Johan Thorn Prikker: Werke bis 1910*, 12.

[294] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 148, 292.

[295] Ibid., 178.

From 1892 onwards Borel aroused Thorn Prikker's interest in the middle- and far-eastern arts and crafts. This interest was further inspired by other friends, who bought him eastern gifts. The Dutch-Indonesian painter Johanned Theodorus (Jan) Toorop (1858-1928), for example, gave him a mosque lamp.[296] From Borel he received many photographs of buildings and utensils from China.[297] Thorn Prikker's interest in the East also led him to read a series of verses about Guanyin and the *Mahābhārata* (one of the major Sanskrit epics in German).[298]

In addition to photographs and publications, Thorn Prikker came into direct contact with eastern art at exhibitions. In 1893 the *Haagse Kunstkring* organized an exhibition in which he saw Japanese woodcuts owned by art dealer Siegfried Bing (1838-1905). The influence of the photographs and the woodcuts on Thorn Prikker's work becomes particularly evident in his use of ornaments.[299] From 1892 onwards his work indeed becomes more linear than it had been.[300]

Borel also familiarized Thorn Prikker with the writings of Max Müller (1823-1900), one of the founders of religious studies, who was particularly interested in the East. Borel quoted in *Groote Godsdiensten: De Godsdienst van het Oude China* ('Great Religions: The Religion of Ancient China', 1911) a letter by Müller:

> *The true Religion of the Future will be the fulfilment of all the religions from the past, the true Religion of Humanity, whats left over from the struggle of the religions as the indestructible part of all the human race's so-called false religions. There was never a false God, any more than there was ever a false Religion, unless you want to call a child a falsified human being. All religions . . . are links in a chain that links the heavenly to the earthly, and it is held, and has ever been held, by One and the Same hand.*[301]

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[296] Ibid., 115.

[297] Spaanstra-Polak, *Het Symbolisme in de Nederlandse Schilderkunst*, 298.

[298] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 173, 216.

[299] Spaanstra-Polak, *Het Symbolisme in de Nederlandse Schilderkunst*, 298.

[300] Bionda et al., *The Age of Van Gogh*, 218.

[301] Original: *De ware Godsdienst van de Toekomst zal zijn de vervulling van alle godsdiensten van het verleden, de ware Godsdienst der Menschheid, wat in den strijd der godsdiensten is overgebleven als het onvernietigbare gedeelte van alle zogenaamde valsche godsdiensten van het menschdom. Daar was nimmer een valsche God, evenmin als er ooit een valsche Godsdienst was, tenzij men een kind een vervalscht mens wil noemen. Alle godsdiensten . . . zijn schakels van een keten, die het hemelsche verbindt met het aardsche, en die wordt vastgehouden, en eeuwig werd vastgehouden, door Eene en Dezelfde hand.* Borel, *De Godsdiensten van Het Oude China*, 4.

Borel also wrote to Thorn Prikker concerning what touched him in Max Müller's article *Popol Vuh* ('Book of the People', 1867). The *Popol Vuh* is a corpus of mythical-historical stories of the creation according to the K'iche,' one of the Maya peoples, in the region that is now Guatemala.[302] Müller described his translation of this work as *a literary composition* that contains *the mythology and history of the civilized races of Central America*.[303]

Symbolism and *Les Vingt*

Thorn Prikker was invited by the avant-garde art society *Les Vingt* or *Les XX* (The Twenty, 1884-1894) to exhibit in Brussels in 1893, where he met, amongst others, the artist Henry van de Velde. *Les Vingt* aimed to give a voice to the latest European art movements by means of annual exhibitions, publications and lectures. It was through these different art societies that Thorn Prikker became familiar with the work and publications of several influential people at that time, such as poet, symbolist art critic and painter Albert Aurier (1865-1892), symbolist poet Emile Verhaeren (1855-1916) and painter and writer Maurice Denis (1870-1943), who was also a member of the symbolist and *Les Nabis* movement.[304] Thorn Prikker also had some contact with the Belgian symbolist writer Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949).[305]

On Verhaeren's series *Les Moines* (The Monks, 1886), Thorn Prikker based four of his works in 1894: *Le Moine Sauvage, Le Moine Epique, Le Moine Doux* (destroyed), and *Une Estampe* (whereabouts unknown).[306] Below his drawing *Une Estampe* (1894-1902) Thorn Prikker wrote one stanza of Verhaeren's poem of the same name:

Que de baisers rempli de deuil et d'infini;
Que de lèvres déjà froides et solennelles,
Et qui n'avaient laisse d'autres souvenir d'elles,
Qu'un peu de leur moiteur sur le velin terni.[307]

So many kisses filled with mourning and infinity;
So many lips already cold and solemn,

[302] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 291.

[303] Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, 1: 324.

[304] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 37.

[305] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 202.

[306] Bionda et al., *The Age of Van Gogh*, 222.

[307] Thorn Prikker made a mistake here, the first line should be: "Que de pensers remplis de deuil et d'infini." Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 205–6; Verhaeren, *Poèmes Par Émile Verhaeren*.

And which had left no other memories of them,
Than a little of their moistness on the tarnished vellum.

Verhaeren's monks represent values from the 'heroic' Middle Ages, the period he believed to be the antithesis of his own superficial and decadent time. Thorn Prikker shared this idealistic image of the Middle Ages.[308]

These friends and acquaintances show that during this period Thorn Prikker was surrounded by symbolist artists. Symbolism, as a historical style, came to its peak between 1893 and 1905. Symbolism was based on Albert Aurier's theory of analogies and correspondences, according to which the perceptible world corresponds to a world of ideas. Thus the symbol was seen as a sign charged by the artist's individuality. In contradiction to traditional iconography, the artist is not supposed to make any universal claims, but instead reveals the world of ideas not accessible to the senses of others.[309] Most important was the transcendental potential of the artist to express his or her emotions. The artist was supposed to represent the *ideas behind the things* by means of lines, forms and colors. The role of the artist therefore was that of a *chosen one*. It is for this reason that religion, spirituality and occultism played an important role in symbolist art.[310]

Thorn Prikker became one of the main representatives of this movement in The Netherlands. His *The Bride* (1892-1893) [app. 27] is generally regarded as one of the highlights of Dutch symbolist art.[311] Thorn Prikker, however, did not create symbolist art for a long period of time. He began in 1891, the year in which he became a member of the *Haagse Kunstkring,* the art society in The Hague that was internationally active. Here he soon became acquainted with some highly innovative figures, and with their art.[312] *Les XX* was also influential in this respect. Soon however he was no longer welcome at the meetings of the *Haagse Kunstkring* because he was too easily irritated by the conservative thinking of the older artists, and he would interrupt the meetings too frequently.[313] On December 8th 1893 he wrote to Borel that *Les XX* no longer existed.[314]

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[308] Bionda et al., *The Age of Van Gogh*, 222.

[309] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 23.

[310] Ibid., 39.

[311] Ibid., 23, 42.

[312] Ibid., 39.

[313] Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 8.

[314] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 157.

Following this, he changed his mind about symbolism. In January 1894 he described it to Borel as a method for those who cannot really draw to mislead by the use of flowers, flowing lines, etcetera. He called this unfair and not pure in the manner of the paintings of the Early Netherlandish painters.[315] In June 1894 he wrote: *I am no longer a symbolist*.[316]

The exhibitions of *Les XX,* however, played an important role in the reception of the Pre-Raphaelites and the Arts and Crafts movement in The Netherlands. Belgium functioned at this time as a place of cultural exchange between England and The Netherlands.[317] Walter Crane and Ford Maddox Brown were invited by *Les XX* to exhibit in 1891 and 1893.[318] In 1894 and 1895 Morris was asked to exhibit his work at the continuation of *Les XX,* called *La Libre Esthétique* (The Free Aesthetics). He was asked by the art critic Octave Maus (1856-1919), the former secretary of *Les XX* and founder of *La Libre Esthétique* to exhibit because of his emphasis on social art.[319]

The Arts and Crafts movement and *Gemeenschapskunst*

In the 1890s the art of the Pre-Raphaelites reached The Netherlands. During this period many artists went to London to discover and explore Pre-Raphaelite art. Thorn Prikker also wished to go there to see the work of Holman Hunt, Millais, Burne-Jones and especially Madox Brown, whose work he had seen in a magazine. Dutch artists had a particular fascination for the latest English art movement: The Arts and Crafts movement. The exhibitions of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society in the New Gallery from 1888 onwards, which drew attention to decorative art and publications on the relationship between art and society, attracted many visitors. Through English magazines such as *The Studio* the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement spread to the continent. These magazines were not only available in The Netherlands; their contents were summarized in Dutch magazines. The German magazine *Pan* (1895-1900) also facilitated the spread of knowledge of the artistic views of Ruskin and Morris and of the artistic products of the Arts and Crafts movement.[320]

The first major article about Morris in a Dutch magazine was published in 1890. The author emphasized the ways in which Morris strived for a better society and for better art. She claimed that Morris's synthesis of socialism and artistry was not yet to be found in The

[315] Ibid., 162.

[316] Original: *Ik ben tegenwoordig geen sijmbolist meer.* Ibid., 184.

[317] Buul, van, *In Vreemde Grond Geworteld*, 85–86.

[318] Vandevoorde, "'L'âme Bruxelloise' Georges Khnopff," 30.

[319] Buul, van, *In Vreemde Grond Geworteld*, 86.

[320] Ibid., 83–85.

Netherlands. In *De Nieuwe Gids*, the magazine of the *Tachtigers,* a debate on the social engagement of the artist emerged in 1890. That same year the first Dutch translation of one of Morris's works appeared [app. 28]. The translators were less interested in Morris's writings on the early Middle Ages, and preferred those texts that focused on social engagement. The first translation into Dutch was that of *A King's Lesson* (1891), a story that criticizes the feudal system and illustrated Ruskin's idea that wealthy people steal from the poor. This idea also greatly influenced Van Eeden.[321]

A transition took place in Thorn Prikker's oeuvre between 1890 and 1900. He gradually moved towards greater social engagement with his art.[322] In this respect Thorn Prikker's interest in community art, called *Gemeenschapskunst* in Dutch, is highly significant. The ideals of community art offered an alternative to the ideology of *l'art pour l'art*, supported by most of the *Tachtigers.* As the term community art suggests, it was art intended to serve the community. The writings of Ruskin and Morris, amongst others, lent impetus to the community art movement. Writers who favored community art believed that art should ideally be a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a unity of different art forms that together represent a whole. They idealized the Middle Ages and regarded the medieval cathedral to be the finest model for both society and the arts. They maintained that the period before the Renaissance was the 'pre-individual' period, while in medieval cathedrals, several art forms were combined into one architectural whole that served all the community. Artists who worked on cathedrals were expected to be happy to cooperate with each other and to take great joy in their labor. Artists who embraced the idea of community art were also attracted to Egyptian art, eastern art and art from so-called 'primitive' societies.[323]

Three main variants of community art can be distinguished. The first relates ideas of community art to the mystical-religious focus of pre-Renaissance societies. In this view new art equates with religious (chiefly Christian) art. The second variant entailed socialist views, focusing on the public role of art and the conditions of labor of the artists and craftsmen. For some these two views were quite incompatible. For others, including Thorn Prikker, they were unified into a third variant that combined the mystical-religious emphasis with a social concern.[324]

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[321] Ibid., 91–92.

[322] Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 16.

[323] Greer, "Johan Thorn Prikker's Mural for De Zeemeeuw," 14.

[324] Ibid.

Thorn Prikker supported these socialist ideas about community art. He rejected mainstream authoritarian ideas and what he saw as a small elite group that decided on what the art world should be like. He maintained that when art served the common man, then instead of the entrepreneurial interests of art dealers, a pure form of art would emerge.[325] In his own words:

> *Then the people will start to live, then ~~fine~~ art will come, for art comes from and is of the people . . . [T]hen we will have art that will of course be as great as those Buddhists, the Egyptians, the Primitives, for then once again what is born of the people will arise from it in purity, without first having asked about the taste of some gent or other with lots of money.*[326]

Artist Henry Van de Velde and writer August Vermeylen (1872-1945), both friends of Thorn Prikker, held similar views. Vermeylen in fact gave a lecture at the *Rotterdamsche Kunstkring* (Art Group in Rotterdam) in March 1894, which was published a year later as *De Kunst in de Vrije Gemeenschap* ('Art in the Free Community'). In this he emphasized the necessity of a spiritually inspired community art.[327]

Thorn Prikker's friendship with Belgian artists and, in particular, with Van de Velde, damaged the reputation of the art gallery *Arts and Crafts* [app. 29, 30], of which he was artistic director.[328] He started this in 1898 with Johan Uiterwijk (1872-1955) and Chris Wegerif (1859-1920). Uiterwijk had worked in Ashbee's *Guild of Handicrafts* and was therefore familiar with Ashbee's ideas.[329] Thorn Prikker was responsible for the design of the furnishings and the gallery front, but his role as artistic director was more important, for he was responsible for the selection and presentation of the exhibits, as well as for furniture designs and textile designs for the workshops. These workshops were based on those of the Parisian *Salon de*

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[325] Greer, *The Artist as Christ*, 84.

[326] Original: *Dan zal het volk gaan leven, dan zal de ~~mooie~~ kunst komen, want de kunst komt uit en is van het volk . . . [D]an hebben we de kunst die natuurlijk even groot zal zijn als die Boudhisten, de Egijptenaren, de Primitieven, want dan is het weêr ~~dat~~ hetgeen geboren is uit het volk, puurer uit zal stijgen, zonder eerst gevraagd te hebben wat de smaak is van deze of gene meneer die véél centen heeft .* Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 213–14.

[327] Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 62.

[328] Heiser, "De Wansmaak van Johan Thorn Prikker en Soortgenoten," 167.

[329] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 86–87.

L'Art Nouveau by Siegfried Bing, who began his gallery based upon the example by Morris in his *Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society* (1888).[330]

Arts and Crafts was the first gallery in The Netherlands that included both the fine and the applied arts. The company's logo places particular emphasis on handwork, diligence and originality: a stylized bee flying from a beehive accompanied the initials 'A' and 'C.' Although it gave important impetus to the development of the applied arts in The Hague, *Arts and Crafts* received harsh criticism at the outset, especially from architect Hendrik Berlage (1856-1934) and his circle.[331] Berlage accused the gallery of being too internationally minded and profit oriented. Thorn Prikker also received criticism for using far too decorative and organic lines in his works. Stylistically it did not suit the Middle Ages and it could not therefore evoke truly national feelings. Naming the gallery after the British Arts and Crafts movement was regarded as a homage to British applied arts, but was also seen as a lack of love and loyalty for the homeland. A rumor even prevailed that the firm was a branch of a British firm and British capital was being used for exploitative ends.[332]

Within the company itself there were also problems. Thorn Prikker could not agree with the disowning the principle of handwork in favor of monetary profit, especially since, following the death of his wife in 1899, a fixed income had become less important to him.[333] Despite the presence of the *Arts and Crafts* at the *Exposition Universelle* (World's fair) of 1900 in Paris, Thorn Prikker left the company later that year.[334]

Mysticism

One of Thorn Prikker's most influential contemporaries, and one who saw the close connection between art and mysticism, was Max Simon Nordau (1849-1923, born Simon Maximilian Südfeld). Nordau was a physician (he took courses with Jean-Martin Charcot, 1825-1893), a philosopher of culture and a writer. He co-founded the *World Zionist Organization* in 1897 with Theordor Herzl (1860-1904). His most significant work is *Entartung* (Degeneration), published in 1892.[335] In the nineteenth century, degeneration was a shifting term, often used in discussions on the increasing crime and insanity rates. Degeneration served to explain the dangers of alcoholism, prostitution, suicide, crime and other 'social

[330] Heynen, *Johan Thorn Prikker: Werke bis 1910*, 13, 85–86.

[331] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 88–90.

[332] Heiser, "De Wansmaak van Johan Thorn Prikker en Soortgenoten," 164–67.

[333] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 88–90.

[334] Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 190.

[335] Leijnse, *Symbolisme en Nieuwe Mystiek in Nederland voor 1900*, 146–49.

pathologies,' because these things were supposed to constitute a degenerative process within family lines. Nordau believed that pathological literature symptomatized modern times and was particularly obsessed by the relation between hysteria and late nineteenth century art and culture.[336]

Nordau gathered and described in his voluminous study some of the new art movements, including the Pre-Raphaelites, symbolists, Tolstoyans, Wagnerians, as well as the artist Sâr Péladan and the poet Maurice Maeterlinck, under the term 'mysticism.' It was immediately translated into several European languages; as well as into Dutch by Frans Maurits Jaeger in 1893 *(De ontaarding).* Jaeger, however, did not translate everything literally, but omitted some parts and added some more, including a section on the degenerated artists within his own homeland, The Netherlands. Jaeger discussed Vincent van Gogh, Jan Toorop and Johan Thorn Prikker, as well as all employees of *De nieuwe gids* ('The New Guide', the art magazine of the *Tachtigers),* except for Frederik van Eeden.[337]

> *Among them we also find the longing to forge words, to chew them over and patch them together, often without any logical coherence; the pursuit of sound effects . . . the predilection for looking into religious, mystical and social matters; the sensuality and eroticism; the delusions of grandeur; the hostility towards people who think differently; the feigned or genuine contempt for science.*[338]

Nordau described mysticism as a mental state, in which objects from everyday life are believed to represent an underlying higher meaning. With his definition of mysticism, it is hardly surprising that Nordau regarded symbolism as a symptom and component of mysticism.[339]

Thorn Prikker was not only perceived as a degenerated artist. Thorn Prikker wrote twice to Borel claiming that he had been accused of *godsdienstwaanzin* (religious mania).[340] The idea that someone could become mentally ill after being too occupied with religion was, however,

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[336] Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, C. 1848 - C. 1918*, 7, 11, 21, 24.

[337] Leijnse, *Symbolisme en Nieuwe Mystiek in Nederland voor 1900*, 146–49.

[338] Original: *Ook bij hen vindt men die zucht tot woordsmeden, dat herkauwen en samenlappen van woorden, waarbij dikwijls de logische samenhang ontbreekt; dat werken op klankeffect . . . dat zich bij voorkeur verdiepen in gods dienstige, mystieke en sociale kwesties; dat sensuele en erotische; dien grootheidswaan; die vijandige gezindheid jegens andersdenkenden; die voorgewende of werkelijke minachting voor de wetenschap.* Ibid., 148.

[339] Ibid., 146–49.

[340] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 186, 200.

becoming an outdated view by the end of the nineteenth century. The inspection of the *Staatstoezicht op Krankzinnigen en Krankzinnigengestichten* ('State Inspectorate on Madmen and Mental Hospitals') described *godsdienstwaanzin* as one of the four categories of moral causes for insanity up until 1911. In practice, however, most psychiatric authorities claimed that religion was beneficial for the mental health of the individual, especially the *gereformeerde* (Dutch Reformed Church) organizations.[341]

Thorn Prikker's occupation with religion and mysticism was not scorned by Joséphin Péladan (1858-1918), better known as Sâr Péladan, a very well-known but also much ridiculed figure at the time. He attempted to pursue a double career as spiritual master and littérateur. The title 'Sâr' is a Babylonian royal title.[342] He first came to attention in the Catholic press with *Le Matérialisme dans l'art* ('Materialism in Art', August 1881), in which he stated that all artistic masterpieces are religious (even for non-believers) and that all masterpieces have also been Catholic (even for Protestants).[343] He was the first to publish an occult novel, *Le Vice Suprême* ('The Supreme Vice,' 1884), and wrote others later, such as *Comme on Devient Mage* ('How to be a Mage', 1892) and *L'Occulte Catholique* ('The Catholic Occult', 1898).[344]

Péladan was also the founder of the *Association de l'Ordre Laïque de la Rose † Croix du Temple et du Graal* ('Association of the Laic Order of the *Rose † Croix* of the Temple and the Grail').[345] This order was supposed to be the answer to the problems of a society obsessed with materialism and rationalism. Instead they practiced magic and theosophy and admired the Jewish tradition of the Kabbalah. The artist became a high priest. In April 1890, at the Salon de la *Rose † Croix,* Péladan addressed the artists with *Artiste, tu es prêtre, tu es roi, tu es mage* ('Artist, you are priest, you are king, you are mage.')[346] The extravagance of the salons appealed especially to the higher society. Most of the symbolist painters of the time were also involved.[347]

Péladan visited the Netherlands in 1892. He gave a lecture entitled *Le mystère, l'art et l'amour selon la Magie doctrine des Rose † Croix* ('Mystery, Art and Love According to the Magic Doctrine of the *Rose † Croix')* in Leyden. Thorn Prikker went along and described his first meeting with Péladan in his letters to Borel. He was initially impressed by Péladan's

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[341] Belzen, van, "Godsdienst en Psychiatrie," 36.

[342] Hanegraaff, *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, 2005, II, I-Z.: 938.

[343] Pincus-Witten, *Occult Symbolism in France*, 2, 10, 31.

[344] Hanegraaff, *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, 2005, II, I-Z.: 938.

[345] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 48.

[346] Spaanstra-Polak, *Het Symbolisme in de Nederlandse Schilderkunst*, 5.

[347] Hanegraaff, *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, 2005, II, I-Z.: 938.

appearance. The first time he saw him, *the Sâr,* was wearing knee-length grey boots, a purple blouse, a black tie with white lace and a monk's cowl, which was completed with his *aureole* of black hair.[348] This costume was that of the Grand Master of the *Ordre de la Rose Croix du Temple*.[349] Péladan claimed to be the inheritor of the initiation into a Toulouse branch of the *Rose-Croix*.[350]

Thorn Prikker also admired Péladan for more than just his looks, however. He maintained that Péladan had a lot of beautiful things to say about art. Péladan for example expressed his dislike of the landscapes of *modern painters* with their *portraits of trees*. Instead he encouraged depictions of the *soul* of the landscape. He also provided his listeners with information about the *Salon de la Rose † Croix*.[351]

During his time in The Netherlands Péladan asked Jan Toorop (1858-1928), Richard Roland Holst (1868-1938) and Thorn Prikker to become members of *Rose † Croix*. Thorn Prikker was flattered and was looking forward to the amulet he would receive to show off his membership of the order. Thorn Prikker further described how Péladan complimented him on his work, took some photographs of it with him to Paris, and asked for one of his drawings, *Harba Lorifa* ('The Herbs Bloom,' 1892). Péladan did not get this drawing however, because Thorn Prikker simply had too many simultaneous exhibitions at the time.[352]

A year later Thorn Prikker wrote less positively about Péladan. He wrote to Borel that he had laughed about Péladan from the beginning:

> *[T]he man who for instance wrote such books as Comment on devient Mage ['How to be a mage'] and Comment on devient artiste ['How to be an artist']. Oh dear, if he really knows all about that, why doesnt he be an artist or a magus himself . . . Anyway hes a comedian, for instance ive now got this invitation from Rose † Croix – complete and utter posturing. With other invitations you get a simple note saying youre invited to send some works to this place or that – but this one from Rose Croix...!!! The way im described in it defies description. Artiste, Mage, Ouvrier d'Art, votre travail sera sous la protection des Anges de votre pays, etc. etc. ['Artist, Magus, Worker of Art, your*

[348] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 75, 77.

