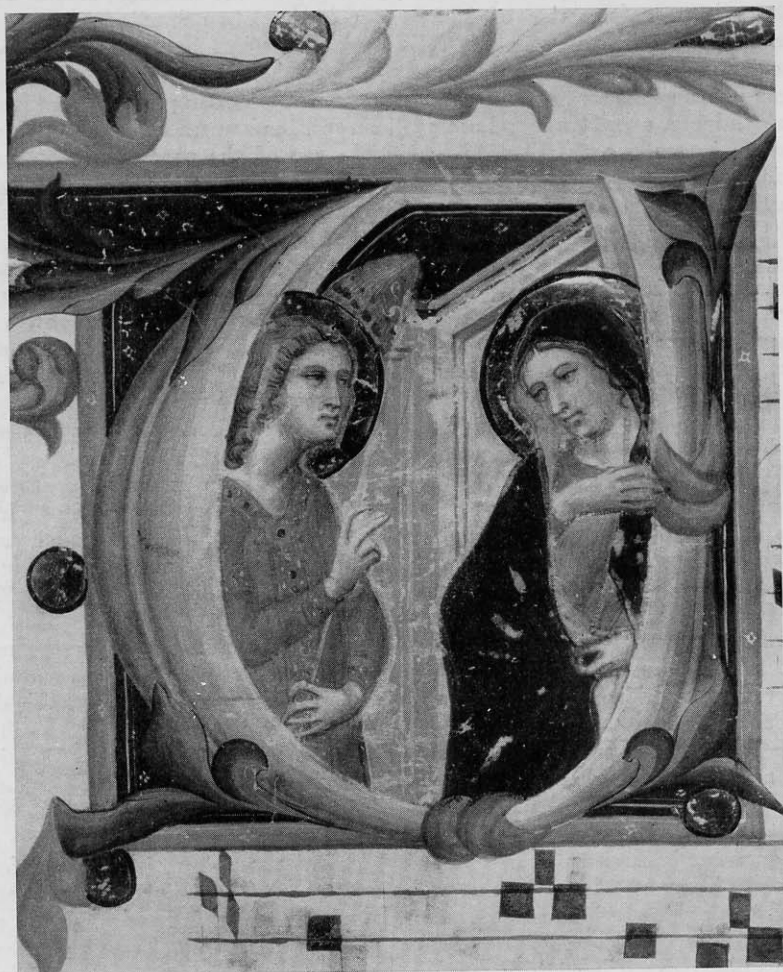


Bulletin of
The Detroit Institute of Arts
of the City of Detroit



DETAIL OF ANTI-PHONARY BY LIPPO VANNI
SIENA. XIV CENTURY
FOUNDERS SOCIETY, OCTAVIA W. BATES FUND

A PAGE FROM AN ANTIPHONARY BY LIPPO VANNI

It is a great pleasure to have a part (however small) in the gradual resuscitation of certain artists of Siena who worked there during the last fifty years of the Trecento. The business often involves the transformation of a mere name into an artistic personality. It is realized by the perseverance of critics claiming authorship for anonymous pictures; studying, classifying, and arranging them in sequence, until an artist's oeuvre is established. Thus an artist literally entombed for centuries emerges in this archaeologically-minded age, a living personality. His works, rescued from anonymity, take on new significance, his re-established character is further index to his epoch, and he becomes an ornament to the civilization that bore and nurtured him.

Such is the story of Lippo Vanni, brought to life some thirty years ago, largely through the efforts of B. Berenson and G. de Nicola. His reputation grows as more pictures take their place beneath his name. And we hereby with pleasure, add yet another—a parchment sheet from an illuminated antiphonary.¹ The Museum has acquired the manuscript which was formerly in the Six Collection, Amsterdam, as a gift of the Founders Society.

The artist chose to concentrate the enrichment of the page around the first letter, a capital V which embraces the half-length figures of the Annunciation. The ornament is carried out in a beautiful color harmony of ultramarine and gold, flattering to the blond complexion of both Saints Gabriel and Mary. The Virgin's blue cloak is lined with saffron. The angel annunciate wears a brocade vestment of ruddy yellow, and in his hand bears a wand terminating in a

fleur de lis, fragile as a snowflake. The richness of his tunic, studded as it is with gems, is matched by a corner of his wing appearing above his halo. The artist set the tableau before simply-molded walls, painted gray, and sharpened in effect by a deep blue ceiling. And he has further enriched the decoration with coursing leafage that is rooted in the enframing, and flows across the top of the page, scattered through with roundels of burnished gold. These foliage forms are carried out in shaded pink and green.

Lippo, though a minor artist, shared with his Sienese brethren their genius for expressing spiritual insight, a trait by no means obscured by the modest dimensions of this picture. Gabriel approaches the Virgin with an expression of gravity. Yet from his countenance, his tidings are palpably joyous. Likewise the Virgin receives her messenger with subtly expressed emotions. In this moment of surprise, her modicum of deference suits perfectly the regally conceived Queen of the Sienese. She is humble without humility.

The elements of style in the miniature are too obviously Lippo Vanni's to suffer a labored comparison with documented works. A glance at the illuminated antiphonary of Lippo Vanni, bequeathed to the Fogg Art Museum of Harvard University by the late Walter V. R. Berry,² not only reveals the same physical types, but the twisting foliage ornament of our miniature is sometimes almost duplicated there. And the technique of our Annunciation is of the same high quality. Suffice our knowledge of Lippo's prowess as a miniaturist³ to seal the attribution.

