

Guide to the Lavater Collection

YCGL MSS 13



by Beinecke staff

November 2000

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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New Haven, CT 06520-8330
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CALL NUMBER: YCGL MSS 13

CREATOR: Lavater, Johann Caspar, 1741-1801

TITLE: Lavater collection

DATES: 1775-1816

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1.97 linear feet (3 boxes + 1 broadside folder)

LANGUAGE: German

SUMMARY: Collection of engravings, drawings, silhouettes, and miniature paintings, many of them annotated in the hand of Johann Caspar Lavater. The artists most heavily represented among the signed works in the collection are Daniel Chodowiecki and Johann Heinrich Lips, both major contributors to Lavater's Physiognomische Fragmente.

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Requesting Instructions

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To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The provenance of the collection is uncertain, although it may have been part of the material, called simply "prints," purchased in 1926 from descendants of Lavater, Waldemar C. Hirschfeld (Yale certificate in architecture, 1903) and his brother Robert Lavater Hirschfeld, both then of Meriden, Connecticut.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

Lavater Collection. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

JOHANN CASPAR LAVATER (1741-1801)

Johann Caspar Lavater was born in Zürich in 1741, the son of a physician. He trained as a clergyman and at the beginning of his career campaigned successfully against corruption in the government of the canton. Having made many local enemies during this controversy, he undertook a journey with his friend Heinrich Füssli through northern Germany, where he met several prominent authors and public figures. Upon his return to Switzerland, he became increasingly well known as an eloquent preacher, which led finally to his appointment as deacon (1778) and then pastor (1786) of St. Peter's Church in Zürich. His later years were overshadowed by political events. Because of his outspoken criticism of the government, he came under suspicion of collaboration with Russia and Austria and was arrested in May 1799 and deported to Basel. Released in June, he returned to Zürich where, in September, he was himself wounded while trying to help wounded soldiers during the occupation of the city by the French. His injuries resulted in a long and painful illness, of which he died on 2 January 1801.

Lavater's numerous published works include poems, prose works devoted to his emotional, pietistic brand of Christianity, and the famous *Physiognomische Fragmente*, published in four volumes between 1775 and 1778 and illustrated with many engravings. Lavater's friendship with Goethe began by letter in 1772. They first met in 1774, and, as is well known, Goethe made minor contributions to the *Physiognomische Fragmente*. The friendship cooled during the early 1780s as Goethe became alienated by Lavater's growing religious fanaticism.

Scope and Contents

Many of the engravings, drawings, and miniature paintings in this collection are annotated in the hand of Johann Caspar Lavater (1741-1801). The style of some of the drawings, as well as the format of the material (for example, the way the illustrations are mounted and the style of the borders, both handmade and engraved) resemble two other manuscripts in the Speck Collection, Lavater's "Vermischte physiognomische Regeln" (YCGL MSS 6, vol. 819, from 1789) and his "Stufen" (YCGL MSS 6, vol. 820a-c). It would appear that at least some of the present material represents fragments and/or rejected portions from the process of creating collections similar to the two just named. Lavater's habit of assembling sets of aphorisms and emblematic illustrations for his family and friends is well known.

Of the dated items, almost all fall in the 1790s, the majority in the second half of that decade. The collection is organized into three series: *Portraits*, *Other Artwork*, and *Other Papers*. [Portraits](#) is organized into Portraits of Johann Caspar Lavater and Portraits of Others. [Other Artwork](#) is organized into eight subseries: Jacques Callot, Daneil Chodowiecki, Johann Heinrich Lips, Conrad Meyer, Pfenninger, del., George Friedrich Schmol, Various Artists, and Unidentified.

The artists most heavily represented among the signed engravings in the collection are Daniel Chodowiecki (1726-1801) and Johann Heinrich Lips (1758-1817), both major contributors to the work for

which Lavater is best remembered, *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung des Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe*. The collection includes a small portrait of Anna Barbara Schulthess (1745-1818), a friend of Goethe who preserved the manuscript of *Wilhelm Meisters theatralische Sendung* (the first version of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*), not rediscovered and published until 1911 (folder 10). Other notable items include a silhouette of Katharina von Stolberg (1751-1832), sister of the poets Christian and Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg, and a self-portrait by the painter Johann Caspar Schinz (1797-1832), a pupil of Heinrich Lips (folders 11 and 6).