[349] Hanegraaff, *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, 2005, II, I-Z.: 938.

[350] Hanegraaff, *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, 2005, I, A-H.: 441.

[351] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 75, 77.

[352] Ibid., 78.

endeavours will be protected by your country's Angels, etc. etc.'], and more of the same stuff and nonsense.[353]

Nevertheless Thorn Prikker might have been influenced by Péladan's preference for visual art, which had the characteristics of murals.[354]

Anarchism and Paul Verlaine

Around the same time that Thorn Prikker met Péladan in November 1892 he also met the symbolist poet Paul Verlaine. He described this meeting to Borel and appreciated in particular that, unlike the Sâr, Verlaine was not a show-off. According to Thorn Prikker, you could tell that Verlaine was a pure artist by his eyes and in the way he moved. During this visit Verlaine felt so comfortable that he was constantly singing what Thorn Prikker called the anarchist song *Dynamitons, anarchists* ('Let's Dynamite, Anarchists').[355] He probably meant the song *La Dynamite:*

Vive la Révolution
De l'homme libre en action!
Plus d'argent, ni de gueux en larmes
Plus de prisons, plus de gendarmes.
Dynamitons! Dynamitons!
Danse, dynamite,
Que l'on danse vite
Dansons et chantons
Et dynamitons![356]

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[353] Original: *[D]ie man die bv boeken schreef als Comment on devient Mage en Comment on devient artieste. Och je, als hij dat allemaal zoo goed weet, waarom wordt hij zelf dan niet artiest of mage . . . Bovendien is het een grappenmaker, ik heb bv nu de uitnodiging van de Rose † Croix gekregen, een aanstellerij van belang. Bij andere invitaties krijg je zoo een gewoon briefje waarin geschreven staat dat je geinviteerd wordt eenige werken te zenden hier of daarheen, maar die voor Rose Croix!!! Waar ik daarin niet voor ben uitgemaakt is niet te schrijven. Artiste, Mage, Ouvrier d'Art, votre travail sera sous la protection des Anges de votre pays, etc. etc. en dergelijke flauwe kul meer.* Ibid., 102.

[354] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 51.

[355] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 78.

[356] Rieger, *La Chanson Française et Son Histoire*, 229.

Translation:

Long live the Revolution
of the free man in action!
No more money, no more beggars in tears
No more prisons, no more gendarmes.
Let's dynamite! Let's dynamite!
Dance, dynamite,
Let's dance fast
Let's dance and let's sing
And let's dynamite

Anarchism emerged as an important social current from the 1860s onwards.[357] In the Netherlands the term was adapted by several groups and, in addition to being related to socialist economic theory, it was also combined with theosophical ideas, Christian beliefs, pacifistic ideals and an interest in nature communes.[358] Thorn Prikker became acquainted with anarchism partly through his meetings with Verlaine. He agreed with Verlaine on the relationship between anarchy and artistry: *He claimed that if youre an artist, deep down you have to be an anarchist. If you see these chappies (pignoufs) ['louts'] round you, you want to see a few in the air.*[359]

Thorn Prikker admired Verlaine so much that he began work on a *paysage evangelique* ('evangelical landscape') in 1892.[360] After walking through the winter landscape in December 1892 he wrote to Borel, claiming that he saw his *paysage evangelique.* He described the colors and the forms of the snow and said that he will call his work *Noël* ('Christmas'), because of all the white and the purity and virginity that he saw in the snow. He intended to depict a large yellow star in the middle, and trees like singing angels, with everything in shades of white and with several symbolic forms, lights and heads of Christ. *The impression should be that of a normal landscape, as i saw this afternoon, and then that superb beauty*

[357] Bionda et al., *The Age of Van Gogh*, 218.

[358] Greer, "Johan Thorn Prikker's Mural for De Zeemeeuw," 16.

[359] Original: *Hij beweerde, wanneer je artiest ben moet je vanzelf anarchist zijn. Als je om je heen de chappies (pignoufs) ziet wil je [er] wel eens een paar in de lucht zien.* Thom Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 76.

[360] Ibid., 81, 283.

that should show the pureness of the high nature.[361] He later changed his ideas at least twice, according to the letters.[362] However, he never did finish this work.[363]

No sooner than 1894 Thorn Prikker began making anarchist art. In the same year Verhaeren also remarked that symbolism was beginning to decline. Thorn Prikker found inspiration in socialist ideals and, under the influence of Nietzsche (1845-1900) amongst others, Thorn Prikker found new moral ideals and began to foretell a new kind of human being.[364] Thorn Prikker shared his anarchist views with Henry van de Velde (1863-1957) and his wife and artist Maria van de Velde-Sèthe (1867-1943). They supported the anarchist socialists Piotr Kropotkin (1842-1921), Jean Grave (1854-1939) and Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis (1846-1919).[365] Thorn Prikker also agreed with François Claudius Koenigstein (1859-1892), also known as Ravachol, who was responsible for the bombings of the Boulevard St Germain and the Rue de Clichy in March 1892 in Paris. Thorn Prikker also admired the deeds of the Italian anarchist, Sante Geronimo Casserio (1873-1894), who killed the French president Sadi Carnot (1837-1894) in Lyon in June 1894.[366]

Thorn Prikker himself, however, wrote to Borel saying that he had no intention of making any bombs, although he believed that such rumors did circulate. In July 1894 he wrote that he was now known as: 1; arrogant; 2; a dangerous anarchist who would blow something up one of these days; 3; a victim of religious mania; 4; a smith (which might be related to anarchism), and 5; that he would allow himself to be locked up from time to time, and to pick stones from the wall. According to Thorn Prikker himself, it was true that he was an anarchist, but not a violent one.[367]

The ideas of Kropotkin had a particular and specific relevance for Thorn Prikker and the Van de Velde's. Thorn Prikker read his *Paroles d' un Révolté* ('Words from a Rebel', 1885) and *La Conquête du Pain* ('The Conquest of Bread,' 1892) in the late 1890s. According to Kropotkin's theory, a central role in the creation of a new order had to be played by the artist. In his view artists had to show the misery of modernity and to represent alternative ways of

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[361] Original: *De indruk moet zijn gewoon als landschap, zooals ik het van middag zag, en dan die superbe schoonheid, dat reine van de hooge natuur moet geven.* Ibid., 85.

[362] Spaanstra-Polak, *Het Symbolisme in de Nederlandse Schilderkunst*, 172.

[363] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 283.

[364] Kalmthout, van, *Muzentempels*, 515.

[365] Heiser, "De Wansmaak van Johan Thorn Prikker en Soortgenoten," 166.

[366] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 214, 302.

[367] Ibid., 186.

living.[368] Thorn Prikker also shared Kropotkin's opinion on the emancipation of women.[369] In paragraph 3.3 we will see that Thorn Prikker's ideas on the role of the artist were very similar to Kropotkin's beliefs.

Theosophy: Willem Leuring, Peter Behrens and Mathieu Lauweriks

Although there is no evidence that Thorn Prikker was a Mason or a Theosophist, he was familiar with Freemasonry ideas because of his friendship with the medical doctor and Freemason Willem Leuring (1864-1936). Moreover, Thorn Prikker was motivated to use this knowledge in his art.[370] This interest in occult movements such as Freemasonry and Theosophy might seem to be in contradiction to his interest in socialism, but in fact these ideologies were often combined at the *fin de siècle*:

> *[I]t was considered perfectly feasible at the turn of the century to adhere to a communitarian vision and socialist principles while espousing a belief in an unseen spirit world, a cosmic mind, and Eastern religion, and many did.*[371]

This is less surprising than it seems, because both socialists and occultists believed themselves to be at the forefront of fundamental historical change. In addition to this apocalyptic expectation of social transformation, both movements shared the notion of a creative brotherhood.[372]

Thorn Prikker also shared the theosophical interest in mystical eastern religions. He became familiar with these from his own reading and because of his friendship with Borel. Thorn Prikker used this knowledge, for example, in his mural for *De Zeemeeuw,* the house of Leuring (see also paragraph 3.4). In this work, he used forms and geometrical principles closely tied to Theosophical and Masonic circles, especially to those of the Dutch Theosophical architects Karel de Bazel and Matthieu Lauweriks.[373]

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[368] Greer, "Johan Thorn Prikker's Mural for De Zeemeeuw," 17.

[369] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 256.

[370] Greer, "Johan Thorn Prikker's Mural for De Zeemeeuw," 21.

[371] Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, 25.

[372] Kontou and Willburn, *ARC to Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism and the Occult*, 166,168,172.

[373] Greer, "Johan Thorn Prikker's Mural for De Zeemeeuw," 19, 21.

Fig. 14: Johan Thorn Prikker, Detail of poster for *Revue Bimestrielle Pour l'Art Appliqué*, 1896, lithograph, 133 x 98 cm, KWM.

§ 3.3 Religious ideas and their consequences

§ 3.3 Religious ideas and their consequences

In his letters to Henri Borel Johan Thorn Prikker called his studio his *sanctum* (*heiligdom*).[374] Although this might have been just a figure of speech, he did hold some religious beliefs that combined his perspective on society with his role as an artist.

State and church

Johan Thorn Prikker was very critical about the society in which he lived. In a letter he asked Borel to imagine how they would tell their grandchildren that, during their own time, people tried to kill each other with guns and that God was unknown, and that their contemporaries would not acknowledge that money was their God, but attended church with hypocritical faces and acted as if God lived only there, and that in their time the vicar thanked God for the victories won by their weapons.[375]

Thorn Prikker's interest in society gave him a deep interest in an art for the people, and art integrated into society as a whole.[376] Between 1890 and 1900 he gradually approached a more socially engaged form of art. He put his art at the service of his vision of a new future for society.[377] This view had consequences for the role the artist should play. According to Thorn Prikker the habit of some artists of isolating themselves from society was a profound mistake, not only because it is the artist's calling to dedicate himself to the revolution in order to ensure that people would *rise up and come to life*, but also because it would bring harm to the arts:

> *[B]ut instead of living with the people, trying to understand and formulate the aspirations of the masses etc. etc., we just stay quietly in our places in society, most people tend to isolate themselves, what a feeble result such a life will produce. No, if an artist has understood his true vocation and understands the importance of art itself, he has to join forces with the people, not as a master but as a brother in arms, he must devote his talents to the revolution, show the people what their place is in our present society, clearly show the meanness in our society, so that the people will rise up and start to live. Once the people live, art will again be as pure and as good as it ever was, for art has stayed the same down the centuries. So start now, be revolutionary, lets join*

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[374] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 96.

[375] Ibid., 214.

[376] Bionda et al., *The Age of Van Gogh*, 218.

[377] Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 16.

in, for we know that the fine, the sublime, in other words life is with those that are revolt, which means those that fight for light, for humanity.[378]

Although the idea of the artist as a Romantic genius isolated from society was dominant by the end of the nineteenth century, Thorn Prikker held the contrary view. He saw the artist as a servant of art and of society.[379] However, Thorn Prikker often represented the artist as Christ figure, which can be linked to contemporary ideas of the artist as a Romantic genius, the *poète maudit* ('accursed poet').[380]

For a Romantic artist the concept of an external ideal of beauty was no longer the 'holy grail.' Instead the focus was on subjectivity, introspection and the expression of the emotions.[381] A metaphysical concept of art in which art allows access to God was popular amongst German idealist philosophers. The artist was regarded as a genius who was gifted with extraordinary sensitivity and imagination.[382] In Thorn Prikker's Dutch context, the *poète maudit* was most prominent in the written arts, especially in the poems of the *Tachtigers* and in the writings of Albert Aurier and Paul Verlaine.[383] Thorn Prikker never depicted himself as Christ, although this was not uncommon among the artists of his time. Paul Gauguin, James Ensor and others did so. Thorn Prikker represented a more generalized image of the artist.[384]

The figure of Christ received a more important role in Thorn Prikker's drawings over time. In *The Sower* (1919), Christ is the servant of both humanity and art. Furthermore, he depicted Jesus several times as a martyr; for example in the stained-glass window *Ecce Homo* ('Behold the Man,' 1913). At the same time, Christ functioned as a metaphor for love, freedom and

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[378] Original: *[M]aar in plaats nu met het volk te gaan leven, te trachten de aspiraties van de massa te begrijpen, die te formuleeren enz enz, blijven we maar stiekum op ons plaatsje in de maatschappij, zelf is bij de meesten de nijging om zich af te zonderen, wat een zwak resultaat zal een dergelijk ingericht leven opleveren. Nee, als een artiest zijn ware zending begrepen heeft en het belang van de kunst zelve begrijpt, moet hij zich scharen bij het volk, niet als meester maar als strijdmakker, hij moet zijn talent aan de revolutie wijden, het volk laten zien, hoe hunne plaats is in onze tegenwoordige maatschappij, t gemeene van onze samenleving duidelijk laten zien, op dat het volk zich opricht, en gaat leven. Zoodra als het volk leeft is de kunst er weer zoo puur en zoo goed als ooit, want kunst is zichzelf door de eeuwen heen gelijk. Daarom beginnen thans, wees revolutionnair, laten we ons aansluiten, omdat we weten dat het mooie, het sublieme en fin het leven bij degenen is die revolte zijn, dus degene die strijden voor het licht, voor de humaniteit.* Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 218.

[379] Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 16.

[380] Greer, *The Artist as Christ*, 57, 59.

[381] Sturgis et al., *Rebels and Martyrs*, 10.

[382] Kemperink, "Psysiognomies of Genius," 118.

[383] Greer, *The Artist as Christ*, 59–60.

[384] Greer, "Johan Thorn Prikker's Mural for De Zeemeeuw," 10.

transcendence.[385] In his series of political drawings, made between 1893 and 1898, Thorn Prikker combined his social criticism with the Christian idea of redemption.[386]

In 1896 Thorn Prikker designed a poster [Fig. 14, app. 31], depicting the applied artist as Christ for the Dutch applied arts magazine *Maandschrift voor Vercieringskunst* ('Magazine for Decorative Art,' also known by its French title *Revue Bimestrielle pour l'art appliqué).* One year later this poster was used as a cover for the magazine and was exhibited at the *International Exhibition for the Decorative Arts* in Turin, Italy in 1902. Thereafter it was reproduced in two German design publications: in *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* ('German Art and Decoration') and in *Internationale Austellung für Moderne Dekorative Kunst in Turin* ('International Exhibition for Modern Decorative Art in Turin').[387]

On this poster we see the crucifixion of Christ. Above his head a cross nimbus is depicted, with six figures alongside it; three on the right and three on the left. Christ is wearing a crown of thorns that ends in a flower bud. His right hand is also wound in thorns, while his left hand is wound in softer vegetation, in flowers. Nails have been driven into both of his hands. Below the crucifixion the text of the poster is positioned on an ornament of lilies.

The six figures at the top of the lithograph can be related to the concept of community: they serve as disciples of Christ, but not in the traditional sense. They represent figures who support Christ and his mission. In other words, the Christ-artist is placed within a community of like-minded people. This breaks with the tradition of isolated Christ-artists. For Thorn Prikker an artist should be a teacher, instructing and leading people towards a new ideology.[388]

Thorn Prikker's Christ-artist did not confirm traditional Christian ideas, but instead revealed contemporary discourses concerning the life of Christ. On the one hand, there was a discourse on the Christ-like anarchist, and on the other, on the anarchist-like Christ. Christ was in these viewpoints not regarded as a divine entity, but as a human. Writings by religious theorists such as Ernest Renan (1823-1892), David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874) and Strauss's translator Emile Littré (1801-1881) contributed to the construction of Christ as an anarchist-

[385] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 16.

[386] Ibid.

[387] Greer, "Johan Thorn Prikker's Mural for De Zeemeeuw," 11–12.

[388] Ibid., 12.

like social revolutionary.[389] Not surprising, the artist-as-Christ motif became prominent within anarchist imagery.[390]

Thorn Prikker studied anarchist literature and met others who were also influenced by anarchism.[391] This led him to create several political works. In 1894, for example, he created the political prints *Anarchy* [app. 32] and *Anarchy: Quo usque tandem* [app. 33]. *Quo usque tandem* is short for *Quo usque tandem abutere, Catilina patientia nostra?* ('How long, Oh Catiline, will you abuse our patience?') This quotation serves as the opening of the first Catiline oration given by Cicero (63 BC). In *Anarchy: Quo usque tandem,* a figure with a pick-axe poses in the foreground, while behind him men with top hats are hanging from lamp posts or lay dead on the floor.

In 1898 the same theme reoccurs in his work for the *Woman's Suffrage Association*. The committee for *social work exhibit* invited different organizations involved in the interests of women, such as the *Woman's Suffrage Association,* which had asked Thorn Prikker to portray a woman (miss Gallé, one of the organizers), struggling against oppression. Alongside the artwork was a large poster, which read: *Only Suffrage can guarantee a lasting restoration of an oppressed class or gender*.[392] This work, *The Liberation of Women,* shows a naked, chained woman together with a bishop and a king, symbolizing church and state.[393]

The work also shows Thorn Prikker's attitude to the clergy, which arose from his anarchist thoughts combined with his aversion to institutionalized religion. Thorn Prikker wrote to Borel claiming that the church attempts to prevent anarchy by pretending to change and to develop. According to Thorn Prikker, however, the church has considerable problems. He stated that vicars, catechism teachers and teachers of protestant elementary schools were frequently arrested for the sexual abuse of small children. He declared that no socialists had ever been involved in such matters, while vicars have broken the world record. Furthermore, he accused the church of being capitalist and that the above-mentioned crimes are often concealed for reasons of financial gain.[394]

His dislike of institutionalized religion, however, does not mean that Thorn Prikker was not interested in religion. As already mentioned before, he was an artist who combined political

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[389] Ibid., 18.

[390] Greer, *The Artist as Christ*, 57, 59.

[391] Bionda et al., *The Age of Van Gogh*, 218.

[392] Grever and Waaldijk, *Transforming the Public Sphere*, 102.

[393] Spaanstra-Polak, *Het Symbolisme in de Nederlandse Schilderkunst*, 83.

[394] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 232.

ideas with a mystical-religious worldview. He was convinced that some anarchist publications were too materialistic and did not pay enough attention to the spiritual duties following on important revolutionary changes. In his view anarchists needed to *develop the people's souls, tell them theyre the best thing created in the world, above all them that everyone is the seed of God so naturally all people bear the same thing within themselves.*[395] The term he used in this letter, *godskiem* in Dutch (translated as seed of God), could be derived from a publication by the German theologian Johann Ludwig Ewald, who also published on Christian mysticism, a topic that interested Thorn Prikker greatly.[396]

Mysticism

At the beginning of the twentieth century mysticism was regarded as the direct, subjective experience of God, transcending sensory perceptions and making it possible to escape from the power of the Catholic Church.[397] According to Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941), who was a prominent writer on mysticism at the beginning of the twentieth century, mysticism is *the art of union with Reality. The mystic is a person who has attained that union in greater or less degree; or who aims at and believes in such attainment.* She asked the *normal man* not to worry about the question of what this *reality* is, but to consider instead that this *union* is something that a person does at every moment of their conscious life, because we can only know things by unifying with them.[398]

Underhill's publications were not the only works on mysticism that were well-read at that time. Mysticism had become fashionable. By approximately 1800 the term 'mystic' had a derogatory associations, while towards 1900 the renewed interest in Jakob Boehme (1575-1624), Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), Novalis (1772-1801), Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), and Plato (c. 427-348/347 BCE) had increased and new translations of Jan van Ruusbroec (1293-1381) became popular.[399] Popular magazines of this time used the term continually, irrespective of their target audience or program.[400] Mystic writings received much attention and influenced several writers and artists, including the *Tachtigers* as well as Louis

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[395] Original: *[W]ij moeten de ziel van de volk ontwikkelen, hen zeggen dat ze het beste schepsel ter wereld zijn, vooral hen leeren dat ieder de godskiem dus natuurlijk allen hetzelfde in zich dragen.* Thorn Prikker used the term godskiem for the first time in his 34th letter to Borel, page 214. Ibid., 236.

[396] Ewald and Verwey, *Christelijke Overdenkingen*, 2:178.

[397] Verstraeten, "Representations of Mysticism," 1257.

[398] Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*, 1.

[399] Spaanstra-Polak, *Het Symbolisme in de Nederlandse Schilderkunst*, 3–4.

[400] van Dijk, *"Welk een Ketter is die Vrouw Geweest!,"* 44.

Couperus.[401] Couperus described transcendent reality in his novel *Extaze: Een Boek van Geluk* ('Ecstasy: A Book of Happiness,' 1892) as:

> *[T]hat which cannot be conceived of within the narrow boundaries of intelligence; that which can only just be touched on with feelers of soul: Essence of essences of the things of ourselves.*[402]

Similar mystical ideas can be seen in Thorn Prikker's art and writings. He tried to express the *great unity of everything* in his paintings. For some time he thought highly of the symbolists and in 1893 he claimed that they had a 'higher' conception of art and were capable of creating 'higher art' than the impressionists. The reason he gave for this was that *every person needs a certain number of senses to work with, to see, to be sensitive. Now you see, if an impressionist has four factors to work with, a symbolist has five – one more.*[403]

In a second fragment Thorn Prikker stated that some artists only paint after nature, and only depict reality, although what they see does not match the vision in their souls. These artists, according to Thorn Prikker, *paint a tree because it is a tree; theyre missing exactly that sense organ that makes the difference between an artist and a painter.*[404] Here he more or less paraphrases what Sâr Péladan said in his lecture in The Netherlands. In an earlier letter to Borel Thorn Prikker claimed that the Sâr did not like the landscapes of some contemporary artists, *ce n'est pas que de peinture* (that is not painting), Péladan said. Instead Péladan wanted to see *the soul of the landscape and not a portrait of trees.*[405]

During this period Thorn Prikker also created symbolist art. Like Jan Toorop and Antoon Derkinderen, he used symbolic images to portray ideas from the invisible world that could not be depicted directly. This resulted in the simplification of lines, the avoidance of optical

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[401] Verstraeten, "Representations of Mysticism," 1257.

[402] Original: *[D]at wat niet te denken is in de enge grenzen van het verstand; dat wat alleen aan te zweemen is met nauwlijks voelhorens van ziel: Essence der essences der dingen van onszelve.* Leijnse, *Symbolisme en Nieuwe Mystiek in Nederland voor 1900*, 177.

[403] Original: *[E]lk mensch een zeker aantal zintuigen noodig heeft om te werken, om te zien, om gevoelig te zijn. Nu zie je, als een impressionnist 4 factoren heeft, waardoor hij werkt, dan heeft een symbolist er 5, dus een méér.* Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 95.