Lippo Vanni was one of the many

¹Tempera on parchment: page, H. 21½ inches; W. 14½ inches; initial letter, H. 5¼ inches; W. 4⅞ inches.

²*Bulletin of the Fogg Art Museum*, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 29.

³Berenson, *Studies in Medieval Painting*: pp. 39 ff.

Sieneſe who basked in the ſalutary afterglow of the Lorenzetti and Simone Martini. From documents and extant works we know that he was widely employed in Siena, and at leaſt once enjoyed a commiſſion from Rome.⁴ Like his contemporaries of the later fourteenth century, he owed not only his ſtyle but his ſucceſs to his great Sieneſe predeceſſors who had ſwept their ſchool to univerſal popularity. But by a paradox, his obſcurity derives from the very ſame ſource. The fame of Simone and the Lorenzetti refuſed to fade, and the highly competent work of a follower like Lippo never once threatened the brilliant memory of his elders. In fact, as if by a blinding light, his achievement was driven out of ſight.

Lippo Vanni's activity extends over a period of ſomething more than thirty years, from 1341 to 1375. He ſeems to have commenced his career as a miniaturist, and in the earlieſt documents is referred to as "Lippo miniatore." It is entirely likely that the Muſeum's illumination dates from this period. Beren-

ſon has made this intereſting obſervation of the miniature ſtyle of the Italian Trecento: "a miniaturist was likely to be bolder, looſer, ſketchier than a tempera painter, and . . . the addiction to miniature painting as then practiſed, would tend to looſen and free rather than tighten and tie up an artiſt's hands."⁵ The remark moſt certainly applies to Lippo Vanni. The preſent miniature is painted with freedom, and a ſurety of brush ſtroke, and the foliage is deſt and reſolute, almoſt flaſhing in its effect. It is alſo apparent that within the covers of a book, Lippo Vanni gave free reign to his preoccupation with hands. In almoſt every example of his miniatures, the hands are conſpicuous for their elegant geſtures. In our Annunciation they are formed by unique finger compositions, which however unnatural, are nevertheless piquant.

The antiphony was uſed by the choir in medieval churches, and contained the Latin words and muſic of the chants that were repeated in the liturgy.

Perry T. Rathbone

CHRIST IN LIMBO BY HERRI MET DE BLES

In the northern imagination there has been a ſtrain of the ſombrely fantaſtic which from the beginning diſtinguiſhed it from that of Greece or Italy. In Greek mythology, and in the Mediterranean tradition as a whole, there is little of the anti-human. But the ſongs and tales with which our winter-bound anceſtors frightened and delighted themſelves, are haunted by terrors which moved in the ſea or stalked the moors and dark foreſts of the north, fearful, uncanny, hoſtile to man. The wild, the terrible, the grotesque, oddly mingled with enjoyment and humor, run in a broad ſtream through literature from Beowulf to the modern detective ſtory. The

gargoyles which yawp and leer from Gothic cathedrals are witness to its preſence in mediaeval art. It found, however, one of its moſt vivid outlets in Flemish painting at the end of the fifteenth century in the ſtrange genius of Hieronymus Bosch. Bosch's viſions of the tormenting of Chriſt, the tortures of the damned, the wiles of demons lying in wait for the righteous, belong no doubt to a morbid phase of late Gothic religious emotion; yet a certain Flemish ſturdineſs, an imaginative power at once ſtrong and earthy, gives reſiſtance to his moſt lurid fancies. What is more, his tradition lived long, growing gradually ſecularized, until it produced,

⁴Van Marle, "*The Italian Schools of Painting*: Vol. II, pp. 452 ff.

⁵Berenson, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

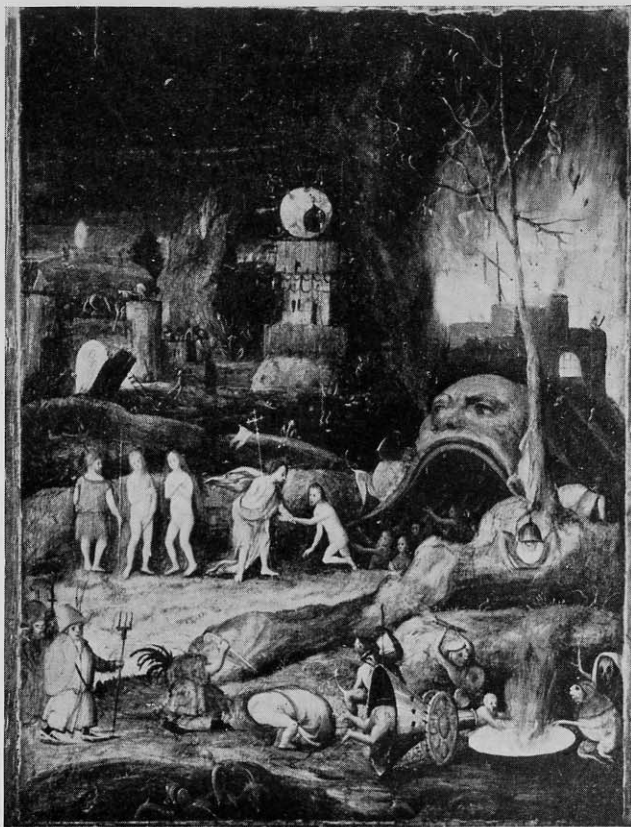


FIG. 1—CHRIST IN LIMBO
 HERRI MET DE BLES
 FLEMISH. ACTIVE 1530-50
 FOUNDERS SOCIETY, MEMBERSHIP FUNDS

as its latest flower, the riotous and fantastic humor of Pieter Bruegel.

