

Lucas Cranach the Elder and Studio



1472-1553 | GERMAN

Moses and the Pillar of Cloud

M.S. Rau
FINE ART • ANTIQUES • JEWELS

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Oil on panel | Circa 1530

Panel: 8 1/2" high x 18 1/8" wide | 21.59 cm x 46.04 cm

Frame: 12 7/8" high x 22 1/8" wide x 2" deep

32.70 cm x 57.15 cm x 5.08 cm

“

Cranach's paintings
contain more truth
than the writings of
many theologians.

– Martin Luther

”



This work, titled *Moses and the Pillar of Cloud*, is a bold and evocative composition that showcases the signature intense color and intricate detail of Lucas Cranach the Elder's celebrated oeuvre. The remarkable 16th-century oil on panel by Lucas Cranach and his studio captures the narrative moment when Moses leads the Israelites out of Egypt and encounters God manifested through a large pillar of cloud. Moses stands at the precipice of a bridge and turns back to soldiers helping to lead the group of Israelites who huddle closely together. Cranach depicts Moses with his traditional iconography, rendering the rays of light on his head which came to be interpreted as "horns" in the translation of the Bible. Using his traditional walking staff, Moses gestures toward the pillar, seemingly acknowledging that God will protect the group as they cross the bridge to the other side, leaving exile and entering a promised land.

In a nod to Cranach's Germanic locale, he renders the figures and setting in a manner that feels decisively more akin to European aesthetics than those of the Red Sea. Soldiers wear elaborate, gothic suits of armor that recall the livery of Northern European guardsmen. The terrain appears more like a European forest giving way to a sweeping valley than the arid landscape the Israelites trekked through on their journey across the Red Sea. Though still clearly recounting a story from the Old Testament, Cranach renders the cast of characters and setting in an earthly, familiar manner. This aesthetic shift speaks to Cranach's own changing beliefs as he found himself at the center of the Protestant Reformation.

After first gaining recognition in 1505 as the official painter of Frederick the Wise, Cranach established a thriving painting and print studio in Wittenberg, Germany. Cranach was renowned for his court portraits and genre paintings and was also well known for his association with the famous protestant reformer Martin Luther, then under the protection of Frederick

the Wise. As Wittenberg became a bastion of new religious thought, Cranach soon befriended Luther and played an active role in creating the printed materials that proliferated throughout the Reformation.

Cranach worked with his sons and many assistants in order to spread the ideas of the Reformation through his prints and artwork. The Protestant faith famously renounced what they deemed the over-the-top iconographies of the Catholic Church, and Cranach's artwork toed the line of representing the narratives of the Bible without soliciting the worship of icons. Cranach's works both captured the message of the scripture while also rendering bright, luminous colors and exacting details that enchanted 16th-century patrons and continue to make a lasting impression today. Lucas Cranach the Elder's works can be seen at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Kimbell Museum of Art in Dallas, Texas, the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, the Kunst Museum in Winterthur, Switzerland, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museo Nacional in Madrid, the National Gallery in London and the Getty Museum in Southern California.

This work is accompanied by a handwritten letter from a Cranach expert, Dr. Dieter Koeplin certifying the merit and quality of the work. Koeplin writes, "I consider this painting with Moses and the Cloud Column to be a very lively, high-quality work from the workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder, created around 1525-1530. The state of preservation is excellent."



PROVENANCE

Count Hessenstein, Sweden

Art dealer H. Bukowskis, Stockholm, 7-8 May 1941

Private collection, Sweden

M.S. Rau, New Orleans

LITERATURE

Attribution letter by Dr. Dieter Koeplin, 2021



an Tutquin

Basel, 2. Dez. 2021

Concurre : INV 21.265/7

Sehr geehrter Herr Pinta
 Vielen Dank für Ihren Brief vom
 24. Nov. und die Photographien.
 Ich halte dieses Gemälde mit
 „Moses und die Wolkensäule“
 (gemäß 2. Mose 13, 21) für ein sehr
 lebendiges, qualitativ tolles Werk
 aus der Werkstatt von Lucas Cranach
 dem Älteren, entstanden um ¹⁵²⁵⁻1530.
 Der Erhaltungszustand ist ausge-
 zeichnet.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Dietrich Koepplin



Moses and the Pillar of Cloud

After 1530

Panel: 22 x 46 cm

Provenance

Count Hessenstein;
Art dealer H. Bukowskis, Stockholm, 7-8 May 1941;
Private collection, Sweden.

Letter by Dr. Dieter Koeplin

This astonishing painting illustrates Chapter 13 of the Book of Exodus; as Moses led the Hebrew people out of Egypt where they were living in servitude, the Lord appeared by day in the form of a cloud to show them the way, while by night a pillar of fire appeared (Exodus, 13:21). God appeared to Moses among these clouds and left him instructions. The pillar did not depart from before the people.