[404] Original: *Nou de meeste schilders die nu leven bv. Neuhuys, Ter Meulen, Van der Maarel, en nog zoo'n paar die niet slecht zijn als Bles en consorten, zijn schilders zooals ik hierboven schreef, die een boom schilderen omdat het een boom is, die juist dat zintuig missen, wat het verschil maakt tusschen een artiest en een schilder.* Ibid., 111.

[405] Ibid., 46.

illusions and an emphasis on contours.[406] One example of this can be seen in how he chose to depict purity. In his letters to Borel he linked his work *The Bride,* as well as another work depicting a bride, entitled *Purity,* to the concept of purity. The painting of *The Bride* is usually religiously interpreted. In it the mystical marriage with the crucified Christ is depicted. The erotic elements in this work, such as the phallic flower buds, derive from medieval mystical texts, and also from Dutch female authors such as the thirteenth century poet and mystic Hadewijch and poet and recluse Sister Bertken (1426/1427-1514).[407]

A second example, the drawing entitled *Purity*, he described to Borel:

> *I have two new drawings, about one metre by seventy-five centimetres. With one i intended purity, you see, such that the bad cannot reach it, that it changes through purity and so becomes good. I started with a flower in white, nice and full, well-made, with long spreading leaves that are figures of saints that are still and somewhat curved. From the flower in the centre comes a force that ascends and forms a female figure, naked, with a double outline because she is infinite, or rather because she has no beginning and no end for herself . . . [N]ext to the woman a highly stylised Christ, with a crown of thorns with flowers round his head. Next to the Christ, very still parallel lines that should provide peace and quiet, and a dove with outspread wings, as sublime life. Round the female figure are candles as a symbol of living from within yourself, as sacrifice, for [from] one side of the central figure come the passions.*[408]

His idea is that the bride is so pure that the evil forces cannot reach her. This purity he depicts by using the symbolic images of lilies and candles. The fragment from his letters further shows how he used lines and colors to support the symbolic content of his work. Most of his paintings are executed in ochre, grey-green and purplish-blue. These colors were

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[406] van Dijk, *"Welk een Ketter is die Vrouw Geweest!,"* 47.

[407] Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 53.

[408] Original: *[I]k heb twee nieuwe teekeningen zoowat van een meter bij vijf en zeventig cmeter. Ik heb met de eene bedoel, de reinheid, zie je, die zoo is, dat het slechte er niet bij kan komen, dat het veranderd door de reinheid, dus ook goed word. Ik ben begonnen met een bloem van wit, mooi vol, welgedaan, met lange uitslaande bladeren die heiligebeeldjes zijn die stil, eenigzins gebogen liggen. Uit de bloem in de midden komt een kracht die naar boven gaat en die een vrouwefiguur vormt, naakt, met dubbele contour omdat ze oneindig is, liever gezegd, omdat ze voor zich zelve geen begin en geen einde heeft . . . naast de vrouw een Christus heel sterk gestileerd, met een doornenkroon met bloemen om het hoofd. Naast de Christus heel stille evenwijdige lijnen, die kalmte en rust moeten geven, en een duif met uitgespreide vleugels, als heel hoog leven. Om de vrouwfiguur staan kaarsen als sijmbool van uit zich zelf leven, als opoffering want [van] eene kant van het middenfiguur komen de hartstochten.* Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 101.

associated with purity. Lines, he believed, can express either strength, restlessness or holiness.[409]

In April 1894, however, Thorn Prikker stated in his letters to Borel that he had never really been a symbolist: *I am, rather, a mystic.*[410] He declared that he currently did not represent the Christ or Madonna from the Bible, but that he saw them as very pure things. Giving the essence of something rather than its symbol was what he intended to do. He defined the essence as *that mystic existence of things, of everything, look, a flower is a flower with petals and a heart, but a flower is more than that*.[411]

He now asserts that some of his earlier work, i.e. his Madonnas, were his least successful. He explained that although these were created in a pious mood, they were not created in a Christian one and that he took his inspiration for the Madonnas from someone he called *Zuster Bearte* (Sister Bertken, a recluse who lived between 1427 and 1514.) Thorn Prikker believed that if he could realize his own ideas, then he would create honest art without any dogmas.[412] This view is closely related to the mystical ideal of a direct, subjective experience of God. Some of Thorn Prikker's other religious beliefs were also consistent with some of the elements that were central to twentieth century concepts of mysticism.

Thorn Prikker wrote comprehensively on the mystical concept of *unio mystica* (the union of the individual human soul with God). He believed that a person can be united with God or Christ. In his letters to Borel he called this *verglijden met God* (to converge into a single entity with God). Thorn Prikker agreed with Henri Borel that God is everywhere and that people can converge into a single entity with God, and he believed for this reason that one cannot experience loneliness. To claim that one is lonely would mean to wish oneself away from God, and therefore would be to offend God.[413] Thorn Prikker thought about what it meant to be united with God and wrote in May 1894 that: *if you once felt the great Peace, the being one with God, then you always stay in it, then you cannot get out anymore, because all things, hate, Love, everything then is permanently dead, dead as a doornail.*[414]

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[409] Ibid., 86.

[410] Ibid., 176.

[411] Original: *De essence is dat mijstieke bestaan der dingen, van alles, zie je een bloem is een bloem [,] met blaadjes en een hart, maar een bloem is toch meer dan dat.* Ibid., 177.

[412] Ibid., 174.

[413] Ibid., 181–82.

[414] Original: *[A]ls je de groote Rust het een met God zijn, éénshebt gevoeld, dan blijf je er altijd in, dan kan je er niet meer uitkomen, want alle dingen haat, Liefde, alles is dan voorgoed dood, dood als een pier hoor.* Ibid., 181.

Thorn Prikker also stated that it is impossible to grieve after being with God for just a moment. After witnessing seas, rocks and huge trees, one cannot think of an ant or a microscopic beetle. After that moment with God one can only speak the Word. He believed that when you have found this peace of mind *(Rust),* then you will no longer work or write. Instead you will dream quietly, like a fakir (an ascetic). You will no longer eat or drink because you will forget about your body, as well as everything else.[415] However, Thorn Prikker wrote to Borel saying that he himself did not wish for peace. He only wished to control his passion, to work hard and to be a good person. He maintained that the admission of having found peace of mind, or even wishing to approach peace of mind in order to be closer to God, is not good. The reason is that this in itself requires self-regard, and Thorn Prikker believed that great humility is required in order to approach God at all. He reminded Borel of the Biblical injunction of becoming a child in order to come to God, in order simply to be accepted. Thorn Prikker believed this to be true.[416]

Thorn Prikker also wrote about being united with Christ. When he described his *Moine Sauvage*, he noted that he wanted to make the believer feel the pain of Christ when he or she looks at the nails in his hands, in order to depict the way that monks of previous times felt and believed.

> *What pain someone like him must have felt when thinking of that Christ. The greater his pain became, the more he felt the body and sorrows of that Christ, who at last became such a giant, nailed roughly to a cross of tree trunks . . . I also added the bible, the book that gave such an old monk consolation and pain, you know, a bit of mysticism for him, in a strange light of his own . . . Of course i left all the things those people use to chastise themselves with, the knotted cord and so on, in a forgotten corner, for if someone feels that Giant Christ's pain he leaves all the means of self-chastisement aside and simply feels.*[417]

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[415] Ibid.

[416] Ibid., 182.

[417] Original: *Wat moet zoo iemand een pijn gevoeld hebben als hij aan die Christus dacht. Hoe grooter dat zijn pijn werd, des te grooter ging hij dien Christus zijn lichaam en zijn smarten voelen, eindelijk werd het zoo'n reus, ruw tegen een kruis van boomstammen aan genageld. . . Ik heb er ook de bijbel, dat boek dat aan zoo'n oude kloosterling troost en pijn gaf, gegeven, weet je, zoo'n beetje mijstiek voor hem, in vreemd eigenlicht . . . Ik heb natuurlijk alles wat die lui zoo gebruiken om te kastijden dat koord met die knoopen en zoo, ergens in een vergeten hoekje laten liggen, want als iemand de pijn van die Reuzenchristus voelt, laat hij alle kastijdingsmiddeltjes lings leggen en voelt alléén.* Ibid., 204.

Thorn Prikker also believed in the unity of human beings with nature, which he considered true and holy.[418] In a letter to Borel he declared that everyone has *het beste, goddelijke, begin* (the best, divine, beginning) in themselves. If people do evil things, he maintained, this divine part is insulted. He also believed that if people knew about this, they would live a simpler and more honest life.[419]

> *[A]fter all, everything is really just the way you yourself make it, if you yourself are good you see everything round you as good, if you yourself are evil of course everything is evil, and because nature is straight and holy you must also make straight and holy things if you have contact with it it fits, if you dont you have never seen nature in all its holiness.*[420]

Related to this unmediated experience of God is the rejection of religious dogmas, but not of course of religion itself. As already mentioned this rejection can also be found in the writings of Thorn Prikker. In his own words: *I firmly believe that giving art along with some dogma, e.g. the Catholic or some other faith, is the beginning of going wrong.*[421]

Thorn Prikker also discussed the mystical concept of *cognitio Dei experimentalis* (experiential knowledge of God). To create art it is essential to have an unmediated experience, he believed. He therefore advocated the true and the pure *(het waare and het reine)* in art and claimed that the only artists who remained close to pure feeling *(reine gevoel)* were the Early Netherlandish painters Jan Van Eyck (c. 1390-1441) and Rogier Van der Weyden (1399/1400-1464).[422] Thorn Prikker emphasized that it is important to insist on your own world views rather than depicting those of others, as he believed Toorop did after reading Nietzsche, and that Borel was currently doing after becoming acquainted with Buddhist philosophy. For Thorn Prikker, the inspiration for art lies in the impressions that the artist gets from nature and the *science (if I can call it that) which is inborn, which is inherited*

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[418] Greer, *The Artist as Christ*, 77, 79, 81.

[419] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 178.

[420] Original: *[A]lles is toch eigenlijk precies zooals je het zelf maakt, als je zelf goed bent zie je alles goed om je heen, als je zelf kwaad bent dan is natuurlijk alles kwaad, en omdat de natuur recht, en heilig is moet je als je er mee omgaat ook rechte en heilige dingen maken dat komt uit, als je dat niet doet heb je de natuur ook nooit gezien in al zijn heiligheid.* Ibid., 222.

[421] Original: *Ik vind stellig dat kunst geven, met een of ander dogma, bv het Katholieke of ander geloof, reeds het begin is van verkeerd worden.* Ibid., 172.

[422] Ibid., 70.

from father to son, which is the belief in God or something like that; passion if it needs to be, or something else, but really something national, with the character of your surroundings.[423] Such an impression, according to Thorn Prikker should be innate to the individual, including some influence around him also, while he still feels life within him.[424]

In this discussion of the mystical elements of Thorn Prikker's writings, the transcendent sensory perceptions available to the artist should also be mentioned. Thorn Prikker declared that people are never really lonely because great spirits are close to us all the time. These beings radiate a certain force that surrounds us. He claimed that while working in his studio he was never lonely, that he always had unconscious contact with these spirits, although he did not know with whom he was in touch.[425] Thorn Prikker related this belief to art and philosophy. His personal method of becoming inspired by the great minds from the past was the only way for artists, who should feel the force of these minds rather than undertaking research and gaining knowledge.[426] For Thorn Prikker this idea also showed how the wisdom of Confucius is similar to that of Plato, although the two had never.

> *There does seem to be something that makes community possible at a great distance. I believe it is art, that art arises through contact with other people you dont know and perhaps live a very long away apart, so you have unconscious contact with each other, you tell each other the ideas, and so the artistic notions arise through that contact. Im convinced that such a thing arises, i cant explain what i mean but i believe that the great ideas you then get come from spiritual contact with other beings that also exist, here or there, that your inmost beings have contact with each other, that the sublime things arise through that contact, so that as an artist you arent completely <u>alone</u>, but that the artist is the human body that makes things, by which i mean paints them, or says them in words, through contact with other beings. Old chap i didnt know i was*

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[423] Original: *[W]etenschap (als ik het zoo noemen kan) die ons ingeboren is, die zo van zoon op vader overgeerfd is, dat is dan zoo'n beetje het geloof in God of zoo, desnoods hartstocht of iets anders, maar dus echt nationaal, echt met karakter van je omgeving.* Ibid., 172.

[424] Ibid.

[425] Ibid., 181.

[426] Original: *Zie je ik geloof dus als slot van de zaak, dat we moeten wachten tot de groote kracht, die van deze of genen uitgaat of uitgegaan is, ons ontmoet opdat we zullen voelen, en niet door willekeurigheden van ons zelve zekere dingen gaan onderzoeken of zooiets, wat dat geeft weten.* Ibid., 185.

such a symbolist in my letters. If i dont write like this i cant explain a thing. Its so hard for me to write.[427]

For him this also explained how two people who lived miles away from each other could have close similarities in their artwork; it is caused by the God force that makes them feel the same way.[428]

These mystical concepts notwithstanding, and in contradiction to Toorop's work, there is no direct influence of the ideas, theories or emblems of the Rosicrucians to be found in the art of Thorn Prikker.[429] Nor did he become a freemason or a member of the Theosophical society, although he was acquainted with some of their ideas and writings. From 1890 onwards he was befriended by people who discussed different secret teachings, such as Van Eeden and Borel. It is unknown whether he participated in the design seminars of *Architectura et Amitia* (1893-1918) or the theosophical *Vahana-Loge* in Amsterdam.[430]

Nevertheless, Thorn Prikker was influenced by theosophy and was familiar with the teachings on harmony by Mathieu Lauweriks, based on mathematical principles of organization. He also held discussions on this matter with architect Peter Behrens (1868-1940). These theosophical ideas assumed that the way an image is ordered is derived from a certain world order.[431] As a result Thorn Prikker developed his own geometric design system, upon which he based the form and content of his later work.[432] Within this system he combined medieval theories of proportion, theories from the nineteenth century on ornaments, and the above-mentioned mathematical principles by Lauweriks.[433] In order to

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[427] Original: *Er schijnt toch iets te bestaan die de gemeenschap op groote afstand mogelijk maakt. Ik geloof dat kunst dat is, dat kunst ontstaat door omgang met anderen menschen die je niet ken, en die wellicht heel ver van elkaar wonen, dus dat je met elkaar onbewust omgaat, dat je elkaar de denkbeelden zeg, en zoo door die omgang de kunstbegrippen ontstaan. Ik ben overtuigd dat zoo iets ontstaat, ik kan het niet uitleggen wat ik bedoel maar ik geloof dat de grootte ideen die je zoo krijg komt uit de geestelijke omgang met andere wezens die ook bestaan, hier of daar, dat je innigste wezens met elkaar omgaan, dat door die omgang de sublieme dingen ontstaan, dus dat je als artiest niet geheel alléén staat, maar dat de artiest het menselijch aam is dat de dingen maakt, ik bedoel met verf ze schilderd, of ze zegt in woorden, door de omgang met andere wezens. Kerel ik wist niet dat ik zoo'n sijmbolist was in mijn brieven. als ik zoo niet schrijf kan ik heelemaal niets uitleggen. Tis zoo moeilijk voor me om te schrijven.* Ibid., 103–4.

[428] Ibid., 181, 185.

[429] Spaanstra-Polak, *Het Symbolisme in de Nederlandse Schilderkunst*, 172.

[430] Heiser, p. 115. *Architectura et Amitia* was founded by a group of architects and applied artists, who were influenced by theosophy from the beginning. Bank/Buuren, *Dutch Culture in European Perspective, p. 209.*

[431] Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 206, 210.

[432] Ibid., 206.

[433] Ibid., 135.

locate the 'sensitive' points and directions Thorn Prikker chose three points at the top and bottom of the surface of his mural or painting that equally divided its length. Likewise the vertical measures were divided into four parts. He then connected these points and created from it an invisible grid. He used this principle, for example, in his mural *The Game of Life* (1902, see paragraph 3.4), and from 1910 onwards in many of his monumental artworks.

Thorn Prikker's *The Artist as a Teacher of Trade and Business* also demonstrates his familiarity with theosophy. In this stained-glass window at the railway station in Hagen, Germany, he depicted a pair of compasses to refer to these geometrical-mathematical principles, and to express his ideas on artistry.[434]

[434] Ibid.

Fig. 15: Johan Thorn Prikker, *The Last Supper,* 1926, apse mosaic, originally in the *Duinoordkerk* in The Hague, after the second World War applied in the *Kloosterkerk* in The Hague, The Netherlands.

§ 3.4 Religious art

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In the previous chapter Thorn Prikker's anarchist and mystical views and how these influenced his view of the role of the artist and his own artifacts were discussed. We have seen that he began making anarchistic works in 1894, the same year in which he described himself as a mystic. Two years previously, however, he had devoted himself to making religious art, as we will see in the next section.

Paintings and drawings

Between 1892 and 1894 Thorn Prikker almost exclusively created artifacts with religious subject matter. At this point he preferred to depict scenes from the Passion narrative of Mary and the Saints. He made, amongst other works, an oil on canvas of *Christ at the Cross with Mary* (± 1891-1892), *Descent from the Cross* (1892) [Fig. 11], *At the Cross (Madonna in Tulips Field)* (1892) and *The Bride* (1892 – February 1893). He also drew *Jesus at the Well* (± 1892), *Christ Carrying the Cross (1892), Singing Seraphs (1892), Annunciation (1892), Harba Lorifa (The Herbs Bloom,* 1892), *Adoration of the Magi (1892), At the Cross (Women by the Cross) (± 1891-1892), Christ and the Samaritan Woman at the Well* (1892), *Christ Crucified (1893),* and *Christ Vanqueur (1893).*[435] In watercolors he created *Madonna* (1892) and in ink *Apostle heads* (1894). He also created the now lost mural *The Holy Julian on the Hunt* (1894).[436] Some of his works from this period, however, he left unfinished, or destroyed them later on. For example, the triptych *Trinity* (1893), which measured 2.50 x 1.85 meters, and the drawing *Christ Vainqueur* (1893) he probably never finished, and possibly destroyed.[437]

Some of these works were too controversial for some of his contemporaries. One example is his *Christ on the Cross* (1891-1892) [app. 40]. According to the influential artist, art critic and collector H.P. Bremmer (1871-1956), nicknamed the *Kunstpaus* ('Art Pope'), Thorn Prikker aspired to the annual *Willink van Collen Prijs* with this oil painting. This prize was awarded by the society *Maatschappij Arti et Amicitiae* ('Art and Friendship'). Every year a certain theme was prescribed; in 1891 the society asked for an 'expressive head.' The submissions were shown at *Arti* in January 1892. The jury was however conservative and Thorn Prikker's work was probably too revolutionary. Submitting a religious theme was already uncommon and Thorn Prikker's interpretation was highly unorthodox. His Christ is shown bowing his head down to his chest and the torso is slumped to one side, as in medieval devotional pictures.

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[435] Spaanstra-Polak, *Het Symbolisme in de Nederlandse Schilderkunst*, 161.

[436] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 185.

[437] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 113, 288.

However, this work is unconventional in the sense that Thorn Prikker represented Christ as a tortured human being without very much detail. The facial features are barely shown, neither is the cross shown entirely, and the acronym INRI is almost as vague as the blood in Christ's hair.[438]

Religion continued to be a major subject of Thorn Prikker's paintings and drawings between 1905 and 1924. Examples include many watercolor paintings, such as *The Judgement of Solomon* (1905), *Descent from the Cross* (1907), *The Blinds* (1906) [see cover], *Annunciation* (1907), *Apostle With Goat* (1907) and *The Creation of Eve* (1907).[439] He also created two mosaic designs in watercolor: *Heavenly and Worldly Music* (1924).[440]

Textiles

Krefeld, where Thorn Prikker lived from 1904 onwards, had developed a large silk-industry in the course of the nineteenth century. While there were only fourteen firms in 1823, there were more than ten thousand by 1850.[441] Although Thorn Prikker had already made his first fabric designs before 1900, this environment gave him the opportunity for further development. His designs were executed by several German textile manufacturers. The most popular, the 'Thorn-Prikker-silk' [app. 35], as his contemporaries called it, only became popular more than two decades after he had designed it. However, it was then used by several ateliers in the Netherlands and Germany for priestly vestments, altar cloths and processional canopies. It was decorated with a repeating pattern of interlocked diamonds.[442]

Thorn Prikker also designed an orphrey pattern, an embroidered part of an ecclesiastical embroidery or parament. This pattern with its geometrical forms is one amongst several used on a mourning chasuble in the 'Thorn-Prikker-silk' [app. 37]. Between 1910 and 1925 Thorn Prikker designed entire paraments, including chasubles [app. 36] and banners for several German churches. His textiles, however, were not very well-known generally. Only a select group of collectors and church administrations were willing to pay large sums for his work.[443]

Thorn Prikker and his second wife Berta also began weaving. He made several designs, but the only preserved tapestry created after a Thorn Prikker design, is *The Three Ice Saints* (1910) [app. 34]. He probably created this around 1908/1909. The choice of theme is highly

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[438] Bionda et al., *The Age of Van Gogh*, 219–20.

[439] Heynen, *Johan Thorn Prikker: Werke bis 1910*, 92–95.

[440] Wember, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 128.

[441] Roon, van, *Goud, Zilver & Zijde*, 32.

[442] Ibid., 195, 236, 240.

[443] Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 126; Roon, van, *Goud, Zilver & Zijde*, 195.

original, as it is one seldom depicted in art history: Mamertus, Pancratius and Servatius, three Catholic saints, are depicted. According to popular belief, their name days (11-13 May) mark the change from cold to warm weather. Contemporary photographs and descriptions in exhibition catalogues show that other tapestry designs were also executed. The first documented example of this is *Pièta,* executed by his second wife Berta. At the exhibitions of the *Rotterdamsche Kunstkring* (art group Rotterdam) in 1906-1907, this tapestry was on sale for 1050 Dutch guilders.[444]

Monumental art

While Thorn Prikker was still living in The Netherlands he was determined to create larger religious works, such as church murals. In his 1894 letters he stresses the importance of proportion in his work, and concludes that murals, either in churches or elsewhere, would be his ideal. The environment would allow the artist to proportion the artwork to the church or altar, resulting in the painting or fresco blending in as if it belonged to the church.[445]

In general, the importance of proportion, or the monumental aspects of artifacts, received more attention from the end of the nineteenth century onwards. The term *monumentale kunst* (monumental art), included all kinds of architectural art not already covered by the disciplines of architecture and sculpture. Students were taught, amongst other things, about wood inlays, linoleum flooring, mosaics made from glass or tiles, glass windows, mural paintings, tapestries and wallpaper.[446] Art historian Heinrich Richard Hamann (1879-1961) wrote about artifacts that exceed the human scale in 1916. Not only did he mean works of larger proportions than the human body, but also works that represent dimensions that show the superiority of a Creator (*Schöpfer),* dedicatee (*Widmungsträger*), or God. According to Heiser this links the term 'monumental' with the terms 'monument' and 'religion.'[447]

Although Thorn Prikker would later in life become a teacher of monumental art at various schools, his earlier anti-clerical works (see paragraph 3.2) probably did not encourage the Catholic Church to offer him ecclesiastical commissions. In October 1892 he wrote about the newly built Roman Catholic Church in the Elandstraat in The Hague. He suspected that 'they' were reticent about giving him commissions because he was not a Roman Catholic, and also

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[444] Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 114, 118–19.

