Between 1862 and 1876 Johann Schwetz, originally from Bosan in Moravia, was Hofburg Palace priest and in charge of the collection. Schwetz, a dogmatic theologian, considered his religious agenda much more important than the management and supervision of an important art collection that had only limited liturgical use. No wonder that the pertinent collection files do not mention any loans, restorations or similar actions, even though objects were obviously restored or even exchanged during the late 19th century. Supposedly the exchange or restoration of objects should have been noted in the inventory but this is not the case.

The first concrete indication that original objects of the Ecclesiastical Treasury must have been exchanged with forgeries surfaced at an inventory made on occasion of the transfer of the collections of the Ecclesiastical Treasury to the collections of sculpture and decorative arts (today Kunstkammer) in the Kunsthistorische Museum in 1921. Arpad Weixlgärtner mentions in a footnote in his 1929 newly issued *Führer durch die Geistliche Schatzkammer* (Guide of the Ecclestiastical Treasury) that "two especially precious late medieval objects had been lost. A fiendishly able jeweler had taken advantage of the inexperienced and trusting Hofburg Palace priest who wanted to have the pieces restored. On this occasion the originals were exchanged with forgeries, which were exhibited until recently….. Under the statute of limitations the originals are now incontestable properties of the Germanische Museum and the British Museum (Waddesdon Bequest)."[94] In a later letter Weixlgärtner identified this "jeweler" as Salomon Weininger.[95]

These two objects in question are the Holy Thorn Reliquary (Inv.No. D 129) and the Reliquienostensorium with a Fatimid rock crystal sphere (Inv. No. D 103). Within the museum doubts if these two objects were genuine existed for a long time. An inventory note made during the transfer to the Kunsthistorische Museum dated the Holy Thorn Reliquary as 19th century. The 1909 Guide of the Treasury states the Holy Thorn Reliquary as being a 19th century work, albeit dating it to the first half of the century. Later guides of the collection dated it obscurely as being "…. made in a late Gothic style."[96]

The first to declare the Holy Thorn Reliquary in the Ecclesiastical Treasury as a forgery was Joseph Destrée, who also explained the connection with the original in the British Museum in a 1927 essay.[97]

In the inventory of 1867 there is a penciled note declaring the Reliquary -ostensorium as a "copy". The exact date of this note cannot be recon-

94. Weixlgärtner 1929, ibid, 8f.
95. Letter by Arpad Weixlgärtner to Erich Victor Strohmer, Göteburg, April 22, 1953, Vienna, Kunsthistorische Museum, Kunstkammer
96. See also *Führer durch die Geistliche Schatzkammer des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, Vienna 1913, 80, No.243
97. Joseph Destrée, *The Reliquary of the Holy Thorn in the Waddesdon Bequest at the British Museum*, in The Connoiseur: LXXXXIX, No. 315, November 1927, 138-143
98. See the Ecclesiastical Treasury inventory 1887-1901 (accounting department) p.23, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Kunstkammer.

structed as the inventories were used over long time periods. In the inventory of 1888 there is a reference to a comparable piece in Nuremberg.[98]

The Holy Thorn Reliquary

The Holy Thorn Reliquary, which was taken from the Ecclesiastical Treasury and is now in the British Museum (Waddesdon Bequest 67) is one of the most important works of Paris goldsmiths' art circa 1400.[99] (Fig. 4) Renate Eikelman suspected it to be a work by Rennequin de Harlem, a Dutch goldsmith active in Paris who worked for John Duke of Berry as well as for Philip the Bold.[100] The reliquary must have been the property of John Duke of Berry as his coat of arms is applied on its postament. This base is formed as castle fortifications. Above its four towers are angels, worked in *émail en ronde bosse*, announcing the Last Judgment. A hill above the castle features the scene of the resurrection of the dead. The green enameled hill forms the base on which the massive round bow-formed "window" of the reliquary is mounted. The window displays Christ as Judge of the world above a rainbow. Two angels are floating above him holding the instruments of the Passion. Maria and Joseph are kneeling at Christ's feet; the reliquary is placed in between the two figures. A banner ("Ista est una spinea corone [sic] domini nostril ishesu xpisti") declares the reliquary to be a thorn of Christ's crown of thorns.

