

Bulletin of

THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS OF THE CITY OF DETROIT

**VOL. XXIII . . . NO. 8
MAY 1944**



**BRONZE SHANG FANG MIRROR
CHINESE, III CENTURY A. D.**

Gift of the Founders Society, 1942.

*" . . . Its light is that of the Sun and the Moon,
worshipped by the world . . . "*



TWO SAINTS BY BERNARDO ZENALE (1436-1526), recently given by Mrs. Ralph Harman Booth in memory of her husband, brings into our collection one of the important pictures in this country produced by the Milanese School before the dominance of Leonardo da Vinci. It represents two saints in rich clerical robes, St. Louis of Toulouse with bishop's mitre and staff and behind him a sainted deacon as yet unidentified, who holds in his hands the model of a fifteenth century castellated town. They stand within an open portico of carved marble and are seen in perspective from below, so that behind them is only the clear, calm sky. The color is bright and fresh with rather dramatic, strong contrasts. The frosty white of St. Louis's mitre, staff and gloves against his dark blue velvet cape embroidered with the silver lilies of France, and the deacon's white banner and red velvet vestment richly decorated with embroidered gold against the oyster greys of the marble and the soft blue of the sky, make a vivid effect. The impression one

Published monthly, October to May inclusive, at the Detroit Institute of Arts of the City of Detroit, 5200 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, Michigan. Entered at second class matter at the post office at Detroit, Michigan, under date of October 29, 1934. Subscription price \$1.00 per year.

gets of the whole is at once rich, intricate, cool, restrained, and surprising or slightly fantastic.

The Renaissance painters of Lombardy before Leonardo—Foppa, the founder of the school, and his followers Bernardino Butinone and Bernardo Zenale, Civerchio, Bramantino, and Borgognone—are not well known in this country, where they are on the whole quite sparsely represented. Zenale and Butinone shared a workshop together and collaborated on a number of works, so that their styles are not easy to distinguish. Our picture was first attributed to Zenale by Lionello Venturi, a suggestion confirmed in a recent study by Wilhelm Suida. The National Gallery in Washington has the central panel of an altarpiece by Zenale of a rather early period of his work. Our picture belongs to his later development after 1500 and was therefore painted when Leonardo was already in Milan but Zenale shows in his firm, clearly blocked-out forms and calm mood no perceptible influence from the other's art.

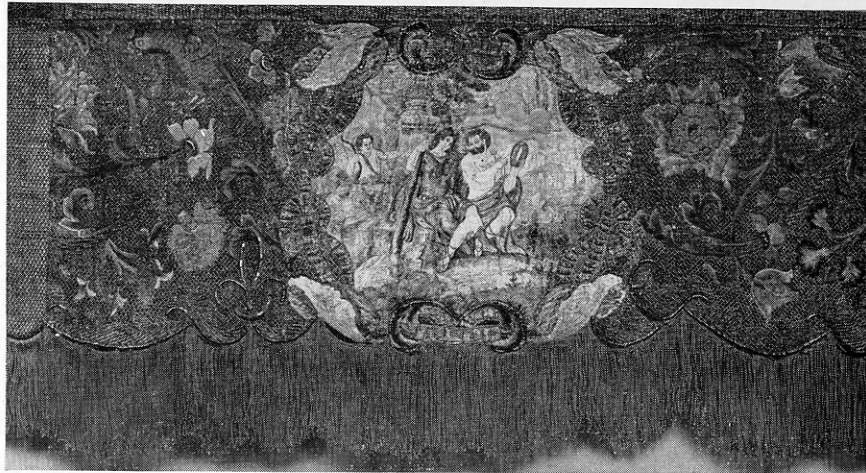
The most important example of the collaboration of Zenale and Butinone is a large altarpiece in the cathedral of their birthplace, Treviglio, which gives a good idea of the kind of composition to which our panel originally belonged. It is a polyptych in several panels, which are separated by boldly projecting architectural frames in the form of an arcade. Through the arches one looks upward at groups of figures in splendid costumes, standing beneath a marble portico glowing with intricate patterns of mosaics. These groups of saints are the attendants of the Virgin and Child, who sit on a marble throne in the center surrounded by angels adoring and making music. The two saints of our picture were once part of such calm, rich, architectural ensemble but the remaining portions, if any still exist, have not yet been identified. Zenale was, also, an architect and subsequent to our picture he appears, in extreme old age, as supervising architect of the cathedral in Milan.

