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THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

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On the cover (see also page 67), detail of

CHRIST ENTERING JERUSALEM

by CHRISTOPHORUS LANGEISEN, German, late 15th Century

Gift of Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass, 1957

"THIS EXQUISITE ART OF PORCELAIN"

The creative and glorious period of the Meissen porcelain factory was of short duration; one may say without too much over-simplification that it lasted from about 1710, when the factory's first products were shown at the Leipzig fair, to the beginning of the Seven Years' War in 1756, when Frederick the Great defeated Saxony. Yet in these few decades the factory in the small town near Dresden seems to have produced literally millions of pieces of the most delicate, and technically the most perfect, hard porcelain ever made in Europe. From Constantinople to Russia and from Madrid to Stockholm, Meissen porcelain (the *porcelaine de Saxe* of the French, the "Dresden China" of the English) found its way to all the courts, seraglios and manoirs of Europe, and collecting it became a craze comparable only to the collecting of antiques in our own generation. "Je suis Saxe des pieds jusqu'à la tête," said charmingly a French lady of Louis XV's court; so was the rest of Europe, and when Frederick II's troops invaded Saxony they sent their king, it is said, fifty-two boxes of the precious ware.

It is not astonishing therefore that even today specimens of Meissen porcelain in very large numbers still exist in private collections as well as museums. But most of the really important examples are no longer readily available, in particular those of the early Meissen period, which may be said to have ended in 1733, with the death of Augustus the Strong. It is therefore a matter of pride and gratitude for our museum to have received as a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford, II, the covered vase reproduced here, which surely must be one of the most splendid creations of the great period of Meissen and, in size, one of the most impressive. To feel that a masterpiece must necessarily be large and complicated is of course, as the scholarly historian of Meissen, W. B. Honey, said in his admirable volume, nothing more than a superstition. But when to these qualities are added those of absolute technical perfection and exquisiteness and concentration on essentials, the result is, as in this case, unforgettable.

The first impression made upon the spectator by the Detroit vase is indeed that of monumental strength. The vessel is over twenty-five inches high, to the knob of its gilded cover. Only professional ceramists will realize what this implies to a potter, the seemingly insuperable difficulties of the potting, the triumph of sensitive hands over capricious clay, the awe and anguish which accompanies the firings of a large mass of unpredictable material. To this first impression of massive nobility succeeds a more conscious admiration for the incredibly delicate workmanship. On a milk-white luminous ground the artist who decorated the vase with sprays of plum blossoms and bunches of Japanese



PORCELAIN VASE

German, Meissen, ca. 1725-1730

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford II, 1958

flowers has evidently copied some oriental model. But the imitation is only superficial: no oriental palette ever had such a sumptuous range of colors—iron-red, violet, yellow-green and lemon-yellow, turquoise blue, a mauve and a resonant rose-crimson of great beauty among others—or gave such importance to subtle shadings. Still more personal, although probably borrowed from some contemporary German pattern book, are the small figures which the fantastic humor of the painter has introduced at the bottom of the vase. A rococo drama is being enacted there. Vaguely Chinese warriors are fighting winged monsters, authentic dragons, over-size mustachoeed rodents—all drawn with a wonderful sense of rhythm and all on the same plane as in an oriental shadow-play. Yet, with all its wealth of details and exuberance, there is nothing mawkish about the vase. Such was the discipline of taste at Meissen and the craftsman's artistic probity, that the final impression remains one of power and strength. This is in large part due to the perfection of the shape, which is more elegant perhaps than is usual with the other vases executed in the Meissen factory at the time of Augustus the Strong. As in the splendid example in the Thornton Wilson Collection (Metropolitan Museum) these are often characterized by their flattened shoulders, reminiscent of the shapes made familiar by the Dutch and English silver jars of the period. In the Detroit vessel, on the contrary, the shoulders follow more closely the outlines of the great Chinese vases which Meissen vases attempted to imitate.

Complete in itself, the present vase probably formed once part of a garniture of five covered vases and beakers, which Augustus the Strong reserved for his *Palais Japonais*, his Porcelain dream palace in Dresden, or intended to present as gifts to his favored courtiers. Our example belongs in fact to the group of vessels called "Augustus Rex Vases," because they often bear the king of Saxony's special cypher, AR. It was probably executed in the last years of the third decade of the eighteenth century, at the time when Johann Gregor Herold was manager of the factory and when Adam Friedrich von Löwenfinck, to whom such Chinoiseries as those on our vase are usually ascribed, was the principal Meissen painter. A supreme example of what Honey called "this exquisite art of porcelain," it will represent in our collections what one may describe as the "classical" period of Meissen, which to many of us is also the most significant.

PAUL L. GRIGAUT

Acc. No. 58.40. Height 25½ inches. At bottom Meissen double sword mark in underglaze blue; inscribed: No. 342 and W. On underside of cover: No. 343. Ex. coll.: Miss A. D. M. Skrine. Purchased from Rosenberg and Stibel, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford II, 1958. The volume referred to in the text is: W. B. Honey, *Dresden China*, London, Faber and Faber, 1954 edition. Cf. also, Yvonne Hackenbroch, *Meissen and Other Continental Porcelain . . . in the Irwin Untermyer Collection*, Cambridge, Mass., 1956, which describes and illustrates the extremely important Untermyer Collection, with valuable comments.