Before the recent gift from the Founders Society of a *Christ in Limbo* by Herri Met de Bles¹ (Fig. 1), we had no representation in our collection of this strain in Flemish art. Bruegel's *Wedding Dance* looks forward to the robust and human humor of the Renaissance—of Jonson or Shakespeare—rather than backward to the middle ages. One must look to his early engravings such as the *Big Fish and the*

Little Fish (Fig. 2) done after Bosch's sketch, to the *Flemish Proverbs* in Berlin and the *Dulle Griet* in Antwerp, for Bruegel's connection with Bosch's phantasmagoria. Bles's picture adds to the background of the greater figure and brings, as well, a rare and interesting artist into the collection.

This is an unusual subject in Bles's oeuvre: he was a landscape painter in the tradition of Patinir. The little that is known of his life can be briefly stated. According to Van Mander his title is a

¹Panel, 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", Accession No. 35,22, Purchased from the General Membership Funds of the society.

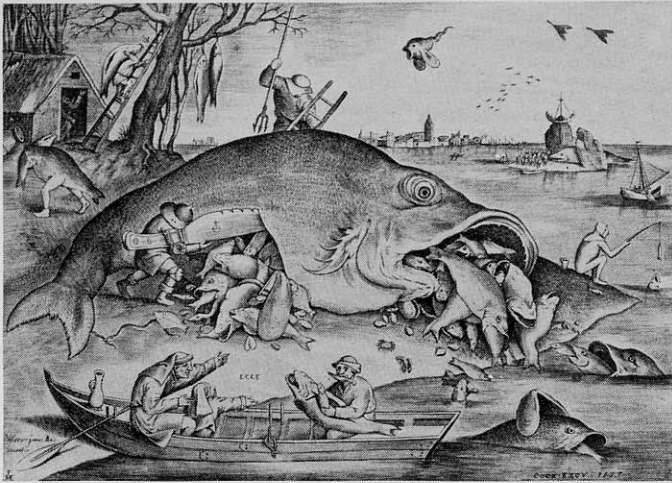


FIG. 2—THE BIG FISH AND THE LITTLE FISH
ENGRAVING BY PIETER BRUEGEL
AFTER A SKETCH BY HIERONYMUS BOSCH

nickname, given him because of a white forelock (*bles*). The Italians (who were very fond of his pictures) called him *Civetta* or "little owl," from the bird which often peers from hollow trunk or bushy tree in the foreground of his landscapes. The owl cannot, however, be considered his monogram, as was once supposed. He seems to have worked in Antwerp, the artistic and commercial center of the Low Countries in the sixteenth century; possibly he was the Herri de Patinir who became a Master in the Antwerp Guild in 1535. According to one tradition, he came from Dinant, the home of the great landscape painter Joachim de Patinir; Van Mander says that he came from Bouvines and was self-taught. Certain it is that he followed in the years 1530-50 the great Patinir, who, in the early years of the century, had created a rich and enchanted landscape style, the first tradition of pure landscape in the Low Countries. It is partially represented in our gallery by the landscape of *Lot and His Daughters* by Jan Wellens de Cock.

In our new panel, *Christ in Limbo*, the color, changing from brown in the

foreground to deep bluish-green, the soft, minute touch, the horizontal bands in which landscape and tiny figures are arranged, reveal the characteristics of Herri Met de Bles's landscape style. But it shares, also, the fantastic, gross, humorous, irresistible imagination of Bosch. Bles's religious feeling, however, is more tender than that of Bosch, as his horrors are more difficult to take seriously. A delicate pathos suffuses the three scenes which reveal Christ as the hope of mankind: the angel of good tidings appearing to shepherds in the distant hilltop, Christ bursting the gates of the underworld, and rescuing souls from the gaping monster-mouth of hell. It is hard to take even the torments of the damned too seriously. Bosch painted horrors in earnest; but in Bles there is already the lurking comic spirit which burst out triumphantly in Bruegel. In these low-comedy demons who flourish knives at the plump rear of a soul, who force their victims through a great funnel into a caldron which shoots fire in their faces, one is close to the hearty slap-stick comedy which enlivened many a mediaeval mystery play. How

long have laughs been stirred at the sight of a person poked behind by a sharp point, falling down, or having something explode in his face! Such clowning is as old as Greece and modern as the movies and Ringling Brothers circus.

This odd and fascinating mixture of pathos, gruesome fantasy, low comedy and exquisite painting exists nowhere but in Flemish painting. A hasty glance at the Flemish gallery might, it is true,

overlook Herri Met de Bles's picture (it is only $5\frac{3}{8}$ inches by $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches). But in northern painting especially, size is no guide to excellence, for the great achievements of the fifteenth and sixteenth century artist are often found in miniature format. It is true also, fortunately, of art as well as of human nature, that it is not only the great and famous personality that is delightful.

E. P. Richardson

AN EQUESTRIAN STATUETTE OF PHILIP IV OF SPAIN

The bronze equestrian statuette exhibited in the Italian High Renaissance room under the name of Pietro Tacca, had been ascribed to Giovanni da Bologna, his master, when it was acquired by the Art Institute in 1930.¹ (Fig. 1.) In his article in the Bulletin (Vol. IX, No. 4), Dr. Heil pointed out that not only the advanced pictorial style of the statuette but also details of the costume excluded Giovanni da Bologna as the artist.² The *golila* (collar) which the rider wears was not introduced into Spain until 1623, while the famous sculptor from Douai died in 1608. Dr. Heil concluded that it was a work of the most talented pupil of Giovanni, Pietro Tacca, the only sculptor capable of carrying on the work of his master in creating equestrian statues of similar importance. In his opinion the sitter was most probably a person close to the Spanish court, perhaps Spinola, the commander of the Spanish forces in The Netherlands, who is well known from Velasquez's *Surrender of Breda*.