The collection was previously housed in a large box labeled "Lavater" that had been among the uncataloged holdings of the William A. Speck Collection of Goetheana for several decades. Possibly the collection was not cataloged by earlier librarians because of the fragmentary nature of its contents. The provenance of the collection is uncertain, although it may have been part of the material, called simply "prints," purchased in 1926 from descendants of Lavater, Waldemar C. Hirschfeld (Yale certificate in architecture, 1903) and his brother Robert Lavater Hirschfeld, both then of Meriden, Connecticut. Later the Hirschfelds donated to the Speck Collection oil portraits of Lavater by Ilg and of Gottlieb Wilhelm Rabener (1714-71) by Anton Graff. The exact relationship between Lavater and the Hirschfelds has not at this writing been determined. Their father was Henry Hirschfeld, one of four sons of a widow Hirschfeld who immigrated to the United States from Emmershausen around 1850. Heinrich Fussli's drawing of Mrs. Lavater's hands, now at the Beinecke Library, came from the Hirschfeld family as well; in 1926 it was described as still being in the possession of an unnamed aunt of Waldemar and Robert Hirschfeld.

Collection Contents

Series I: Portraits, 1775-1816

0.21 linear feet (.5 box)

Series I, *Portraits* is organized into Portraits of Johann Caspar Lavater and Portraits of Others.

PORTRAITS OF JOHANN CASPAR LAVATER

b. 1, f. 1	Wirz, J. H. [Johann Heinrich Wirz, 1784-1837?] Silhouette and manuscript motto, in printed borders and mounted. On one sheet, signed and dated Kilchberg Motto is dated 1 October 1790	1802 Sep 24
b. 1, f. 2	Various artists. Etchings, engravings, and watercolors, including one with a manuscript inscription to Luise Lavater (his daughter) and a caricature depicting a Lavater-like figure presenting a light show. 14 items Two by Johann Heinrich Lips, one by Daniel Chodowiecki	1775-1805, undated
b. 1, f. 3	Various artists. Lavater memorials. Engravings Engraving of the memorial plaque at the St. Peterskirche in Zürich, engraving showing a monument to Lavater, with an explanatory printed broadsheet entitled "Erklärung zu Lavaters Denkmal. Gezeichnet und gestochen von J. H. Lips," printed poem, "Erinnerungen an J. K. Lavater," 4 pages	undated
	Unidentified. Etchings and engravings, including 2 engravings with the same manuscript caption in Lavater's hand on mount, and one full-length seated portrait. 5 pieces Stored in: Oversize box 3, folder 37	undated
b. 1, f. 4	Unidentified. Silhouette showing two heads: Lavater and "Karg." Identification according to a reproduction in the Speck bibliographical file	undated

PORTRAITS OF OTHERS

	Haid, I. I. Johann Jakob Bodmer (after a painting by Henry Fuseli). Engraving Stored in: Oversize box 3, folder 38	undated
	Lips, Johann Heinrich. "Wieland." Engraving Stored in: Oversize box 3, folder 39	undated
b. 1, f. 5	Lips, Johann Heinrich. Engravings after works by other artists, including portraits of Condorcet, Salomon Schinz (1734-84) and Maximilian I. 7 items	undated
b. 1, f. 6	Schinz, Johann Caspar. Signed [self?]-portrait. Watercolor over pencil Schwerdgeburth, C. A. Carl Maria von Weber. Engraving Stored in: Oversize box 3, folder 40	1816 June 23 undated
b. 1, f. 7	Various artists. Portraits of Christoph Martin Wieland, Torquato Tasso, and Johann Caspar Schinz. Prints	undated
b. 1, f. 8	Unidentified. Engraving of Magdalena Lavater, infant. Mounted, with a manuscript caption in Lavater's hand	undated
b. 1, f. 9	Unidentified. Engraving of Johann Conrad Pfenninger (1747-1792). Mounted, with manuscript caption on mount	undated

PORTRAITS OF OTHERS (continued)