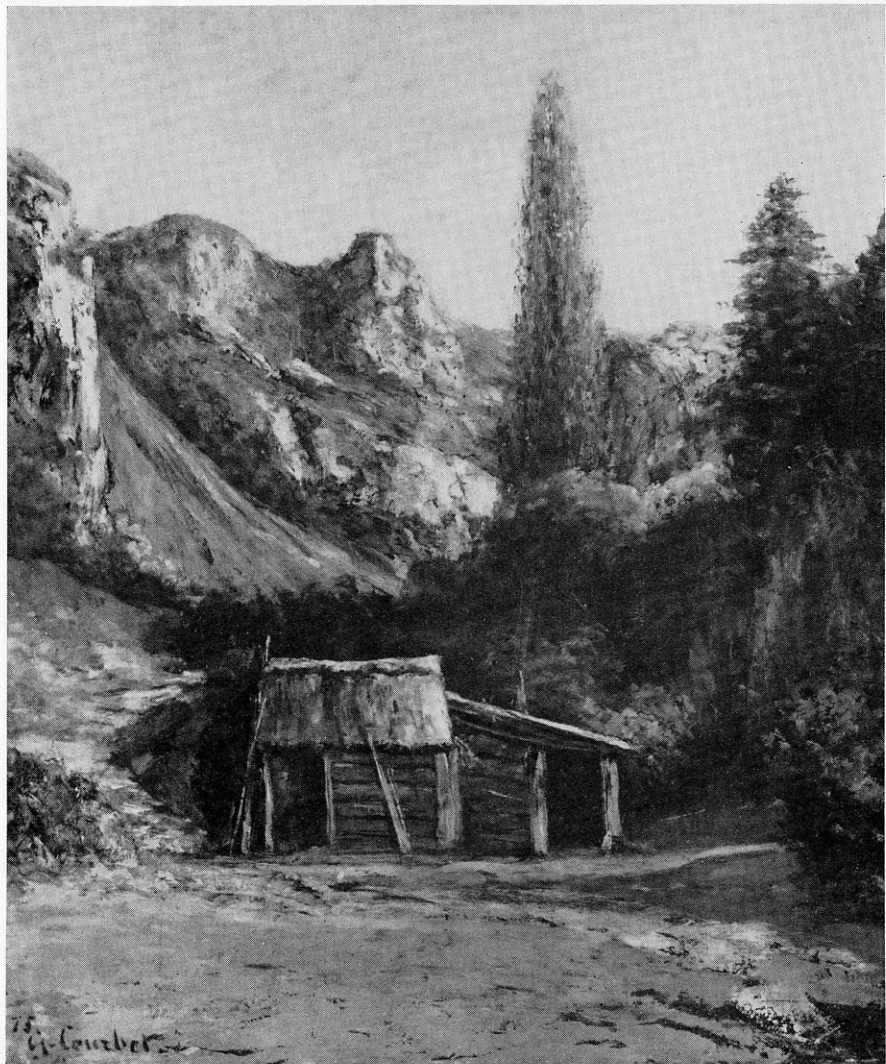
A LATE LANDSCAPE by COURBET

The great nineteenth century French master, Gustave Courbet, is probably better represented in America on the whole, by works created during his early and middle years rather than during those final, tragic years spent in exile in Switzerland. For three decades the Detroit Institute of Arts has owned one of Courbet's early works, a magnificent and well known figure study of a *Bather Sleeping by a Brook*, painted in 1845. Only twenty-six years old at the time, Courbet achieved complete mastery of form in his straightforward treatment of the heavy, relaxed figure posed in a woodland setting. This robust, pastoral quality, this complete rejection of the picturesque or the idealized, was to characterize the work of Courbet's entire career. In his final paintings, based on a lifetime's experience of sharply perceiving and analyzing, he retained his monumental plasticity but moved on from expressing himself in terms of numerous particulars to reach an all-inclusive synthesis. Until now, this facet of Courbet's career has not been represented in our Museum.

The recent gift of his *Mountain Hut*,¹ dated 1875, from Mr. and Mrs. James S. Whitcomb, brings to our collection a late work, executed by the painter only two years before he died. Within the confines of a relatively small canvas, Courbet has distilled all the quietude and majesty of the Swiss mountainside. In 1864 he had written to Victor Hugo, "The sites of our mountains offer us an unlimited view of immensity; the vacuum which cannot be filled gives us peace." Early in life Courbet developed a keen knowledge and love of the countryside which deepened with the years. Born in Ornans in the French-Comté in 1819, Courbet started painting quite early, learning as much through his own efforts and from studying the old masters in the Louvre, as from relatively unimportant instructors. Although he lived in Paris for some time, he never found inspiration as did Daumier, in the foibles of city dwellers, but preferred to depict earthy peasants and bourgeois dressed in their best.

Along with people, he painted the torrents and rocky slopes near Ornans, the quiet lakes and majestic mountain ranges of Switzerland. The tableland of the Jura served as background for his *Burial at Ornans* and the *Stonebreakers*; the harsh realism of both shocked critic and public alike. Courbet's unorthodox ideas threw on controversy; his passionate, often belligerent personality led to headlong clashes with those in authority.