That the model was more probably Philip IV, the patron of Velasquez, has been suggested more than once by visitors to the museum, from the similarity of the face to the portraits by Velasquez and Rubens. This likeness, however, did

not seem convincing enough to justify a change of name on the label, as long as it was not possible to connect the known facts relating to the only equestrian statue ever made of Philip IV during his lifetime,—the one by Tacca in front of the royal palace in Madrid,—with the characteristics of our statuette. If our statuette was done by Tacca, it was natural to suppose that it was a model for the large statue, for the fact that Tacca died before the large statue was installed would preclude the possibility of its having been done subsequently. But pose of horse and rider in our statuette has little in common with the equestrian statue in Madrid (Fig. 2), although the plastic style of the bronze and the workmanship are entirely the same and prove that they came from the same workshop. While the horse in our statuette is walking, resting the left fore-and right hind leg on the ground, in the statue in Madrid he is standing on his hind legs in a position which, as contemporary Spanish experts on riding explain, has at the same time something of the gallop, the curvet, and the parade, and can be best characterized as *levata*. The king was a good horseman and famous for his *maneggio in aria* (practising above the ground). We remember

¹W. Bode, *Die italienischen Bronze Statuetten der Renaissance*, Berlin, III, p. 3.

²The view of the other side of the statuette is reproduced in the first article in the Bulletin.



FIG. 1—EQUESTRIAN STATUETTE OF PHILIP IV OF SPAIN
BY PIETRO TACCA

that Velasquez as well as Rubens had to select similar rearing positions for the horse in their portraits of Philip on horseback. In our statuette not only does the position of the horse differ, but that of the rider also, who holds his *commando* staff in a more restful manner, while his armour and breeches show considerable differences in detail. On the other hand, the construction of the horse, with its short body and its long, wavy mane and tail reminds us of the horses of the painted equestrian portraits of Philip IV.

The differences in outer appearance seemed to make it difficult to find for our statuette a place within the later phase of Tacca's art, to which it should be assigned if it was executed by him and if it represents Philip IV. For we know that the idea of ordering a bronze equestrian statue of the king was not con-

ceived at the Spanish court until 1634, that is, six years before Tacca died. So far as Tacca's equestrian statues—which form his most important contribution to art history—are concerned, we may divide the development of his art into two distinct periods, the first from 1605 to 1616, the second from 1617 to 1640.

In the first period he follows Giovanni da Bologna's style, executing and casting more or less exactly his master's models. The following statues which belong to this period represent the rider on the quietly walking horse characteristic of the style of the older master: the equestrian statue of Grandduke Cosimo I in the Piazza of the Signoria, Florence, a work of Giovanni da Bologna, on which Tacca only collaborated; the statue of the Grandduke Ferdinand I on the Piazza della SS Annunziata in Florence (1603-08), also a model



FIG. 2—STATUE OF PHILIP IV IN MADRID

of Giovanni da Bologna which was cast by Tacca; the statue of Henri IV at Paris (1611), destroyed in the revolution, and finally the remarkable statue of Philip III, on the Plaza de la Constitution, formerly in the Casa del Campo, the second great equestrian statue of the earlier type which adorns the city of Madrid. This statue was also begun by Giovanni da Bologna but finished and cast by Tacca, the execution taking him seven years (1606-13).

In the second period he develops his own more animated and pictorial style in representing the horse rearing upon his hind legs. Tacca was the first sculptor in art history to master this difficult task, though Leonardo before him had been occupied with this problem, but only in sketches on paper and possibly in small wax models. We know the models of three equestrian statues by Tacca of this later type, of which only the last, that of Philip IV, was executed in life size. In 1617 he planned the equestrian statue of King Louis XIII of France, for which the two models, one with the rider, the other without, are preserved in the Museo Nazionale in Florence. In 1619 he received the order

to create a life-size equestrian statue of Duke Charles Emanuel of Savoy, the famous general and pretender to the Emperor's throne. Circumstances prevented the execution of this statue also, but the two large models in half life size, the one without the rider in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin,³ the other in a castle at Kassel, are still in existence. As the crowning effort of his life may therefore be regarded the large statue of Philip IV at Madrid, the casting of which created a considerable sensation in Florence, related to us in accounts by contemporary writers, especially Baldinucci. He tells us how Tacca overcame the difficulties of balancing the horse's heavy body on his hind legs by filling up the hollow legs and strengthening them through bars, and further by placing them on a slanting plate which was inserted into the pedestal and connected with a bronze bar running through the pedestal the entire length of the horse. This latter means of dividing the weight was suggested by none other than the great Galileo Galilei, whose advice Tacca had accepted.

Now to return to our statuette. It would have seemed odd if Tacca, whose life aim it was to create an equestrian statue with a rearing horse, had proposed to the Spanish Court our model with the walking horse in the older fashion of Giovanni da Bologna, especially since we know that the king himself liked to be represented in the more lively and striking position of the horse.