Cranach depicts Moses in a manner consistent with traditional iconography: old, with a stick and rays of light surrounding his head sometimes interpreted as horns. As usual, the artist focuses his technique on the rendering of the materials. Moses' flowing, delicate clothing contrasts with the plain and shiny metal of the armour and the abundance of vegetation. The composition is organised in two parts; on the right, the men are gathered behind their guide while on the left, the space opens towards the sea to make way for the pillar of cloud. The latter is a theophany, a manifestation of God, who appears bearded and with curly hair, encircled by a halo. The horizontal format, which Cranach was particularly fond of, allows him to integrate a narrative into his painting. With his stick, Moses points to the pillar from which God is sending his message. This type of historiated composition can be found in the panel dedicated to *Abraham and Isaac* from the Kunst Museum in Winterthur (Fig.1).

Attribution letter by Dr. Dieter Koeplin, 2021



The highly graphic style of Lucas Cranach accentuates the strong lines. Thick black contours outline the clouds and Moses' curls. A similar technique is used by the artist to represent vegetation. Every blade of grass is highlighted by a pale line of colour. On the right, pine cones glimmer like lanterns and light the way for the soldiers. By staying close to nature, the artist anchors his story in a landscape, which doesn't play the leading role, but serves as a framework.

Cranach is appreciated for his majestic portraits, his sumptuous ornaments and his Venuses with mother-of-pearl skin. The reason he chose this passage from the Old Testament is because it echoed his political and religious convictions. Cranach used his painting to defend the ideas of the Reformation. Here, the subject alludes to the education of the free and modern man, released from his shackles. Placed in the centre of our composition, Moses is about to cross the bridge to another shore, representing the escape from exile. From Luther to *Samson* (Fig.2), Cranach likes to represent the freedom of man. Moses, however, is rarely depicted in his paintings. Two examples where he does appear are *Moses and Aaron with two Prophets* in Munich (Fig.2) and *Moses and the Ten Commandments* (Fig.3).

In Cranach's time, the world evolves quickly, and his exceptional inventiveness is marked by traces of these changes. His works were collected by both Catholic and Protestant patrons. In addition, this panel is a perfect example of the incisive clarity characteristic of Cranach's art, whose brilliant colours and quality of drawing still surprise us today.

Attribution letter by Dr. Dieter Koeplin, 2021





Fig. 1: *Studio of Lucas Cranach the Elder, Abraham and Isaac*, circa 1530, panel, 53 x 102.7 cm, Winterthur, Kunst Museum.



Fig. 2: *Lucas Cranach the Elder, Samson and the Lion*, circa 1520-1525, panel, 56.7 x 38 cm, Weimar, Klassik Stiftung Museen.

Attribution letter by Dr. Dieter Koeplin, 2021





Fig. 3: Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Moses and Aaron with two Prophets*, 1532, panel, 26.1 x 15.2 cm (fragment), Munich, Alte Pinakothek.

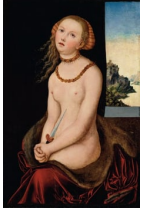


Fig. 4: *Studio of Lucas Cranach the Elder, Moses and the Ten Commandments*, panel, 32.8 x 22 cm (fragment), Leipzig, Stadtgeschichtliches Museen.

Attribution letter by Dr. Dieter Koeplin, 2021



AUCTION COMPARABLES



Lucas Cranach the Elder
Lucretia
 oil on panel
 Height 61 x Width 40.6 cm.
 Height 24.016 x Width 15.984 in.

15 October 2020 *over 4 years ago*
 Christie's New York
Old Masters – [Lot 00011]

est. 1,200,000 - 1,800,000 USD **5,070,000 USD** ©
 ↑ 182% est



Lucas Cranach the Elder
PORTRAIT OF MARTIN LUTHER (1483-1546)
 oil on beechwood panel
 Height 40.3 x Width 26.5 cm.
 Height 15.866 x Width 10.433 in.
 1517

01 February 2018 *about 7 years ago*
 Sotheby's New York
Master Paintings Evening Sale – [Lot 00009]

est. 800,000 - 1,200,000 USD **2,295,000 USD** ©
 ↑ 91% est



Lucas Cranach the Elder
The Resurrection
 oil on panel
 Height 54.2 x Width 38.3 cm.
 Height 21.339 x Width 15.079 in.
 1530

22 April 2021 *almost 4 years ago*
 Christie's New York
Old Masters – [Lot 00012]

est. 800,000 - 1,200,000 USD **2,190,000 USD** ©
 ↑ 82% est



Lucas Cranach the Elder
Madonna and Child with angels (collaboration with workshop)
 oil on panel
 Height 56.5 x Width 34.9 cm.
 Height 22.244 x Width 13.74 in.

