

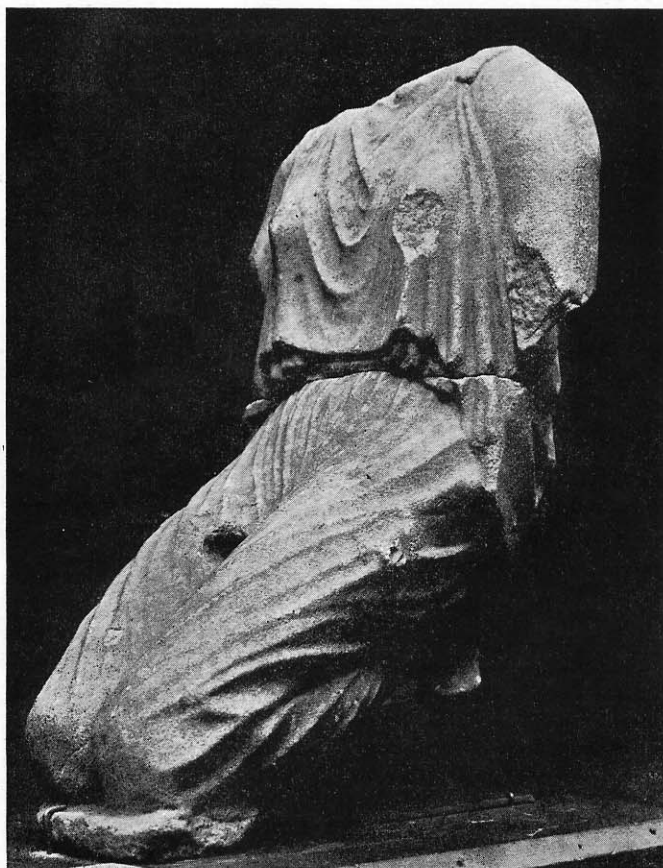


BULLETIN OF
THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS
of the City of Detroit

Vol. IV

MAY, 1923

No. 8



GREEK TORSO. V CENTURY B. C.

A RECENT ACCESSION

ACCESSIONS TO CLASSICAL DEPARTMENT

During the past season several important additions have been made to the Institute's classical department—a Greek figure of the end of the V Century B. C., a fragment of an Augustinian throne of the first century A. D., and a Roman mosaic of the II or III Century A. D.

The Greek figure, which represents a sitting or kneeling nymph, is of the period just before the age of Phidias, and has that naïve grace and simplicity which is the great charm of an art that has not yet come to its full fruition but for that very reason delights us the more, not only because it is so far removed from the period of decadence but because we can see in it the germ of all the traits that flower so gloriously in the sculptures of the Parthenon. With its graceful composition and flowing lines of drapery it is of the same general type as some of the figures in the pediments of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia. It is interesting to compare it with the figure of the lapith in the well-known Centaur and Lapith group on the west pediment, just at the left of the central figures.

It was evidently originally part of a fountain composed of three similar figures, one of which is known to be in a private collection in Stockholm, the other in the Museum of Naples.

The Roman fragment, a foot from one of the Augustinian thrones, is in the form of a fantastic animal—half dog, half lion, and is a fine example of the decorative art which came to a climax during the period of Augustus. Gargoyles of a similar type recur again and again in Gothic architecture and decorative art.

The art of mosaic, known to the Romans as *opus musivum*, came originally from the East and was also practised by the early Egyptians. It was first introduced into Rome about the middle of the second century B. C.

It is usually found convenient to divide the history of Roman work in Mosaic into three periods: the Augustan or early empire (A. D. 1-100); Antonine or later empire (A. D. 100-300); and Constantinian or Christian. The

piece which the Institute has purchased belongs to the second period.

