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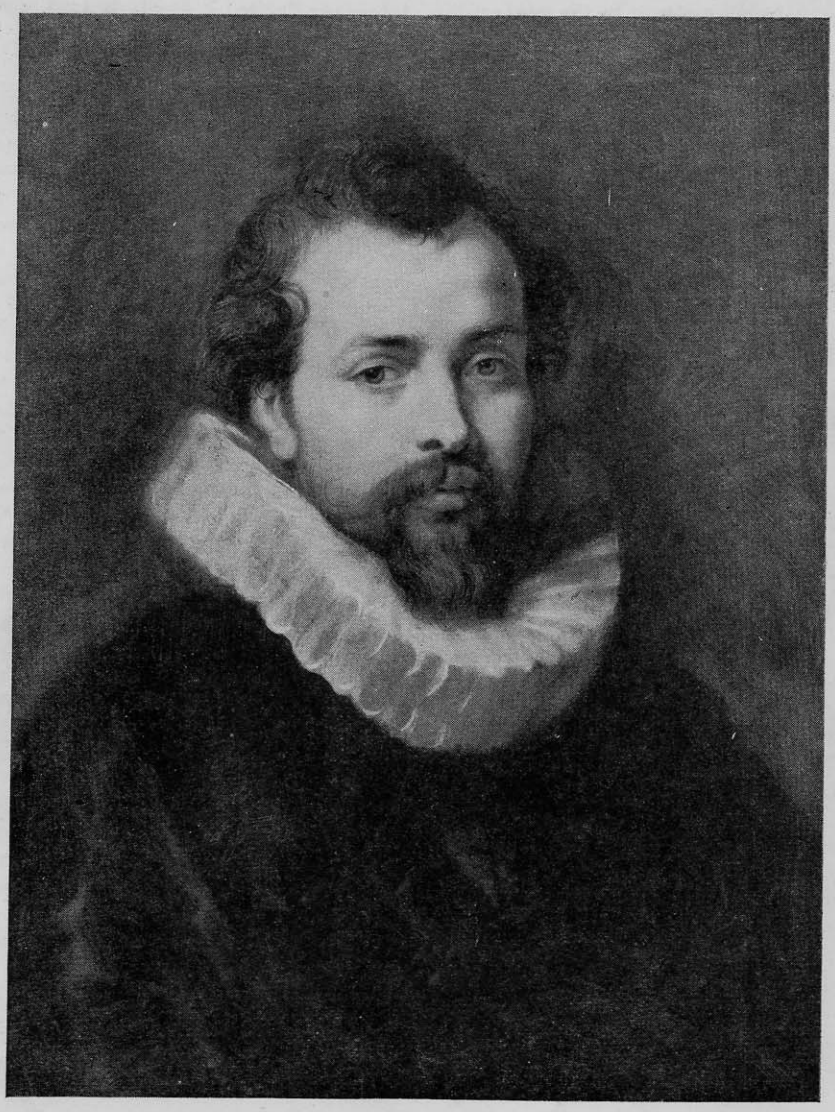


PHILIPPE RUBENS, BY PETER PAUL RUBENS

A RUBENS PORTRAIT

One of the pictures purchased from the famous collection of Camillo Castiglioni of Vienna, sold in Amsterdam in November, is Peter Paul Reubens's bust portrait of his brother Philippe Rubens. This picture having arrived is now installed in the Gallery of Recent Accessions. Supplementing the Biblical picture by the same artist, *Abigail Meeting David With Presents*, which was one of the more important canvases presented by Mr. James E. Scripps some years ago, it gives the museum two phases of the work of this great Flemish master.

The portrait, described in "Smith's Catalogue Raisonné of the works of Rubens," No. 805, and also mentioned in Max Rooses, Volume 4, page 247, shows a three-quarter view of his brother and is described by the latter in these words: "Philippe Rubens is shown in bust. His black, curly hair ornaments his head of which the well developed forehead shows a superior spirit. His expressive face has mustaches, and his chin, slightly bearded, rests in the plaits of a large white collar which is fastened to his dark doublet. This beautiful portrait of an admirable color is highly finished." Painted with fine restraint and a less florid coloring than characterizes his later works, this picture was possibly done in Rubens's early middle period, and being of so intimate a member of his family is undoubtedly entirely by his own hand.