[445] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 165.

[446] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 24.

[447] Ibid., 25.

because they did not appreciate his work.[448] More than a year later they still did not want his work inside their churches. He believed that this was because of his *unconsecrated hands*. He confessed to Borel that he was considering converting to Catholicism, but also wrote that this would be despicable, because he did not believe in what he called *that Roman buffoonery (Roomsche grappenmakerij)*. Converting to Catholicism, however, would have allowed him to paint in so many churches and monasteries, he believed. While he wrote that he was willing to paint the murals free of charge, he joked that the Church could nevertheless pay him because of her wealth and his poverty.[449] Unfortunately for Thorn Prikker, offering his services free of charge did not help him to achieve his goal either.

In February 1895, he complained that the Catholic Church, which considered him incapable of communicating Christian ideas:

> *[T]hey think at least that i practise black arts or something, so that instead of decent Saints i draw cabbalistic signs or the portrait of the devil in person on the wall. Its a damned shame im not Catholic. Those gents say we people who think differently dont understand what a saint or a devil is, so we might get things mixed up. Thats all very well, isnt it? Anyway, i wont vent my feelings by swearing about the priest, but a fellow like that at least didnt look as if he could judge which people were good and which were bad.*[450]

It is understandable that Thorn Prikker was disappointed by the opportunities offered to him in The Netherlands by the religious institutions. In 1904 he moved to Germany, where he finally had the chance to create murals. Up until 1912 he had made, for example: *The Blind, Cain and Abel, The Creation of Eve, The Sacrifice of Isaac, The Sower* and *Adam and Eve*.[451]

Before he left for Germany, however, he was commissioned to execute his first monumental art work in the villa *De Zeemeeuw* (The Seagull) in The Hague, in 1902-1903

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[448] Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 70.

[449] Ibid., 168.

[450] Original: *[Z]e denken minstens dat ik aan zwarte kunst doe of zooiets, zoodat ik in plaats van behoorlijke Heiligen, kaballistische teekens of het portret van den duivel in persoon op de muur zou maken. T is verdomd jammer dat ik niet Roomsch ben. Die heeren beweren ook dat wij als anders denkende geen begrip zouden hebben wat een heilige of een duivel is, zoodat we wellicht de zaak zouden verwarren. T is wel aardig he; enfin, ik zal maar niet mijn gemoed door eenige scheldwoorden aan het adres van de pastoor lucht geven, maar zoo'n vent zag er toch minstens niet naar uit, zoo'n goed oordeel over de diverse goeden en slechten te hebben.* Ibid., 213.

[451] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 15.

[app. 38, 39].[452] This house belonged to the physician Willem Leuring, who became a Freemason in 1901. It was designed by Henry van de Velde. In this mural Thorn Prikker used the technique of *sgrafitto,* in which a lower surface is revealed by incising the above layer with a sharp instrument.[453]He was not only responsible for the *sgrafitto* on the wall in the entrance hall. He also designed the suite of furniture and decided upon the color scheme for the living room.[454]

At first glance this work looks similar to Thorn Prikker's earlier Christian works. However, he was familiar with ancient Chinese and Hindu philosophy via Henri Borel, and clearly used this knowledge for the mural. The theme for the work came from Leuring, who shared his interest in Asia with his friend, the historian Johan Huizinga (1872-1945). Both also were familiar with Indonesian temples, such as that in Borobodur, through images and articles in magazines.[455] Leuring asked Thorn Prikker to depict *The Game of Life* on a wall measuring 8 x 4 meters.

The mural shows one of the verses from the *Panchatantra,* a collection of old-Indian fairy tales and fables dating back to 300-500 AD. The exact fable, verse 445, can be found in the nineteenth century Dutch translation of the first volume of the book. The fable concerns Papabuddhi, who misleads his friend Darmabuddhi by setting up a plan for them to earn money together, and then to steal it from him. Their friendship ends through of greed and egotism. The message to the reader is to avoid the company of evil people, because you will pay a high price.[456] Rather than depicting the fable literally, Thorn Prikker concentrated on the universal values of the story.[457]

After this first monumental art work, Thorn Prikker had to wait seven years to receive his first ecclesiastical commission for a mural. In 1910 he was asked to paint the sacrifice of Isaac in the 9.50 x 4.70 meters apse dome of the chapel of the *gesellenhuis* (a home for unmarried journeymen) in Neuss. It was brave of the chaplain of the church, Joseph Adalbert Geller, to entrust a non-Catholic without experience with this commission. However, while Thorn Prikker was still working on this project, he was asked to design the windows for the chapel also. He decided to create a monochrome mural with colored windows. The first window he

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[452] Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 80.

[453] Greer, "Johan Thorn Prikker's Mural for De Zeemeeuw," 6.

[454] Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 80.

[455] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 113.

[456] Greer, "Johan Thorn Prikker's Mural for De Zeemeeuw," 113.

[457] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 113.

created was *The Dove and the Holy Spirit.*[458] He also created three windows with Christian symbols (alpha, omega and the cross), surrounded by stylized leaf and blossom ornaments.[459]

While Thorn Prikker's work in Neuss was received well by other artists and praised by art critics, it was far from appreciated by the general public and the church administrators. The murals were criticized for being *too raw, not religious, a mistake,* and having *frills.*[460] The use of intense color contrasts of red, blue and green, amongst others, caused considerable controversy. Chaplain Geller received a letter about the windows: *that is a kaleidoscope and recalls cubism, but not religious art . . . [The Church] is not in the vanguard of such trends, that is symbolism today, expressionism tomorrow, and is named futurism the day after tomorrow.*[461] The windows were removed and the chaplain bought them for himself. The original *The Dove and the Holy Spirit* window was brought to Cologne in 1950, where it can still be seen in the Chapel *Madonna in den Trümmern* (Madonna in the ruins). Two years later, copies of the windows were placed in Neuss.[462] The remaining windows were later given to the *Kaiser Wilhelm Museum* in Krefeld and replicas were placed in Neuss in the 1960s.[463]

Stained-glass windows are a different type of monumental art. In 1909 Thorn Prikker joined the *Deutscher Werkbund* ('German Association of Craftsmen'), and started designing stained-glass windows.[464] He would design several before 1928. Some of these were more or less abstract, with only the shape of a cross in the middle. Others were more figurative, representing for example the head of a pelican, alpha and omega symbols and fishes. In 1911 Thorn Prikker was given a free hand by Geller to create six choir windows and two transept windows for the Neo-Gothic *Hl. Dreikönigekirche* (Three King's Church) in Neuss (close to Düsseldorf, Germany). Some of these windows were presented at an exhibition in Cologne a year later.[465] In this church he used primary colors and black and white, which is the color scheme of *De Stijl* ('The Style'), a Dutch art movement that reduced the use of form and color to essential in order to attain universality and greater abstraction.[466]

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[458] Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 146, 148.

[459] Ibid., 152.

[460] Ibid., 24, 28, 152.

[461] Original: *[D]as ist Kaleidoskop und erinnert an Kubismus, aber nicht an religöse Kunst . . . [Die Kirche] steht nicht and der Spitze jeder Mode, die heute Symbolismus ist, morgen Expressionismus und übermorgen Futurismus heißt.* Ibid., 152.

[462] Ibid., 148.

[463] Ibid., 152.

[464] Bionda et al., *The Age of Van Gogh*, 218.

[465] Heynen, *Johan Thorn Prikker: Werke bis 1910*, 16.

[466] Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 166.

Thorn Prikker continued to create stained-glass windows for both secular and religious buildings. He was allowed to make the rosary window for the *Liebfrauenkirche* in Krefeld in 1913. Two years later he created the windows and mosaics in the *Altkathalogische Kirche* in Essen.[467] He was also responsible for the glass paintings in the roman *Saint Remigius Church* in Wittlaer near Düsseldorf (1926), in the *St John the Baptist Church* in Neu-Ulm (1927) and in the *St Elizabeth Church* in Hagen (1927). In 1928, the year of his sixtieth birthday, which was also the occasion for exhibitions in The Hague and Duisburg, he produced the windows for the synagogue in Krefeld. [468]

The synagogue windows display geometric abstractions of the Star of David, the Torah Ark (the place where Torah scrolls are kept) and the *Mizrah* (the wall that indicates the direction of prayer). About a year after Thorn Prikker's death, in April 1933, the windows were damaged by small cobblestones. The same thing happened to many other synagogues in Germany after the foundation of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) in 1928, especially during the *Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass) on November 9th-10th 1938.[469] The press office of the police station in Krefeld reported:

> *On the nights of the 5th and the 6th of February, three windows of the local synagogue were smashed by stones thrown by unknown perpetrators. The destroyed windows display artistically valuable glass paintings restored after the designs of Prof. Thorn Prikker. There is a damage of about 6000 German marks.*[470]

This was just the beginning of the persecution and the suppression. The old synagogue at the Peterstrasse no longer exists; it was replaced with a monument. Replicas of Thorn Prikker's windows were made after his 1:1 scale designs and placed in the new synagogue in 2008 in Krefeld at the Wiedstrasse.[471]

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[467] Heynen, *Johan Thorn Prikker: Werke bis 1910*, 17.

[468] Ibid., 18–19.

[469] Eschwege, *Die Synagoge in Der Deutsche Geschichte*, 150.

[470] Original: *In der Nacht von 5. zum 6. Februar wurden von d unbekannten Tätern drei Fensterscheiben der hiesigen Synagoge durch Steinwürfe zertrümmert. Die zertrümmerten Fenster stellen künstlerisch wertvolle Malereien dar, die nach Entwürfen von Prof. Thorn Prikker hergestellt sind. Es sol ein Schaden von etwa 6000 Mark enstanden sein.* Kähler and Schulte, *Daten Zur Jüdischen Geschichte in Krefeld*, 93.

[471] Kähler, Schulte, and Zickler, *Die Neue Synagoge in Krefeld*, 11, 124.

From 1929-1930 Thorn Prikker worked on the glass paintings in the Roman *St Georg Church* in Cologne.[472] The pastor felt that a complete renovation of the basilica, built in 1059, was necessary, including the removal of elements added later. He later admitted that he might have taken things a little too far. Nonetheless, Thorn Prikker was asked to create fifty-one windows, which he did together with his students from the *Kölner Werkschulen* (Cologne Art and Craft Schools).[473]

He was afterwards responsible for the stained-glass windows for the *Holy Trinity Church* in Cologne-Bickendorf and the *Herz-Jesu-Kirche* (Sacred Heart Church) in Leverkussen in 1930, and for more churches and public buildings in Essen, Hiltrup and Recklingshausen in 1931.[474] These commissions for stained-glass windows exemplify what art historian and friend August Hoff wrote in 1924 about Thorn Prikker:

> *Thorn Prikker loves the Christian symbols tremendously. In the evening we sat over books, and hundreds of sketches were developed afterwards, especially the central symbol of Christianity, the cross. He seeks to fill with new content his representations.*[475]

In August 1910 Thorn Prikker started making mosaic murals after moving to Hagen, Germany.[476] One of the largest church mosaics he created in 1925. By that time he had already moved to Düsseldorf, but created this piece, entitled *The Last Supper* in the *Duinoordkerk* in The Hague [Fig. 15]. This mosaic was removed from the *Duinoordkerk* in 1942. Although the church was relatively new, being built in 1920, it was demolished by the Germans in order to be able to dig anti-tank trenches to make a landing in Scheveningen impossible. During the war the 12,000 kilo mosaic was kept safe in the gardens of the Peace Palace in The Hague. After the war it became clear that the *Duinoordkerk* would not be rebuilt and the artwork was moved to the *Kloosterkerk* in The Hague.[477]

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[472] Heynen, *Johan Thorn Prikker: Werke bis 1910*, 18–19.

[473] Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 232, 234, 236.

[474] Heynen, *Johan Thorn Prikker: Werke bis 1910*, 18–19.

[475] Original: *Das christliche Symbol liebt Thorn Prikker ungemein. Abends saßen wir über Büchern darüber und Hunderte Skizzen entstanden danach. Besonders das Zentralsymbol des Christentums, das Kreuzzeichen, sucht er mit neuem Inhalt in seinen Darstellungen zu erfüllen.* Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 166.

[476] Bionda et al., *The Age of Van Gogh*, 218.

[477] Stichting Kloosterkerk, *De Geschiedenis van de Kloosterkerk 'S-Gravenhage*, 24.

Conclusion

Over the years Thorn Prikker became involved in very diverse artistic movements. While at first he was more attracted to symbolism, from the 1890s onwards his work became increasingly socially engaged. The writings of Ruskin and Morris, his friendships with Borel and Van Eeden, and his meeting with anarchist Paul Verlaine all contributed to his views on art, democracy, capitalism and society. Thorn Prikker maintained that an artist is inevitably also an anarchist. Art, according to him, is intended for the people and the artist should put his art at service of the future of society.

Thorn Prikker's rejection of mainstream authorities in general made him reject also all forms of institutionalized religion. He was not in favor of religious dogmas and his ideas even went further than this: an attitude of anti-clericalism, in particular against the Roman Catholic clergy, is a recurring theme in his oeuvre.[478] Thorn Prikker's rejection of organized religion is also in accordance with the late nineteenth and early twentieth century understanding of mysticism as a direct experience of God without intermediaries. Mystical ideas influenced, on the one hand, the way he thought about artistry and life itself, and on the other hand his oeuvre.

Thorn Prikker's work of the period 1892-1984 consists mainly of drawing and paintings having Christian subject matter. For the opportunity to create something larger, a monumental work of art, he had to wait until 1902. His long-cherished wish of painting murals on church interiors was fulfilled by 1910. By that time he had proved to be capable of designing silks, embroideries and paraments for ecclesiastical use, as well as for other purposes. His artwork occasionally combined Christian iconography with ancient Chinese or Hindu philosophy, or he used his own geometric design system, which was partly based on theosophical geometrical principles, as explained in paragraph 3.3.

[478] Greer, "Johan Thorn Prikker's Mural for De Zeemeeuw," 15.

Fig. 16: Detail of: photograph of the Arts and Crafts exhibition at the Royal Academy, London, 1916.

Chapter 4: Comparison and conclusions

Comparison and conclusions

With this thesis I have aimed to show that the religious aspect of the Arts and Crafts movement has received, undeservedly, scant attention from scholarship. In order to recover and understand the religious ideas and beliefs on which many of the artifacts of the Arts and Crafts movement are based, I have selected two artists for a case-study approach. I began this study with the main question: Why does the British artist William Morris and the Dutch artist Johan Thorn Prikker refer to religious traditions, rituals, ideas and writings in their art? What is the purpose of these references? I adopted the social constructivism approach, meaning that by the term 'religious' I referred to everything these artists understood as such.

Religion and the Arts and Crafts movement

In order to place the work of these two artists in the context of the Arts and Crafts movement I carried out a brief study of the key principles and characteristics of the movement. The main points that have emerged are an insistence on the unification of the applied arts with the so-called 'higher arts,' and an emphasis on individual expression and an aversion to modernity, capitalism and industrialization, with its division of labor. This led to a shift in gender roles within the Arts and Crafts movement, as well as to an emphasis on handwork, functional design and an idealization of the working circumstances of the Middle Ages and the Gothic forms.

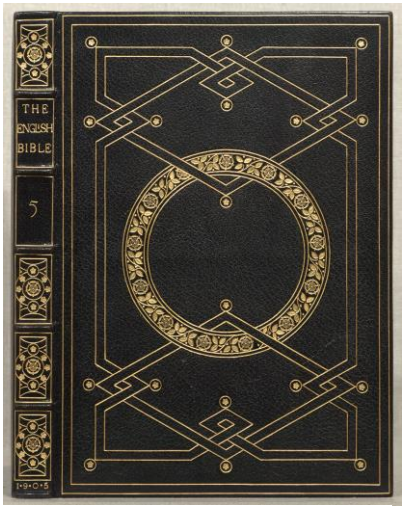
The central figures of the Arts and Crafts movement, such as Morris, encouraged alternative ways of living and working. They promoted the ideals of honesty and integrity, as well as that of joy in labor. Furthermore, whatever their political learnings, they supported the idea that it was the aim of art to contribute to a better life, which meant not only an improvement of the life of the artist but also that of the lower classes. Inspiration for their art they found in their own national heritage, eastern cultures and in nature.

Some of the characteristics of the Arts and Crafts movement are particularly interesting when considering the relationship between this art movement and religion. First, the aversion to modernity, capitalism and industrialization is directly related to the writings of Carlyle and Ruskin, who both believed that industrialization was a threat to spiritual wellbeing, and is a cause of loss of faith. To correct this a spiritual revival is needed, in which the moral values of the Middle Ages are restored. But not just the moral values of the Middle Ages were taken as an example. The Gothic forms were equally idealized. Pugin and others regarded the Gothic forms as an expression of faith. By returning to these forms the Christian spirit would be restored and the damage done by industrialization rectified.

Another important aspect of the Arts and Crafts movement in which a clear relation with religion is seen is the encouragement of an alternative way of living. The ideals of honesty, purity and integrity are particularly important in this regard. Some artists joined guilds or began new lives in artists' colonies. Some of these, such as *The Peasant Arts Society,* were religious in character. This guild aimed to provide local women with jobs in an environment that was considered suitable for women: *Its rural location was an important part of its ethos, as the countryside was seen as a panacea to urban degeneracy, and as the place where one could get closest to God*.[479]

Arts and Crafts in the context of religious worship and religious themes

While investigating the Arts and Crafts movement I discovered that almost every conceivable aspect of church decoration has been executed by Arts and Crafts artists: murals, Bible bookmarks, church plaques, altar frontals, elders' chairs, choir stalls, rood screens, altar furniture, processional crosses, vestments and banners, Bishop's croziers, chalices, and so on.[480] Examples include the chalices and other ecclesiastical metalwork created by Francis H. Newsbery, Jessie Newsbery, William Kellock Brown [app. 48] and John Duncan (1866-1945).[481]



T.J. Cobden-Sanderson and Emery Walker, *The English Bible*, 1903-1905. Bound in vellum, stamped in gold, Hammersmith: Doves Press, LOC.

Ecclesiastical murals were made by, amongst others, Gerald Moira (1897-1959), Phoebe Anna Traquair [app. 45, 46], William Hole (1846-1917), Christopher Whall (1849-1924) and Mary Seton Watts (née Fraser-Tytler, 1849-1938) [Fig. 2, app. 42, 43].[482] Arts and crafts artists even published Bibles and Psalters, such as the five-volume *The English Bible* (1903) from the Doves Press, an initiative by T.J. Cobden-Sanderson and Emery Walker [app. 41], and the Essex House *Psalter* (1902) by Charles R. Ashbee.[483]

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[479] Blakesley, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 77.

[480] Cumming, *Hand, Heart and Soul*, 162, 165.

[481] Ibid., 35.

[482] Willsdon, *Mural Painting in Britain 1840-1940: Image and Meaning*, 234–35, 240–41.

[483] Meggs, *A History of Graphic Design*, 211–13.

Furthermore, hundreds of Arts and Crafts stained-glass windows can still be found in Great Britain and other countries.[484] Various Arts and Crafts principles become clear in these windows, such as the philosophy of workmanship that inspired Christopher Whall (1849-1924) and his pupil Paul Woodroffe (1875-1954).[485] The work of Mary Lowndes is exemplary for a different Arts and Crafts principle, namely that of naturalistic representation. Mary Lowndes was one of the first women to have a full-time career as a stained-glass artist.[486] She stressed the importance of life drawing for the design of figures. These naturalistic representations of traditional subject matter went against the trend of the *ecclesiastical tailor's dummy* appearance of figures in *trade* windows.[487]

Because of this large category of ecclesiastical Arts and Crafts artefacts, one of the sub-questions of this thesis is: to what extend were the artifacts of Morris and Thorn Prikker used in the context of worship? Both artists created work for this context. When we consider church commissions, the main difference between Thorn Prikker and Morris is that while Thorn Prikker was really eager to work on church interiors, he received no commissions at first. Morris, on the other hand, was able to decline eminent and well-paid commissions on the basis of his *anti-scrape* beliefs, and also because of his wealth. Morris, as one of the founders of the SPAB *(The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings),* spent much time on the protection of Christian heritage. This concern appears not to have been one of Thorn Prikker's, who struggled financially.

The source of Thorn Prikker's problems was that he was considered incapable of creating Catholic art because of his own beliefs. This was not an issue with Morris. Thorn Prikker finally gained permission to show his skills after he moved to Germany, where he was happy to create stained-glass windows, mosaics and textiles for church interiors. Morris had the opportunity to create works for religious contexts from the very outset of his company, although he lacked practical experience in window-making. During his career he was commissioned to create artifacts for use in churches, such as stained-glass windows and different kinds of textiles, as well as altar frontals and pulpits.

That an artist creates artifacts for religious use or having religious motifs is not necessarily contingent upon the religious convictions of that artist. However, in the cases of Morris and

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[484] William Morris Gallery, *Women Stained Glass Artists*, 3.

[485] Greensted and Wilson, *Originality and Initiative*, 61.

[486] William Morris Gallery, *Women Stained Glass Artists*, 1.

[487] Ibid., 2.

Thorn Prikker, it was. The content of the letters written by Morris and Thorn Prikker is full of concern for religion. This also translated into social awareness.

Morris and Thorn Prikker: religious influences, ideas and references

Morris's early interest in theology and the influence of the High Church and the Oxford movement was slowly transformed into a more social concern. He became actively involved in politics and combined his idealization of the Middle Ages with socialist views. While in Morris's life, oeuvre and interests it is relatively easy to discern a dominant recurring theme, Johan Thorn Prikker appears to be far more eclectic and consequently difficult to grasp as a personality. During his life different art movements appealed to him, resulting in contradictory ideas on art over a period of time. Moreover, he seems to have been affected by many different ideas that were popular at the time. Thorn Prikker himself wrote on this matter that his friend Van Eeden was surprised by all the different kinds of art that Thorn Prikker had made. He commented on his own personality: *But then its so typical of me to get started on things and be fed up with them just six months later.*[488]

Although William Morris and Johan Thorn Prikker had very different personalities, religious beliefs had a large impact upon the work of both of them. Morris's oeuvre can be divided into different periods according to the crafts he was interested in at the time. Throughout all these periods he continued working on artifacts for both secular and religious settings. He generally did not make a strong distinction between religious and profane themes, as his *Socialist Banner* depicting Adam and Eve [app. 12] shows. During the period before Thorn Prikker was familiar with the Arts and Crafts movement, between 1892 and 1894, he almost exclusively created artifacts having religious subject matter. Thus his interest in Christian themes remained, but it was no longer his exclusive subject matter. Instead of making religious pious artifacts he began to use religious figures, such as Christ, to express his religious, social and artistic beliefs, which were closely intertwined.