During his brief presidency of the Committee of Fine Arts, following the outbreak of the Commune in 1871, the Vendôme Column was overthrown by Parisian rioters. Courbet was held responsible, sentenced to six months in prison, and later ordered to defray the enormous cost of restoration. This meant ruin, and although he succeeded in escaping to Switzerland, he never rallied from the blow and died in exile there at fifty-eight in December, 1877. Despite his failing



THE MOUNTAIN HUT
by GUSTAVE COURBET, French, 1819-1877
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James S. Whitcomb, 1957

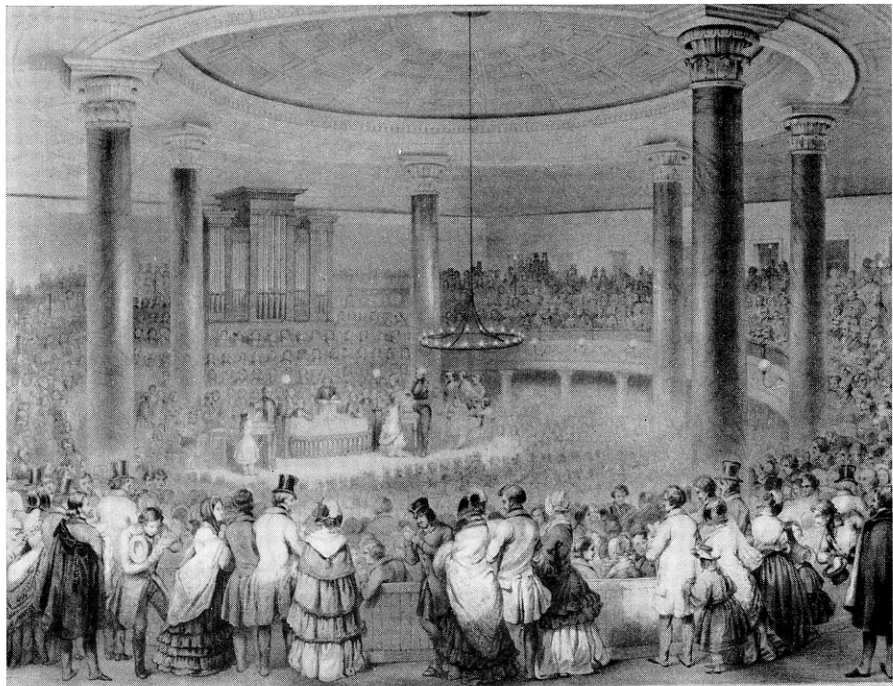
health and spirit, Courbet produced some of his finest work during these last years. During the 1840's and '50's, the color had been fairly opaque and the shadows dense. Paintings of the 1860's took on new effects of light and air. More luminous color and greater textural interest are evident in the flickering lights and shadows of such pictures as *Le Ruisseau Couvert* (Louvre) or the *Forest Pool* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

These tonic effects were never lost. The greens in the *Mountain Hut* have the freshness of Spring. There is a vibrance of surface texture as Courbet combines tiny, light brush-strokes in the quivering tree-tops with great, broad ones — scumbling occasionally, using the palette-knife, even his thumb, perhaps — to reveal patches of light falling upon the roof of the shelter, or on the little path which winds its way around it and up the hillside. Fundamentally, however, Courbet was interested in density rather than light, in building up form, rather than destroying it with atmospheric haze. His careful analysis of the structure of each rock and tree in the *Mountain Hut* results in a solidity of construction which seems inevitable. Massive strokes define the sheer wall of rock at the left. Its incisive vertical, echoed in the tall trees and timbers of the hut, plays against a series of diagonals in the rocky terrain to form a powerful plastic synthesis. The mood is peaceful.

This newly acquired landscape brings into public view a significant work which appears to have remained unrecorded and undescribed in the literature on the great French realist. It formed part of Mr. Edgar B. Whitcomb's private collection here in Detroit for many years. Intimate in scale and restrained in feeling, it was one of Mr. Whitcomb's favorite paintings and over the years was hung in his bedroom. On Mr. Whitcomb's death, the painting passed to his son, who, with his wife, has generously given it to the Museum. To twentieth century eyes, the art of Courbet appears soundly conservative. Yet at the time it was created, it not only ran counter to the great traditions of his day, but had a profound influence in pointing the path along which modern painting was to travel. It was not by chance that in the series of Biennale exhibitions of the progenitors of modern art (with Goya and Picasso earlier), the 1954 show was devoted to Gustave Courbet.