Peter Paul Rubens was born on the day dedicated to the two saints whose name he bears, June 28, 1577. His brother Philippe was his senior by three years. We learn from Max Rooses that this portrait was made as a memorial in the abbey church of St. Michel at Antwerp. Both from the fact that his brother died in 1611 and from the youthful appearance of the sitter, it would seem that the portrait must have been painted about 1610 or '11 when Rubens was in his early thirties. The portrait disappeared during the French Revolution and turned up in the collection of Stiers d'Aertselaer which was sold in Antwerp in 1822. It then passed into the collection of the Baron Mecklenburg and after the dispersal of this collection in 1854 at Paris it reappears in the collection of C. VonHollitscher of Berlin. The picture was exhibited in Berlin in 1909, and in Brussels in 1910 and was acquired during the war by Camillo Castiglioni, whose collection was recently dispersed.

The prodigious accomplishment of Peter Paul Rubens both in the field of painting and diplomacy have astounded the world. Having given her son a sound education at Antwerp in spite of the family indigence, the mother of Rubens placed him as a page in the household of the widow of Count Antoine van Lalaing, formerly Governor of Antwerp and it was here that he learned the courtly ways so useful to him in later life. After studying landscape painting for a brief period with Tobias Verhaecht, he entered the studio of Adam van Noort where he studied for four years in a large company of students of which Jordaens was one. At the age of nineteen he entered the studio of Otto van Veen who had been trained under Zucchero at Rome and had been appointed Court Painter to the Archduke Albert. Van Veen inspired his talented pupil with a desire to visit Italy and secured for him the favor of the Archduke, through whom it was accomplished. From 1600 to 1608 he was in Italy under the patronage of Vincenzo Gonzaga, the reigning Duke of Mantua, copying in the galleries or as a courtier in the train of the Duke. He journeyed with the Duke to Florence to attend the marriage of Marie de Medici with Henry IV of France, a marriage which he was later to celebrate in those immortal canvases now in the Louvre.

He might have been lost to Flanders forever had he not received word of the illness of his mother in 1608. This sad news drew him homeward posthaste only

to arrive too late. He then settled at Antwerp, built a magnificent house in the Italian style, married Isabelle Brant and settled down to the great volume of work that was to flow from his brush during the next few years. In his princely atelier he gathered a large number of pupils about him, among the best known being David Teniers, Anton Van Dyck, Jacob Jordaens and Frans Snyders, and they assisted in the execution of many of his larger commissions. Meanwhile his brother Philippe, who was versed in the law, was town secretary until his untimely death in 1611. His wife died in 1626, and almost immediately afterward Rubens's work as a painter was interrupted when the Infanta Isabella sent him as her ambassador to Spain, where he met Velasquez, had a room in the palace and was frequently visited by Philip IV. Later he was sent to England where as ambassador he performed his diplomatic mission and also executed a number of important paintings. He left the British Isles in 1630, carrying away the badge of Knighthood. He now married Helena Fourment, he being fifty-three years old and she a girl of sixteen, and we find her celebrated in many of his subsequent pictures. Between 1635 and 1640, the date of his death, he suffered from poor health but continued to carry on his numerous works.

His robust style and florid coloring have embellished the great galleries of the world with their greatest masterpieces, and they were also employed in designs for tapestries and illustrations for books. Some twenty-five hundred of his works are recorded.

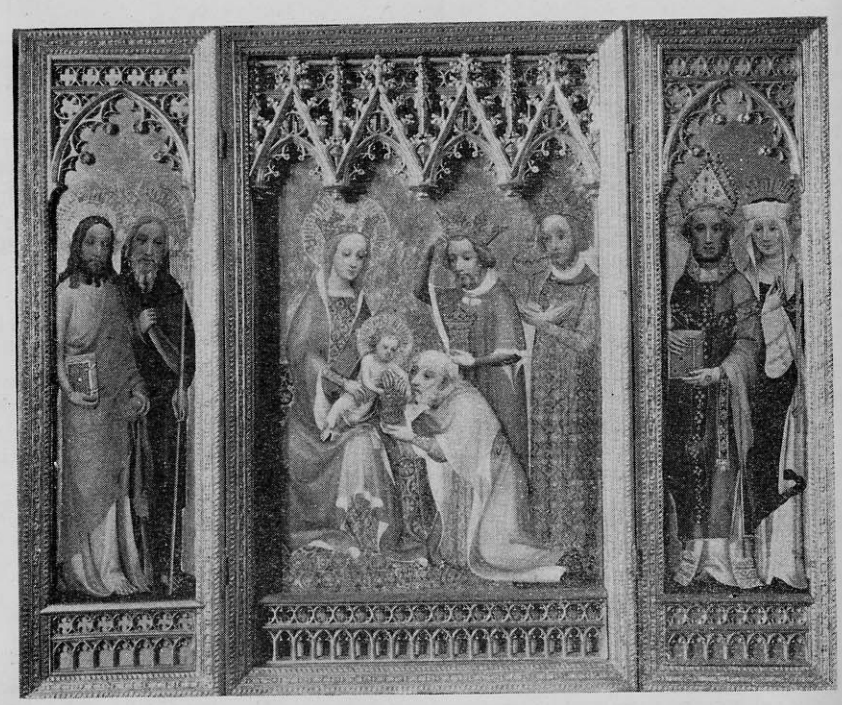
C. H. B.