27 January 2022 *about 3 years ago*
 Sotheby's New York
Master Paintings & Sculpture Part I – [Lot 00016]

est. 800,000 - 1,200,000 USD **1,653,500 USD** ©
 ↑ 38% est





Lucas Cranach the Elder
Anbetung Christi

oil on wood
Height 14.5 x Width 20 cm.
Height 5.709 x Width 7.874 in.

20 September 2013 *over 11 years ago*
Koller Auktionen AG

Auktion A166: Alte Graphik, Zeichnungen Alter Meister, Gemälde Alter Meister, Gemälde des 19. Jahrhunderts – [Lot 03026]

est. 400,000 - 600,000 CHF **1,181,500** CHF [Ⓟ]
est. 439,367 - 659,050 USD **1,297,781** USD [Ⓟ]



Workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder
Heiliger Hieronymus in der Einöde

oil on wood
Height 34.7 x Width 23.5 cm.
Height 13.661 x Width 9.252 in.

10 June 2009 *over 15 years ago*
Galerie Fischer Auktionen AG

Gemälde Alte Meister, Gemälde 19. Jh. & Schweizer Gemälde – [Lot 01003]

est. 150,000 - 180,000 CHF **1,200,000** CHF [Ⓟ]
est. 139,043 - 166,852 USD **1,112,347** USD [Ⓟ]



Lucas Cranach the Elder
DER JUNGE CHRISTUS ANGETET VON JOHANNES DEM TÄUFER

oil on wood
Height 35.2 x Width 23.2 cm.
Height 13.858 x Width 9.134 in.

29 June 2023 *over 1 year ago*
Hampel Fine Art Auctions

Old Master Paintings - Part I – [Lot 00178]

est. 1,000,000 - 1,500,000 EUR **971,000** EUR [Ⓟ]
est. 1,093,254 - 1,639,881 USD **1,056,583** USD [Ⓟ]



Lucas Cranach the Elder
THE FAUN FAMILY






oil on panel
Height 44 x Width 34 cm.
Height 17.323 x Width 13.386 in.
1531

06 December 2017 *about 7 years ago*
Sotheby's London




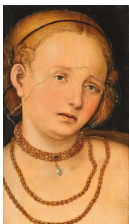

Old Masters Evening Sale – [Lot 00030]

est. 400,000 - 600,000 GBP **789,000** GBP [Ⓟ]
est. 535,260 - 802,890 USD **1,055,800** USD [Ⓟ]



	<p>Studio of Lucas Cranach the Elder <i>Winged altarpiece with the Annunciation, Saints Catherine and Barbara (inside), as well as Christ as Man of Sorrows and Mary as Mother of Sorrow (outside)</i> oil on panel Height 122.5 x Width 86 cm. Height 48.228 x Width 33.858 in. 1515</p>	<p>31 March 2023 <i>almost 2 years ago</i> Koller Auktionen AG OLD MASTER PAINTINGS – [Lot 03014]</p> <p>est. 800,000 - 1,200,000 CHF est. 876,136 - 1,314,204 USD</p> <p>948,300 CHF (P) 1,038,549 USD (P)</p>
	<p>Lucas Cranach the Elder <i>Portrait of a lady, three-quarter-length</i> oil on panel Height 14.6 x Width 14.4 cm. Height 5.748 x Width 5.669 in.</p>	<p>27 January 2023 <i>about 2 years ago</i> Christie's New York Modern Medici: Masterpieces from a New York Collection – [Lot 00205]</p> <p>est. 700,000 - 900,000 USD</p> <p>945,000 USD (P) ↑ 5% est</p>
	<p>Workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder <i>Hercules at the Court of Omphale</i> oil on panel Height 82.2 x Width 118.4 cm. Height 32.362 x Width 46.614 in. 1533</p>	<p>06 February 2025 <i>2 days ago</i> Sotheby's New York Master Paintings Part I – [Lot 00321]</p> <p>est. 700,000 - 900,000 USD</p> <p>840,000 USD (P)</p>
	<p>Lucas Cranach the Elder <i>The Mocking of Christ</i> oil on panel, unframed Height 35.9 x Width 28 cm. Height 14.134 x Width 11.024 in.</p>	<p>05 July 2018 <i>over 6 years ago</i> Christie's London Old Masters Evening Sale – [Lot 00013]</p> <p>est. 400,000 - 600,000 GBP est. 528,890 - 793,335 USD</p> <p>488,750 GBP (P) 646,238 USD (P)</p>
	<p>Lucas Cranach the Elder <i>Kristus i Getsemane (collab. w/studio)</i> oil on panel Height 62 x Width 43 cm. Height 24.409 x Width 16.929 in.</p>	<p>12 June 2012 <i>over 12 years ago</i> Uppsala Auktionskammare Internationell Kvalitetsauktion – [Lot 01117]</p> <p>est. 1,000,000 - 1,500,000 SEK est. 140,954 - 211,431 USD</p> <p>3,800,000 SEK (H) 535,626 USD (H) ↑ 153% est</p>