The explanation, as is often the case when we find it difficult to understand unexpected changes in an artist's development, lies not in his own character, but in purely accidental circumstances. In reading the illuminating and charming essay written by Carl Justi in 1883 on Tacca's equestrian statue of Philip IV,⁴ in which this art historian of the

³E. F. Bange, *Italienische Sculpturen im Kaiser Friedrich Museum*, 1933, reproduced p. 75.

⁴Carl Justi, "Die Reiterstatue Philip IV von Pietro Tacca," *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, 1883, reprinted in *Drei Jahrhunderte spanischen Kunstlebens*, 1908.

old school attacks his subject more by way of literary documents than by style analysis, we find that the artist misunderstood the Italian ambassador's message. When he received his order, Tacca believed Olivarez wanted him to represent the king in the same position as he and Giovanni da Bologna had represented the king's father, Philip III, several years before,—that is, on a walking horse. Commendatore di Serrano, the Florentine ambassador, received a letter from Count Olivarez from Aranjuez on the 2nd of May, 1634, which reads as follows: "His Majesty has expressed the wish that a *medalla* or effigy on horseback (*efigie a' caballo*) should be executed of him, made of bronze, conforming to the portraits made by Pedro Pablo Rubens and using for an example (*'traza'*) the one in the Casa del Campo. As it is known that Florence has the most important sculptors of any city, I ask your Senoria to give the order through your authority to the best specialist in this field in Florence and to give us at once an estimate of the cost."

The ambassador was somewhat embarrassed by the not very clear wording of the letter. What was meant by "*medalla*?" A medallion, a relief or a statue? What size should the statue be? Who was to know that "*traza*" should

refer only to the size of the figure, the "portraits of Rubens" only to the movement of the horse?

We hear next that Tacca is working on the model, but that the horse is represented walking (*di passaggio*), since he had understood that it should be done in the style of the statue in the Casa del Campo, i. e., the one of Philip III. On the 30th of August, 1635, the model of the horse is well advanced (*ridotta a buon termine*), and he needs now a portrait of the king and a design of his costume and armour in order to finish it.

The portraits and the drawings left Spain soon after the 22nd of September. Only after their arrival did Tacca and Serrano, the ambassador, seem to have found out that Olivarez wanted the horse represented in a rearing position. In the meantime the sculptor had not only finished the wax model, but also the large terracotta model of the horse in accordance with the instructions as he had understood them. All this work had been done in vain and he considered it a loss of one thousand soldi. On September 20, 1636, however, Olivarez himself wrote to Tacca that the change was necessary, that he must under any circumstance represent the horse galloping, with his front feet lifted so high from the ground that he would seem to jump and make a curvet. It was in such jumps, he added, that the king showed his elegant style of riding.

While Tacca may have been upset at having to begin all over again, we can well believe that it was easier to persuade him than it would have been most artists in such a situation. For the motif which he had now to employ was, after all, exactly the one at which he had aimed since the beginning of his career. Thus we hear that at the beginning of the year 1637 Tacca is busy at work on the new model, which he finished at the end of September of this year. The casting occupied more than a year. On Decem-



FIG. 3—STATUE OF PHILIP III IN MADRID

ber 10, 1638, the new Florentine ambassador, Gabriel Riccardi, wrote to the Spanish court asking them to send a portrait of the king, which Tacca needed in order to complete the face of his statue. The portrait was delivered in Florence on January 27, 1640, and at last, on September 26, 1640, the statue was completed and could be shipped from Livorno to Spain. Tacca died before the statue arrived in Madrid. His son, Ferdinando Tacca, himself an accomplished artist, went to Spain during the summer and autumn of the year 1642 to supervise the unpacking and mount the statue upon the marble pedestal. He had to melt the different parts together and chisel over the face after he had seen the king himself. He succeeded so well in bringing out the features of the king that (as he writes to Florence in October, 1642) even the queen found it to be an excellent likeness (*naturalissimo*).

We understand now why the likeness in our statuette is not so convincing as the one in the large statue. Tacca had never seen the king; and when he finished the first model, our figure, he had

not even sufficient painted models to work from. The same applies to the costume and the armour, which we had not found very exact. The models from which he had to work obviously arrived only after he had executed the first model.

We know from the other equestrian statues which Tacca planned that after it was found impossible to execute them in large size, he cast the wax models so as to preserve his creations. Obviously the original of our statuette was also executed in wax, as the casting seems to be made according to the process *à la cire perdue*.

The article in which our statuette was first published ended with the remark: "The identification of the horseman, if it should be established, might give a further clue to the exact dating of the bronze." From the above-mentioned report, sent to the Spanish court from Florence, we can conclude that the statuette was executed by Pietro Tacca during the first half of the year 1635.

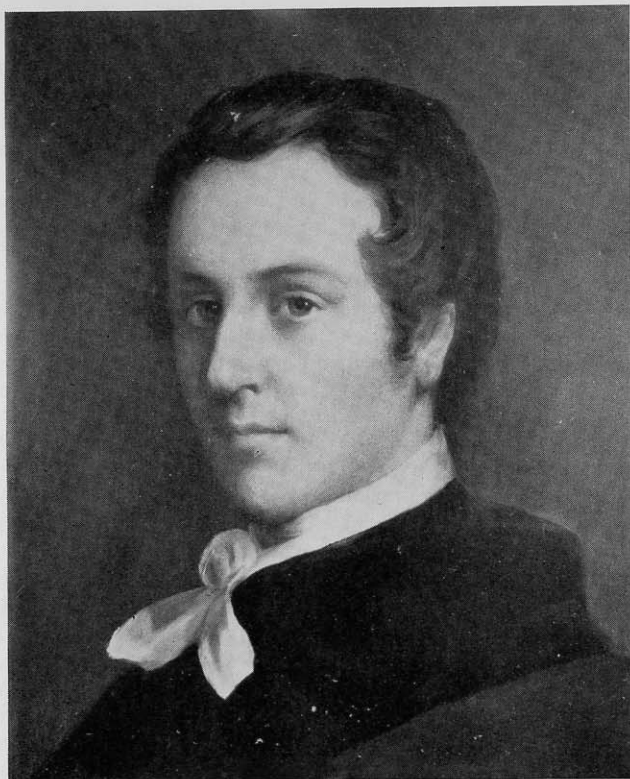
W. R. VALENTINER.