A TRIPTYCH BY MEISTER WILHELM

Last year at the Castiglione sale the Institute was fortunate enough to acquire among other pictures an important triptych by "Meister Wilhelm" of Cologne. It represents in the center panel the Adoration of the Magi. In the wings are four saints: on the left the apostles James and Philip—St. James in blue and St. Philip in red—and on the right St. Severus with a bishop's mitre and St. Walburga in black and white nun's garments.

The late fourteenth century was one of the most interesting, one of the most individual moments in the history of German painting. Very soon the realism of Flanders was to invade the country and to sweep away that expression of a mystical and idealistic piety which had characterized especially the art of Cologne and the Rhineland. Before the middle of the fourteenth century German painting had been confined to mural decorations, of which neither very many nor very important specimens survive, and the miniature painting which is familiar in many existing illuminated manuscripts of the period. But during the later part of the thirteen hundreds the practice of painting small altar pieces and panel pictures arose, and with it there came into the art a certain intimacy which would have been unsuitable to large works intended to be seen from a distance, and which suggests the inspiration of the manuscripts.

The painting of Cologne, of which this picture is an admirable example, centres round the somewhat shadowy figure of a certain Meister Wilhelm, whose name is mentioned in various documents at different dates between 1358 and 1378. He is known to have died in 1377. A few years after his death, a chronicler wrote: "At that time there lived in Cologne Meister Wilhelm, who, in the opinion of the masters, passed for the greatest painter of the whole German country, for he painted everyone in so convincing a manner that it seemed as though each one lived." Much of this painting is informed by a similar spirit. It has about it a humble and devotional quality,—one might almost say a peasant quality, something of Oberammergau, which is peculiarly Teutonic and which reflects the spirit of Tauler and Suso



TRIPTYCH BY MEISTER WILHELM OF COLOGNE. ACTIVE 1358-1377

and the *Theologica Germanica* rather than that of St. Francis. Indeed there could not well be a greater contrast than that which exists between these pictures and the contemporary Italian work, in much of which the teaching of St. Francis finds such beautiful expression.

The present triptych is a characteristic product of this movement and an exceptionally interesting example of late Gothic painting. With its brilliant color, its elaboration of purely decorative detail, its plain gold background with hardly an indication of any locality in which the figures are thought of as being situated, it resembles many contemporary manuscript paintings. This is an art in which the demand for verisimilitude has not yet made itself felt very pressingly. The attention is concentrated on the actors in the scene and on their relations to one another. It is the emotional significance of the scene that has preoccupied the painter and he has not come to the point at which in art a landscape can itself represent a state of mind and contribute, as in the work of more mature artists, to the emotional effect of the scene. When primitive painters have tried to represent at all completely the setting of the stories they wish to tell, they have often dissipated their energies in showing us essentially insignificant even if curious episodes, but our artist has kept severely to the point, and has reaped a reward in the directness and simplicity of appeal to which he has been able to attain. It can well be understood that a pious man like Tauler should be no iconoclast before works such as this, but should recommend his followers to hang such pictures in their houses as holy images, the contemplation of which would be a spiritual benefit to their fortunate possessor.

This work is particularly interesting as being the earliest picture of the German school that the Museum possesses, and with the *Crucifixion* by Rueland Frueauf it gives an excellent idea of the special virtues of German art in the fifteenth and late fourteenth centuries.

