

Cranach the Elder

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Paris
Art Studies - Lucas Cranach the Elder 1472 - 1553

1472 – Birth of Lucas Cranach in Kronach, High Franconia. Taught painting in the studio of his father Hans.

1483 – Birth of Martin Luther in Eisleben.

1500-1504 – Cranach is active in Vienna in Humanist circle around Conrad Celtis.

1502 – Foundation of the university of Wittenberg by the Prince Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony.

1505 – Cranach is named official painter of the court of the Prince Elector in Wittenberg, who has close relations with the Viennese humanist Conrad Celtis.

1508 – Prince Frederick the Wise confers on Cranach a coat of arms featuring a heraldic animal, a serpent with outstretched wings and a ruby in his mouth. This will be used by Cranach from now on as his studio signature. Cranach visits the emperor Maximilian I and Margaret of Austria in Nuremberg.

1512/13 – Marries Barbara Brengbier daughter of town councilor from Gotha.

1513 – Birth of his son Hans. He will also have 3 daughters, Barbara, Ursula and Anna.

1515 – Birth of his son Lucas. Both boys will become their father's assistants in the studio.

1517 – Luther nails to the gate of the Wittenberg castle his theses against the granting of indulgences and other abuses of the Catholic Church.

1519-45 – Cranach is elected town councilor of Wittenberg, he will also serve as treasurer and burgh master of the city several times.

1519 – First woodcut prints to illustrate the writings of Martin Luther. Melchior Lotter Junior from Leipzig establishes a printing press in Cranach's house. First commissions from the Cardinal Albert of Brandenburg, great adversary of Luther. Death of Emperor Maximilian I, succeeded by his grandson Charles V.

1520 – Cranach is named sole apothecary (pharmacist) of Wittenberg.

1522/23 – Cranach runs a prosperous printing business with the goldsmith Christian Döring.

1523 – Cranach offers asylum to exiled King Christian II of Denmark.

1524 – Cranach accompanies Prince Frederick the Wise to the Diet at Nuremberg. Meets Albrecht Dürer who draws his portrait.

1525 – Death of Frederick the Wise, succeeded by his brother John the Steadfast.

1529 – With the rise of Protestantism the demand for traditional religious images declines considerably. Cranach produces new religious paintings illustrating “Law and Grace” as a new specifically Protestant iconography. He continues, nevertheless, working for Catholic patrons like Cardinal Albert of Brandenburg.

1532 – Death of John the Steadfast, succeeded by John Frederick the Magnanimous.

1537 – Death of his favorite and most talented son Hans on a trip to Italy. Cranach changes the studio signature, the serpent’s wings are now folded.

1541 – Death of Cranach’s wife Barbara Brengbier.

1547 – Defeat of the Protestant armies gathered in the League of Schmalkade by the emperor Charles V at the battle of Mühlberg. Cranach’s patron Pricne John Frederick the Magnanimous is imprisoned. Cranach loses his official position at court.

1550 – Cranach visits the Prince still a prisoner in Augsburg. He meets Titian whose portrait he draws. His son Lucas takes over the direction of the studio in Wittenberg.

1552 – John Frederick is released and Cranach follows him to his new residence in Weimar.

1553 – Death of Cranach in Weimar at 81.

1586 – Death of his son, Lucas Cranach the Younger.