	Unidentified. Portrait of William Pitt the Elder. Pencil drawing with manuscript caption in Lavater's hand Stored in: Oversize box 3, folder 41 See YCGL MSS 6, vol. 817, for Lavater's commentary on Lips's bust of Pitt	1798 Dec 10
b. 1, f. 10	Unidentified. Portrait of Anna Barbara Wolf Schulthess (1745-1818). Colored pencil and watercolor	undated
b. 1, f. 11	Unidentified. Silhouette of Katharina von Stolberg (1751-1832). Manuscript caption, "Sister of Christian and Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg."	undated
b. 1, f. 12	Unidentified. Portraits of Dante, St. Peter, and Judas (?); pastel with pen-and-ink black medallions, and borders on blue background	undated
b. 1, f. 13	Unidentified. "Grosse Gesichtsform." Portrait of a man, ink drawing, mounted, with manuscript caption	undated
b. 1, f. 14	Unidentified. Four silhouettes, one a full-length portrait	undated
b. 1, f. 15	Unidentified. Four watercolor miniature portraits with manuscript captions in Lavater's hand, with matching borders and mounts	undated
b. 1, f. 16	Unidentified. Portfolio of portraits, unbound. 47 etchings with manuscript captions in the hand of Lavater interpreting facial expressions Mounted on 11 leaves of thick tan paper, most of them folded, with evidence that two others portraits have been torn away. With one sheet of etchings of horses. Several women are depicted, and a few of the portraits are identified as 17th-century personalities, including Ambrogio Spinola, Andreas Rivetus (Andrew Marvell), Jean Gaspard Gevaerts, Abraham Heidanus, and Pieter de Jode	undated
	Unidentified. Three prints of religious figures: young Christ, with manuscript motto by Lavater, dated 25 July 1796; Jesus with palm and crown of thorns, with manuscript motto by Lavater dated 8 May 1796; Samuel, with manuscript caption Stored in: Oversize box 3, folder 42	1796, undated
b. 1, f. 17	Unidentified. Three watercolor miniatures depicting religious figures, with manuscript captions in Lavater's hand, with matching borders and mounts	undated
b. 1, f. 18	Unidentified. Three watercolor miniatures: Portrait of a man, with manuscript caption "originalgenie des urbilds, wo in dem Bilde?", Man smoking, manuscript caption cropped, Boy reading outside	undated
b. 1, f. 19	Unidentified. Two watercolor portraits of women	undated
b. 1, f. 20	Unidentified. Two gouache portraits of men, one with caption in Lavater's hand, dated 12 July 1792; the other dated 15 November 1797, with a caption signed "G" (Georg Gessner?)	1792, 1797

Series II: Other Artwork, 1776-1799*0.6 linear feet (.75 box)*

Series II, *Other Artwork*, is organized into eight subseries: Jacques Callot, Daniel Chodowiecki, Johann Heinrich Lips, Conrad Meyer, Pfeninger, George Friedrich Schmol, Various Artists, and Unidentified.

CALLOT, JACQUES

- b. 1, f. 21 Engravings, with engraved title "Diverse figures grotesques inventées par Jacques Callot.... Paris [undated]" undated
 Engravings pasted on 16 sheets of paper folded into 4 signatures with folios numbered 17-48 (the last engraving is on leaf 44)

CHODOWIECKI, DANIEL

- b. 1, f. 22 [18 small engravings, many of them signed by Daniel Chodowiecki, including two series of studies of heads](#) 1776, undated
 Mounted on 4 sheets of tan paper (1 folded)
- b. 1, f. 23 [16 small engravings and etchings of scenes, vignettes, and faces, many of them signed by Daniel Chodowiecki](#) undated
 Mounted on 5 leaves of thick blue paper (one folded). Two engravings with manuscript captions in Lavater's hand interpreting the mood of the person portrayed
- b. 1, f. 24 [Three engravings and etchings](#) 1782, undated
- b. 1, f. 25 [Two etchings after Chodowiecki, in matching borders, with manuscript captions in Lavater's hand](#) undated

LIPS, JOHANN HEINRICH

- b. 1, f. 26 [16 engravings of scenes and vignettes](#) undated
 Mounted on 7 leaves of gray paper, some folded as to form a booklet, with some page numbers between 11 and 39
- b. 1, f. 27 [Engravings after works by other artists. 9 items](#) undated

[MEYER, CONRAD]

- b. 1, f. 28 [Four engraved scenes mounted on black cardboard with manuscript captions of two-line moral aphorisms in Lavater's hand mounted beneath](#) undated
 One print by Conrad Meyer

PFENINGER, [----?]

- "Horum est Regnum Dei." Two mezzotints after a painting by Benjamin West, with printed caption, two copies, each with a manuscript caption in Lavater's hand undated
 Stored in: Oversize box 3, folder 43

SCHMOL, GEORGE FRIEDRICH

- "Nach der Natur im Spital zu Zürich gezeichnet." Pen-and-ink drawing of four heads, mounted with manuscript caption 1779
 Stored in: Oversize box 3, folder 44
 Also Schmoll, Schmohl

