

[David Before Saul](#) by [Lucas van Leyden](#)

Original Lithographic Bookplate - Main Subject: Renaissance

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Dimensions (As Shown)

6.5W x 9H Inches

16.51W x 22.86H cm

Medium

Original Lithographic Bookplate

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About Lucas van Leyden

Lucas was born in Leyden (Leiden) in 1494. His father, Hughe Jacobsz, was his first teacher, followed by the mannerist painter Cornelis Engelbrechtsz. In 1515 Lucas was married in Leyden, where he worked all his life. In 1521 he traveled to Antwerp. There he met Albrecht Dürer, whose works provided the most important artistic influence on his graphic oeuvre.

Lucas's engraving Mohammed and the Monk Sergius (1508) confirms Van Mander's story of his precocity. His technical mastery and compositional skill at this early age presuppose considerable training and experience as well as a formidable natural talent. It is not unlikely that, as Van Mander says, Lucas had learned his craft in the shops of a specialist in inlaying metal in weapons and of a goldsmith.

Much of Lucas's large production of engravings and woodcuts and a few etchings bear dates, from 1508 to 1530, so that it is possible to follow his development and to establish a probable chronology for his paintings, only five of which are dated.

In 1510 Lucas produced several masterpieces of engraving, including the large Ecce Homo and the Return of the Prodigal Son, both of which impressed Rembrandt more than a century later. Lucas's Triumph of Mordecai (1515) was the basis for a painting by Rembrandt's teacher, Pieter Lastman. Lucas's close observation of nature, delight in landscape, and grotesque physiognomies were in the Dutch tradition. His best works are the early ones, in which these features predominate. Later he was so overawed by the achievements of Dürer and by the prints of the Italian engraver Marcantonio Raimondi that he attempted to emulate them at the expense of his personal bent.

Lucas was commissioned to make woodcuts to illustrate a number of books. A series of seven large woodcuts, Pernicious Women (ca. 1513), show his power in this medium, which he used for admirable independent subjects as well as sets. His graphic works dealt mainly with religious subject matter. A few were genre subjects, such as the engraving The Dentist (1523), which pointed out a moral in an ironic way, a form of art that became very popular in Holland in the 17th century.

We know of no painting that can with certainty be identified as a youthful work by Lucas. The most likely candidate is a small Adoration of the Magi. Certainly awkward enough to be early is the Beheading of John the Baptist, which is thought to date from about 1512, in which the belated Gothic flavor of Engelbrechtsz is sharply reflected.

Lucas's portraits have a forthright quality that is characteristically Dutch. This sense of unsparing veracity can be seen in his painted Self-portrait (ca. 1508) and in the chalk drawing Portrait of a Young Man (1521).

The Last Judgment triptych, which was commissioned in 1526, is Lucas's masterpiece. Groups of nude figures realized in a broad, painterly style are arranged in a field of vast depth that depends for its sense of distance mainly on aerial perspective. Moses Striking Water from the Rock (1527) is confused in composition, but it displays very well Lucas's genre-like way of treating a religious theme. The Worship of the Golden Calf triptych is a better-composed work of his maturity in which his natural bent for genre and for a Northern specificity of detail tends to submerge the Old Testament subject. In the foreground families that represent all the ages of man eat, drink, quarrel, and cuddle, and in the far distance one can descry with difficulty the Golden Calf, which is the ostensible occasion for the celebration.

Lucas was a transitional figure rather than a major innovator, despite his exceptional gifts. He appreciated Renaissance developments but failed in his efforts to adapt them in his native idiom.

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Sorry. No information about this medium is available.

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