In this thesis I have discussed some of the most influential people and (religious) movements that had an impact on both of these artists in order to answer the first sub-question: which references to religious traditions, rituals, ideas and writings can be distinguished in the art of Morris and Thorn Prikker? The young Morris was raised within Low Church Anglicanism, but was later drawn to High Church ideas. At the age of nineteen he

[488] Original: Enfin 't is ook wel net iets voor mij om met alles te beginnen en er na een half jaar weer het land aan te hebben. Thorn Prikker, *Brieven van Johan Thorn Prikker*, 167.

matriculated at Oxford, intending to take Holy Orders. He was inspired by Ruskin and the Tractarian movement. This helped to produce in him an anti-Protestantism and anti-Puritanism. These feelings were related to his later socialist thoughts, which were amongst other influenced by Charles Kingsley. During his time at Oxford Morris also made lifelong friends, with whom he later embarked on a business.

Thorn Prikker was also raised as a Protestant, but at a later stage he rejected every form of institutionalized religion. Anti-clericalism, and in particular an aversion to the Roman Catholic clergy recurs in Thorn Prikker's artwork. Nevertheless he was interested in Catholic mysticism and eastern religions, in particular Buddhism. His interest in mysticism brought him to value Sâr Péladan and his *Salon de La Rose ✝ Croix* for a brief period of time. Other people who inspired him included writers from the literary circles and artists groups to which he belonged or was associated with, such as de *Tachtigers* and *Les Vingt*. Peter Behrens and Mathieu Lauweriks awakened his interest in theosophy, while Paul Verlaine was one of the people instrumental in his engagement with anarchism.

All these influences had a considerable impact on the ideas and works of Morris and Thorn Prikker. Morris, following Ruskin, was extremely fond of the Middle Ages. He believed that a return to the working conditions of this period would address the problems of modernity. He maintained that during this period even religious differences were overcome through the joy of craft-making. He quoted the English priest John Ball (1338-1381), emphasizing his own belief in social equality. In one of his poems he related social justice to God by asserting that God is a God of the poor: *Deus est Deus Pauperum.* Thorn Prikker shared the desire for social justice with Morris, and his interest in anarchism and mysticism had at least one thing in common with Morris: an aversion to institutionalized religion. Thorn Prikker combined his social criticism with the Christian idea of salvation.

Political convictions and the role of the artist

In order to analyze the religious references made by Morris and Thorn Prikker I posed the question: how did Morris and Thorn Prikker relate to religious traditions in their own publications and in their personal writings? Connected to this understanding of the underlying religious ideas in the artifacts of the Arts and Crafts movement is recognition of the entanglement of religious beliefs and the need for economic and social reform, which was central to the movement. The question of how Morris and Thorn Prikker combined their political engagement and religious convictions is also clearly relevant. Both questions are

concerned with the relationship between religion and what these artists saw as the function of art and the role of the artist.

Both men held strong socialist convictions, which influenced the way they lived and worked. Morris in particular became a committed socialist. Thorn Prikker was also a socialist at heart and was even drawn to anarchism. Morris shunned anarchism because in his view the acts of anarchist groups were dysfunctional and illegal. He became a member of the Social-Democratic Federation and later co-founded the Socialist League. For both parties he was involved in the publishing of their magazines, *Justice* and *The Commonweal.* In the latter, controversial articles such as *Why I don't like clergymen* by John Bruce Glasier (1859-1920) were published. On the series of articles called *Socialism from the Root Up,* Morris collaborated with Ernest Belfort Bax (1854-1926), the writer of *Religion of Socialism.*

These socialist ideas are consistent with the ideal of *Gemeenschapskunst* (Community Art). The underlying ideas of this ideal derived from the writings of Ruskin and Morris. Art created with the intention of serving the community was their ideal. Thorn Prikker emphasized not only the social concerns of this movement, but connected these ideals to his mystical-religious ideas also. Contemporary discourses on the Christ-like anarchist and the anarchist-like Christ are represented in his art and writings. For Thorn Prikker the artist should be an engaged spiritual leader. He depicted the artist as Christ on several occasions. In his opinion an artist should be a teacher, instructing and leading people towards a new ideology. According to Morris, however, the aim of art was to increase human happiness. He emphasized the importance of taking pleasure in work. As a result he did not regard art as something divine, but as something human. The artist, however, should use his or her inborn knowledge to create a work of art.

Morris and Thorn Prikker were far from being the only Arts and Crafts artists to be influenced by socialism and anarchism. Elbert Hubbard (1856-1915) was an influential Arts and Crafts artist and writer in America who searched for economic, social, and spiritual freedom. He stated that:

> *I believe John Ruskin, William Morris, Henry Thoreau, Walt Whitman and Leo Tolstoy to be Prophets of God, and they should rank in mental reach and spiritual insight with Elijah. Hosea, Ezekiel and Isaiah.*[489]

[489] Hubbard, *A Message to Garcia*, i–ii.

Hubbard shared Thorn Prikker's view on Christ. In the same publication he wrote that Jesus was an anarchist.[490]

Morris and Thorn Prikker: representatives of the A & C movement?

The last question posed in this thesis is: to what extent are Morris and Thorn Prikker representatives of the Arts and Crafts movement? William Morris is generally regarded as one of the main figures of the movement. Translations of his work and art magazines were responsible for his ideas extending to continental Europe in the 1880's, where many artists were influenced, and a major impact was made on other art movements. One of the ideals derived from his thinking was that of *gemeenschapskunst*. Thorn Prikker was influenced by Morris's thinking about the meaning of art. However, so far he has been regarded solely as a marginal figure in symbolist and expressionist art, Art Nouveau and Jugendstil art.[491] Thorn Prikker was a versatile artist; it is difficult to pin him down and to classify his oeuvre in any specific stylistic or national category.[492]

Nevertheless, the Arts and Crafts movement's influence on Thorn Prikker is mainly present in the ideal of honesty. Both Thorn Prikker and Morris emphasized the importance of honesty and purity in art. However, how they envisaged this ideal certainly differed. For Morris the ideal of honesty was connected to justice. He saw handicrafts as essentially honest, while work performed by machines was not. Morris stressed the importance of taking pleasure in labor. For Thorn Prikker however the ideal of honesty meant showing the true materials used. Like Pugin and many other Arts and Crafts artists, Thorn Prikker argued that material should be used where it is most appropriate and that its true nature should not be concealed. He also wrote about the *waare en reine* (the true and the pure) in art. In order to create this form of art an artist needs to be true to himself/herself, not taking any ideas from other people or traditions. This is in accord with the position taken by the Arts and Crafts movement against historicism. At the time all kinds of neo-styles were popular. The Arts and Crafts movement offered an alternative to this.

Both artists shared an admiration for nature and natural forms. For Morris this meant using natural patterns in his art. His appreciation of nature was not metaphysical in the way that it was, for example, for Burne-Jones. Thorn Prikker, who was strongly influenced by Burne-Jones and the other Pre-Raphaelites, also maintained that impressions should be

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[490] Ibid., 147.

[491] Heiser-Schmid, *Das Werk Johan Thorn Prikkers*, 12.

[492] Heiser, Thomas, and Til, *Johan Thorn Prikker*, 8.

acquired from nature herself. Thorn Prikker thus insisted on the importance of the artist's soul in this regard. Following Péladan, he maintained that merely portraying trees is not at all sufficient.

The philosophical-mystical wing of the Arts and Crafts movement

Thorn Prikker's interest in mysticism is not exceptional. According to art historian Colin Trodd, the Arts and crafts movement had a philosophical-mystical wing. These artists shared a belief in *the transcendental nature of art as manifestation of human spirit*.[493] T.J. Cobden-Sanderson, who coined the term 'Arts and Crafts,' can be regarded as one of the British representatives of this wing.[494] Cobden-Sanderson sketched in *Industrial Ideals* (1902) his ideal for the production and distribution of art. He illustrated this ideal and also wrote about how to realize it in an article with examples from the 'Holy' Catholic Church. He wished to contribute to *a cosmic conception which shall unite into one vision or Ideal [of] the forces of the universe and of man, and give to the forces of the latter the dignity and constancy and rhythm which we associate with the forces of the former*.[495] He concluded his article by maintaining that striving after some ideal is necessary: for guidance, and also for providing significance to our daily work. *And until the world's ideal be established, I submit my own. ECCE MUNDUS ECCE COELUM*.[496]

The function of art and the role of the artist in this matter becomes clear from another quotation:

> *[Art] is primarily, and chiefly, and always, the doing a right thing well in the spirit of an artist who loves the just, the seemly, the beautiful; and its immediate future is to apply this idea of itself to the whole of life . . . Life . . . is stupendous energy, and at not one moment of time is that energy suspended. First, the energy of the universe without man, then of man in unison with the universe, and of the two conjointly. That stupendous energy in its main and its minor strains, in its entirely and in detail, is the province of art.*[497]

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[493] Trodd, *Visions of Blake*, 386.

[494] Ibid.

[495] Cobden-Sanderson, *Ecce Mundus: Industrial Ideals and the Book Beautiful*, 7.

[496] Translation: See the world, see the heaven. Ibid., 28.

[497] Trodd, *Visions of Blake*, 387.

Another representative of the philosophical-mystical was Phoebe Anna Traquair (1852-1036), whose main theme was the redemption of mankind. She was responsible for murals in several chapels, churches and cathedrals.[498]

Ecclesial commissions

Morris and Thorn Prikker were certainly not the only artists who were asked for ecclesiastical commissions. The Arts and Crafts ideal of beauty in everyday life also suited the ideals of Christian pastoral care. After the Disruption of 1843 a schism within the established Church of Scotland which led to the formation of the Free Church of Scotland and later the United Presbyterian Church - many new churches were designed and decorated by Arts and Crafts architects and artists.[499] Sometimes, as was the case with the *Thistle Chapel* in *St Giles Cathedral* in Edinburgh, only parts of the church were built in the new style.[500] However, Arts and Crafts designers were asked to restore some of the older buildings also. A key example of Arts and Crafts ecclesiastical work is the scheme in the thirteenth century Cathedral of Dunblane, executed by among others by Rowand Anderson (1834-1921) and Robert Lorimer (1864-1929).[501]

Vehicles of new ideas: pluralism and the Arts and Crafts movement

To return to the main question of this thesis: why do the British artist William Morris and the Dutch artist Johan Thorn Prikker refer to religious traditions, rituals, ideas and writings in their art? To answer this it is important to consider the time in which these artists lived. The fin-de-siècle period was characterized by a longing for different ways of life, a renewed interest in occultism and mysticism, a fascination for eastern religions, and, finally the process of secularization. We have seen in earlier chapters how these developments occurred in the art of Morris and Thorn Prikker. During this period, in which new religious movements emerged and older traditions gained greater attention, theologian Peter Taylor Forsyth (1848-1921) stated that:

> *Genius has gone to Pagan sources for its inspiration . . . The very genius which falls in love with Greek or Norse antiquity has been a genius inspired by centuries of hereditary*

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[498] Blakesley, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 98–99.

[499] Cumming, *Hand, Heart and Soul*, 135.

[500] Ibid., 142.

[501] Ibid., 139–40.

> *Christian idealism, and reared in a society troubled, amid all its Paganism, with the presence of the Christian dream . . . The old tales and characters have become vehicles of new ideas, passions and inspirations, which to the old days were impossible.*[502]

In other words, artists turned to what he called *pagan sources* in order to express themselves. In my opinion Forsyth was correct in his observation that old *tales* were given new content. In the works of both William Morris and Johan Thorn Prikker the artists combined a Christian iconography/symbolism with socialist ideas. Neither of them were hardly involved at all in any form of institutionalized religion, but they did not shun the creation of art having religious subject matter or from creating artifacts for religious bodies.

This combination of conventional imagery and new ideas makes these forms of art pluralistic. Within the Arts and Crafts movement not only their own works of art constitute this blend of ideas, but the movement itself is also highly heterogeneous. This is also the case for their craft associations, which were:

> *in no way homogeneous. Some were clubs, some philanthropic initiatives, and some commercial enterprises. Some aimed to address social problems, while others restricted themselves to the arts alone. Some were gender-specific, and others catered for social or geographical catchment areas.*[503]

Other artists combined their own Christian backgrounds with additional ideas and impulses. Phoebe Anna Traquair, for example, combined on several occasions Christianity with what was at the time called *pagan* imagery. Her four-part series of embroideries entitled *Progress of a Soul* (1895-1902) shows the author Walter Pater's *Imaginary Portraits* (1887); the character of Denys/Dionysus with the wounds of Christ in his side and other Christian imagery. Likewise, Traquair's paintings on the *Grand Piano* (1909-1910) from Lympne Castle, Kent, show scenes from the *Song of Solomon* and the figures of Pan, Eros and Psyche.[504] John Duncan, also, was a theosophist who painted many Celtic themes.[505]

This plurality of religious sources makes it difficult to draw general conclusions about all the Arts and Crafts artists or associations, but as I have shown, there are certainly some

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[502] Forsyth, *Religion in Recent Art*, 57–58.

[503] Blakesley, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 71.

[504] Carruthers, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Scotland: A History*, 162, 166.

[505] Cumming, *Hand, Heart and Soul*, 148.

golden threads throughout the history of the movement that show it was influenced by religion. The relevance of examining the role that religion played in the Arts and Crafts movement becomes clear when considering the findings of this thesis. By taking the religious aspect of the movement into account, our present understanding of the movement as one with many social and political aspects to it can be further refined.

This study has thrown up many questions in need of further investigation. It is recommended that further exploration of the roots of the movement be undertaken (in particular concerning the relationship with the Anglo-Catholic revival), its patrons (because they were often connected to the Anglo-Catholic tradition as well),[506] and the reception of the writings of Arts and Crafts authors in more detail. Morris, for example, was of crypto-spiritual significance for, amongst others, poet and Nobel Prize winner William Butler Yeats (1865-1939), playwright George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) and author Oscar Wilde (1854-1900). Yeats linked Morris to the Rosicrucian tradition and described Morris as *among the greatest of those who prepare the last reconciliation when the Cross shall blossom with roses.*[507] Equally interesting would be an examination of the impact of some of the early scholars of religious studies, such as Max Müller and James George Frazer on the Arts and Crafts movement. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890) was believed to be particularly influential to Arts and Crafts group *The Glasgow Four.*[508]

It is also important to remark that the Arts and Crafts movement had some impact on religious institutions. Morris laid the ground for others by refuting the then current historicism and by stressing the social aspect of art. Many people held similar ideas to those of the Arts and Crafts movement. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), like William Morris, emphasized that art should be truthful in the sense of being suitable for its purpose as well as beautiful as well: form should follow function. Furthermore, the ideal of creating a symphonic whole from all the visual arts applied within a building was the starting point of Steiner's Goetheanum in Dornach, near Basle in Switzerland. Steiner designed this building - which functions as the world center of the anthroposophical movement - according to his own architectural principles.[509] Another influential spiritual leader inspired by the writings of one of the central figures of the Arts and Crafts movement, Mahatma Gandhi (1896-1946), took his inspiration from harbinger and patron John Ruskin. Gandhi claimed in his autobiography that after

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[506] The clients of architect Reginald Fairlie (1883-1952) were for example connected to this tradition. Ibid., 162.

[507] Kontou and Willburn, *ARC to Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism and the Occult*, 172.

[508] Blakesley, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, 102.

[509] Steiner, *Architecture as a Synthesis of the Arts*, ix–x.

reading Ruskin's *Unto This Last* (1860), he was determined to change his life in accordance with Ruskin's ideals. He also translated this work into Gujarati and entitled it *Sarvodaya* (the welfare of all, 1908).[510]

Arts and Crafts artists tended to combine their artistic ideals with their political views, including their thoughts on how to live one's everyday life, together with their opinions on what it means to contribute to society, as well as their religious beliefs. The words *the welfare of all* therefore recapitulate their collective world view fairly well.

[510] Brantlinger, "A Postindustrial Prelude to Postcolonialism," 467.

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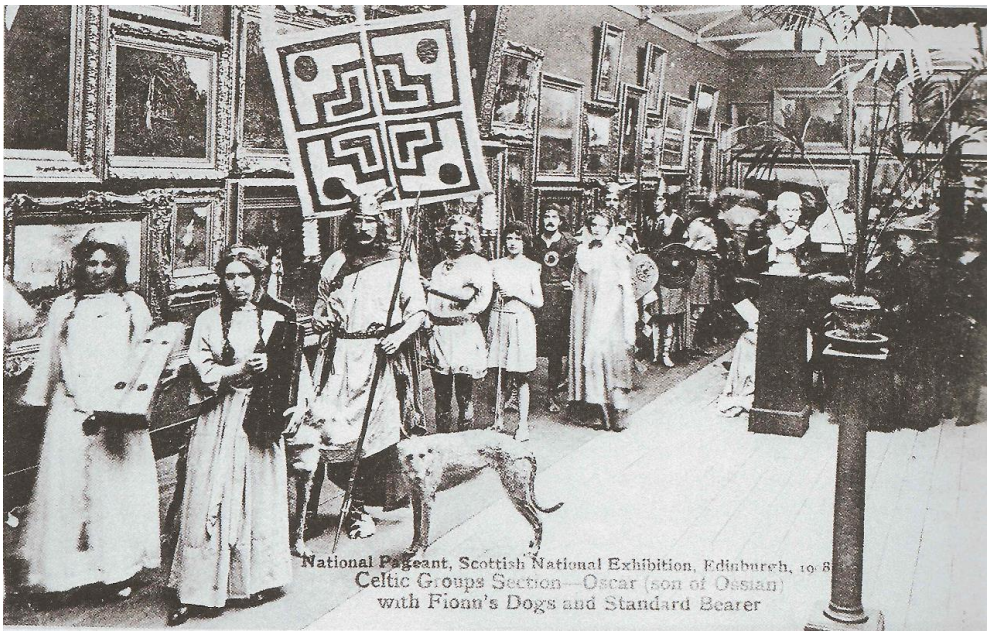
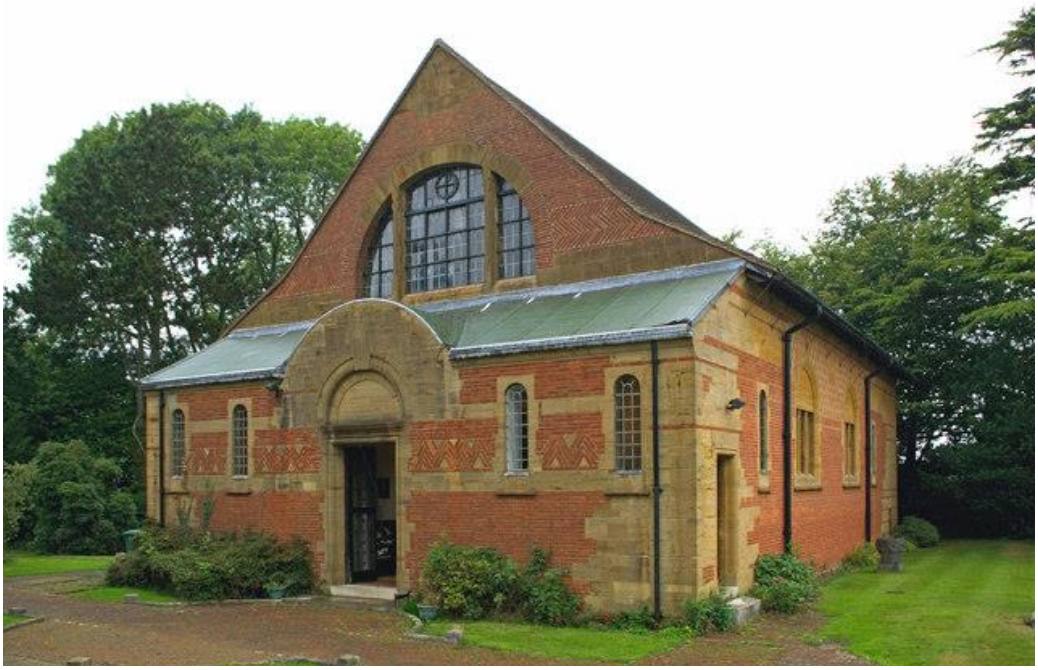
List of appendices

Appendices: images and poems



Appendix 1: *The Celtic Group*, publicity postcard on the occasion of *The National Pageant of Allegory, Myth and History*, 1908. Costumes designed by John Duncan.

Appendix 2: *The Jacobite Group of the 1745*, publicity postcard on the occasion of *The National Pageant of Allegory, Myth and History*, 1908.



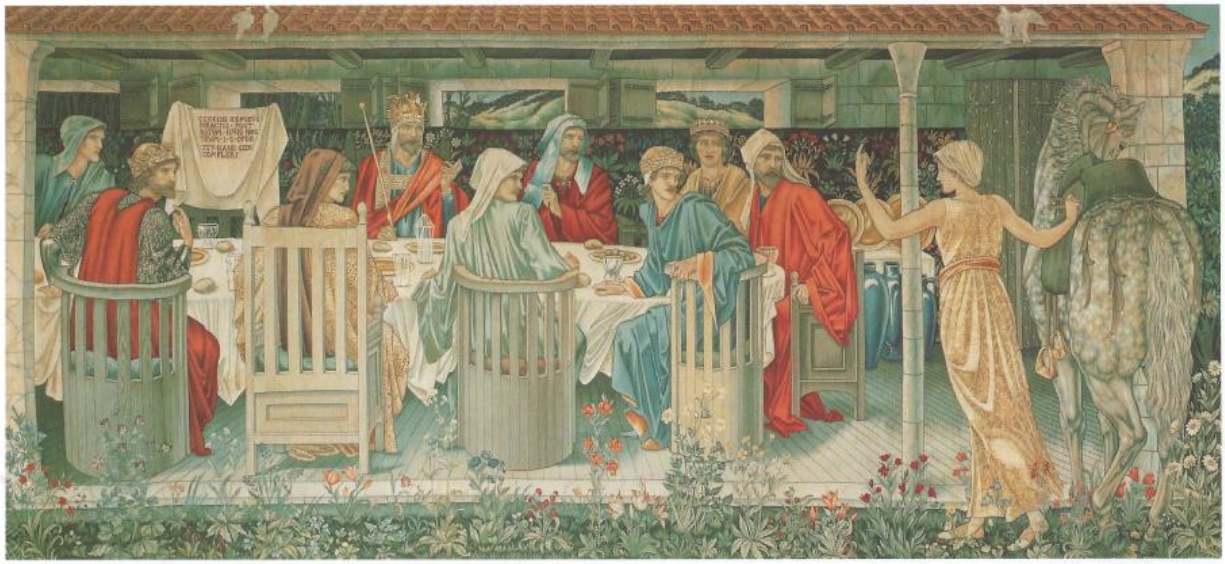
Appendix 3: Sidney Howard Barnsley, exterior of the church at Lower Kingswood in Surrey, dedicated on 17 July 1892. The design is based on a roman basilica.