H. J.

A PORTRAIT BY THOMAS HUDSON

PORTRAIT OF MISS ASHTON, BY THOMAS HUDSON

Thomas Hudson was born in the year 1701. Like his famous pupil Sir Joshua Reynolds, he was a native of Devonshire. He became in his day the most fashionable of all the portrait painters, though long before his death his reputation had been dimmed by the increasing glory of his great pupil. He had, however, by that time acquired considerable wealth, and like Sir Joshua himself, he had made a fine collection of drawings of the old masters. Indeed it is probable that the foundation of Reynolds's abiding interest in the old masters was laid by this admirable teacher. It is indeed always in connection with Sir Joshua Reynolds that we think today of Hudson and it is instructive to compare the work of the two men as their pictures hang side by side in the Museum. The portrait which has recently been presented by the Museum of Art Founders Society, is typical of the painting that was being done in

England in the first half of the eighteenth century. There is about it a certain dryness, a certain conventional and almost schematic quality, but it has great competence and an undeniable charm of style. It was in this manner that Reynolds made his early efforts, and he grew dissatisfied with its aridity when he saw the work of Gandy, who was artistically a descendant of Van Dyck and an admirer of Rembrandt. After this Reynolds drifted away from the methods of his old teacher and became the Reynolds we know so well. But when we have the opportunity of examining the work of the older man we see how much there is still to value in this style of painting that went out of fashion almost two hundred years ago.

H. J.

A PERSIAN LACQUERED AND PAINTED MIRROR CASE

Through the generous gift of the Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society the Oriental Department has recently acquired its second example of Persian lacquer—a very beautiful mirror case ornamented with a miniature painting, signed and in the style of the celebrated master Riza Abbasi.

Lacquer work, employed for doors and such household articles as pen and knife boxes and mirror cases, came into vogue in the reign of Shah Abbas (1587-1629). The boxes and cases so ornamented were often made of *papier maché* very carefully prepared, then treated with lacquer, ornamented by style with an etched design or by brush with miniature painting.

The scene on the cover of our mirror case, executed with much charm of rhythmical line, composition and color against a rich ochre background, patterned with golden brush strokes, represents a couple, perhaps courtiers, kneeling *vis a vis*, feasting under the sheltering boughs of two trees. The woman, cushioned against a pillow and garmented in green brocaded with gold, with a white hood covering her shoulders, leans slightly forward gazing at a bird perched on her extended hand. In the other hand, held against her hood, is a pomegranate. The man, who wears a turban and is garmented in brown, brocaded with gold, a red scarf falling from his shoulders, is holding a wine cup in one hand and in the other a golden vase. A salver of pomegranates rests upon the ground between the couple amidst a spray of leaves. Minor details consist of a clump of flowers and hovering bees. The design on the reverse side of the case outlined in gilt probably with penstroke, represents a nature study of a bird on an apple bough in full leaf and bloom, with clumps of flowers and insects in other parts of the scene, and is drawn with a spirited interest and joy in the subject altogether charming. A diaper border inclosing tiny leaves surrounds the case.

The use of colors, which are limited to yellow ochre, salmon red, viridian, deep blue, brown and gold are vigorous and clear, and are distributed so as to preserve a refined and well balanced arrangement, pleasing the eye instantly with both the charm of the color scheme and the mellow tone of the lacquer.

Several interesting points regarding the miniature paintings upon the cover and the nature study on the reverse side of the case, together with the signature, deserve special mention, but cannot be treated fully here for want of space. The style, composition and color of the miniature are unquestionably in the refined and graceful manner of the celebrated Riza Abbasi. Details, such as a certain grace and ease in the postures of his figure, together with the richness of the costumes, the heavily wound turban and feather-plume upon the crown, so much in vogue in the Shah Abbas

Period, are characteristic of the master; so also are the girdled waist, the round full face and the drawing of the hands.

Moreover, the group is representative of both the new and the old manner prevalent at the Court of Shah Abbas. The new manner derived from Europe, and Italy in particular, to which country Shah Abbas sent ambassadors and painters to study the Italian School, introduced a naturalism not previously known in Persian art.

PAINTED AND LACQUERED MIRROR CASE, SHAH ABBAS PERIOD, 1587-1629

Fundamental principles and technique, however, fortunately remained the same throughout this epoch; the change was rather in motifs and subjects and in a more literal rendering of nature. European influences increased the subject possibilities through freeing them from confinement to illustration of history and poetry.