ELIZABETH H. PAYNE

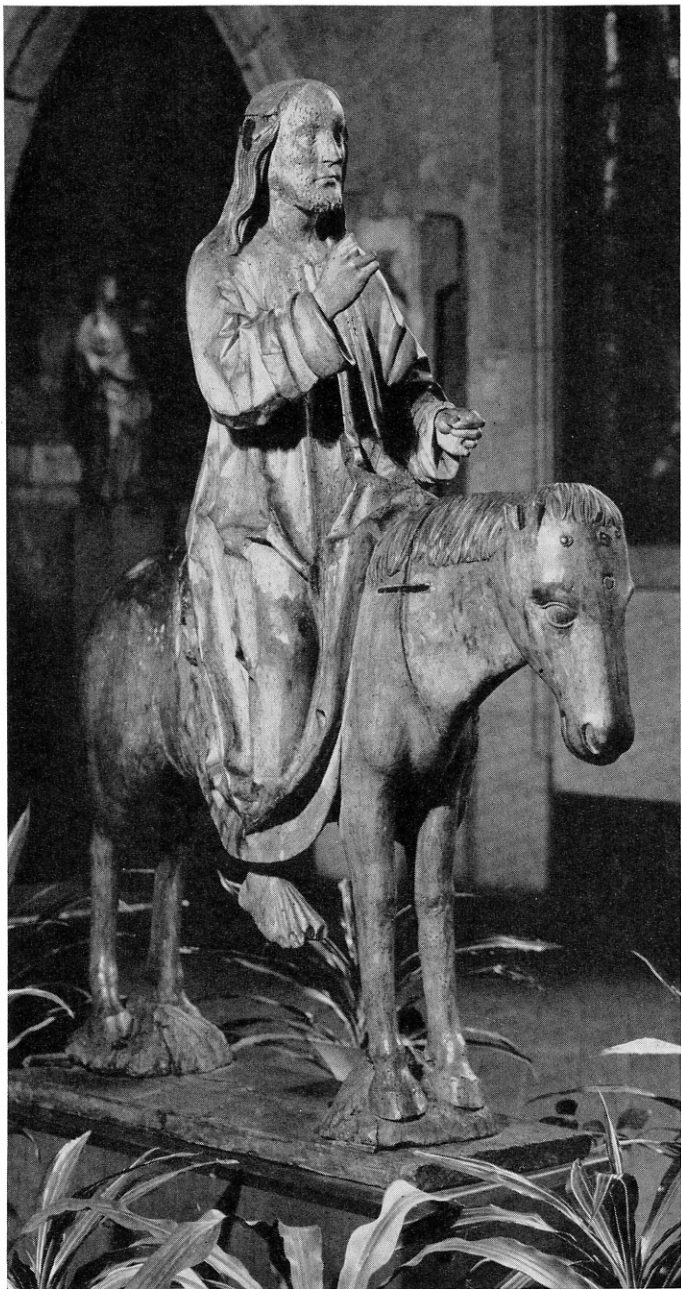
¹ Cat. No. 1523. Canvas. Height, 24¼; width, 19¾ inches. Signed and dated lower left: 75/G Courbet. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James S. Whitcomb, 1957.



DISTRIBUTION OF THE AMERICAN ART-UNION PRIZES.

Distribution of the American Art Union Prizes (. . . “at the Tabernacle, Broadway, 24th December, 1847. Lithograph published by Sarony and Major”). The American Art Union’s annual lotteries from 1838 until 1853 (when a court order against lotteries disbanded the group) represented a significant effort by far-sighted Americans to advance the cause of native art and native art patronage. For five dollars, the interested citizen received a print of the principal work of art to be offered at a pre-holiday lottery, a chance at winning and owning the original painting (in 1847, George Caleb Bingham’s *Jolly Flatboatmen*), a further chance of winning one of the 200-odd works purchased by the Union from subscription funds and the excitement of participating in the progress of art among the democratic peoples of a new and self-conscious nation.

Acc. No. 57.115. Tinted lithograph. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Fleischman, 1957.



CHRIST ENTERING JERUSALEM
by CHRISTOPHORUS LANGEISEN, German, late 15th Century
Gift of Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass, 1957

A LATE GOTHIC PALMESEL

A rare sculptural type of the late Gothic in Germany, a Palmesel, now enriches the museum's collection of Medieval art. The *Palmesel*, or figure of *Christ Entering Jerusalem on the Back of a Donkey*,¹ carved in lindenwood, is one of about sixty such groups still preserved from late medieval and early Renaissance religious pageants. Only two Palmesels are in the United States; one is at the Cloisters of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York; the other, published by E. P. Richardson in 1940² as an early work of Christophorus Langeisen in Ulm, about 1480-90, was presented to the Detroit Institute of Arts last year by Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass.

Figures of this type were created by craftsmen of varying degrees of skill from the twelfth until about the eighteenth century in southern Germany and surrounding areas, to be borne through the town streets in Palm Sunday liturgical processions. The Detroit Palmesel represents the work of a master closely associated with Jörg Syrlin the Younger (1455-ca. 1523) whose workshop at Ulm was the nucleus of the veritable industry of wood sculpture in fifteenth century Suabia.