The subject, like the majority of the period, is a mythological one and represents a naiad with wreath-crowned flowing hair, borne through the waves by a sea horse. The action is spirited, and the coloring, obtained by means of brightly colored cubes of glass paste, in blues, greens, browns and flesh tones, is extremely pleasing. It is a fine example of the naturalistic design and brilliant color scheme of the Augustinian period.



FOOT OF AUGUSTINIAN THRONE
PURCHASED 1922

FRENCH MEDALS ACQUIRED

DUKE OF MILAN
EMBLEMFRANCO-AMERICAN
UNION. ROTY '86CONSERVATORY OF
MUSICMARRIAGE OF
THE EMPEROR

Fifty-one French medals have been acquired after careful selection from a very large number in the Paris Mint. They include historical subjects from the time of Louis XII and François I to 1900 when a medal to the memory of Molière was designed by Prudhomme. Most of them commemorate the rule of France's political leaders, her great personalities, and other great events.

Medals were made from white metal, copper, bronze, and rarely from silver and gold, brass or German silver. They were formed by squeezing such metal into dies. The first French medals of importance were influenced by Italy, like those of Louis XI's reign. Later François I employed Italians like Cellini. But in the time of Louis XII of which we own the "Duke of Milan" medal, (here illustrated) the medals were being made by the French themselves. Since then that country has stood supreme in this beautiful art.

There followed again a reversion to the Italian manner at the end of the XVI Century with a balancing renewal of interest in good medals in the XVII Century, under Henry IV (King 1589-1610). At this time, Guillaume and Dupré made excellent reliefs like the acquired "Consecration of the Queen."

Under Louis XIV (King 1643-1715), Cardinal Mazarin, chief Minister, and Colbert, Comptroller-general of finances, were chiefly responsible for the founding of an Academy that contributed toward the conventionality into which art and life sank without much resistance. The great leaders are represented in medals of the period, delightful in technique if not particularly refreshing in point of view.

In the Eighteenth Century with the coming of Louis XV, a renewed freedom was expressed. Instead of serving the King alone, art widened its range to include at least the nobility and aristocracy. A medal in the collection, "The Consecration of the King," expresses this spirit.

The medals of the Louis XVI rule are particularly pertinent to this country, one, the "Capture of Boston," reminding us of the French aid that brought about the peace between us and Great Britain. The "Aerial Experiments at Lyons" shows the balloon investigations that were then occupying the minds of the French. It was during this reign that the French Revolution was precipitated with the beheading of the King and the institution of a Republic in 1792. In art, an effeminacy and flamboyancy was developing, with certain refinement at the close of the Epoch.

"Lafayette" (here reproduced) is an exceptionally sensitive portrait medal, one of the best and incidentally the last left of the subject at the mint. This is dear to the heart of Americans because of the great man's service to us. "The General Peace" recalls the period of the Constitution that followed.

In the Napoleonic days, while the power was great, art was not progressive. The classicist style Empire was a drag on spontaneity. In the medals, design and execution were indifferently treated until improved through Denon's initiative. Idealized and portrait studies were in vogue. Andrieu and Droz made such beautiful Napoleonic portraits as the one here seen in the "Marriage of the Emperor." Seven medals of historical import from this period are especially fascinating.

After Napoleon, the medals cease to be of superior quality until 1870. There is a group of important French personalities including Barye, the great sculptor, Victor Hugo, Carnot, a great politician, and Molière, the greatest playwright of French comedies.

Great medallists were numerous

after 1870, among them Louis O. Roty, and Jules Clement Chaplain. The latter's "Conservatory of Music" is here represented. These two men were leaders, winners of many prizes and officials in important art positions. Roty's impassioned work of strong, imaginative, distinguished but sensitive quality, especially in treating the feminine subject, is noteworthy. His 1886 "Franco-American Union" (here shown) characterizes his ability. "The Youth of France" is another of his subjects purchased.

In all these, there appears a perfection of technique with a crispness of line, a sharpness of edges and subtle modeling of low or high relief. The composition of parts, the harmony of the ensemble with the circular bounds of the medal, and a "medal quality" hard to analyze, specifically, are also characteristic of this French Art.