A foliate band decorated with pearls and rubies frames the niche. Here the twelve half-length enameled figures of the twelve apostles with their attributes are grouped. The reliquary is crowned by an aureole wherein are placed God the Father on the throne and two adoring angels. The reliquary's window can be closed from the back by a door. Its two wings are decorated with a chased relief of St. George fighting the dragon[101] as well as St. Christopher. The golden background is stipple edged. The aureole features Christ's face on its back side.

The forged Holy Thorn Reliquary (Inv. No. D 129, Fig. 5) in the Ecclesiastical Treasury in the Vienna Hofburg, Kunsthistorisches Museum is an accomplished imitation regarding its technique and motifs. Apart from the lack of refinement that contributes to the original's magic it copies the original in great detail. But the forgery features some additions which the original lacks. The forgery's door of the postament is enameled in blue while the original's door is left unadorned. The copy also features angel wings in enameled blue, green and red in contrast to the original's plain angel wings. Additionally the imitation's foliate frame of the niche is applied with odd enameled ornaments, and the crown of God the Father is enameled as well. But curiously the forger omitted Christ's stigmata. Christ is depicted as an

99. For more on the original see Eikelmann 1984/1995, ibid, 192–210; Hugh Tait: Catalogue of the Waddesdon Bequest in the British Museum, 1. The Jewels, London 1986, 26–46, Tait does not take Eikelmann's thesis into account.

100. Eikelmann, 1984/1995, ibid, 199. Please note the assigning to Rennequin de Harlem, since it is generally ignored in related literature.

101. Tait 1986, and Eikelmann 1984/1995 both identify the figure fighting with the dragon as Archangel Michael. This would fit with the theme of the Last Judgement. But in fact Knight St. George is depicted, in the inventory of the Ecclesiastical Treasury the figure is also described as St. George.

Fig. 4 The Holy Thorn Reliquary

Original

British Museum, Waddesdon Bequest

Fig.5 The Holy Thorn Reliquary (Dornenreliquar)

Counterfeit 1863-1872, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Ecclesiastical Treasury, Inv. No. D 129

old man with flowing beard very similar to the figure of God the Father. Obviously the forger lacked the necessary understanding of the depicted theme. Physiognomy and posture of the apostles and the various other figures are well copied, even though they do not achieve their models' fine quality.

The back sides of copy and original differ greatly. The main differences here are the copy's enameled altar wings. St. George wears a red enameled garment with golden border; the dragon is greenish-brown, and the field is enameled in green color. St. Chistopher's clothing is blue with yellow lining. Baby Jesus is dressed in red. The flesh tone of the figures is bright white enamel. In contrast, the original has golden altar wings. Tait suspected that originally the wings had been enameled, but this theory must be ruled out.[102] The surfaces are not prepared for enameling; in addition the fine stippling of the background as well as on the figures' clothing would be superfluous. The copy's altar wings are more richly decorated than the original, but the forger omitted Christ's face on the aureole's back side.

Apart from the copy's high technical quality the use of precious material is impressive. The main body is gold; the applied stones are rubies and pearls. Only the base for the thorn, a faceted stone, does not seem to match the ensemble. The same observation as made about the altars in the trial of 1877 "…..with use of genuine materials such as gold, silver and precious stones" also applies to the forgery of the Holy Thorn Reliquary.