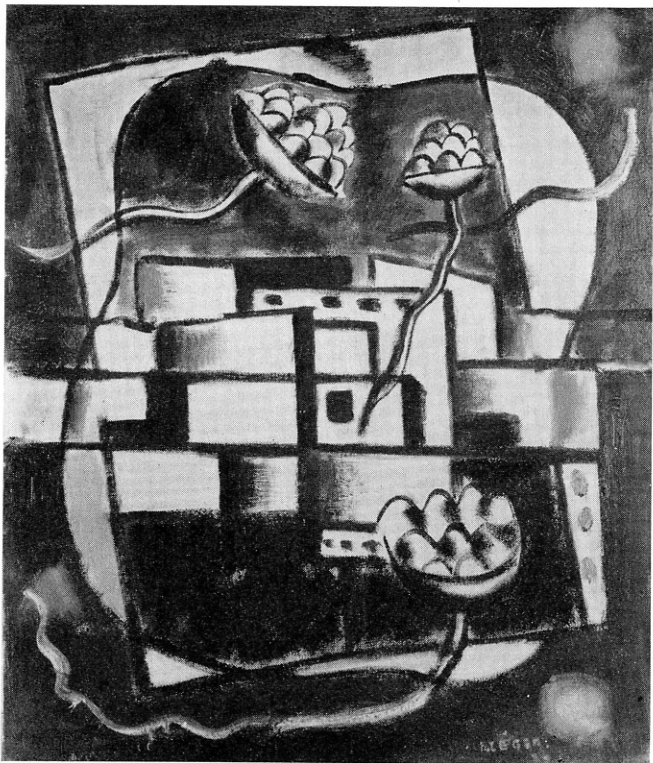
Of Langeisen, Mr. Richardson says, "His attitude towards his subjects from the story of the Passion was one of simple delights in the pageantry of a mystery play . . .". This delight is evident in the grave yet gentle figure of Christ, seated in quiet majesty on the submissive donkey, one hand raised in benediction. The character of the face of the Christ-figure, although solemn in the temper of the Holy Week liturgy, evinces a lyrical softness. The planes and folds of the garment also retain a flowing quality, as they fall from the shoulders and arms of the figure, despite a Gothic angularity. The serenity of this Christ on a donkey, the particular attribute of Langeisen's hand during this period of his activity, manifests itself as completely now (in spite of the absence of the original polychromy) as it must have when the figure was carried, or perhaps drawn in a cart, from the church, along the streets lined with worshippers waving traditional palm-branches.

The Langeisen Palmesel embodies the deepest sentiments connected with these popular wood figures, carved in the spirit of the Biblical prophecy of Zacharias (ix. 9), "Behold the King cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass." As Mr. Richardson concludes in his article, "This grave and touching figure by Langeisen, next to Multscher's figure of 1456 in the Ulm Museum, is the most sensitive treatment of the theme I have found." Detroit is particularly fortunate, not only in having received the Palmesel, itself a rarity, but also in possessing an example so eloquently expressive of the mood of the Gothic sculpture of Suabia.

CATHERINE CORGAN

¹ Acc. No. 57.97. Height 57 inches; length 46 inches. Gift of Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass, 1957.

² E. P. Richardson, *The Art Quarterly*, Vol. III, No. 4, Autumn, 1940, pp. 345-347.



LANDSCAPE by FERNAND LÉGER, French, 1881-1955
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lewis Winston, 1957

Collecting modern art long before it has received the seal of approval which the perspective of time alone can give, offers an exciting challenge. Such a challenge was accepted two decades ago by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lewis Winston. The outstanding collection of painting, sculpture, and graphic arts which they have assembled during recent years was exhibited in its entirety at the Detroit Institute of Arts last fall, and since then has been travelling throughout the United States. Its owners will receive it back again this October.

From time to time, Mr. and Mrs. Winston have generously passed on works of art from their collection to the Museum. The *Landscape*, painted by Léger in 1923 is one of a group of such works. Others comprising the recent gift include a 1955 collage by Jean Dubuffet, a water color by Jules Pascin, two works in gouache by Marino Marini and a transformable, three-dimensional composition in wood by Agam. These acquisitions, revealing current forms of expression and fresh approaches to various media, add substantially to our representation of contemporary art.

E. H. P.

POINT DE FRANCE

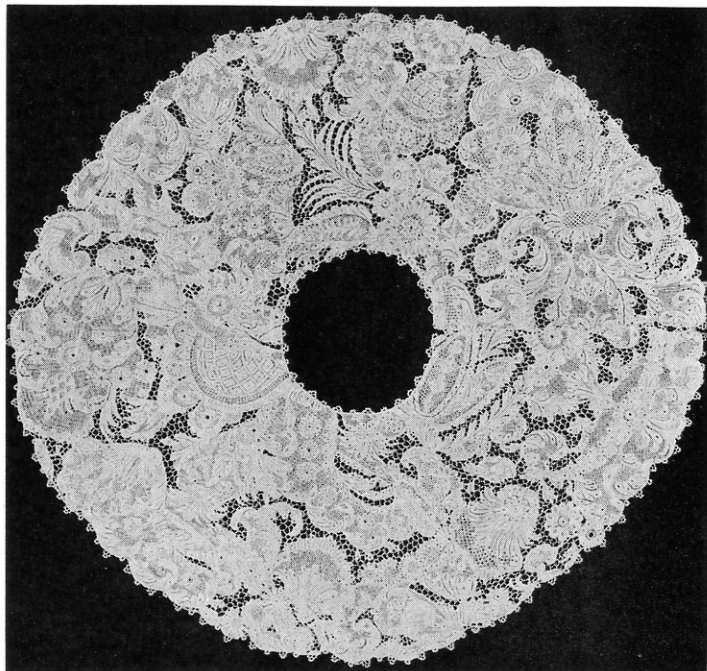
From the large collection of laces which Mr. and Mrs. Marc Patten have presented to the Textile Department, we select three specimens of *Point de France*, of the last quarter of the seventeenth century.