In conformance with the new manner, Riza Abbasi is known to have made studies from nature in note books and to have redrawn these, obtaining a naturalism and at the same time preserving in the finished work the traditional and ornamental rhythm. The cover of our mirror case illustrates this point. The figures are more abstract and conform in linear rhythm to the older school, while the subject of two personages seated at a feast under the trees, one admiring a bird and the other lifting a cup of wine, together with the detailed interest in shrubs, insects and flowers, are clear indications of the new school.

The reverse side of the case might almost have been made from a notebook study. The unusually detailed rendering of both plant and bird life is especially significant here, and yet it is accomplished with such feeling for grace and rhythm of line as is to be found only in Oriental art. A European could hardly have drawn so literal a study with so delicate and light a touch.

The miniature is signed *Ali Riza Abbasi*, but as in the case of most of Riza's signed work, there is much confusion. At least three surnames *Abbasi*, each in a different caligraphy, appear —*Ali Riza Abbasi* in the caligraphic manuscripts, *Riza Abbasi* in the paintings, and the signature of his son Schafi Abbasi, who after his father's death signed Riza's name to those paintings without signature. Kuhnel in his

Miniaturmaleri im Islamischen Orient identifies the caligrapher Ali Riza Abbasi with the painter Riza Abbasi although the signatures are not in the same handwriting. To add to this confusion there is also an undisputed work by Riza Abbasi signed *Aqa Riza*, by many considered another personality, but whom Mr. T. W. Arnold identifies with Riza Abbasi.

We are unable at present to discuss the caligraphy of the mirror case. The most we can say is that it was written at the same time that the miniature was painted, although the caligraphy appears to be in a lighter stroke than that of Riza Abbasi.

Of Riza's life there is scant record. The dates of his birth and death are conjectural. We know only that the caligrapher Ali Riza Abbasi was a favorite at the Court of Shah Abbas, and that he enjoyed great fame for his work and gained advantage over his rival Mir Imad, in whose murder he was implicated. Riza's work was of such excellent quality and his innovations so far-reaching that he may be said to have established a definite school. Beyond this skeleton outline and the fact that he left a son, there is little other information, unless one accepts Arnold's account of the rather debauched life of Aqa Riza drawn from a contemporary history of Iskandar Munishi, and is willing to agree that this is Riza Abbasi. His voluminous work, both the illustration of a work of such a poet as Nizami and contemporary subjects reflecting every day life about him, is his best, clearest and most accurate biography. Collections of his miniatures appear in all the larger European Museums and such important private collections as that of Dr. Sarre of Berlin, Messieurs Migeon and Rothschild of Paris, and in this country Mrs. Rockefeller McCormick, Dr. Ross, Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, and others.

A. C. E.

EARLY AMERICAN FURNITURE

The beginning of a collection of antique American furniture was recently made by the Museum. The pieces acquired, in pine, maple, and hickory, comprise a turned table, a candle stand, a sleigh seat, a form or single seated bench, a child's chair, a Windsor chair, and a desk in frame or lowboy desk, all in a style commonly called "early American," though why Windsor chairs should be classed as early American is difficult to see, dating as they do from the third quarter of the eighteenth century.

The confusion in terms has been brought about by the tendency to call "early American" all furniture made of the commoner woods such as maple, oak, pine and hickory, and to qualify as later everything in walnut and mahogany. In general, it is true, of course, that seventeenth century furniture made in America was fashioned out of what we term the commoner woods, and it is equally true that mahogany does not become popular until 1740-50. But it is manifestly absurd to classify pine and maple furniture of the eighteenth century, very often made for farmhouses and inns, as early American, and contemporary pieces, destined for the homes of the rich, as later work. As a matter of fact, American furniture might with greater accuracy be dated from the year 1776, and all furniture made before that time be termed Colonial. Nutting undoubtedly had that distinction in mind when he entitled his book on seventeenth and eighteenth century furniture made in this country, *Furniture of the Pilgrim Century*.