There is a further parallel to the altars: the original of the Holy Thorn Reliquary was donated by Ferdinand von Rothschild to the British Museum; it had been bought by his father Anselm before 1872. The *terminus ante quem* can be deducted from the publication year of the Anselm von Rothschild collection's catalogue addendum, where it is listed under number 607.[103] Weininger had had several business transactions with Rothschild on recommendation of the dealer Georg Plach before 1874 as shown in the court records of the first trial.[104] Whether Weininger sold this piece directly to Anselm von Rothschild or had the help of another dealer cannot be ascertained. In any case this transaction leaves a bad aftertaste, especially since Anselm von Rothschild knew "that Weininger professionally dealt in forgeries of antiques."[105]

Karl Kuthmayer's testimony at the 1877 trial regarding the production of the forgery is especially telling. He testified that his brother had ordered him to cast the figure of Christ and twelve apostles as well as two wings for an altar not connected with those subject to the trial. It could be deducted that these twelve apostle figures are the ones grouped around the window of

102. Tait 1986, ibid, 34

103. Franz Schestag, Katalog der Kunstsammlung des Freiherrn Anselm von Rothschild in Wien, Bd.II, Vienna 1872. This addendum is not available in any of the Vienna Public Libraries.

104. Court report, in: Wiener Zeitung, February 24, 1877, No.44, 6

105. Court report in: Neue Freie Presse, February 21, 1877, 2



From left to right: Fig. 6/7/8: Statue St. Paul, Statue of evangelist John, both counterfeits Weininger circle, 1863-1872, with a Munich art dealer in 2006, Statue St. Paul, counterfeit Weininger circle, 1863-1872, The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Marylinn B. Alsdorf, Inv. No. 1992.551

the Thorn reliquary. Karl Kuthmayer could also be named as the executing goldsmith who had produced the wings with the reliefs of St. George and St. Christopher on the back side of the reliquary, but to date this remains speculation only.

We know from the 1877 court proceedings that Kuthmayer had cast the figure of St. Peter with an oversized key.[106] There is just such a statue in the Ecclesiastical Treasury which fits this description. It is the finial of an ostentorium with a part of the staff (reed) used to mock and hit Christ on his way to the cross (Inv. No. D 22).[107] Major parts of this reliquary dating to 1600 and made in Augsburg or Munich were exchanged in the late 19th century. One of these parts is the statue of St. Peter leaning with his left arm on an immense jeweled key, which indeed has similarity to a cupboard key, and holding a similarly decorated book in his right hand. The similarities of this statue in posture and physiognomy as well as in its technical execution and the brilliant white flesh tone with greenish edges to the apostles and the figure of Christ of the Thorn reliquary are convincing enough to assign them to the same maker.

Apart from these figures Karl Kuthmayer testified in the 1877 trial to have cast the figures of apostles John and Paul for the larger of the two altars. These were finished and probably enameled by Karl Bend-

Fig. 9: Statue of apostle Peter, Finial of an reliquary ostensorium with a part of the staff (reed) with which Christ was hit and mocked before being led to the cross.

Forgery Weininger circle, 1863-1872,Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum,Ecclestiastical Treasury, Inv. No. D 22

er. Two enameled statues that fit the same description and are stylistically comparable with the St. Peter finial in the Ecclesiastical Treasury were offered by Munich art dealers in 2006 (Fig. 6 and 7).[108] Corresponding features of the three figures lead the author to believe that all must have been made by the same artisan. Curiously, all three hold jeweled books, their faces featuring the same distinctly protruding foreheads and deeply set eyes. The undergarments are decorated with an odd pattern reminiscent of arabesques. All three figures might be versions of the cast statues placed in the niche of the larger altar in the 1877 trial produced by Karl Kuthmayer.

Just like the links of Count Daun's chain these statues were probably "mass-produced" by Weininger's helpers. Furthermore we know of yet another St. Peter statue which was cast in silver in Simon Grünwald's studio. Like Bender, Grünwald got orders to finish and enamel such statues, which would explain their slight differences in surface design. The enamel of the statues of Paul and John is executed much finer than the one of St. Peter. A similar statue worked in the same method as the Paul statue is in the Art Institute of Chicago (inv.No.1992.551, Fig. 8) ; it stands on a star-studded base but is otherwise almost identical with the other figures. All four statues are comparable in posture and physiognomy with the figures of the forged Thorn reliquary.