About half the original length of a wide flounce has been arranged at some later date as a train, by finishing it all around with a scalloped edging. What became of the missing part, whether it was destroyed in some catastrophe, we do not know. Although the handsome design is now seen sideways, it still has strength and character, the fantastic leaves and flowers rearrange themselves into new patterns, a wide variety of filling devices gives lightness to these forms, a delicate relief accentuates their contours. The versatility of the design is enhanced by the beautiful ground of *grands réseaux picotés*. This is an elaboration of the earlier *bride picotée*, the single bar of buttonhole stitch which was placed between the forms of the design wherever such support was required. They had been sufficient for the Venetian laces, but the French designs demanded a real ground that would accentuate their beauty and so the lace workers of Alençon devised this allover net work of large hexagonal meshes.¹

Also part of a lady's outfit is a round collar which was embellished with a scalloped edging at some later period. The design of this collar is remarkably diversified and at a first glance the ferns and flowers look almost realistic. Here the meshes of the ground are slightly less regular than those of the train; the collar may date slightly earlier, a matter of a few years at most.²

Lastly there is a narrow bertha of almost incredibly fine needle point. For firmness and evenness of workmanship, this piece defies comparison. For the design only one word can be used: "perfection." And to all its inherent qualities may be added the excellent preservation of this delightful piece, of which it can truly be said that, though small in size, it is great in art. One tries to avoid the use of superlatives, but I must say that never anywhere, have I seen anything comparable to this masterpiece of a lost craft.³

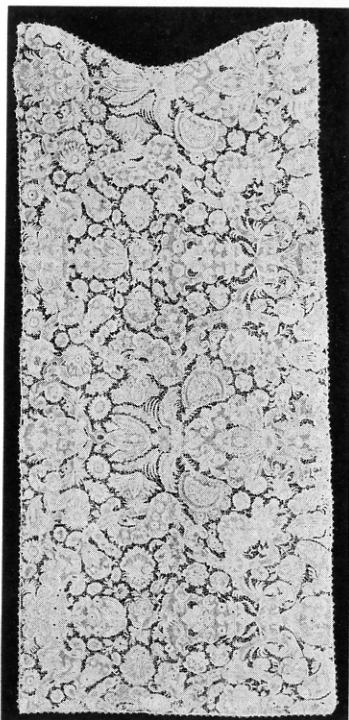
The history of the *Point de France* has been told repeatedly, yet a short recapitulation may not come amiss. The invention of needle-made lace is claimed for Italy, where in the sixteenth century Venice was famed for her *punto in aria*. Venetian lace was exported to France in large quantities, used by men as well as women for their accoutrements, and also for decorative purposes, table and bed linen and hangings. The reign of Louis XIII and Louis XIV saw the promulgation of many sumptuary edicts. One of these, issued in 1660, on the eve of the marriage of Louis XIV to the Infanta Maria Teresa, is especially important because it provoked the composition of a set of satirical verses, entitled *La Révolte des Passments*.⁴ Here every then-known lace is mentioned by name; one type, which soon became the acknowledged leader, is here mentioned for the first time, "le Point d'Alençon fit une fort belle harangue." This proves that some sort of lace was already made in this city of Normandy, and helps to explain



WOMAN'S COLLAR

French, 17th Century

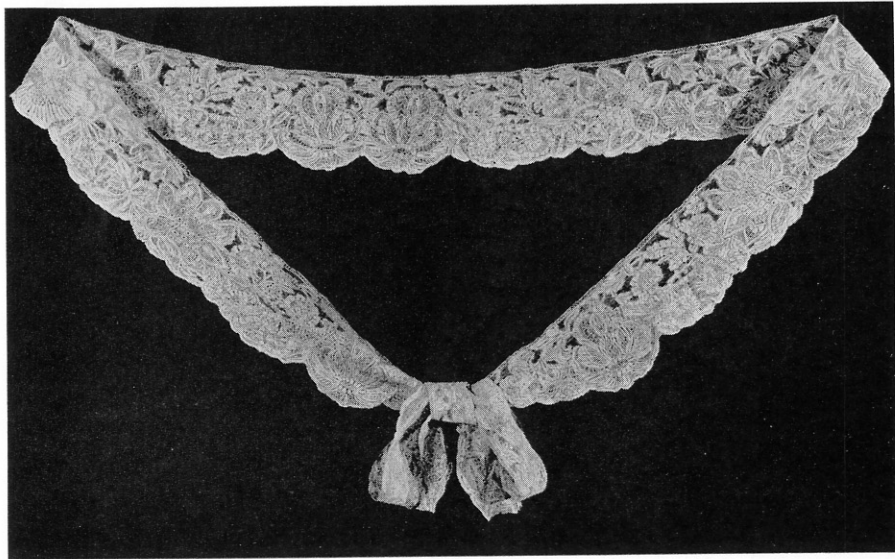
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Marc Patten, 1956



FLOUNCE ARRANGED AS A TRAIN

French, 17th Century

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Marc Patten, 1956



NEEDLE POINT BERTHA
French, 17th Century
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Marc Patten, 1953

why it was chosen by Colbert for his great experiment. He established a training school at his Château of Lonray near Alençon, where thirty Venetian lace-makers taught their craft to French pupils. In a short space of time 1000 French women had learned the elegant craft and soon were able to outdo their teachers. This was due to the genius of Colbert who realized that the only vulnerable point of the Venetian laces was a lack of definite concentration on the design. At this time Colbert was interested in a reorganization of the craft of tapestry weaving. From a whole bevy of highly specialized designers at his beck and call, he selected a few to make designs suitable for needle-lace. In a short time the first specimens were submitted to the King who bestowed on them the proud name of *Point de France*.