Dating American furniture and in fact being certain that the furniture is of American make is not always an easy matter. Early furniture in this country was brought over or imported by settlers, and it was not until about 1660 that the furniture used in America was made here, and then always after home patterns: Dutch with continental and Eastern influences for the settlers of New York, Dutch and English patterns for New Eng-

land, and English alone for the Southern colonies. Consequently it is often difficult to distinguish between the imported piece and the native one, especially as the maker of the second might also be the maker of the first, having crossed the ocean as a settler. Fortunately for the critic, certain well-defined differences in style distinguish much of the American furniture from its

DESK IN FRAME OR LOW-BOY DESK*, CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY. ABOUT 1730

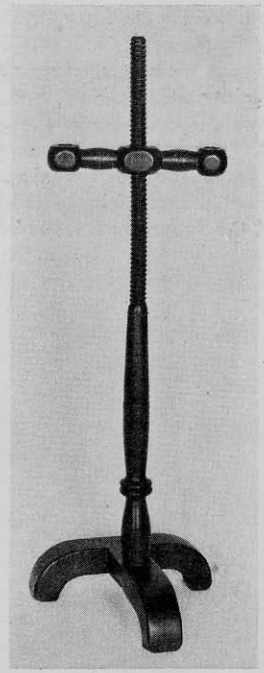
European model, and the employ of certain woods, unused in Europe, stamp many of our native pieces. But in general attributions must be made with considerable latitude.

The majority of the pieces acquired by the Museum come under the heading of Pilgrim Century furniture. The candle stand is not later than 1720; the sleigh seat, the child's chair, the small settle and the turned table are undoubtedly earlier. The lowboy desk, dating from 1725-40 fails to come within that category, as does the Windsor chair, made in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. These pieces illustrate the radical change that occurred in the form of furniture in the early years of the eighteenth century, when straight lines were replaced by curves, and rectangular forms were modified whenever possible. As Lockwood says in his book, *Colonial Furniture in America*, the dominant feature of the new form was the use of the cyma or wavelike curve, as a substitute for straight lines. Of the Museum's purchases, the Pilgrim Century pieces embody the rectangular lines; the Windsor chair, and the desk with its cabriole legs, the cyma curve.

*Editor's Note—The desk in frame is a gift to the Institute from Mr. Robert H. Tannahill, the author of this article.

Several of the accessions call for more extended comment. The "sleigh seat" derives from the type of form used at either end of a long, narrow eating table, in conjunction with the benches, in the early living room of the seventeenth century. The name, no doubt, came from the fact that this type was later used, and even made for use, as an extra seat in the open bodied sleigh of the pioneers. The candle stand is unique in that it is the only one of its kind—threaded candle holder stand with "T-foot" base—known to exist. The Windsor chair, with its original red paint, is an example of the rare type known to collectors as New England fan back, brace back.

WINDSOR CHAIR, LAST QUARTER XVIII CENTURY



CANDLE STAND, ABOUT 1720

Perhaps the most delicately proportioned of all the pieces is the desk in frame, made of maple in the early Queen Anne style. It was found in the northern part of Connecticut, and was undoubtedly made in that section of the country, where the style seemed to predominate and where nearly all such desks have come to light.

These recent accessions are intended to serve as a nucleus for the furnishing of one of the rooms in the American wing of the new Museum, and will be added to from time to time.

R. H. T.

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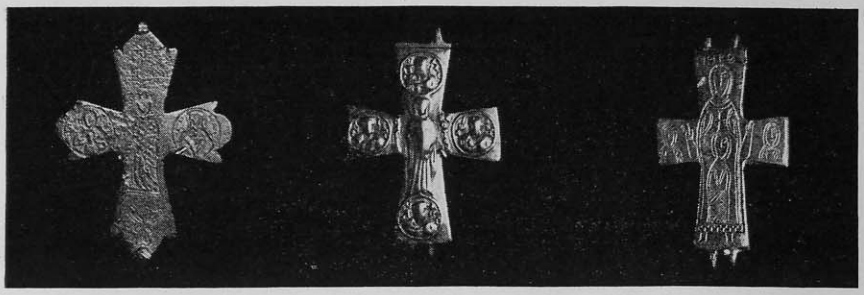

BYZANTINE CROSSES

Thirty-five early Christian crosses, one wheel and cross and two fragments, of Byzantine or eastern provenance and dating between the eighth and tenth centuries, have been presented to the Institute by the Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society. They fall into two groups, the amulet or locket pectoral cross, and those reserved for other uses, perhaps to be fastened upon coffers or small furnishings.

