



Sampler, Solomon's Temple with crucifixion

Anne Horsefield

Not on display

Title/Description: Sampler, Solomon's Temple with crucifixion

Artist/Maker: Anne Horsefield

Born: 1817

Object Type: Textile

Materials: Linen, Silk

Technique: Cross stitch

Measurements: h. 450 x w. 415 mm

Accession Number: 1249

Historic Period: 19th century

Production Place: England, Europe

Anne Horsefield completed her sampler, with silk threads stitched onto linen, on the 12th of July, 1817. On it, she illustrates Solomon's Temple, accompanied by trumpeting angels and a modern depiction of Christ's crucifixion. Although it is not possible to determine exactly when or where Horsefield was born, she likely worked her sampler when she was a girl or young teenager, the typical age of sampler-making girls in the early nineteenth century.

In the centre of the sampler is Solomon's temple, stitched in primarily brown and pink threads. Above the temple stand two trumpeting angels and five angel heads, all of which feature polychrome wings. In between the angel heads are four eight-pointed stars. Between the temple and its fence is an inscription which reads, "A Representation of Solomons Temple." Below the fence are a scene and a lengthy verse. The scene, in the bottom left corner, shows Christ's crucifixion alongside Gestas and Dismas. Christ's head is framed by a halo. Below the crucifixion stand three figures in early nineteenth-century dress. The figure on the left, wearing a many-buttoned coat, observes the crucifixion, while the other two figures, a man in colourful garb and a woman in a hooded cloak, look straight ahead. It is unusual for a sampler to depict the Crucifixion, let alone one with contemporary viewers.

In the bottom right corner of the sampler is a lengthy inscription which reads, 'O peace mother o peace your weeping does me greive/for I must suffer this said he for Adam and for Eve/How can I my weeping leave the sorrows I undergo/for to see my own Son die whilst Sons I have no more/Mother take John Evangelist and for to be your son/and he will comfort you sometimes mother as i have done/O come thou John Evangelist you are welcome to me/but more welcome my own dear son that was born on my body/He laid his head on his right shoulder saying death had struck/him night the Holy Ghost be with my soul I die Mother I die.'

The source of this verse has not yet been identified, but is very similar to several stanzas of a Christmas carol called 'Seven Virgins, or The Leaves of Life,' which read, "'O peace, mother, O peace, mother,/Your weeping doth me grieve,/I must suffer this," he said,/“For Adam and for Eve.”/“O mother, take you John Evangelist,/And for to be your son,/And he will comfort you sometimes,/Mother, as I have done.”/“O come, thou John Evangelist,/Thou'rt welcome unto me,/But more welcome my own dear Son,/Whom I nursed on my knee.”/Then he laid his head on his right shoulder,/Seeing death it struck him nigh —/“The Holy Ghost be with your soul,/I die, mother dear, I die” [1].

The earliest known written example of this verse dates to about 1830, found in a book of hymns sung in Manchester with watermarks of 1826 and 1829, written about in William Howitt's 1840 *The Rural Life of England* [2, 3]. The existence of the verse on Anne's sampler suggests earlier origins for this carol, likely shared orally without being published. The carol's supposed Manchester roots may also imply that Anne Horsefield was from or educated in Manchester.

Isabella Rosner, January 2022

[1] Joshua Sylvester, *A Garland of Christmas Carols, Ancient and Modern* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1861), p. 72-3.

[2] William Howitt, *The Rural Life of England* (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1840), p. 466.

[3] 'Seven Virgins, or The Leaves of Life,' *Mainly Norfolk: English Folk and Other Good Music*, <https://mainlynorfolk.info/watersons/songs/sevenvirgins.html>.