Henceforth the laces of Alençon were worn exclusively at the French court, and soon the demand for them spread all over Europe. The designation of *Point de France* is found for the last time in an inventory of 1723. In later documents it is called *Point à l'aiguille*; and "needle-point" is the name by which it was known in England in the eighteenth century. The use of lace in closely gathered frills was detrimental to its artistic development. The design tended to disappear in the folds, small scattered motifs made their appearance during the dying years of the rococo, and bobbin lace ousted the once so magnificent needlepoint lace.

¹ Flounce arranged as a train. Acc. No. 56.191. Length, 53¾ inches; width 23 inches.

² Collar. Acc. No. 56.192. Diameter 20¾ inches; width 7¾ inches.

³ Bertha. Acc. No. 53.296. Length 69 inches; width 1¼ to 2½ inches. All three are the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Marc Patten.

⁴ "La Révolte des Passements," in *Bulletin of the Needle and Bobbin Club*, 14, 1930, pp. 3-39. The material is assembled and annotated by Miss Gertrude Whiting. Both the edict of 1660 which inspired the satirical poem, and the Royal Proclamation of 1665, which establishes the manufacture of the Points de France, are included in this article.



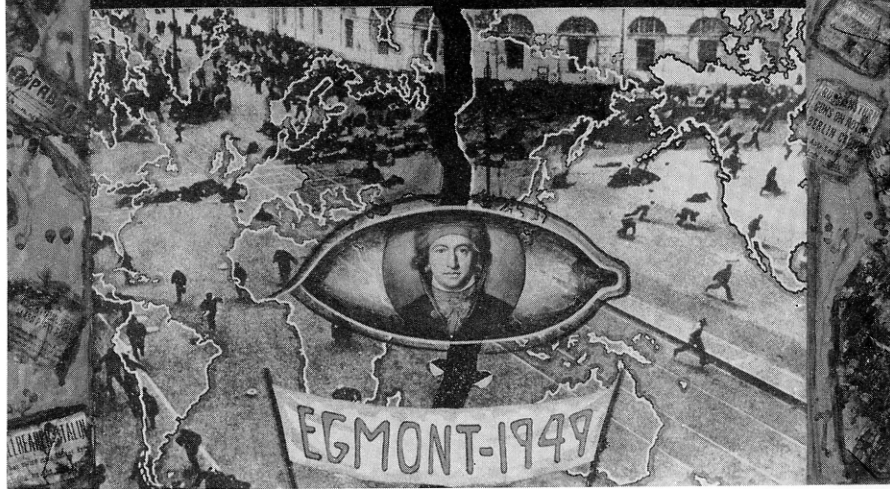
SHANTY TOWN from DANCE WITH YOUR GODS
by DONALD OENSLAGER, American Contemporary
Gift of the Artist

STAGE DESIGNS by OENSLAGER

Outstanding among the recent gifts to the Theatre Arts collection is the gift of seven stage designs by Donald Oenslager, one of the outstanding figures of the American theatre. The designs, a gift of the artist, are representative of the designer's thirty years in the American theatre as a designer and teacher.

Six of the designs are for an unproduced project *Egmont '49*. The design on the right, *Curtain for Prologue*¹ is executed in a collage, photograph,

1749 - Goethe - 1949



CURTAIN FOR PROLOGUE from EGMONT '49
by DONALD OENSLAGER, American Contemporary
Gift of the Artist

tempera technique unique to this artist in his designs. A designer's unproduced projects often reflect new forms of expression, new ideas and newer freedoms in the theatre. Mr. Oenslager has said "Some of the busiest designer's works do not reach the stage . . . his projects . . . the things he dreams of for tomorrow's theatre . . . experiments in form and research in styles . . . new directions in lighting which are not demanded by the average production . . ." ² Such a project is *Egmont '49* and a further revelation of the skill of this artist.

The design opposite entitled *Shanty Town*³ is from *Dance With Your Gods* the forty-sixth production designed by Oenslager and produced in New York on October 6, 1934. A watercolor sketch with cut-out overlay, it is still another example of the numerous techniques used by the artist in the execution of a design.