These observation lead to the conclusion that the forged Thorn reliquary's figure decoration was all cast by Karl Kuthmayer and enameled by either Simon Grünwald or Karl Bender; the same applies to the wings of the reliquary. As with the altars, Grünwald would have been responsible for the assembling of the various parts of the

106. Court report in: Neue Freie Presse, February 25, 1877, 7
107. See *Weltliche und Geistliche Schatzkammer Bildführer* (Führer durch das Kunsthistorische Museum No.35) Salzburg-Wien 1987 (2nd edition, 1991)244, No.27 (Stefan Krenn).The statue is still described here as " Mantua, circa 1600".
108. Hampel Kunstauktion Munich, Katalog III, *Auktion Kunstkammer Objekte*, June 30,2006,98, Lot 919 and 920. In the auction catalogue these statues are assigned to Reinhold Vasters, the figure of apostle Paulus is erroneously described as St. Matthew.

reliquary. Obviously more than one example was made: one was auctioned off by Christie's in New York City in 1993;[109] yet another version was offered by a Munich dealer in 1993.[110] A comparable example to the Viennese copy had been in the Bute collection and was sent to auction in 1996.[111] For the first time not only Salomon Weininger as coordinator of the forged Thorn reliquary is known but also the artists he employed can be named. In the future, despite the variety of Weininger's forgeries, the specific characteristics in the works of these artists will be recognized.

The question is now how Weininger got to own the original Holy Thorn Reliquary. Probably he used the same modus operandi as in the Modena museum. There Weininger had gained access on recommendation of Beda Dudik. Weininger was trusted because of the Benedictine monk's impeccable reputation, his activities in the German Order and his prestige at the royal Court. Dudik would have been equally useful in getting Weininger access to the Ecclesiastical Treasury. Dudik and the Hofburg Palace priest Schwetz, who was responsible for the supervision and inventories of the Ecclesiastical Treasury collections,[112] had a long-standing relationship. Not only had Dudik been a student at the university of Olmütz (Olomoue) where Schwetz had been teaching, from 1855 on both were working at the University of Vienna, Schwetz as Dean of the Faculty of Catholic Theology (from 1849) and Dudik as private docent for historical source study. So it is plausible that Weininger got access to the Ecclesiastical Treasury on Dudik's recommendation even though there is nothing in the Treasury's files that would prove this.

A reliquary casket with rock crystal intagli

A reliquary casket which came from the Olsen Collection to the Arturo Lopez-Willshaw Collection was another object taken from the Ecclesiastical Treasury Vienna. (Fig. 10) This fact was proven by a detailed comparison of original and counterfeit. The forgery is a small casket with a gold, partly enameled frame and inserted wheel-cut rock crystal panels (Inv.No. D 92, Fig. 11). Due to its fine workmanship this forgery was considered an original, even though the 1913 Guide to the treasury mentions that there were "some new parts."[113] Probably realizing problems connected with the casket, Weixlgärtner did not include it in his 1929 Guide. But this assessment must have been forgotten over time – the use of precious materials and its high technical quality might have contributed – so that the casket was once more assessed as authentic. The piece was included in the 1956 Guide of the Ecclesiastical and Secular Treasury and is described as "Italian, 16th century."[114] Renewed doubts about the authenticity of the casket came in 1970 as a similar casket surfaced with

109. Auction *Early English and Continental Furniture Sculpture, Works of Art, Old Master Paintings and Drawings,* January 10, 1991, Christie's East, New York City.
110. The piece was submitted to Kunstauktionen Hugo Ruef, but was unsold. For this information I would like to thank Monika Eham, Munich.
111. Christie's London, Sale 5610, July 3, 1996, Lot 63
112. All changes were meticulously noted in the inventories of the Ecclesiastical Treasury. According to a note in the 1854 inventory, all objects were handed over to Schwetz on April 12, 1863. The inventories of June 6, 1865, July 1, 1867, September 1871 and May 19, 1874 were all signed and approved by Schwetz . Another more thorough inventory was done on October, 2, 3, and 5. 1876, when Hofburg Palace priest Laurenz Mayer took over this office. See also the inventories of 1854 and 1867 (with additions to 1884), p.64 ff. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Kunstkammer
113. Führer 1913,65, No.187
114. Hermann Fillitz, *Katalog der Weltlichen und Geistlichen Schatzkammer*, Vienna, 1956, 67, No.61