MUSEUM NOTES

The museum's famous painting by Pieter Bruegel, *The Wedding Dance*, which has been for the past six months on exhibit in Brussels, has been returned to its place in the galleries. Great interest was aroused by its exhibit abroad, for it had never been shown in Europe since its discovery several years ago, and it

occupied an important place in the Exhibition of Five Centuries of Flemish Art held as part of the International Exposition in Brussels.

The scroll, *Early Autumn*, by Ch'ien Hsüan, is on loan at the International Exhibition of Chinese Art at Burlington House, London.



PORTRAIT OF HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW
 REMBRANDT PEALE
 AMERICAN. 1778-1860
 GIFT OF EXPERIENCE COLUMN OF THE DETROIT NEWS

PORTRAIT OF HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW BY REMBRANDT PEALE

The portrait of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow at the age of 27 by Rembrandt Peale¹ comes to the Art Institute as a gift of the Nancy Brown Experience Column of The Detroit News. This picture is the second work which has been presented by popular subscription of Nancy Brown's many thousands of readers, the first gift being the painting *Street in Brooklyn*, a delightful picture of urban American life dating from

about 1840-1860.²

This latest gift preserves for us and for posterity the sensitive features of America's most popular poet. It is a gracious picture, quite different from the bewhiskered portraits of the poet of later years which we are accustomed to see. It shows Longfellow as a handsome youth, with high intelligent forehead crowned by a mass of dark hair that falls naturally and gracefully about his

¹Oil on academy board: H. 18¼ inches, W. 14¾ inches.

²Described in *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts*, Vol. XIV, p 82.

ears and neck; his gray-blue eyes are clear and penetrating, and his romantic mouth and sensitive chin round out the features of a young man of lofty ideals. And how charmingly the artist has painted the informality of his dress—a green cloak with black collar set off by a loosely-tied white cravat.

The portrait was probably painted while Longfellow was professor of modern languages at Bowdoin and antedates the publication of his poetic works, except for those scattered verses which appeared in the journals of the day. From an inscription on the back, we learn that this portrait was presented to the Hon. Daniel Edgar Sickles, Secretary of the American Legation in London in 1855, presumably because of his admiration for the poet.

From the brush of Rembrandt Peale, who was at that time living in New York, the picture has the distinction of being painted by an able and noted artist of his period. Rembrandt Peale was one of a large family of the children of Charles Willson Peale, one of the great geniuses of colonial days, whose accomplishments in the realm of arts and sciences numbered many things other than painting, by which he is best known. He bequeathed to some of his large progeny a love of art and two of them followed the profession of painting. He even named his children after great artists: Rembrandt, Raphael, Angelica Kaufman. The most noted of these was Rembrandt Peale, the author of this picture.

Rembrandt Peale was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, on February 22, 1778, whither his mother had fled from Philadelphia at the approach of the hostile British army. He received instruction in art at a very early age from his distinguished father and he tells us that his first recollections were with the paint brush. In 1801 he went to England to study, as his father had, with

Benjamin West. After spending some time abroad, he returned to Philadelphia, where he was for a time engaged in portraiture. He then removed to Baltimore where he established a museum and gallery of painting. He continued here for nine years and during that time painted his most imposing work, the large picture of "The Court of Death," an allegorical painting 24 feet wide, 13 feet high and containing 23 figures. This great allegory with its lofty sentiment belongs to this Museum. It has not been on exhibition in Detroit for a number of years because of its enormous size, and for the past three years it has been loaned to the Municipal Museum at Baltimore and is housed in the very gallery which Rembrandt Peale established in that city and where this work was executed.

The origin of these gifts from Nancy Brown and her Column folk is of such interest in the annals of an art museum that it is here worthy of recording. It is best described in the presentation address of Mr. W. S. Gilmore, editor of *The Detroit News*:³ "Five years ago tonight we had our first Experience Column party in this Art Institute. Nancy Brown had thought it would be nice if a few thousands of you could come over to the Institute for the evening and stroll leisurely through the galleries admiring the works of art. Dr. Valentiner and Mr. Burroughs were eager to have you come, and they and I agreed to serve in a receiving line. We thought we would stand over by the door and welcome each of you as you came in.

"Well, you all remember what happened. We who were to have stood in the receiving line were scarcely able to get into the building at all, and then through back windows and doors. Most of the orchestra never did arrive. The piccolo player made it because he could put his piccolo in his pocket and fight through the crowd, but the brass drum-

³Unveiling ceremony November 14, 1935, at which some 6000 people were present.

mer didn't get farther north than the second Crosstown line, because there wasn't room for a bass drum above that point. The police estimated that there were 35,000 people in and near the building, and close to a hundred thousand within many blocks, trying to get here.