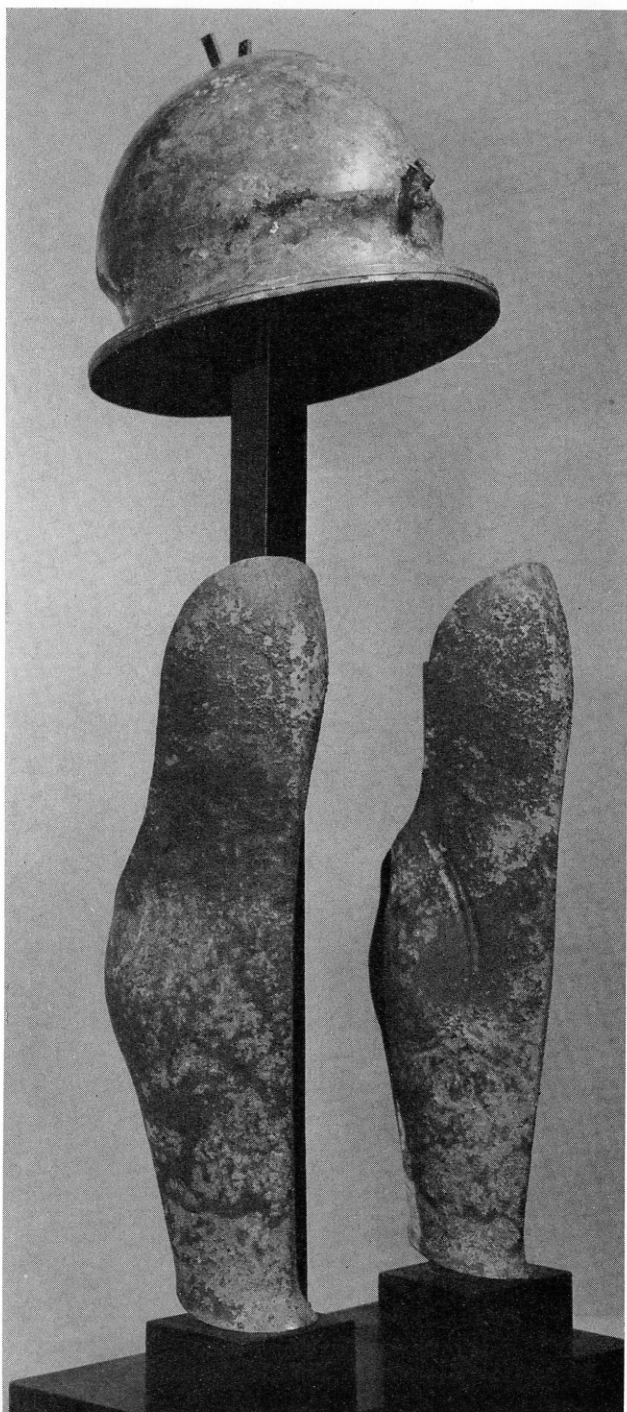
GIL ODEN

¹ Acc. No. 57.13a. Height 18 inches; width 27 inches. Gift of Donald Oenslager, 1957.

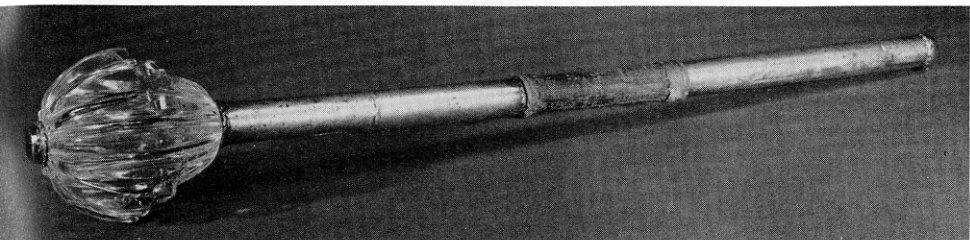
² Donald Oenslager, "Design in the Theatre Today," *Donald Oenslager, Stage Designer and Teacher*, Exhibition Catalogue, The Detroit Institute of Arts, Sept. 25 through Nov. 4, 1956.

³ Acc. No. 57.14. Height 12 inches; width 20 inches. Gift of Donald Oenslager, 1957.

BRONZE HELMET
AND GREAVES
Etruscan
6th-5th century B.C.
*Gift of the
Sarah Bacon Hill
Fund, 1958*
Acc. Nos. 58.71, 72



Pictured opposite are recent additions to the Museum's collection of armor which illustrate two of the major parts of the defensive armor of warriors in the days of ancient Greece and Rome. Here are a helmet of typical Italic hat-like shape (H. 9; I. $10\frac{5}{8}$; W. $9\frac{1}{2}$) and a pair of gracefully shaped leg-clinging greaves, all of bronze and all found in an Etruscan tomb of about 500 B.C. near Orvieto in the heart of ancient Etruria, north of Rome. Only lacking here from the soldier's panoply are the cuirass (a bronze breast and back plate), the shield, and the commonest weapons — sword and spear.



The above mace or scepter of carved rock-crystal on a silver-sheathed wooden staff with leatherbound velvet grip, Islamic Egyptian, Mamluk Dynasty, last half 15th century, (Acc. No. 58.73, L. $22\frac{1}{4}$ inches), was the gift of the Sarah Bacon Hill Fund in 1958. The sharply cut crystal knob is a later example of the glyptic art for which the Fatimid Dynasty of Egypt in the 10th to the 12th centuries was famous in both East and West. Tradition asserts that this scepter or mace, carried as a symbol of power and sovereignty by a ruler or by a high court official when the ruler was present, was once used by the last Mamluk sultan of Egypt, Ashraf Tuman-Bey, who was conquered in 1517 by the Ottoman sultan of Turkey, Selim the First. By the latter ruler this scepter was deposited as a thank-offering in the mosque of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (present-day Istanbul). There it was seen in 1899 by Dr. F. R. Martin of Stockholm, into whose possession it passed in 1929. More recently it was in the collection of the late Dr. Jacob Hirsch, distinguished and discriminating art connoisseur and dealer.

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<i>Assistant Curator</i>	Virginia Harriman
<i>Junior Curators</i>	Nicholas Snow, Charles Meyer Catherine Corgan, Hertha Schulze, Patricia Slattery
<i>Curator in Charge of Extension Services</i>	William A. McGonagle
<i>Librarian</i>	Carol Selby
<i>Assistant Librarian</i>	F. Warren Peters, Jr.
<i>Cataloguer</i>	Elizabeth Fischer