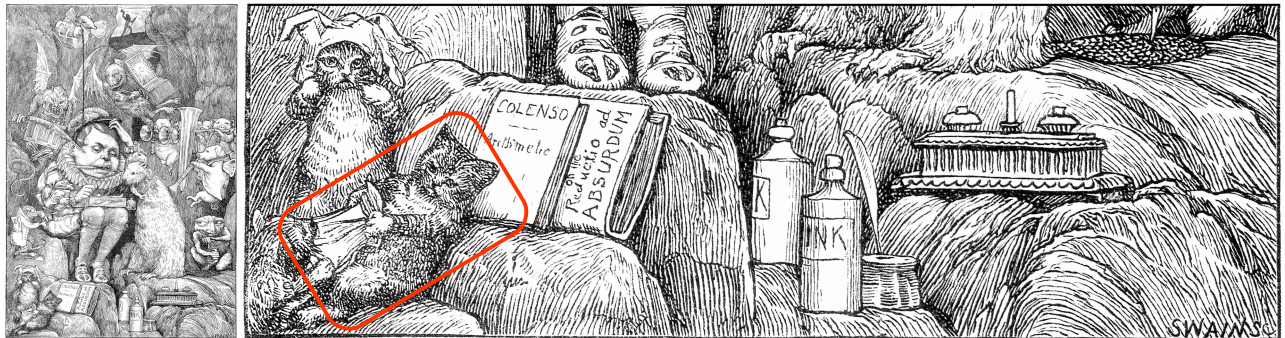


## The Isenheim Altarpiece in *The Hunting of the Snark*

Matthias Grünewald: *Visit of Saint Anthony to Saint Paul*, retinex filtered, vectorized and color desaturated detail from Isenheim altarpiece (1512–1516).



Henry Holiday: from the illustration to the chapter *The Beaver's Lesson* in Lewis Carroll's *The Hunting of the Snark* (1876).



Among all artists to whom Henry Holiday alluded in his *Snark* illustrations, I so far only discovered four who were not English artists: [Gustave Doré](#), [Markus Gheeraerts the Elder](#), [an anonymous Flemish artist](#) and Matthias Grünewald. This [example](#) shows that Henry Holiday also must have used reproductions (prints) from the works of art to which he alluded for building his pictorial conundrums. I found this allusion after searching for possible sources to Holiday's illustration *The Beaver's Lesson* because of suggestions e.g. by Mahendra Singh (Toronto) and Fernando Soto (Toronto) that Henry Holiday may have quoted from depictions of [The Temptation of St. Anthony](#).



Actually, [Mahendra Singh](#), a contemporary [Snark illustrator](#) and creator of pictorial conundrums, played Henry Holiday's allusion game already before I incidentally discovered it in late 2008. Then I asked Mahendra for advice. It turned out that he was the first one who understood what I was doing, probably because he knew the game so well, with which artists can give the beholders of their work some educative and yet entertaining challenges: Already in the year 2007 Mahendra [openly borrowed](#) from Matthias Grünewald's Isenheim Altarpiece for his illustrations to an own [Snark graphic novel](#). That is *not* plagiarism. Such pictorial citations are as artful as e.g. the textual conundrums in a Tom Stoppard drama.



Perhaps also elements from the left Isenheim Altarpiece which depicted *The Temptation of St. Anthony* (center in the image above) went into Holiday's illustration (right) as well as into Gustave Doré's *Don Quixote* illustration (left, 1863). Actually, as for the hero surrounded by monsters, Henry Holiday may have been [inspired by Gustave Doré](#) and by Matthias Grünewald.

Götz Kluge, 2015-06-20