VARIOUS ARTISTS

	Eight assorted engravings mounted on 4 sheets of tan paper, numbered nonconsecutively: literary scenes, portraits of Francis I and Maria Theresia, and a series of heads after Chodowiecki Stored in: Oversize box 3, folder 45	undated
b. 1, f. 29	Miscellaneous engravings and etchings: vignettes, literary illustrations	undated
	Six etchings (portraits, equestrian figures) mounted on two leaves of blue paper, one portrait with a manuscript caption in Lavater's hand Stored in: Oversize box 3, folder 46	undated
UNIDENTIFIED		
b. 1, f. 30	Four emblematic figures, with manuscript captions in Lavater's hand pasted below each. Watercolor over pen-and-ink Mounted inside matching folded leaves of blue paper, numbered 1, 44, 47, 48	undated
b. 2, f. 31	Miscellaneous images, mounted: Jesus receiving children (watercolor over pen-and-ink), engraved portrait of a man, engraved page showing 16 heads of mammals, handpainted frame for medallion and motto	undated
b. 2, f. 32	Six emblematic etchings and watercolors, with manuscript captions in Lavater's hand Borders and mounting do not match each other. Three are dated: 29 April 1795; 12 September 1796; 1798	1795-98
b. 2, f. 33	Three religious miniatures, including a colored portrait of St. Peter and a mounted engraving depicting Jacob and Joseph with a manuscript caption in Lavater's hand	undated
b. 2, f. 34	Two line drawings of heads, with manuscript captions in Lavater's hand; drawings on yellow background, mounted on blue-gray paper Two photographic reproductions of prints: Kaulbach's "Charlotte" and "Dora"; and one print of Pan Stored in: Oversize box 3, folder 47	undated
b. 2, f. 35	Two religious epigrams in Lavater's hand, with similar borders and mounts; with colored miniature depicting a man, within the same border	1799 Dec 4

Series III: Other Papers, 1795-96

0.1 linear feet (1 item)

b. 2, f. 36

[Three manuscript texts in Lavater's hand, in handpainted borders](#)

1795-96

Motto: Lerne lerneder stets die Kunst, den Moment zubenutzen. Poem: Lern' unaufhörlich mehr das Schädel ..., dated 6 May 1795. Poem: Junger Christus nach le Brun, dated 5 March 1796, for Anna Gessner-Lavater (Lavater's daughter)

Oversize*0.9 linear feet (1 box)*

b. 3 (Oversize), f. 37	Unidentified. Etchings and engravings, including 2 engravings with the same manuscript caption in Lavater's hand on mount, and one full-length seated portrait. 5 pieces	undated
b. 3 (Oversize), f. 38	Haid, I. I. Johann Jakob Bodmer (after a painting by Henry Fuseli). Engraving	undated
b. 3 (Oversize), f. 39	Lips, Johann Heinrich. "Wieland." Engraving	undated
b. 3 (Oversize), f. 40	Schwerdgeburth, C. A. Carl Maria von Weber. Engraving	undated
b. 3 (Oversize), f. 41	Unidentified. Portrait of William Pitt the Elder. Pencil drawing with manuscript caption in Lavater's hand	1798 Dec 10
b. 3 (Oversize), f. 42	Unidentified. Three prints of religious figures: young Christ, with manuscript motto by Lavater, dated 25 July 1796; Jesus with palm and crown of thorns, with manuscript motto by Lavater dated 8 May 1796; Samuel, with manuscript caption	1796, undated
b. 3 (Oversize), f. 43	"Horum est Regnum Dei." Two mezzotints after a painting by Benjamin West, with printed caption, two copies, each with a manuscript caption in Lavater's hand	undated
b. 3 (Oversize), f. 44	"Nach der Natur im Spital zu Zürich gezeichnet." Pen-and-ink drawing of four heads, mounted with manuscript caption	1779
b. 3 (Oversize), f. 45	Eight assorted engravings mounted on 4 sheets of tan paper, numbered nonconsecutively: literary scenes, portraits of Francis I and Maria Theresia, and a series of heads after Chodowiecki	undated
b. 3 (Oversize), f. 46	Six etchings (portraits, equestrian figures) mounted on two leaves of blue paper, one portrait with a manuscript caption in Lavater's hand	undated
b. 3 (Oversize), f. 47	Two photographic reproductions of prints: Kaulbach's "Charlotte" and "Dora"; and one print of Pan	undated
b. BSD, folder 48	Jesus being led to his crucifixion, followed by a crowd. Ink drawing.	undated

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Genres / Formats

Engravings (prints)

Etchings (prints)

Silhouettes

Watercolors (paintings)

Names

Chodowiecki, Daniel, 1726-1801

Lavater, Johann Caspar, 1741-1801 -- Portraits

Lips, Johann Heinrich, 1758-1817