Fig. 10 Reliquary casket, first half of 16th century,

The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Marylinn B. Alsdorf, Inv. No.1992.555

Fig. 11 Reliquary casket, Forgery Weininger circle, 1863-1872, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Ecclesiastical Treasury, Kunstkammer, Inv. No. D 92

a dealer. This casket had come from the Anselm von Rothschild Collection and had been described in the Schestag 1872 addendum to the Rothschild catalogue.[115] From this collection the casket came to the Collection Spitzer where it is mentioned in the 1892 collection catalogue.[116] The next owner was Arturo Lopez-Willshaw. The casket was sold at a Sotheby's New York 1970 auction to Mr. & Mrs. James W. Alsdorf and is now in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago (Inv.1992.555).[117]

A comparison of both caskets leads to a definite assessment that the one in Chicago is the original. The most distinctive difference is the decoration of the rock crystal intagli. The original is strongly related to Raphael [the side panels of the Baglioni-Predella dating to 1507 (Pinakoteka Vaticana, Inv. Nos. 40330, 40331, 40332)] while the Viennese copy replaces the frame strips and decorative framing of the Tondi with foliate tendrils. The sizes of the caskets are different, the original being a bit smaller. This also explains the copy's unnecessary gap between the heads of Atlas and the cover. There are also small differences in color, as for instance in the Mauresque ornaments of the underside.

As previously mentioned, the counterfeit's high technical quality and the use of the precious materials are surprising. The goldsmiths' work and the enameling can be assigned to Simon Grünwald or Karl Bender, whose outstanding workmanship was noted in discussing the production of the Thorn reliquary. Josef Pelda and Franz Schadek were introduced as artisan gem cutters during the 1877 trial. It is possible that one of them executed the rock crystal wheel-cut panels; however, due to the lack of comparable pieces a definite assigning to a specific artist is not possible at this time. A casket in the Metropolitan Museum in New York[118] is very similar to the Viennese copy in ductus, style and surface treatment. Possibly the panels of this casket were also made by either Pelda or Schadek. Further clues for this origin would be the decoration with enameled tendrils as well as the twisted rock crystal pillars. Such pillars were, as previously mentioned, supplied to Weininger by Pelda and Schadek. Both caskets must have been made between 1863 and 1872. These dates are arrived at by the year Weininger had been released from his first prison sentence (1863) and the publication year of the addendum to the catalogue of the Rothschild collection (1872).

The rock crystal Crucifix

It can be assumed that the forging of a rock crystal crucifix falls into the same period of time. The counterfeit is in the "Weininger-Style" of combining new with original elements. The original cross with the copy of its

115. Schestag 1872, Vol.III, 32, No.607f.
116. La Collection Spitzer, Antiquité Moyen Age-Renaissance, Vol.5, Paris 1892, No.26
117. See *Renaissance Jewelry in the Alsdorf Collection* (The Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies Vol.25, No.2) Chicago 2000, 59 f. No.24 , Exhibition catalogue *Renaissance Decorative Arts from Chicago Collections*, Chicago (The Art Institute of Chicago) 1987, No. 67, formerly Collection of Mr. & Mrs. James W. Alsdorf, and before Collection of Arturo Lopez-Willshaw, auctioned at Sotheby's, NYC, October 13, 1970
118. The Michael Friedsam Collection, 1931, Inv.No.32.100.247, for this info I want to thank Clare Vincent, NYC.

