Pacificale

Metalwork Collection

Accession Nr.:	5006
Place of production:	Munich
Materials:	ivory
Techniques:	engraved decoration; rubbed graphite powder
Dimensions:	length: 31,7 cm width: 18,2 cm

The front of the cross is decorated by a series of seven engraved scenes: the stations of the shedding of Christ's blood, following a tradition stemming from the writings of St Bonaventura (1221–1274) in the 13th century. Following the traditions of late medieval miniatures and etchings on similar subjects, the series starts off with the scene of "the Circumcision of Child Jesus" (lower centre). This is followed (proceeding upwards) by six scenes of the Passion. It is the peculiar "devotional formula" propagated by the authors of late medieval Franciscan mystical literature, the contemplation of the cult of the Holy Blood. One of the latest visual representations of the subject known today is a religious "leaflet" *(Flugblatt)* illustrated with engravings produced by the Munich press of Peter Konig around 1620. The illustration of this print exactly coincides with the engraved decoration of the ivory cross. The shared precursor of the two versions may be the engraving reproduced by Salomon Miller in Munich in 1593, after a composition by Friedrich Sustris.

The essence of the decorative technique here consisted of rubbing fine graphite powder into the carved surface, thus revealing the outlines of the carving. The Latin inscription on the cross comes from the epistles of St Paul: Phil. 2. 7–8. ("But made himself of no reputation… and was made in the likeness of men … he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.") On the bottom of the upright of the cross is the engraved coat of arms of the Duchy of Bavaria, under the Wittelsbach Dynasty, and in the year it was made, 1597, the incumbent was Duke William V. One of his younger sisters, Princess Mary of Bavaria (1551–1608), as wife of Charles II (1540–1590), the Habsburg Archduke of Styria and Inner Austria, lived in the Graz court of the Habsburgs from 1570 onwards. It was no doubt for her that one of the highly skilled craftsmen employed by the ducal residence in Munich made the cross. Further evidence for this is that the earliest known written mention of the work is in a 17th century inventory of the treasury of the Graz Castle Chapel.

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