Appendix 4: Sidney Howard Barnsley, interior of the church at Lower Kingswood in Surrey, dedicated on 17 July 1892.

Appendix 5: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Aurea Catena, Portrait of Jane Morris*, 1868, graphite and colored chalks on blue wove paper, 76.8 x 62.6 cm, FAM.

Appendix 6: Frederick Hollyler, *The Families of William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones in the Garden at The Grange*, 1874, platinotype photograph, 14 x 13.1 cm, WMG.

Photo taken at Burne-Jones's home in Fulham.
Left to right: Edward Jones (Burne-Jones's father), Margaret Burne-Jones, Edward Burne-Jones, Philip Burne-Jones, Georgiana Burne-Jones, May Morris, William Morris, Jane Morris, and Jenny Morris.



Appendix 7: Edward Burne-Jones, William Morris and John Henry Dearle, *Quest for the Holy Grail Tapestries,* panel 1, *The Knights of the Round Table Summoned to the Quest by the Strange Damsel*, designed 1890-1893, woven c. 1898-1899, Tapestry wool and silk weft on cotton warp, 245 x 535 cm, BMAG.

Appendix 8: Morris & Co, *Quest for the Holy Grail Tapestries*, panel 6, *The Attainment; The Vision of the Holy Grail to Sir Galahad, Sir Bors and Sir Percival*, version woven 1895-96, wool, silk, mohair and camel hair weft on cotton warp, 695 x 244 cm, BMAG.

Appendix 9: William Morris's first poem, *T was in Church on Palm Sunday*, 1855.

T was in Church on Palm Sunday,
Listening what the priest did say
Of the kiss that did betray,

That the thought did come to me,
How the olives used to be
Growing in Gethsemane.

That the thoughts upon me came
Of the lantern's steady flame,
Of the softly whispered name.

Of how kiss and words did sound
While the olives stood around,
While the robe lay on the ground.

Then the words the Lord did speak
And that kiss in Holy Week
Dreams of many a kiss did make:

Lover's kiss beneath the moon,
With it sorrow cometh soon:
Juliet's within the tomb:

Angelico's in quiet light
'Mid the aureoles very bright
God is looking from the height.

There the monk his love doth meet:
Once he fell before her feet
Ere within the Abbey sweet

He, while music rose alway
From the Church, to God did pray
That his life might pass away.

There between the angel rows
With the light flame on his brows,
With his friend, the deacon goes:

Hand in hand they go together,
Loving hearts they go together
Where the Presence shineth ever.

Kiss upon the death-bed given,
Kiss on dying forehead given
When the soul goes up to Heaven.

Many thoughts beneath the sun
Thought together, Life is done,
Yet for ever love doth run.

Willow standing 'gainst the blue,
Where the light clouds come and go,
Mindeth me of kiss untrue.

Christ, thine awful cross is thrown
Round the whole world, and thy Sun
Woful kisses looks upon.

***

Eastward slope the shadows now,
Very light the wind does blow,
Scarce it lifts the laurels low;

I cannot say the things I would,
I cannot think the things I would,
How the Cross at evening stood.

Very blue the sky above,
Very sweet the faint clouds move,
Yet I cannot think of love. [511]

[511] Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, 1: 54–56.

Appendix 10: William Morris, *The God of the Poor*, 1868.

The God of the Poor

There was a lord that hight Maltete,
Among great lords he was right great,
On poor folk trod he like the dirt,
None but God might do him hurt.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

With a grace of prayers sung loud and late
Many a widow's house he ate;
Many a poor knight at his hands
Lost his house and narrow lands.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

He burnt the harvests many a time,
He made fair houses heaps of lime;
Whatso man loved wife or maid
Of Evil-head was sore afraid.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

He slew good men and spared the bad;
Too long a day the foul dog had,
E'en as all dogs will have their day;
But God is as strong as man, I say.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

For a valiant knight, men called Boncoeur,
Had hope he should not long endure,
And gathered to him much good folk,
Hardy hearts to break the yoke.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

But Boncoeur deemed it would be vain
To strive his guarded house to gain;
Therefore, within a little while,
He set himself to work by guile.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

He knew that Maltete loved right well
Red gold and heavy. If from hell
The Devil had cried, "Take this gold cup,"
Down had he gone to fetch it up.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

Twenty poor men's lives were nought
To him, beside a ring well wrought.
The pommel of his hunting-knife
Was worth ten times a poor man's life.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

A squire new-come from over-sea
Boncoeur called to him privily,
And when he knew his lord's intent,
Clad like a churl therefrom he went.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

But when he came where dwelt Maltete,
With few words did he pass the gate,
For Maltete built him walls anew,
And, wageless, folk from field he drew.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

Now passed the squire through this and that,
Till he came to where Sir Maltete sat,
And over red wine wagged his beard:
Then spoke the squire as one afeard.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"Lord, give me grace, for privily
I have a little word for thee."
"Speak out," said Maltete, "have no fear,
For how can thy life to thee be dear?"
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"Such an one I know," he said,
"Who hideth store of money red."
Maltete grinned at him cruelly:

"Thou florin-maker, come anigh."
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"E'en such as thou once preached of gold,
And showed me lies in books full old,
Nought gat I but evil brass,
Therefore came he to the worser pass."
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"Hast thou will to see his skin?
I keep my heaviest marks therein,
For since nought else of wealth had he,
I deemed full well he owed it me."
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"Nought know I of philosophy,"
The other said, "nor do I lie.
Before the moon begins to shine,
May all this heap of gold be thine."
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"Ten leagues from this a man there is,
Who seemeth to know but little bliss,
And yet full many a pound of gold
A dry well nigh his house doth hold."
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"John-a-Wood is he called, fair lord,
Nor know I whence he hath this hoard."
Then Maltete said, "As God made me,
A wizard over-bold is he!"
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"It were a good deed, as I am a knight,
To burn him in a fire bright;
This John-a-Wood shall surely die,
And his gold in my strong chest shall lie."
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"This very night, I make mine avow,
The truth of this mine eyes shall know."
Then spoke an old knight in the hall,

"Who knoweth what things may befall?"
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"I rede thee go with a great rout,
For thy foes they ride thick about."
"Thou and the devil may keep my foes,
Thou redest me this gold to lose."
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"I shall go with but some four or five,
So shall I take my thief alive.
For if a great rout he shall see,
Will he not hide his wealth from me?"
Deus est Deus pauperum.

The old knight muttered under his breath,
"Then mayhap ye shall but ride to death."
But Maltete turned him quickly round,
"Bind me this grey-beard under ground!"
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"Because ye are old, ye think to jape.
Take heed, ye shall not long escape.
When I come back safe, old carle, perdie,
Thine head shall brush the linden-tree."
Deus est Deus pauperum.

Therewith he rode with his five men,
And Boncoeur's spy, for good leagues ten,
Until they left the beaten way,
And dusk it grew at end of day.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

There, in a clearing of the wood,
Was John's house, neither fair nor good.
In a ragged plot his house anigh,
Thin coleworts grew but wretchedly.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

John-a-wood in his doorway sat,
Turning over this and that,
And chiefly how he best might thrive,
For he had will enough to live.

Deus est Deus pauperum.

Green coleworts from a wooden bowl
He ate; but careful was his soul,
For if he saw another day,
Thenceforth was he in Boncoeur's pay.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

So when he saw how Maltete came,
He said, "Beginneth now the game!"
And in the doorway did he stand
Trembling, with hand joined fast to hand.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

When Maltete did this carle behold,
Somewhat he doubted of his gold,
But cried out, "Where is now thy store
Thou hast through books of wicked lore?"
Deus est Deus pauperum.

Then said the poor man, right humbly,
"Fair lord, this was not made by me,
I found it in mine own dry well,
And had a mind thy grace to tell.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"Therefrom, my lord, a cup I took
This day, that thou thereon mightst look,
And know me to be leal and true,"
And from his coat the cup he drew.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

Then Maltete took it in his hand,
Nor knew he aught that it used to stand
On Boncoeur's cupboard many a day.
"Go on," he said, "and show the way.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"Give me thy gold, and thou shalt live,
Yea, in my house thou well mayst thrive."
John turned about and 'gan to go
Unto the wood with footsteps slow.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

But as they passed by John's woodstack,
Growled Maltete, "Nothing now doth lack
Wherewith to light a merry fire,
And give my wizard all his hire."
Deus est Deus pauperum.

The western sky was red as blood,
Darker grew the oaken-wood;
"Thief and carle, where are ye gone?
Why are we in the wood alone?
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"What is the sound of this mighty horn?
Ah, God! that ever I was born!
The basnets flash from tree to tree;
Show me, thou Christ, the way to flee!"
Deus est Deus pauperum.

Boncoeur it was with fifty men;
Maltete was but one to ten,
And his own folk prayed for grace,
With empty hands in that lone place.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"Grace shall ye have," Boncoeur said,
"All of you but Evil-head."
Lowly could that great lord be,
Who could pray so well as he?
Deus est Deus pauperum.

Then could Maltete howl and cry,
Little will he had to die.
Soft was his speech, now it was late,
But who had will to save Maltete?
Deus est Deus pauperum.

They brought him to the house again,
And toward the road he looked in vain.
Lonely and bare was the great highway,
Under the gathering moonlight grey.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

They took off his gilt basnet,
That he should die there was no let;
They took off his coat of steel,
A damned man he well might feel.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"Will ye all be rich as kings,
Lacking naught of all good things?"
"Nothing do we lack this eve;
When thou art dead, how can we grieve?"
Deus est Deus pauperum.

"Let me drink water ere I die,
None henceforth comes my lips anigh."
They brought it him in that bowl of wood.
He said, "This is but poor men's blood!"
Deus est Deus pauperum.

They brought it him in the cup of gold.
He said: "The women I have sold
Have wept it full of salt for me;
I shall die gaping thirstily."
Deus est Deus pauperum.

On the threshold of that poor homestead
They smote off his evil head;
They set it high on a great spear,
And rode away with merry cheer.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

At the dawn, in lordly state,
They rode to Maltete's castle-gate.
"Whoso willeth laud to win,
Make haste to let your masters in!"
Deus est Deus pauperum.

Forthwith opened they the gate,
No man was sorry for Maltete.
Boncoeur conquered all his lands,
A good knight was he of his hands.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

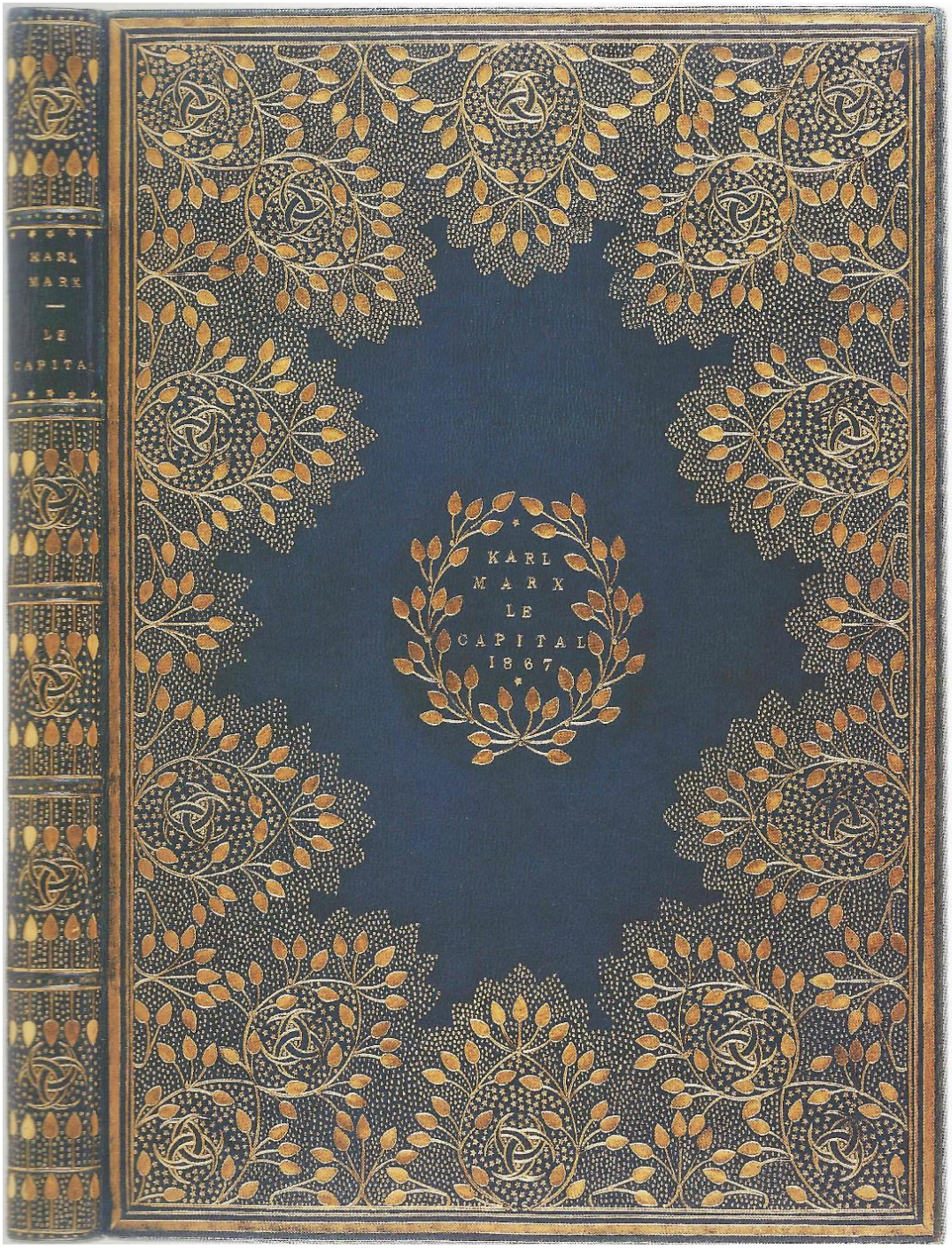
Good men he loved and hated bad;
Joyful days and sweet he had;
Good deeds did he plenteously;
Beneath him folk lived frank and free.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

He lived long, with merry days;
None said aught of him but praise.
God on him have full mercy;
A good knight merciful was he.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

The great lord, called Maltete, is dead;
Grass grows above his feet and head,
And a holly-bush grows up between
His rib-bones gotten white and clean.
Deus est Deus pauperum.

A carle's sheep-dog certainly
Is a mightier thing than he.
Till London-bridge shall cross the Nen,
Take we heed of such-like men.
Deus est Deus pauperum.[512]

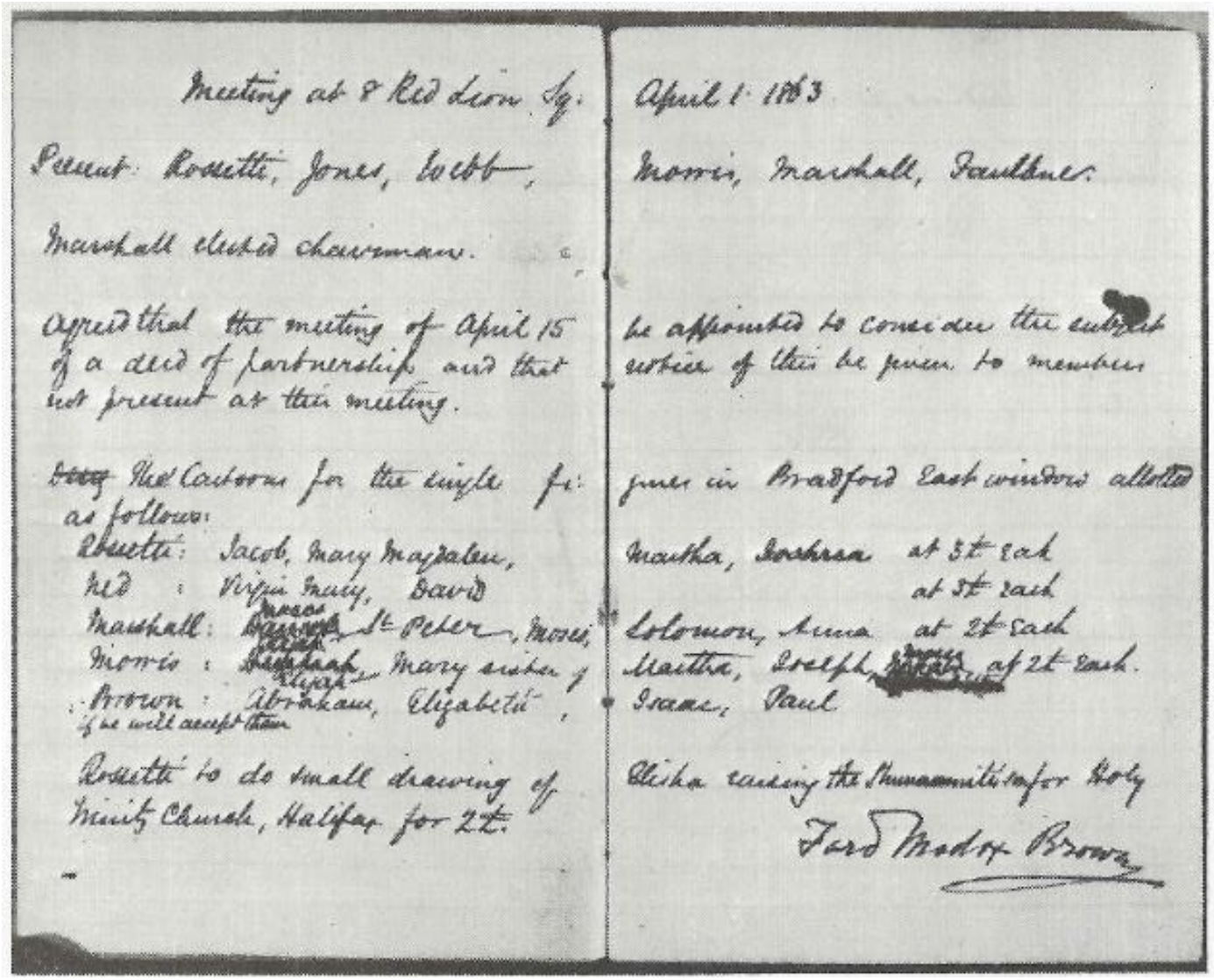
[512] Morris, William, "The Collected Works of William Morris", 2012, 9: *Love is Enough:* 156–63.



Appendix 11: Thomas James Cobden-Sanderson, *Cover of William Morris's Copy of Marx' Le Capital*, 1884, Green leather binding, tooled in gold, 29 x 21.6 cm, J. Paul Getty Collection, Wormsley Library, Berkshire, UK.

Appendix 12: Maker unknown, *Socialist Banner*, c. 1890s, painted and embroidered silk, 168 x 91 cm, WMG. Inscription: upper center: "SOCIALISM," left: "FELLOWSHIP," right: "BROTHERHOOD," lower center: "WHEN ADAM DELVED AND EVE SPAN WHO WAS THEN THE GENTLEMAN."

The imagery in this banner is taken from Burne-Jones's illustration for Morris's socialist novel *A Dream of John Ball* (1888), the sentence below comes from the same novel.



Meeting at 8 Red Lion Sq. April 1. 1863

Present Rossetti, Jones, Webb, Morris, Marshall, Faulkner.

Marshall elected chairman.

Agreed that the meeting of April 15 be appointed to consider the entered of a deed of partnership and that notice of this be given to members not present at this meeting.

Red Cartoons for the triple fi: given in Bradford East windows allotted as follows:

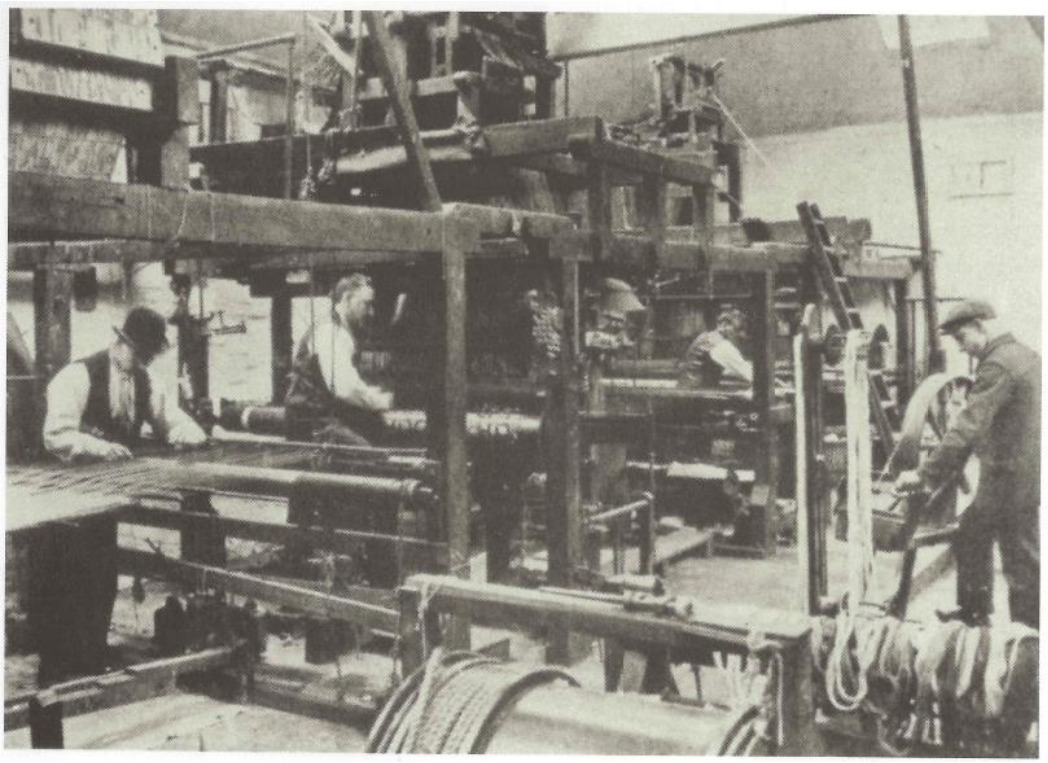
Rossetti: Jacob, Mary Magdalen, Martha, Zechreas at 3£ each
Hill: Virgin Mary, David at 3£ each
Marshall: [illegible] St Peter, Moses, Solomon, Anna at 2£ each
Morris: [illegible] Mary sister of Martha, Joseph, [illegible] at 2£ each.
Brown: Abraham, Elizabeth, Isaac, Paul
if he will accept them

Rossetti to do small drawing of Elisha causing the Shunammite's son to live
Trinity Church, Halifax for 2£.