"A short time after that party, 'Dorette,' in a letter to Nancy Brown, suggested that the Column readers contribute to a fund with which to buy a picture for the Institute. The suggestion was followed. You selected 'Street in Brooklyn' from a number of pictures

placed on display here, and it was unveiled and presented to the Institute April 17, 1934.

"A second fund was started at once, and now you have bought another picture for permanent hanging . . ."

This picture has a meaning for us that quite transcends its material value or artistic worth, as important as they are, in that it is a spontaneous movement on the part of a multitude of people who from their small store of worldly goods shared in the united effort that brought this gift to fruition.

CLYDE H. BURROUGHS.

SELJUK FABRICS

Two fine fragments of Persian silk weave attracted much attention when they were loaned to the Exhibition of Persian Art in London, in 1931.¹

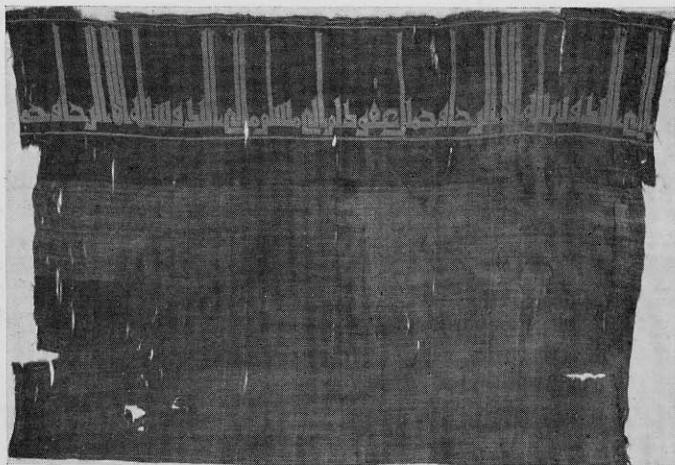
Both fabrics were excavated at Rhages and belong to the small group of Seljukian textiles known today. Fig. 1 (31.59; H. 15¾"; W. 21½") is closely woven in simple linen binding, the combination of blue warp and yellow weft gives an effect of *changeant* bluish green. A four-inch border with kufic lettering in yellow silk, twill weave, is the only ornament of this noble fabric.

Fig. 2 (31.60; H. c. 7½", W. 30" both selvages) shows on a ground of green warp satin an all-over pattern of yellow weft satin. Adossed animals are separated by a palm tree ending in a lotos palmette. From this spring slender branches with round and oval leaves; the remaining space is covered by stylised tendrils approaching the arabesque. The animals, tame gazelles wearing wide collars, are disturbed in their siesta by small but ferocious beasts, mountain lions or leopards. The predatory beast has fastened its teeth and all four feet in the back of the gazelle, tearing a

wound whence blood flows down the back. The expression of terror in the eyes of the gazelle is rendered with astounding reality.

With the defeat of the Sasanian dynasty by the Arabs at the battle of Nehavend in 642, the Old Persian Empire came to an end. But the Aryan people, though forcibly converted to Islam, did not forget the doctrines of their old faith, least of all the belief in the divinity of the sovereign. Their ideal of an absolute personal and hereditary monarchy was fulfilled only after four hundred years of subjection to a succession of governors, appointed by the khalifs, some of whom succeeded in establishing more or less independent local dynasties, with a merely nominal adherence to the khalifate. All these were crushed by the onslaught of the Seljuks, a Turkish tribe which had migrated from the Kirghiz steppes of Turkestan to Transoxania and, in rapid succession, conquered Khorasan, Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Asia Minor. In 1055 their first great ruler, Tughril Beg, entered Baghdad as the protector of the khalif, who gave him the title of sultan.

¹H. Schmidt: "Seldschukische Seidenstoffe auf der Persischen Kunstausstellung in London," *Belvedere* 10, 1931, p. 81.



31.59

FIG. 1—SELJUK FABRIC
XI CENTURY

Thus the dream of the people came true: for the first time since the Arab conquest Persia was ruled by a single authority. The Seljuk rulers adopted the Iranian title of Shahinshah, king of kings; the Sasanian tradition which had already been revived by Firdawsi's *Shah-nameh*, the book of kings, was further strengthened by literary works, such as the romances of Nizami (d. 1178). The textile style of the period is a further proof of a national revival which may be called a Sasanian renaissance. Such textiles have been found, lately, in excavations at and near Rhages, a city mentioned especially by Arab geographers as a center of textile industry. Others have been preserved in shrines of Christian saints; they may have been woven at Rhages, or at one of the other weaving centers such as Tuster, Gundaishapur or Merv, the latter famous for its fabrics with figure scenes.

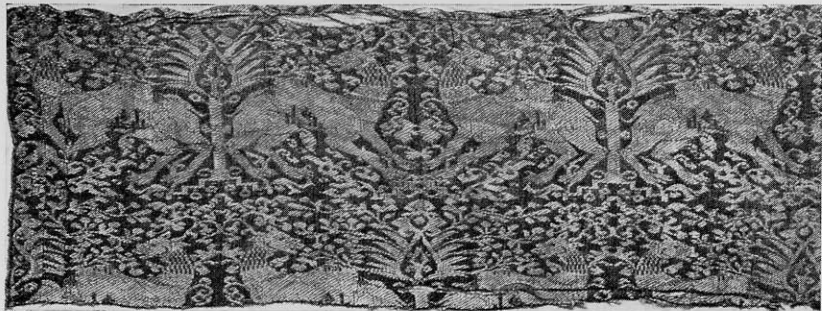
In the middle ages we find two classes of severely plain fabrics, *exametum* and *cendal*. *Exametum*, the *samit* mentioned so often by historians and poets, appears as the costliest and most fashionable of

the many fabrics which were imported from *oultremer*, from Asia. In the romances all the handsome women and elegant young men wear "*samit freis et vermeil*." After the battle of Hastings, Harold was buried in a shroud of purple *samit* which was used widely also for tents, cushions, bookcovers, all of which points to the fact that *samit* must have been a stout fabric.