Fig. 12


Fig. 13

Fig. 14

Fig.12 Crucifix, Forgery Weininger circle, Vienna 1863-1872, base: original, Workshop of Saracchi, Milan, circa 1585, New York, Metropolitan Museum, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917, Inv. No. 17.190.533

Fig.13 Crucifix, Original, Workshop of Saracchi, probably Annibale Fontana, Milan, circa 1585, base: forgery Weininger circle, Vienna 1863-1872, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Ecclesiastical Treasury, Inv. E 43

Fig. 14: Crucifix, Austria?, first quarter 19th century, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Ecclesiastical Treasury, Inv. No. E 44

base is in the Ecclesiastical Treasury (Inv. No. E 43, Fig. 13), while the original base with the added-on cross with an enameled figure of Christ is in the Metropolitan Museum, New York (Inv. No. 17.190.533, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917, Fig. 12). The copied parts are again of such fine technical quality that they were not recognized as counterfeits. In the 1987 Illustrated Guide to the Imperial and Ecclesiastical Treasury the crucifix is still described as being made by the Saracchi workshop, Milan, 1600.[119]

Rudolf Distelberger was the first to recognize that the base of the crucifix and the cross in Vienna must have been once a unit. With new additions two objects had been created from one 16th century rock crystal crucifix.[120] This fact was especially hard to detect since the 19th century base on which the original cross is now mounted is an identical but mirror-image copy of the original.

The front shows the adoration of the shepherds while the backside depicts Christ collapsing under the cross. The style of the figures of the original is typical for the workshop Saracchi; a superficial inspection would come to the same assessment for the copy. Only the somewhat shallow manner in which it is cut as well as the surface polishing expose the base as a 19th century copy.

But even Weininger's artisans could not produce an exact copy of this masterpiece that is carved from a monolithic piece of rock crystal. A plain cross with an enameled cast silver figure of Christ was mounted on the original base. This cast Christ figure is in every way identical with a figure on a crucifix in the Ecclesiastical Treasury, which dates to the first quarter of the 19th century (Inv.no. E 44, Fig. 14).[121] Pointing to this date are not only the technical and stylistic assessment but also the fact that this crucifix is first entered into the inventories of the Ecclesiastical Treasury in the 19th century. Whether the New York figure of Christ was copied from this model or whether Weininger had a stock of Christ figures on hand remains an open question.

Without doubt we are reminded of Kuthmayer's testimony in the 1877 trial in which he stated that he had received a Christ figure "that was mounted on the original cross while the original figure was mounted on a new cross." This testimony gains even more weight given the fact that the enameled Christ figure in the Ecclesiastical Treasury could not have been original to the wooden cross it is mounted on now. Proof of this is the hollowed-out part on the wooden cross to accommodate Christ's buttocks; otherwise proper mounting of the figure could not have been accomplished. However there is not enough circumstantial

119. Bildführer 1987,274, No.86 (Stefan Krenn)
120. Exhibition catalogue Rudolf Distelberger*, Die Kunst des Steinschnitts, Prunkgefässe, Kameen und Commessi aus der Kunstkammer*, Vienna 2002, 200 f., Cat. No. 114
121. Stefan Krenn erroneously dated this crucifix to 1600, see Bildführer 1987, 320, No.161
122. See Bildführer 1987, 198 f.No.202 (Helmut Trnek)
123. Inv. No. 2375

evidence to assign this work to the brothers Kuthmayer. The rock crystal base featuring the fine intagli originated from the same gem cutters that made the panels of the previously discussed smaller casket (Inv.no. D 92), i.e. Josef Pelda and Franz Schadek; possibly it was fabricated in cooperation.