The amulets have in several instances incised representations in silhouette of the Virgin, or the Virgin with the Child drawn in outline upon the same figure; two representations of the Apostles and two only of the Crucifixion, one of which is modelled in relief and is probably of a later period (tenth or eleventh century) as may also be a repoussé figure of the Virgin, repoussé not appearing until the third period. Besides this, the drawing of the figures in these two crosses is advanced in comparison with the cruder drawings of the earlier crosses.

The amulets are said to have been worn by the early Christians on their pilgrimages to the Holy Land and to have had a talismanic significance, such as keeping away illness or warding off the devil. There is a record in the third period of a gold pectoral cross having this significance in that the inscription reads "Lord protect the wearer of this cross."*

The cross in this form was not commonly employed as a symbol of the Crucifixion until the sixth century, the sacred monogram (the cross inscribed within the circle) being employed during the first seven centuries of the Christian era.*

In the early Christian reliefs of Asia Minor the swastika was even used in this connection.

The cross itself—the Byzantine type with equal or nearly equal arms and expanding extremities—appeared in the fourth century, but without representations of the Christ, this being contrary to the sentiment of the Christian East—any representations of the human figure im-

*O. M. Dalton, Byzantine Art and Archaeology.

plying image worship. This sentiment persisted through the iconoclastic period and it was not until the sixth century that the first figures of the Christ, the Apostles, or the Holy Family began to appear.

The drawings were first mere outlines or silhouettes as in the majority of our carved crosses, and of a decidedly rustic quality. No portraiture was attempted and there was little observance of iconographical scheme except auras to distinguish holy personages, or heads with two wings or angels—angels being of eastern origin. The figure was identified by an inscription, written above the head or within a small medallion when so represented.

From the seventh century, the Crucifixion began to appear more frequently, and in the third period, especially in the tenth and eleventh centuries, we have modelled figures and repoussé work, the Christ conforming to already definitely established principles of representation. This developed Byzantine type, which is best illustrated in our Crucifixion with the four medallions at the end of the arms, represents the Christ with an emaciated body, the head surrounded by a cruciferous nimbus and slightly inclined to the right, arms and knees slightly bent, the feet resting upon a support.

The face is bearded, traditional with the Christian East, and a loin cloth covers the body from the waist to the knees. Suffering or agony is not stressed, the figure being represented in final repose, another characteristic of the Byzantine school.

In such representations the medallions at the extremities of the cross contained as a rule heads of the Virgin and of St. John, who seem to be portrayed in the right and left medallions of the cross arms in our cross.

Collections of these early Byzantine crosses are rare in American museums but are found in such important European museums as the Kaiser Friedrich of Berlin and the British Museum in London. Among private collections, the Khanenko collection at Kieff is one of the most important.

A. C. E.

MUSEUM NOTES

Under the joint auspices of the Museum and the Detroit Chapter of the English Speaking Union, a lecture will be given Thursday evening, May 13th, at 8:30 o'clock by Mr. C. Reginald Grundy, editor of "The Connoisseur," a well-known London art publication. His subject will be "The Influence of American Artists on British Painting." Following the lecture an informal reception to Mr. Grundy will be held in the galleries, by the members of the Founders Society and the members of the English Speaking Union.

In the Room of Recent Accessions are to be found two panel paintings of the "Annunciation" by Fra Angelico, 1385-1455, which have just been acquired by Mr. Edsel B. Ford, and are loaned during his absence in Europe. Members should take advantage of the opportunity to see these two fine examples of the early Florentine Master.

The Anna Scripps Whitcomb Traveling Scholarship of one thousand dollars was awarded by the jury of the Founders Society to Joseph Stermer, an advanced student at the School of Fine Arts.

Mr. and Mrs. Whitcomb gave a second prize of two hundred fifty dollars, which was awarded to Mrs. Sari Kryzanowsky.

The Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society has recently added to its rolls eight Life Members, whose contributions exceed a thousand dollars each, as follows: Mrs. R. B. Jackson, Mr. J. B. Ford, Mr. Walter O. Briggs, Mrs. James Couzens, Mr. F. Steinmeyer, Mr. Howard Young, Mr. Jacques Seligman and Mr. K. W. Backstitz.

Mr. Julius H. Haass has been inscribed on the rolls of the Founders Society as a Benefactor in recognition of the fine memorial gift of a Ruisdael painting recently presented in memory of his brother, Dr. Ernest W. Haass.

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