E. P. RICHARDSON.

BERNARDO ZENALE: St. Louis of Toulouse and a Sainted Deacon. Panel: H. 25 $\frac{1}{8}$; W. 26 inches. Late work. References: L. Venturi, *Italian Paintings in America*, 1933, no. 439; B. Berenson, *Pittura Italiana*, 1936, p. 523; W. Suida, *Art in America*, Vol. XXXI (1943), p. 15. Acc. No. 43.1.

THE RUSSELL A. ALGER BRANCH MUSEUM on Lake St. Clair is of interest to large numbers of Detroiters in the months of pleasant weather, as is indicated by the increasing number of visitors. At this time of the year the park and yew gardens surrounding the Museum and the terrace on the lake are at their loveliest.

While the Museum itself is only open on Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 a. m. to 6:00 p. m., the grounds are open every day from 10 to 6. This is the only park on Lake St. Clair which is accessible to the general public, since other lake side parks in the Grosse Pointe villages are restricted to the residents of those communities.



AN EMBROIDERY OF THE BAROQUE PERIOD. There are periods in art when the limitations imposed by the loom seem to irk the craftsman. In such periods he resorts to the oldest tool in textile art, the needle, and instead of embodying his ideas into the fabric superimposes them on it; embroidery takes the place of pattern weaving. In the seventeenth century the possibilities of varying the pomegranate pattern of the Renaissance were exhausted. Baroque art, appealing pre-eminently to emotion, had no patience with symmetrical ornament, it demanded an overelaboration of the main motif, comparable to a melody in rich counterpoint.

An excellent example of the Baroque trend is represented by an embroidered valance, (L. 132 inches; W. 16½ inches), the gift of Mrs. Emma S. Fechimer (Acc. No. 43.438). On a ground covered with a couched diaper of silver threads, *en gaufrure*, large tendrils with immense blossoms turn and twist between three cartouches. A parrot and two other birds intensify the gaiety of this colorful invention. The cartouches are framed by silver scrolls in relief, similar scrolls connect the valance with its rich wavy fringe. The valance has turn-back ends of yellow damask with an ornament of white and yellow galloon.

The cartouches show mythological scenes. In the center (not reproduced) Ganymede is carried off by Jupiter's eagle into a heaven of azure, high over the silvery clouds on the horizon. A galleon spreads her sails before the wind that ruffles the blue Mediterranean into pretty waves. Two men sit on the rocks, absorbed in their fishing; all nature is calm and gay, nobody worries about the boy's plight. At the left Hercules, lightly draped in a shawl of cloth of gold, plays the tambourine for the entertainment of Omphale who, sitting closely beside him on a grassy bench, wears her lover's lion skin over her pale blue dress and leans on his club. Cupid watches the couple from the shelter of a shrub, the scene is laid in a hilly landscape with flowers, trees and a lonely column. In the third scene at the right a young woman, richly attired, is seated under a tree. Three young



men, dressed as for a ballet in short tunics, with plumed helmets, shields, spears and swords, walk away from her towards the shore where a small boat is waiting to take them back to their ship. One of them is turning back but his companions urge him on, the lady's supplications, loudly voiced with open mouth, pass unheeded. Is she Ariadne, forsaken by Theseus on the Island of Naxos?

The designer found his inspiration in the *galleria* of the Palazzo Farnese in Rome. Here, commissioned by Cardinal Odoardo Farnese, Annibale Carracci had painted, during the eight years between 1597 and 1604, his masterpiece, the Triumph of Love over gods and heroes. The great Carracci did not like the general idea which makes Hercules spin at Omphale's request. For him it was sufficient that the lovesick hero should surrender to her his trusted weapon and the trophy of his encounter with the Nemean lion, and don her own mantle. Why make him wield the woman's tool, the distaff? Far better let him make music, even though this be limited to the beating of a tambourine and possibly a raucous song.

The three scenes are "painted with the needle," with the excellent silk which no other country prepared as perfectly as Italy. Three hundred years have passed since the valance was embroidered, yet the silk threads have kept their glossy luster and are hardly faded. The silver is somewhat tarnished, softer and perhaps more beautiful now than in its original hard brilliance. The embroiderer was probably a Roman professional craftsman or woman.

Mrs. Fechimer's personal interest is centered on English embroidery of the period from Queen Elizabeth to Queen Anne. Her important collection is exhibited as a loan in the textile gallery where it gives pleasure to the many visitors. All will appreciate her generosity which gives to the Museum this Italian embroidery which may once have embellished the long windows of the *salone* in a Baroque palace.