The Annunciation Group Mary and the Angel

Another piece – it is today in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge (Inv.No.M'P.22-1938) – was first recognized by John F. Hayward as the original of a copy in the Ecclesiastical Treasury. This is a small annunciation group in é*mail en ronde bosse*. The scene takes place on a wattle-fenced small grass plot (*hortus conclusus*, or enclosed garden). Archangel Gabriel with his right arm raised appears on the right; in his left he would have originally held a lily. Mary is kneeling anxiously holding up her arms. This group is probably Burgundian-Dutch, 15th century. There is a striking similarity with a Burgundian-Dutch brooch in the Imperial Treasury that can be dated to 1430/40 (Inv.no. KK 130).[122]

Fig. 15

Fig. 15 Annunciation group, Forgery Weininger circle,

Vienna 1863-1872, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Ecclesiastical Treasury, Inv. D 191

The version in the Ecclesiastical Treasury is mounted onto a walnut base (Inv.no. D 191, Fig. 15) with partly painted rosettes and ornaments reminiscent of the Star of David. Its base plate is silver-gilt; it is painted and not enamelled. Apart from the Viennese copy there are at least two other versions. One is in the Fundación Lázaro Galdiano in Madrid; [123] the second, formerly in the Jack and Bell Linsky Collection, was auctioned in New York in 1985.[124] None of the known versions is furnished with the original base. In the Ecclesiastical Treasury's inventory of 1752 this base is described as being "from ebony with golden ornaments." The example at the Fitzwilliam has an unadorned stone base. For the Madrid annunciation group an odd looking rock crystal base was fabricated, the group now placed under a rock crystal dome. For the Linsky Collection group a very ornate rock crystal base with enameled feet, somewhat reminiscent of the base of the crucifix (*pacificale*) (Inv.no.D 113) was fashioned.

The figures of the Archangel and Mary surfaced also, albeit without a base and offered separately, with a London dealer and in a private collection in New York City.[125] Typically for Weininger's practice of division of labor, it can be assumed that these statues were produced by several Weininger tradesmen. Kuthmayer was possibly responsible for the casting of the figures; the stone and rock crystal bases were possibly cut by Pelda and Schadek. The finishing of the various figures varies a lot; they were probably made by many artists.

Conclusion

Weininger was a fraudulent, energetic and very successful dealer. He knew how to take advantage of the circumstances of his time and profited handsomely by selling imitations of historical art objects. The great demand from the emerging bourgeoisie as well as from prospering decorative arts museums provided a fertile ground for the development of a large counterfeiting enterprise. Besides, there was a large pool of artisans trained in historical techniques and styles whom Weininger could hire. These artisans produced imitations of outstanding masterpieces and were possibly not even aware of their use in forgeries.

Additionally, Weininger had excellent business contacts with dealers in Paris and London and could place his forgeries and originals in these high-class circles. More research is needed to see what part

124. Auction catalogue *Property from the Jack and Belle Linsky Collection*, Sotheby's, NYC, May 21, 1985, Lot 123
125. Note by Clare Vincent in a book review of Hugh Tait: *Catalogue of the Waddesdon Bequest in the British Museum, I. The Jewels* in Clare Vincent: *Jewellery Studies 3*, 1989, 88
126. See Miriam Krautwurst*: Reinhold Vasters. Ein niederrheinischer Goldschmied des 19. Jahrhunderts in der Tradition alter Meister. Sein Zeichenkonvolut im Victoria & Albert Museum*, London, phil.Diss. (thesis) University Trier, 2003
127. Central Cemetry Vienna, Tor 1. Gruppe 6, Reihe 4, Grab 32. I thank Wolf-Erich Eckstein for this information.

these international dealers like Emanuel and Murray Marks, Henry Durlacher and Oppenheim Frères played. It is remarkable in this connection that a convolute of drawings by Reinhold Vasters, one of the better known forgers of historical goldsmiths' works, was owned by Murray Marks before being given to the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1919. (Inv. Nos. E 2570-1919 to E 3649-1919).[126]

Surprisingly, the forgeries in the Ecclesiastical Treasury stayed undetected in Weininger's lifetime. At least after Weininger's sentencing the Hofburg Palace priest or the person who had made Weininger's access to the collection possible must have had suspicions – if one assumes that they were interested in an investigation. Obviously there was no such interest, however. When Weininger died in prison of dropsy on November 21, 1879, he and his production were soon forgotten. The only reminder of this creative dealer is a modest stone at the Vienna Zentralfriedhof (central cemetery),[127] but his fraudulent activities will occupy art historians for a long time to come.

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