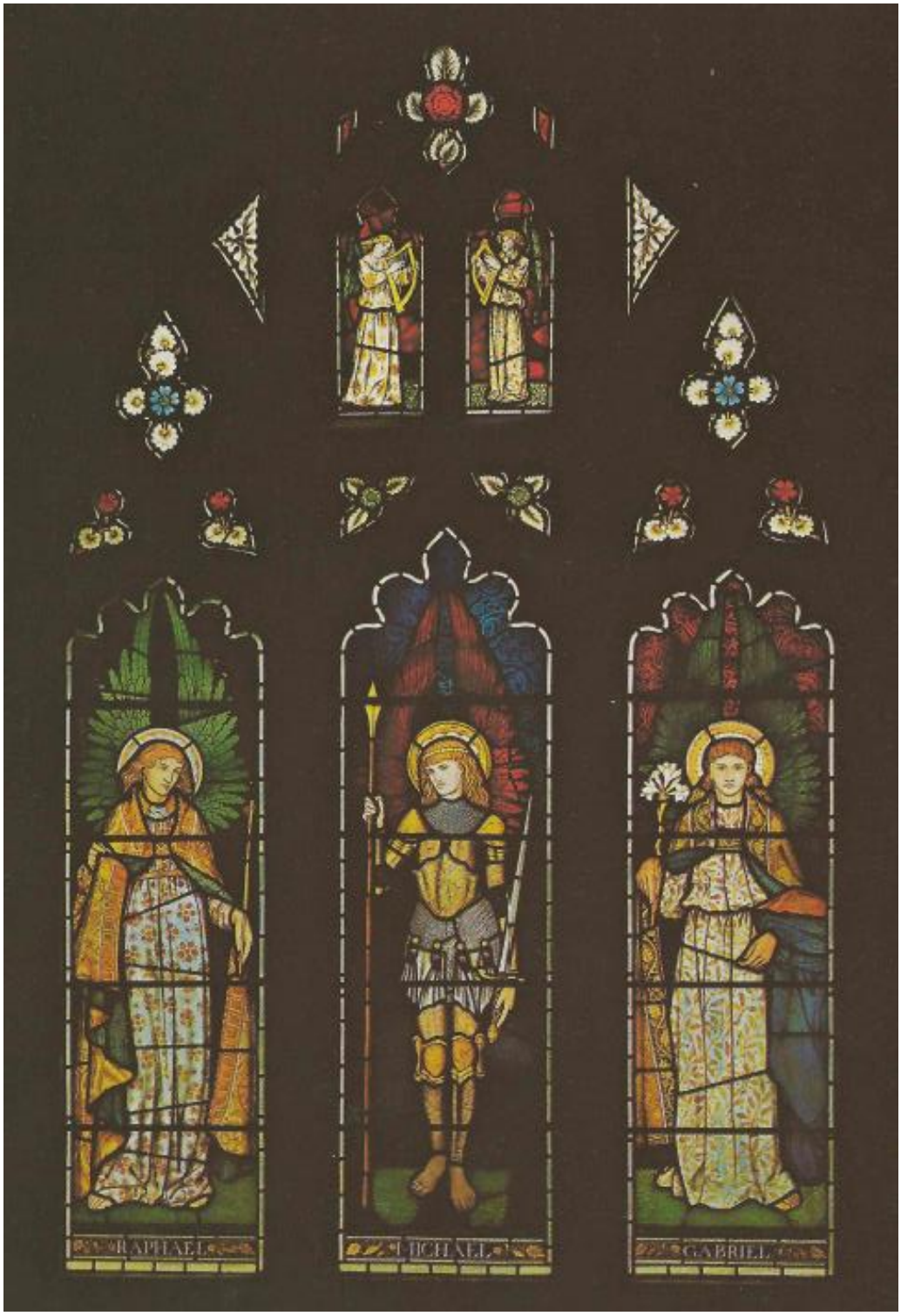
Ford Madox Brown

Appendix 13: Page from the *Minute Book of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co*, 1 April 1863, Mr. Sanford L. Berger, Berkeley, California, United States of America.

Appendix 14: Photograph of the stained-glass studios of Morris & Co. at Merton Abbey, c. 1908.



Appendix 15: Photograph of the Jaquard Looms at Merton Abbey, c. 1881.

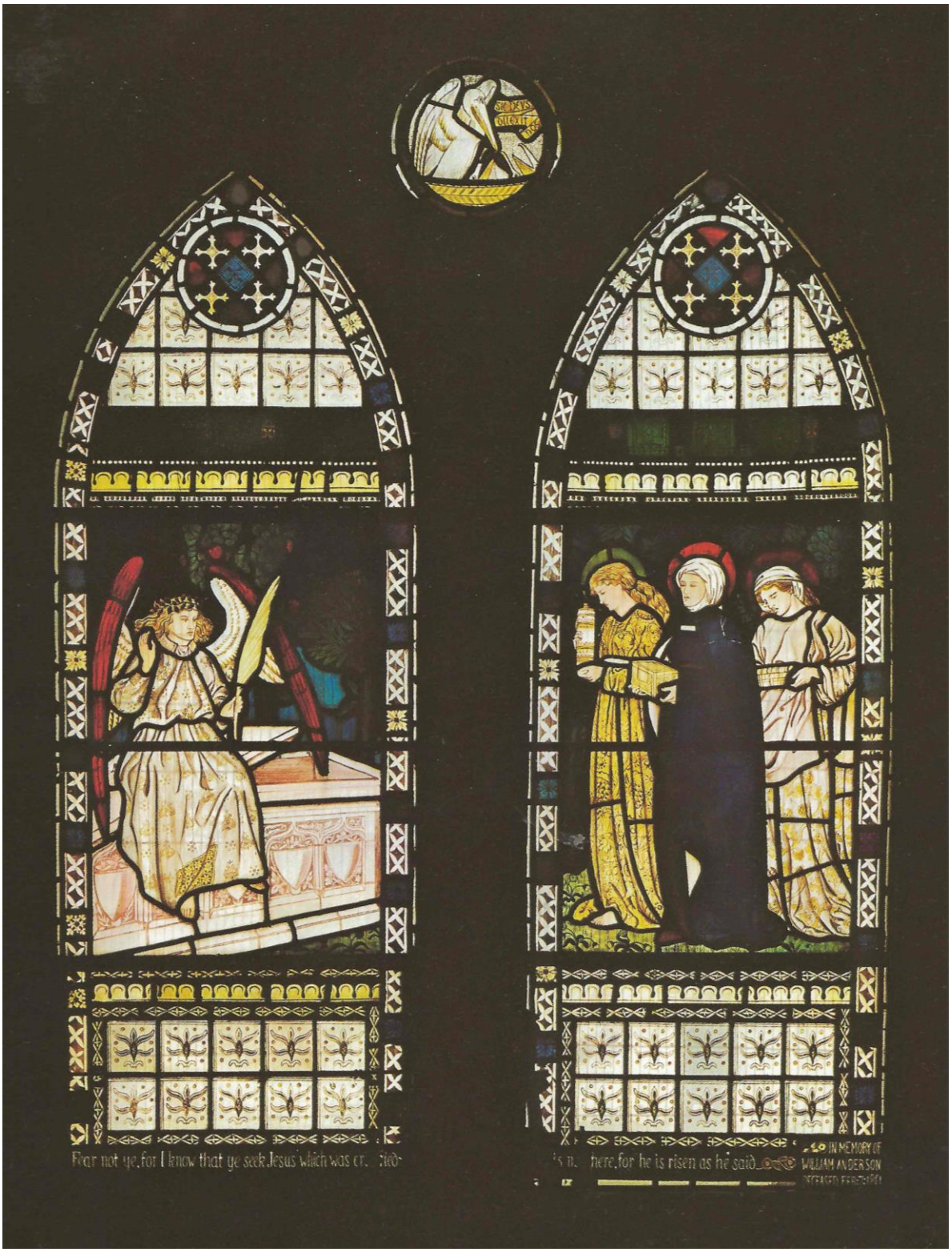


Appendix 16: Design by William Morris, *Archangels Raphael, Michael and Gabriel*, c. 1869, stained-glass windows, south aisle window at St Mary's, Kings Walden, Herts, UK.

Appendix 17: William Morris, *Three Maries at the Sepulchre*, c. 1862, graphite and wash on paper, 39.1 x 18.7 cm, inscription: verso in graphite: "45 Mary the Virgin 1862- Three Marys at the tomb St Martin's on the Hill, Scarborough/ 47 The Three Marys 1865 - St Edmund Hall Chapel, Oxford/ 21W window St Michael and All Angels Brighton 1862"; lower left: "45 21W"; lower right: "26". HT.

Appendix 18: William Morris, *Three Maries at the Sepulchre*, c. 1862, graphite on paper, 39.1 x 25.4 cm, inscription: recto upper left: six columns of numbers; verso lower center: "21 W window St Michael and All Angels, Brighton 1862 47 The Three Marys - 1865 St Edmund Hall Church, Oxford"; lower left: "21W"; lower right: "25". HT.

Appendix 19: William Morris, *Three Maries at the Sepulchre*, c. 1862, graphite and wash on paper, 38.1 x 23.8 cm, inscription: verso in graphite: "47 The three Marys - 1865 St Edmund Hall Chapel, Oxford/ 21W Window St Michael and All Angels Brighton 1862"; lower right: "27"; lower left: "21W". HT.



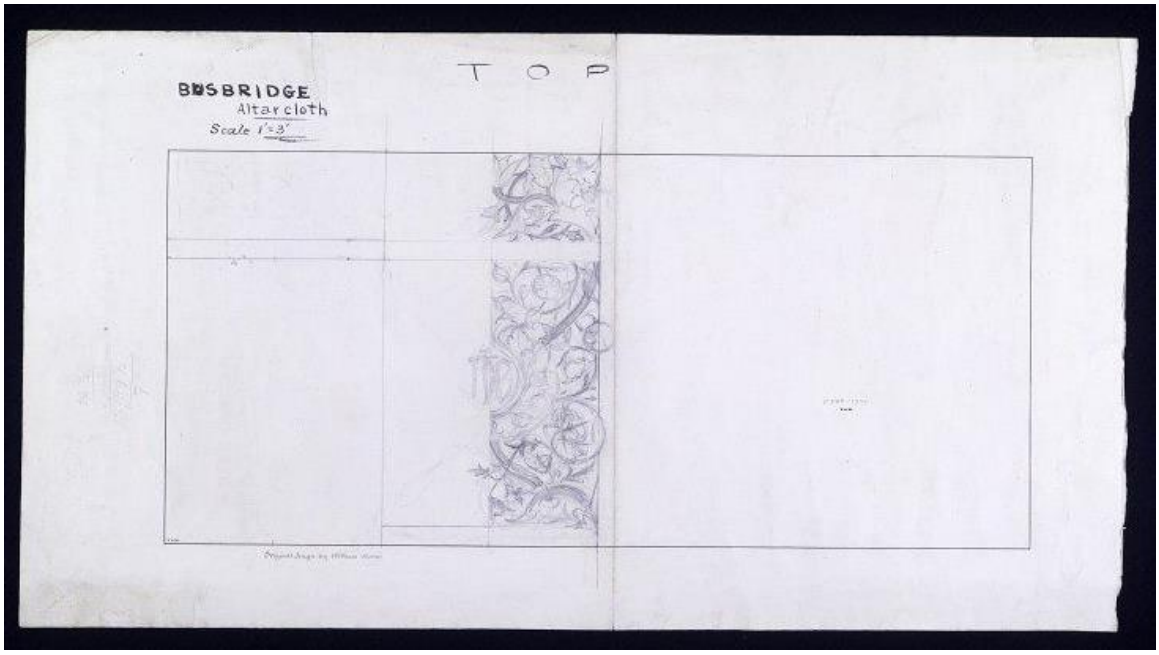
Appendix 20: Design by William Morris, *Three Maries at the Sepulchre*, c. 1862, stained-glass, south aisle east window at St Michael and All Angels, Brighton, Sussex, UK.

Appendix 21: Design by William Morris for Morris and Company, maker unknown, *Saint Catherine*, c. 1860, photograph, 15.2 x 7 cm, inscription: recto left side in graphite: "F.P. 205" recto upper right in graphite: "332" recto lower left in graphite: "S. Catherine" on card: recto upper right in black ink: "53" recto lower center in black ink: "Please return to / Morris & Compy / Merton Abbey / Surrey". HT.

Appendix 22: Design by Edward Burne-Jones for Morris and Company, maker unknown, *Saint Mark*, c. 1874, silver nitrate, 14 x 5.7 cm, inscription: on recto of card at upper left in black ink: F.P. 187 at upper right in graphite: 146 below photo in graphite: S. Mark Jesus Coll. in black ink on card at lower right: Please return to/ Morris & Compy/ Merton Abbey/ Surrey. HT.

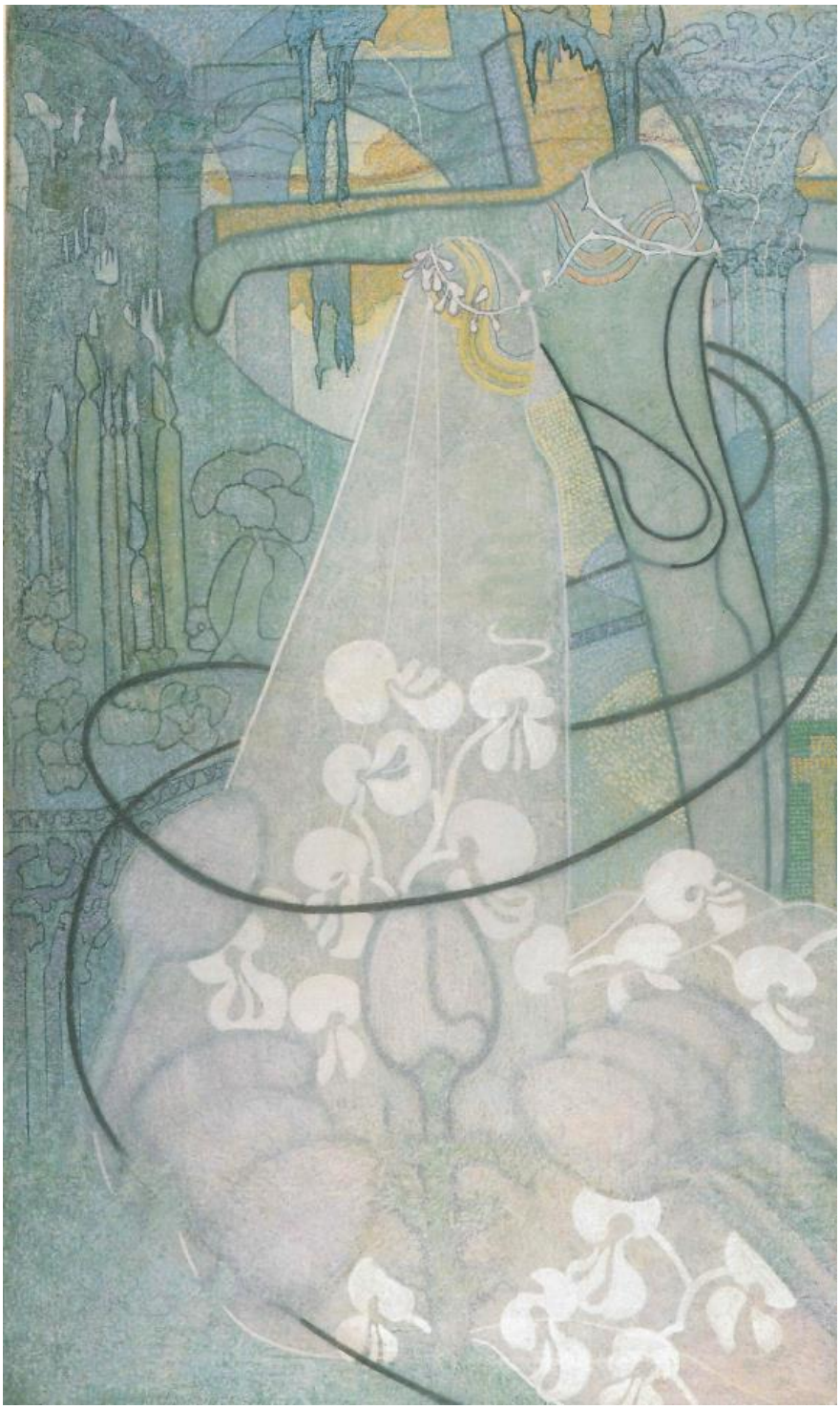
Appendix 23: Design by Edward Burne-Jones for Morris and Company, maker unknown, *Saint Barbara*, c. 1891, black ink on paper, 24.6 x 8.3 cm, inscription: recto upper left in black ink: "WB 27". HT.

Appendix 24: William Morris, *Nativity; Annunciation; Virgin and Child; Minstrel Angels*, December 5 1872, watercolor and ink on paper, 32.1 x 21.6 cm, inscription: recto upper left in graphite by a separate hand: "Nun Monkton" recto lower left: "Design for east window, Nun Monkton,/ Dec 5th, 1872"; recto lower right: "The property of Morris and Company/ 26 Queen Square, Bloomsbury [this line crossed out]/ Merton Abbey Surrey [underlined]". HT.



Appendix 25: William Morris, *Design for an altar cloth*, c. 1870s, pencil and bodycolor, 46.6 x 87.9 cm, V&A.

Appendix 26: Designed and made by May Morris, *Bishop's Gloves*, c. 1900, linen embroidered in silks, 36 x 16.7 x 0.7 cm, V&A.



Appendix 27: Johan Thorn Prikker, *The Bride*, 1892-1893, oil on canvas, 147.1 x 88.2 cm, KMM.

Appendix 28: Sjoerd Hendrik de Roos, Frontispiece and title page from: *William Morris: Kunst en Maatschappij*, Amsterdam: A. B, Soep, 1903. Translated by M. Hugenholtz-Zeeren, with a short biographical sketch by Henri Polak.

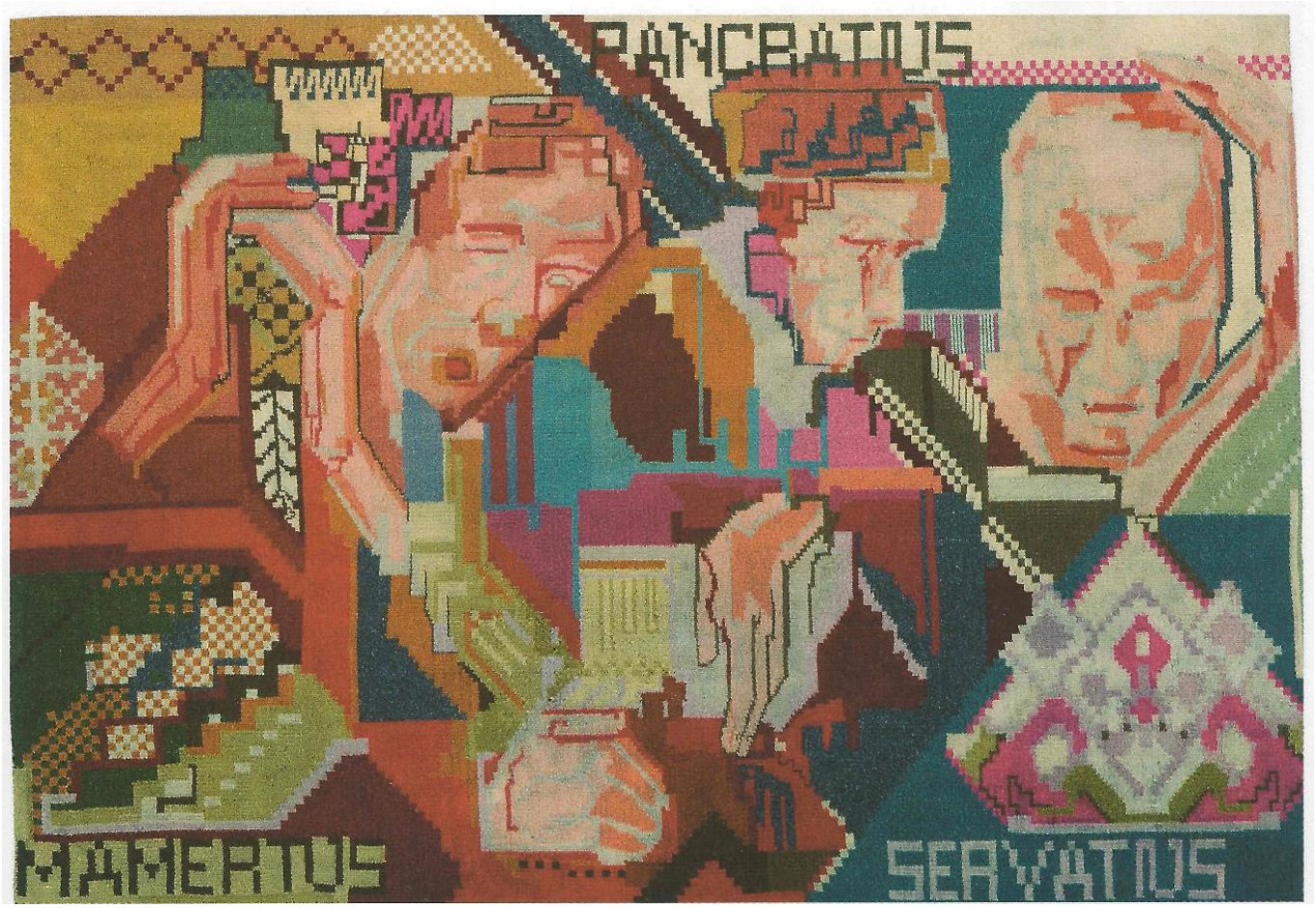
Appendix 29: Johan Thorn Prikker, Store Front Art Gallery *Arts and Crafts*, Kneuterdijk, The Hague (demolished), 1898, photograph, KMM.

Appendix 30: Interior of art gallery *Arts and Crafts* in The Hague, The Netherlands, c. 1900. Photo from: The Studio 23 (1901), nr. 101, p. 210.

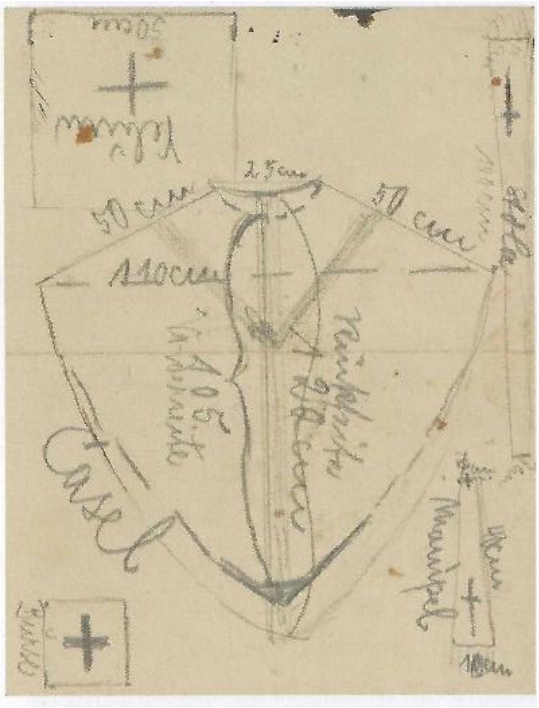
Appendix 31: Johan Thorn Prikker, Poster for the magazine *Revue Bimestrielle pour l'art appliqué*, 1896, lithograph, 133 x 98 cm, KWM.