The French have a decorative spirit, a love of beauty, if superficial at times, that charms and is precious like these delightful little treasures that one loves to handle, feast his eye upon, and keep at hand, if possible, to enjoy continually. R. P.



LOUIS XIV



LAFAYETTE.
LOUIS XVI REIGN



COLIGNY. HUGUENOT VICTIM
OF MASSACRE OF
ST. BARTHOLOMEW

PAINTING BY ROSA BONHEUR GIVEN

The animal painting of Rosa Bonheur has found further representation in the permanent collection of the Institute through the recent gift of a very good example of her work entitled, "A Day in July," presented in memory of Annie Dorr Murphy by her brothers, Charles E. Murphy, Simon J. Murphy, Jr., William H. Murphy, Frank E. Murphy and the estate of Albert M. Murphy.

Honor; Cross of San Carlos from Mexico bestowed by the Emperor Maximilian; election to membership in the Antwerp Academy of Fine Arts; Commander in the Order of Isabella the Catholic, bestowed by Alphonso XII of Spain; Cross of Leopold, bestowed by the King of Belgium; and the order of St. James, bestowed by the King of Portugal.

Despite this galaxy of official awards, however, time has not en-



A DAY IN JULY, BY ROSA BONHEUR

PRESENTED IN MEMORY OF ANNIE DORR MURPHY BY HER BROTHERS

This picture (23 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches high by 34 inches wide), representing horses and cattle in a meadow, is typical of the best work of this painter, which during her life time was so eagerly sought by collectors. One finds in it the all-absorbing animal portraiture that brought her honors and riches in her own day—honors which included medals of all classes at the Salons; Officer of the Legion of

tirely sustained her artistic reputation. Assigned her true place among the French artists of the XIX Century, there are many who take precedence over her, but within the limited range of her efforts she has no superior. In her study of animals there is an accuracy of perception and a scrupulous regard for drawing that are seldom encountered in later day art.

Rosa Bonheur was peculiarly a product of the time in which she lived. She came on the scene of French painting at a time when there was a violent reaction from the classicism and romanticism of the then academic school, and artists were turning back to nature for their inspiration and guidance. Aside from the lessons which her father (also a painter and art teacher) gave her, she learned her painting directly from nature, and from the animal models which she found available. She was a contemporary of, and her art was guided by the same impulses as those which inspired the work of Corot, Daubigny, Rousseau, Troyon and the other great men of the school

of 1830. With her thorough knowledge of animals and her skillful portrayal of them, she takes rank with these men, though unfortunately she sometimes sacrificed pictorial unity, and her conceptions are not always as lofty and inspired as her neighbors' in the village of Barbizon, who, absorbed in a lifelong communion with the moods of nature, achieved lasting renown.

The "Horse Fair," her most important composition in size, is numbered among the treasures of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and her "Plowing in Nivernais" was purchased by the French government and is in the Luxembourg Gallery at Paris.

SWISS PORTRAIT ACQUIRED

Switzerland's natural beauty, its picturesque chalets and little wood carvings have satisfied the natives and even the artists of her land. Perhaps the mountains, the snow and ice formations, and cascades have defied adequate interpretation. But for whatever reason, painting by the Swiss has been of at least secondary importance until very recently.

In the time of Lord Byron, people began to see Swiss life in a new light. Writers immortalized its beauty and Swiss painters began to study abroad.

There has been practically no National school of Swiss Painting. Basel was prominent in the XVI Century in the days of Holbein and Erasmus. The Reformation, which caused the later's removal from Switzerland, ended progress.