Cendal, on the other hand, seems to have been a light weight fabric, although often the two are confused, *samit* and *cendal* being used indiscriminately for the same fabric. *Cendal* was firmly woven, especially well suited for banners and pennons. Thus the banner of Saint Denis, the famous oriflamme, was made of "*cendato simplice textum, splendoris rubei*," the royal banner of France showed silver fleur-de-lys embroidered on azure *cendal*, the banners of Flanders and Leon were of golden hued *cendal*. Sometimes the thinness of the fabric is used as a simile, an enemy's steel armor is pierced by the hero as easily as *cendal*.²

Both *samit* and *cendal* were some-

²Francisque-Michel: *Recherches . . . sur les étoffes de soie . . . pendant le moyen âge*; Paris, 1852. Much delightful information is found in this fascinating work of the French antiquary who was equally at home among the romancers of France, England and Germany.



31.60

FIG. 2—SELJUK FABRIC
EARLY XIII CENTURY

times woven with contrasting colors in warp and weft; such fabrics were called *cangium*. We find samit cangium and cendal cangium in inventories of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, always described as oriental fabrics, *d'oultremer*, once as of Tartar origin. The blue-green fabric (Fig. 1) answers in all points to the medieval description of cendal cangium. Ornamental bands with inscriptions—generally either quotations from the koran or conventional good wishes—are well known from the many excellent specimens still preserved of the court factories, the *tiraz*, of Tulunid and Fatimid Egypt. In Seljuk centers only a few fabrics thus adorned have as yet been found, yet practically all the different types of Kufic lettering are represented, from the simple, short-stemmed Kufi to the most elaborate, where each letter consists of braided ribbons, the inscription standing out on an arabesque covered ground. Our fragment, with its long-stemmed letters, belongs clearly to the eleventh century.

Other fabrics follow the Sasanian tradition in representing mythological figures or fabulous animals, generally confronted or adossed on either side a

tree motive, recalling the old *hom*. But the patterns of the Seljuk period differ from the more realistic Sasanian designs in a tendency towards the abstract ornament. The severe contraposition of the animal motives is softened by the purely decorative treatment of small tendrils covering the ground, a presentiment of the arabesque. Yet in the relatively small number of Seljuk fabrics such wide variety of expression is found as was never attained in later times, when the arabesque ornament was fully mastered. To this class belongs our fabric (Fig. 2); the intermingling of fairly realistic and practically arabesque designs places it towards the close of the Seljuk period, in the early part of the thirteenth century when Mongol influence became apparent. It belongs to the class of "silk stuffs . . . richly wrought with figures of beasts" mentioned by Marco Polo.

When Hulagu captured Baghdad in 1258 he decreed that part of the tribute levied on the city must be paid in textiles.

The textiles came to the museum as a gift of Mr. Edsel B. Ford.

CALENDAR OF LECTURES AND EXHIBITIONS

EXHIBITIONS

- November 13—December 15 Michigan Artists' Annual Exhibition.
 December 3-31 Fine Prints in the Detroit Institute of Arts.

SPECIAL LECTURE

- December 5—8:30 p. m. "Appreciation of Prints," by Fitz Roy Carrington.

GALLERY TALKS

(Tuesdays at 2:30 p. m. and Thursdays at 8 p. m.)

- December 3 and 5 "Cathedrals of France."
 December 10 and 12 "How Flanders Changed the History of Painting."
 December 17 and 19 "The Story of Dutch Painting."

WORLD ADVENTURE SERIES

(Illustrated lectures)

- December 8—3:30 p. m. "Around the World in Ninety Minutes," by Harry C. Ostrander.
 8:30 p. m. "The Depths of the Sea," by Raymond L. Ditmars.
 December 15—3:30 p. m. "Explorations in the Gobi Desert," by Dr. Roy Chapman Andrews.
 8:30 p. m. "A Voyage to the Ice Inferno," by Father Hubbard.
 December 22—3:30 p. m. "The Life and Customs in Oberammergau," by Anton Lang.
 December 29—3:30 p. m. "Exploring Ethiopia and the Source of the Blue Nile," by Dr. Wilfred H. Osgood.

GARDEN CENTER

- December 5—2:30 p. m. "Gardens of Japan." Illustrated lecture by Mrs. Benjamin S. Warren.

YOUNG ARTISTS MARKET

- December 9—11:00 p. m. "Modern Taste and its Sources." Illustrated lecture by Edgar P. Richardson.

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

PAGEANT OF HISTORY TALKS BY MARION LELAND HEATH

(Illustrated lectures Thursdays at 3:45 p. m.)

- December 5 "Daily Life of the Greeks."
 December 12 "Emperors of Rome."

CHRONICLES OF AMERICA PHOTOPlays

(Tuesdays at 4 p. m.)

- December 3 "Declaration of Independence."
 December 10 "Yorktown."
 December 17 "Vincennes."

The Museum has issued six folders bearing a simple greeting suitable for Christmas cards. The subjects are all taken from the permanent collection. These Christmas folders are on sale during Museum hours, at the Publication Desk.