

LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

KUNST



VICTOR HUGO

1802 Besançon - Paris 1885

A Stoneware Jug

Pen and brush and brown ink on laid paper with watermark fragment: *J Wha[tman]*; executed c.1850.
329 x 248 mm

PROVENANCE: Estate of the artist (with the Gâtine inventory stamp and number 106/536) – By descent to the artist's grandson, Georges Hugo; by descent to his son, François Hugo; by inheritance to his step-sister, Marguerite Hugo (by 1963); by inheritance to her brother, Jean Hugo – Private collection, Geneva – Jan Krugier and Marie-Anne Poniatowski, Geneva (acquired in December 1981) – Thence by descent

LITERATURE: Roger Cornaille and Georges Herscher, *Victor Hugo dessinateur*, Lausanne 1963, p. 94, no. 210, repr. p. 156 – Jean Massin (ed.), *Victor Hugo: œuvres complètes*, Paris 1969, II, no. 840, repr.

EXHIBITIONS: *Victor Hugo and The Romantic Vision, Drawings and Watercolors*, exhib. cat., Jan Krugier Gallery, New York and Galerie Jan Krugier, Geneva 1990-1, no. 28, repr. – *Victor Hugo dessinateur*, exhib. cat., Musée d'Ixelles, Brussels 1999, no. 20, repr. – *Linie, Licht und Schatten, Meisterzeichnungen und Skulpturen der Sammlung Jan und Marie-Anne Krugier-Poniatowski*, exhib. cat., Berlin 1999, p. 406, repr. – *Victor Hugo et les siens. Deux siècles d'art et d'artistes*, exhib. cat., Galerie d'Art du Conseil Général des Bouches-du-Rhône, Aix-en-Provence 2002, repr. – Pierre Georgel, *1850, Le Burg à la croix*, exhib. cat., Paris-Musées, 2007, p. 93, no. 59, repr.

The model for this drawing by Victor Hugo was a Rhenish stoneware jug. It was probably made in Siegburg c.1575. A comparable jug from the workshop of Anno Knütgen bearing the same coat of arms and also dating from around 1575 is preserved in the Museum August Kestner, Hanover [fig. 1]. Like other German stoneware of the period, it carries moulded relief decoration. The jug bears the coat of arms of William, Duke of Jülich-Cleve-Berg (1516-92), supported by two lions rampant. It is also decorated with the depiction of a saint in a cartouche and a number of portrait heads in medallions. At the neck of the jug is a small, bearded face mask. The face mask is one of the characteristic ornaments applied to Rhenish stoneware of the period. Jugs of this variety had been exported from Germany to markets in Northern Europe and the British Isles since the late Middle Ages. It is not known when Hugo made this drawing. The jug may have been in his possession – a decorative item at Hauteville House, his home in Guernsey, which was furnished with different types of Asian and European pottery [fig. 2] The motif is unique in Hugo's *oeuvre*. He dispenses entirely with preparatory drawing and the dexterity of his brushwork and skilful application of contrasting areas of brown wash – using a darker tone to heighten the luminosity of the sheet – testify to his remarkable talents as a draughtsman.

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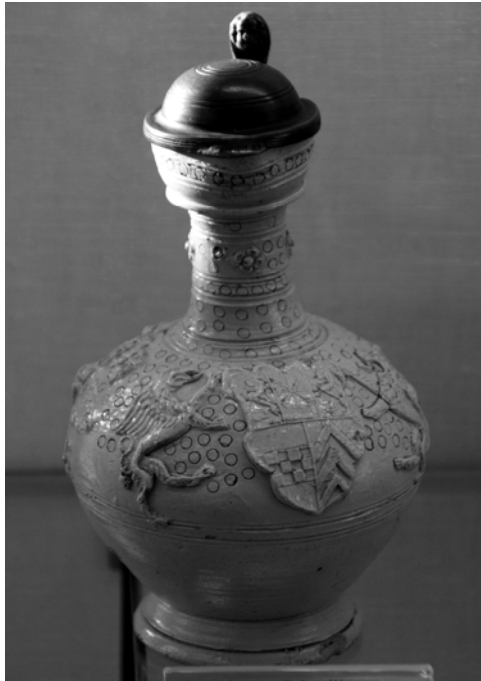


Fig. 1: Siegburg stoneware jug, c.1575.
Museum August Kestner, Hanover [inv. no. 1913.23]



Fig. 2: Hauteville House, dining room, c.1857
Paris, Maison de Victor Hugo