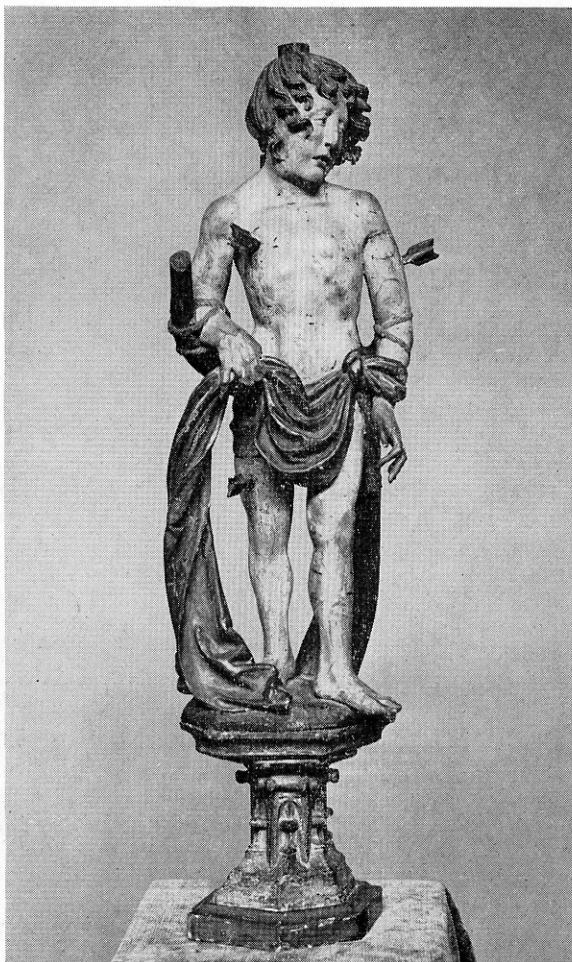
ADELE COULIN WEIBEL.



CHEST for the money, insignia, and documents of a German guild of cabinet-makers, which, according to an inscription on the interior of the lid, was commissioned by Simon Acker Holm of Christianstad, Sweden, 29 May 1751. The solid oak box is richly veneered with walnut and other woods, inlaid with mother of pearl, green and white ivory, gilt metal, and woods of contrasting colors, and ornamented with gilt bronze. Prominent among the decorative designs are the tools of the woodworking trades. The ten names enclosed in the escutcheons on the sides and top are doubtless those of guild members, possibly officers, and probably the makers. In form and proportions the casket, which measures 27 inches in length, 17 inches in width, and 21 inches in height, reflects the architectural style of the German Baroque, which combines solidity of mass and rigidity of surviving classical elements with the restless vitality of multiple mouldings, advancing and receding planes, multicolored surfaces, and curving ornament. The casket, when closed, can be secured by four locks concealed within the lid. When open, the lid is raised on four metal posts sliding within metal tubes at the corners of the interior. The chest is a recent gift from an anonymous donor (Acc. No. 44.80).



ROUND IVORY BOX, carved in relief with a scene of battle, French work of the late Gothic period, dating early in the fifteenth century. This is one of a group of eighteen medieval ivories given to the Museum during the past four years by Robert H. Tannahill (Acc. No. 42.140. Diameter $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Height $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches). The circular box, used in ancient times for jewels or ointments and made of boxwood, whence its name of pyxis, was taken over by the Christians as a container for relics or the reserved Host and was commonly decorated with appropriate religious subject matter. In medieval times the form was occasionally adopted for secular use with profane decoration as in the case of the example illustrated. Although the lid is lost and the silver rim is certainly a later addition, this was without doubt a covered box for jewels or other small and precious objects, and in spite of its warlike subject matter, may have graced the toilet table of a lady of the late Middle Ages.



ST. SEBASTIAN, from Lower Bavaria, about 1500 A. D. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. E. Raymond Field, 1943. (Acc. No. 43.64.) Taste for the accidents of time, patina and loss of color, stands confounded before the polychrome completeness of this wooden image. Originally part of a large and colorful altarpiece, this St. Sebastian (31 inches high) was one of many small figures of saints, each a significant religious symbol. St. Sebastian was a third century Christian member of the Praetorian guards, martyred by the Emperor Diocletian. His cult became increasingly popular after 680 when his name protected Pavia against the plague. In the later Middle Ages he was grouped with St. Christopher, St. Barbara, St. Adrian, St. Anthony and St. Roch, the "Plague Saints," protectors against disease and death.

S. E. L.