In modern painting, "Father" Menn (1815-93) is the first important artist, somewhat classical and naturalistic. August Baud-Bovy later

added to the progress, synthesizing in panoramic landscapes the monumentality of Switzerland. He combined sentiment with naturalism. Segantini, a contemporary, was a poet of the clear, crisp highlands, who impressionistically painted genre scenes with attractiveness and power. Arnold Böcklin, a little later, personified nature in his classical figures in romantic settings. His appeal to emotion is well illustrated by "The Isle of the Dead."

In the 1921-22 season, a comprehensive collection of Swiss art was brought over by American Museums. In it was the work of the painters mentioned and of Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918), who had already become a power as creator and teacher in painting. He has been considered one of Switzerland's greatest triumvirate with Böcklin and Segantini.

A pupil of Menn, his childlike but creative, willful soul had early produced great landscape, portrait,



PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN, BY FERDINAND HODLER
PURCHASED 1922

historical and genre pictures. His spiritual vision helped him to interpret the invisible by visible forms in decorative, linear compositions.

He symbolized the Swiss in battle pictures at the Zurich National Museum and later painted portraits of deep significance. A teacher in the Ecole des Beaux Arts, he established a national school, that unfortunately died with him.

The Detroit Institute of Arts has purchased a bust portrait of a woman that well shows Hodler's art. A bold picture that with simplicity, directness and design, interprets a femi-

nine type, it is without petty detail or incidental characterization.

The almost black hair and dress stand out in a monumental way against the background of light that vibrates in delicate hues. The living flesh is modeled with greens, pinks and cream color. The lines, silhouettes and combined spots make an interesting pattern. If the color is somewhat startling and arbitrary, it has an emotional appeal, and an aesthetic quality that makes the canvas good pictorially.

R. P.

MUSEUM NOTES

THE NINTH ANNUAL EXHIBITION will continue through May thirty-first. Several sales have been made on behalf of the artists, among them Charles H. Davis's delightful landscape, "Spring in the Hills," purchased by Mrs. Theodore G. Fletcher, Carl Lawless's decorative landscape, "A Breeze from the Sea," purchased by Mr. John H. Tigchon, and Percy Ives' "Madame Violette" which will find a permanent home in a Detroit collection. The exhibition this year comprises one hundred and ten paintings, well hung in a single line. Don't fail to see this exhibit.

A MODERN EXHIBITION will be arranged in Gallery III during the month of June. It will be made up of the few examples of the more advanced tendencies in painting and sculpture owned by the Institute, together with a few works borrowed from private collections. It will include paintings by Matisse, Van Gogh, Hodler, Kokoschka, Partikal, Rottluff, Kirchner, Heckel, Pechstein, Feininger, Mueller, Schwabach, Filse, Siewald, Caspar, Schwichtenberg and Huth, drawings by Marjorie Organ, Davies and Derain, and sculpture by Kolbe, Scheibe, Albiker, Nadelman, Epstein and Diederich.

THE GRAPHIC ART OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA will be shown in an exhibition

of prints from the private collection of Henry J. John, M. D., during the month of June. This exhibit, consisting of over two hundred numbers, will afford an opportunity to see the art of a country which is seen but little in our current exhibitions.

NEW BUILDING. The architects, Paul P. Cret and Zantzinger, Borie and Medary, are at work on specifications preparatory to taking bids for the continuation of work on the new building. The foundations are completed and work on the superstructure will be started next month. The appropriation now available will carry the building through the first story up to the main floor levels.

THE MADONNA BY GIOVANNI BELLINI, which has been on exhibition in the Ralph H. Booth Loan Collection has been borrowed by the Metropolitan Museum of Art for their exhibition of the art of the Italian Renaissance.

RECENT ADDITIONS to the Ralph H. Booth Loan Collection include a Gothic stone fountain, a polychrome bust of a member of the Rucellai family of the period of Donatello, an Urbino majolica plate of the Sixteenth Century, a XV Century Italian painting, and a portrait, "The Duchess of Richmond," by Van Loo.

EXHIBITION

April 11th to May 30 Ninth Annual Exhibition of Paintings by American artists. Galleries III and IV.