Appendix 32: Johan Thorn Prikker, *Anarchy*, September 24th 1894, chalk on paper, 43 x 55,6 cm, KMM.

Appendix 33: Johan Thorn Prikker, *Anarchy - Quo usque tandem*, 1894, chalk on paper, 56 x 43 cm, KMM.



Appendix 34: Design by Johan Thorn Prikker, executed by Anna Pahde, *The Three Ice Saints*, 1910, handwoven tapestry, wool, 116 x 173 cm, Bröhan-Museum, Berlin.

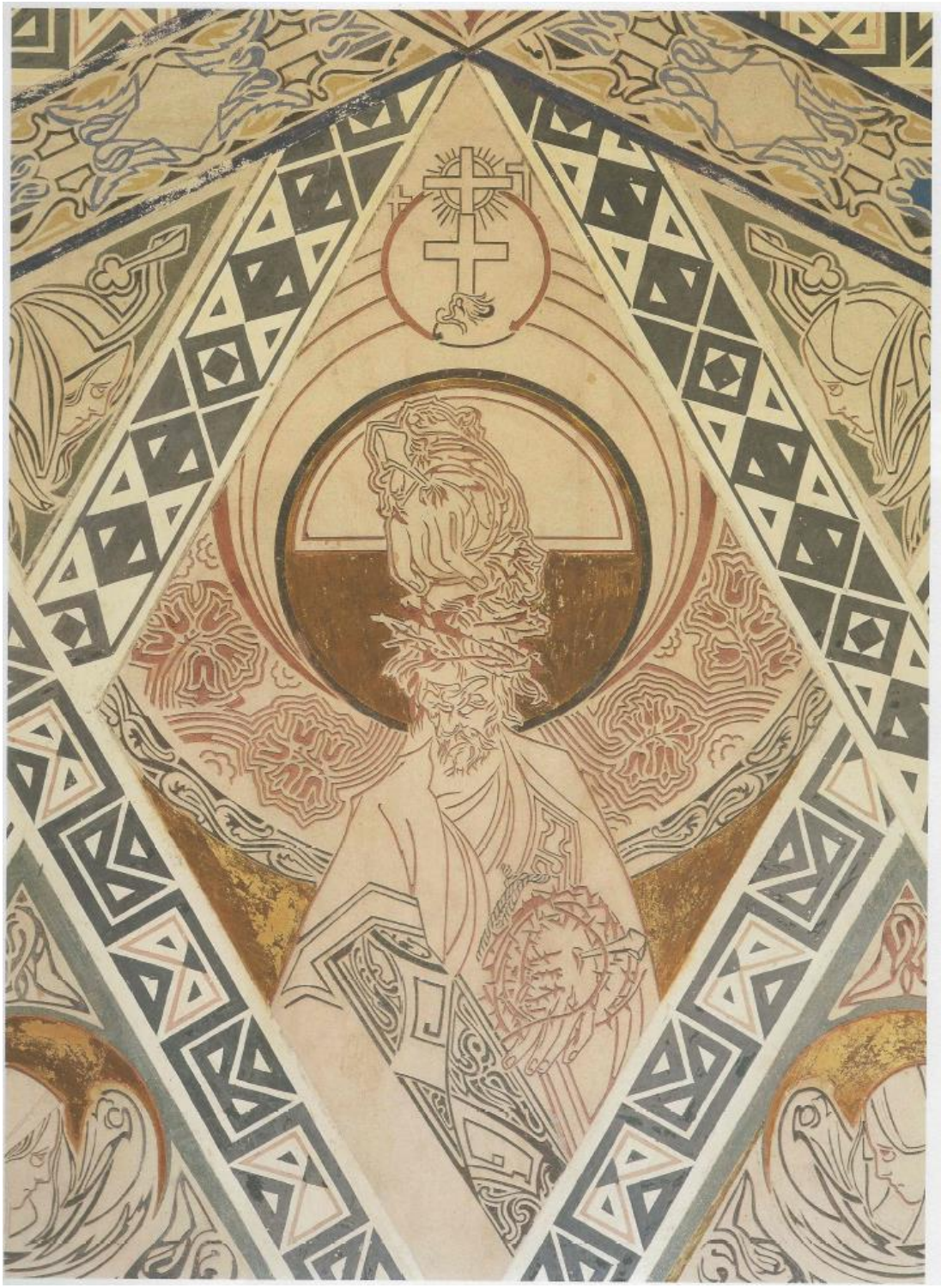


Appendix 35: Johan Thorn Prikker, *Design for a Chasuble*, 1920-1925, pencil on paper, 17,2 x 13,5 cm, KWM.

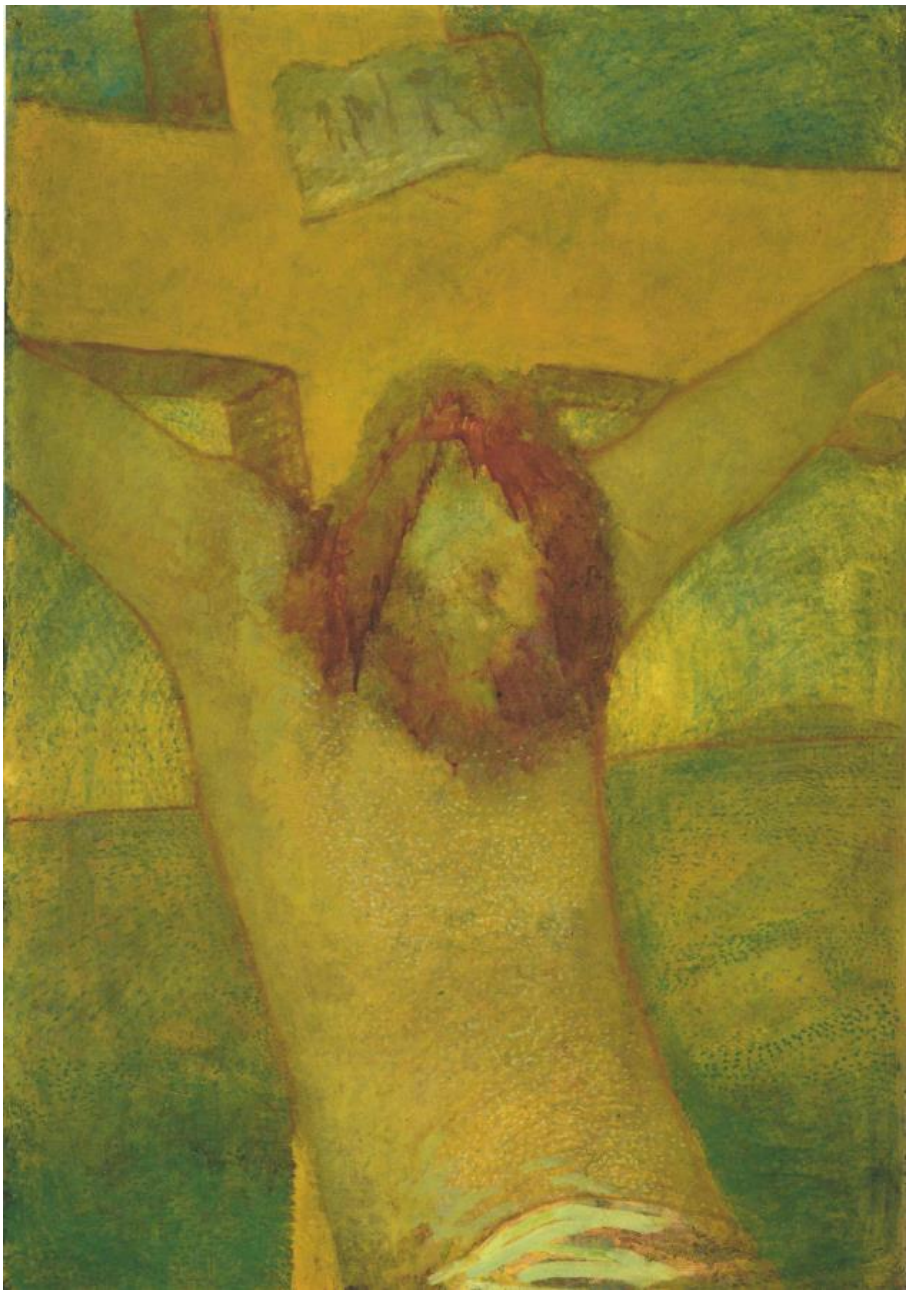
Appendix 36: Design by Johan Thorn Prikker, executed by the firm Steinert und Storck Gebr. & Co., Krefeld, *Three Swatches for Paraments*, 1920-1930, GTM.

Appendix 37: Johan Thorn Prikker, *Mourning Chasuble*, c. 1927, black silk fabric with abstract ornaments and applications on the front and backside, 110 cm x 60.5 cm, executed by Glass und Egeling, Münster, KOL.

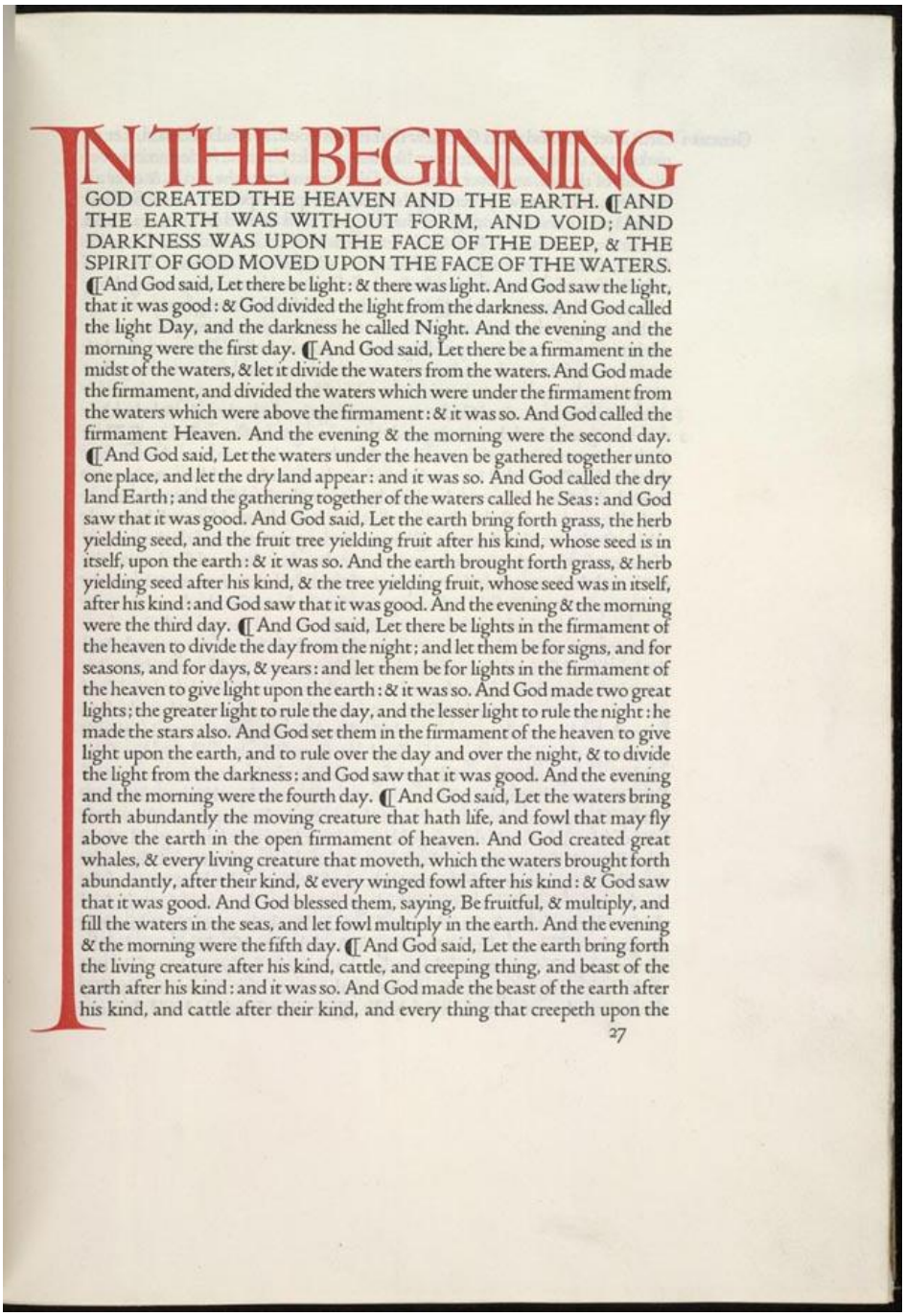
Appendix 38: Johan Thorn Prikker, Murals on the wall in the hall and staircase in villa *De Zeemeeuw* (The Seagull), Scheveningen, The Netherlands, 1902-1903, sgrafitto, stucco intarsia and probably casein paint, c. 6 x 10 m. Architect of the villa: Henry van de Velde.



Appendix 39: Johan Thorn Prikker, Detail of the murals on the wall in the hall and staircase in villa *De Zeemeeuw* (The Seagull), 1902-1903, sgrafitto, stucco intarsia and probably casein paint, c. 6 x 10 m.



Appendix 40: Johan Thorn Prikker, *Christ on the Cross*, 1891-1892, oil on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, KMM.



IN THE BEGINNING
GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH. ¶ AND THE EARTH WAS WITHOUT FORM, AND VOID; AND DARKNESS WAS UPON THE FACE OF THE DEEP, & THE SPIRIT OF GOD MOVED UPON THE FACE OF THE WATERS. ¶ And God said, Let there be light: & there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: & God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. ¶ And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, & let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: & it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening & the morning were the second day. ¶ And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: & it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, & herb yielding seed after his kind, & the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening & the morning were the third day. ¶ And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, & years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: & it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, & to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day. ¶ And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, & every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, & every winged fowl after his kind: & God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, & multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening & the morning were the fifth day. ¶ And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the

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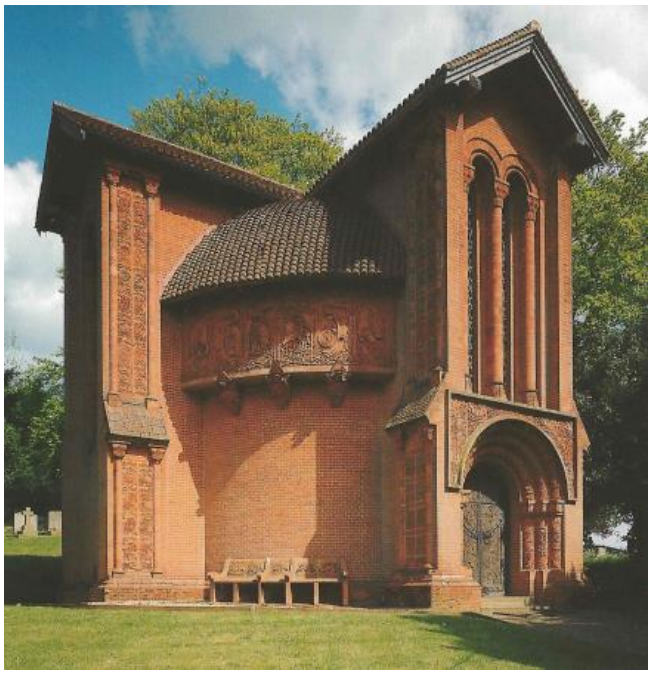
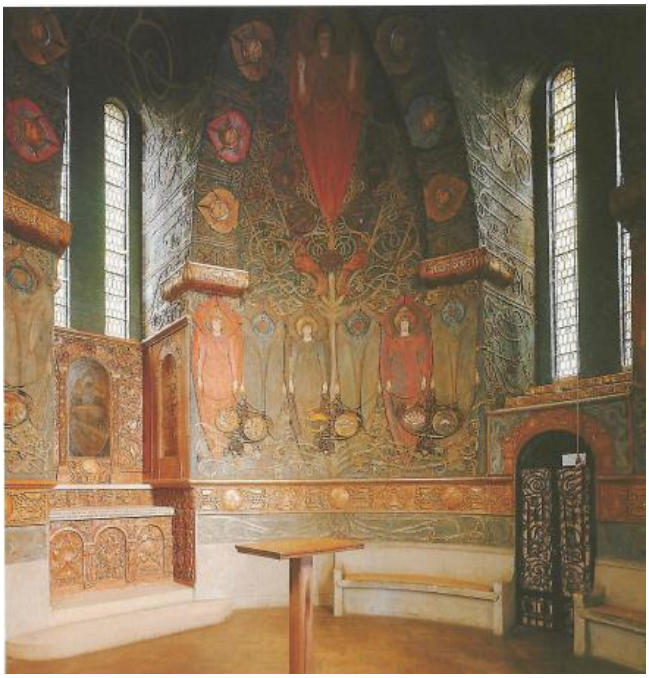
Appendix 41: T.J. Cobden-Sanderson and Emery Walker, page 27 from the *The English Bible: containing the Old Testament & the New / translated out of the original tongues by special command of His Majesty King James the First and now reprinted with the text revised by a collation of its early and other principal editions and edited by the late Rev. F.H. Scrivener M.A. LL.D. for the syndics of the University Press Cambridge,* Hammersmith: Doves Press, 1903-1905



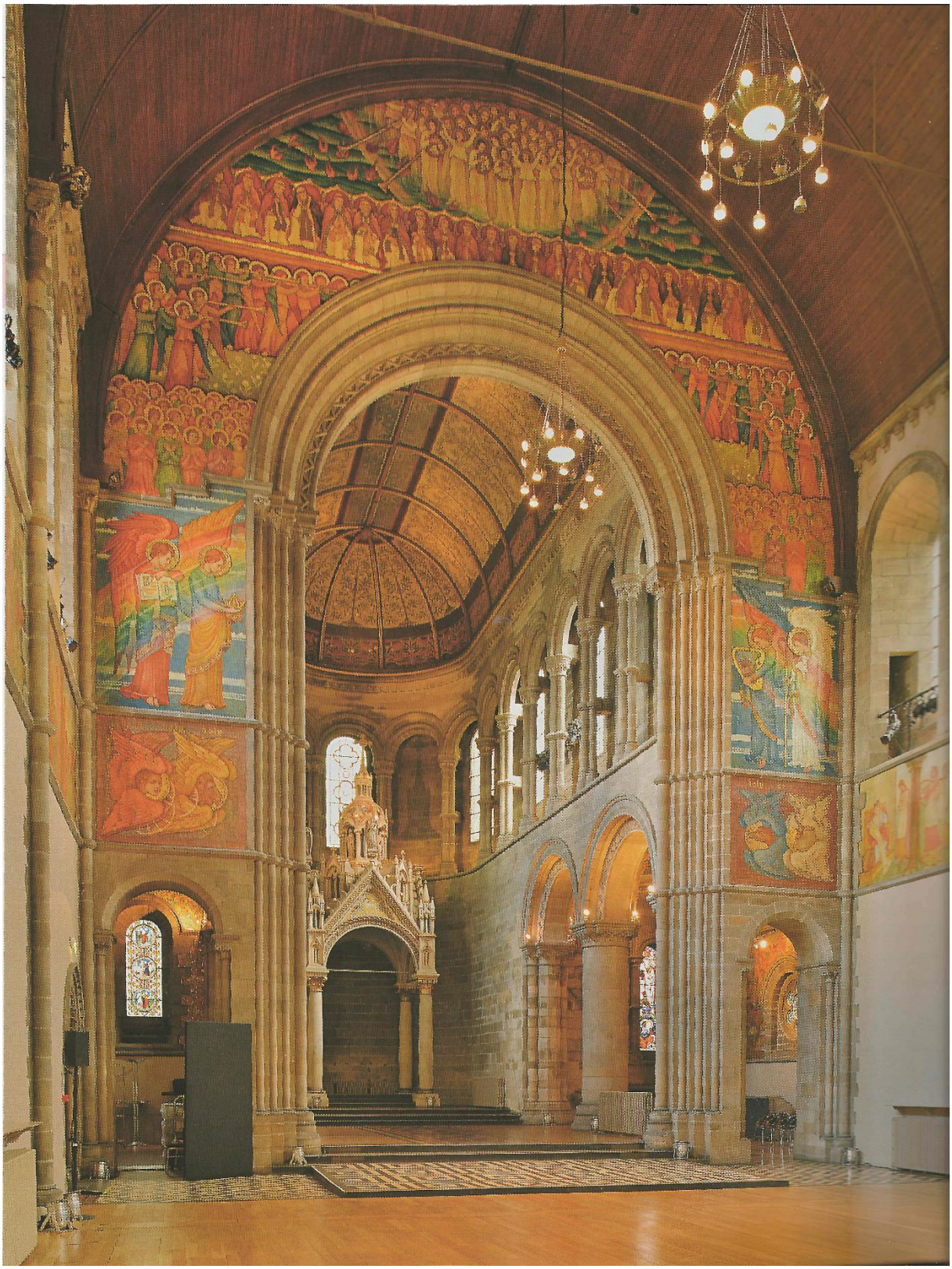


Left: Appendix 42: Mary Seton Watts and others, Exterior of the Mortuary Chapel, Compton, Surrey, UK, 1896-1906.

Right: Appendix 43: Mary Seton Watts and others, Interior of the Mortuary Chapel, Compton, Surrey, UK, 1896-1906.

Appendix 44: William Richard Lethaby, Exterior of the All Saints Church, Brockhampton, Herefordshire, UK, 1901-1902.

Appendix 45: Phoebe Anna Traquair, *The Wise Virgins* and (above) *"Mercy and truth are together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psalm 85:10),* details of decoration of the north chancel aisle, Catholic Apostolic Church, Broughton Street, Edinburgh, Scotland (building is now owned by the Mansfield Traquair Trust).



Appendix 46: Phoebe Anna Traquair, murals in the Catholic Apostolic Church, Edinburgh, 1893-1895.

Left: Appendix 47: Design by Philip Webb, made by Robert Catterson-Smith, *Cross*, 1897, Wood, covered with silver plates, chased and embossed, 115 cm x 77 cm x 4.5 cm, V&A.

Made to hang on the east wall of the chapel of the Rochester Diocesan Deaconess Institute at North Side, Clapham, UK. The Head Deaconess, Mrs. Gilmore, was William Morris's sister.

Right: Appendix 48: Design by Francis and Jessie Newberry with William Kellock Brown, made by William Kellock Brown, *Chalice*, c. 1893-1894, gilded silver with repoussé decoration, height 19.3 cm, St Bride's Episcopal Church, Glasgow, Scotland.