	<p>Studio of Lucas Cranach the Elder <i>The Lamentation of Christ</i> oil on panel Height 48.4 x Width 73.1 cm. Height 19.055 x Width 28.78 in.</p>	<p>20 May 2023 <i>over 1 year ago</i> Kunsthaus Lempertz Auction 1221 - Old Masters – [Lot 02005]</p> <p>est. 200,000 - 250,000 EUR 453,600 EUR [Ⓟ] est. 216,403 - 270,504 USD 490,802 USD [Ⓟ]</p> <p>↑ 81% est</p>
	<p>Studio of Lucas Cranach the Elder <i>Portrait of Martin Luther (+ Portrait of Philip Melanchthon; pair)</i> oil on panel Height 20.7 x Width 15.5 cm. Height 8.15 x Width 6.102 in. 1543</p>	<p>10 July 2008 <i>over 16 years ago</i> Sotheby's London Old Master Paintings Day Sale – [Lot 00104]</p> <p>est. 60,000 - 80,000 GBP 223,250 GBP [Ⓟ] est. 118,858 - 158,478 USD 442,254 USD [Ⓟ]</p> <p>↑ 179% est</p>
	<p>Workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder <i>Der heilige Hieronymus</i> oil on wood Height 50 x Width 40 cm. Height 19.685 x Width 15.748 in.</p>	<p>29 July 2016 <i>over 8 years ago</i> Kunstauktionshaus Schlosser Auktion 71 - Teil 1: Ausgewählte Kunstwerke – [Lot 00060]</p> <p>est. 90,000 - 90,000 EUR 380,000 EUR [Ⓟ] est. 100,524 - 100,524 USD 424,438 USD [Ⓟ]</p> <p>↑ 322% est</p>
	<p>Lucas Cranach the Elder <i>Lucretia</i> oil on panel Height 36.6 x Width 20.4 cm. Height 14.409 x Width 8.031 in. 1535–1545</p>	<p>20 September 2024 <i>5 months ago</i> Koller Auktionen AG Old Master Paintings – [Lot 03016]</p> <p>est. 70,000 - 120,000 CHF 325,000 CHF [Ⓟ] est. 82,372 - 141,209 USD 382,442 USD [Ⓟ]</p> <p>↑ 171% est</p>
	<p>Lucas Cranach the Elder <i>Henry IV the Devout, Duke of Saxony, Margrave of Meissen (1473-1541), half-length, in armor, with a two-handed sword</i> oil on panel Height 20 x Width 15 cm. Height 7.874 x Width 5.906 in.</p>	<p>31 January 2024 <i>about 1 year ago</i> Christie's New York Old Masters – [Lot 00006]</p> <p>est. 250,000 - 350,000 USD 352,800 USD [Ⓟ]</p> <p>↑ 1% est</p>



Studio of Lucas Cranach the Elder | *Abraham and Isaac*

Circa 1530

Medium: Oil on panel

Dimensions: 21 x 40^{1/2} inches | 53.5 x 103 cm



**Kunst Museum
Winterthur**

Kunst Museum Winterthur
Winterthur, Switzerland



Lucas Cranach the Elder | *Judgment of Paris*

Circa 1512-14

Medium: Oil on panel

Dimensions: 16^{15/16} x 12^{11/16} inches | 43 x 32.2 cm



Kimbell
Art
Museum

Kimbell Art Museum
Fort Worth, TX, United States



Lucas Cranach the Elder | *Samson and Delilah*

Circa 1528-30

Medium: Oil on beech

Dimensions: 22^{1/2} x 14^{7/8} inches | 57.2 x 37.8 cm



The Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York, NY, United States



Lucas Cranach the Elder | *Lot and His Daughters*

1528

Medium: Oil on linden wood

Dimensions: 22 x 14^{1/2} inches | 56 x 37 cm



KUNST
HISTORISCHES
MUSEUM
WIEN

Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien
Vienna, Austria



Lucas Cranach the Elder | *Fall of Man*

After 1537

Medium: Oil on red beech wood

Dimensions: 21 x 14^{5/8} inches | 53.3 x 37.1 cm



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WIEN

Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien
Vienna, Austria



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