Individual expression has not been denied to any designer. Each has chosen his own subject and has had a free hand in the choice of assistants and collaborators. While the Museum has made many suggestions, it has forced the hand of no one.

Many voices may at one time sing the same tune; the range of each is its own, but the key for all is the same. This exhibition is but another forward step, a long one, we hope, toward establishing the key for modern design; and so in this style in the making, while the designers' voices remain individual—we are grateful for that—there is nevertheless a unison which augurs well for American design. Richard F. Bach.

THE MILTON WEIL COLLECTION OF CAMEOS AND INTAGLIOS

A collection of 152 cameos and intaglios of postclassical origin has been presented to the Museum by Mrs. Ethel Weil Worgelt and is now shown in the Room of Recent Accessions. This extraordinary collection, which was assembled by Mrs. Worgelt's late husband, Milton Weil, is already familiar to the Museum public, since for some years it has been exhibited in Gallery K 26 as a loan. It was always Mr. Weil's intention that the collection should eventually become the property of the Museum, and Mrs. Worgelt's generosity has now made this possible. In accord with the donor's request, the gift will be known as "The Milton Weil Collection."¹

The Weil collection may be said without hesitation to be the most important private collection of its kind gotten together in recent years. So far as is known, no collection in this country approaches it, and in Europe one must turn to such great public collections as those in London, Paris, and Vienna to find comparable material. Fortunately for Mr. Weil there were virtually no connoisseurs or collectors of gems at the time when he was making the collection. He therefore had the field almost wholly to himself. With the fact that engraved gems were no longer in the height of fashion Mr. Weil had no concern, since he felt that eventually they would undergo the inevitable renaissance. The Museum today is profiting from his farsightedness.

In 1928 Mr. Weil made his first loan of cameos to the Museum. Sixty-eight of them were carefully selected from many hundreds which he had collected. It was characteristic of him to leave the choice entirely to the Museum and never to withhold anything desired. From that time until his untimely death in 1934 the Museum was privileged to add to the loan all the outstanding gems he acquired. Indeed only by a visit to the Museum building could he himself enjoy the really choice fruits of his own collecting.

In 1932 a catalogue² of all the gems from the Weil collection then on loan in the Museum was published under the direction of Dr. Ernst Kris of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. Dr. Kris, a distinguished authority in the field, paid a visit to New York at Mr. Weil's request to study the collection at first hand. After his return to Vienna he acted for several years as Mr. Weil's adviser and was instrumental in adding a number of important items to the collection. The writer recalls Dr. Kris's genuine enthusiasm as he examined the Weil gems—a compliment indeed from one who had under his charge the magnificent cameos in the former imperial Austrian collection.³

The following summary will give the reader an idea of the extent of the collection:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Century</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XI-XV</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII or XIX</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The earliest of the gems is a rare sardonyx cameo with a full-length figure of Saint Michael holding in one hand his sword, in the other the scabbard. It appears

1 The gems used as illustrations in this article are not reproduced exact size.

2 Cf. F. Eichler and E. Kris, Die Kameen im Kunsthistorischen Museum (Vienna, 1927).

to be of Byzantine workmanship and to have been made between 1100 and 1400. The next in date is a jasper cameo, probably Byzantine of the thirteenth or fourteenth century, on which is cut a figure of Saint George holding in front of him his sword and shield. Apparently of the fourteenth century is a beautiful little sardonyx cameo of the Crucifixion enclosed in a gold and enamel pendant of much later date. It conveys with remarkable success in its tiny area the touching pathos of the subject. A curious sardonyx cameo representing the head of Saint John the Baptist and probably made in Italy in the fifteenth century completes the group of mediaeval cameos.

In contrast, as we shall soon see, to the later gems, these four early ones show little or no classical influence.

With the coming of the Renaissance in Italy, the subject matter favored by gem-engravers became predominantly classical.

Among the thirty-six fifteenth- and sixteenth-century cameos assembled by Mr. Weil, twenty-two are in one way or another after the antique, the rest consisting of religious subjects and portraits of living people. Moreover, this passion for classical themes did not end with the sixteenth century. It continued unabated through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and by the beginning of the nineteenth had be-
come so prevalent that gem-engravers frequently signed their names in Greek letters and, on occasion, were not above passing off their work as authentically antique. The monotony of the classical vogue makes one even more appreciative of the rarity and high quality of strictly contemporary themes and portraits. By this it is not intended to belittle either the charm or the exquisite workmanship of many classically inspired gems, but in admiring them one cannot help feeling that their beauty of material and technical perfection were worthy of more originality.

Among the sixteenth-century gems there are many showing classical influence. Of these no less than seven are portraits of Roman emperors. The early examples are the most distinguished, and one of the best is a cameo cut in rich brown chalcedony, probably a portrait of Aelius Verus (fig. 1). Beautifully carried out in high relief and possessing all the bold sculptural quality of a work many times its size, this fine cameo was formerly in the famous Marlborough collection of gems. Among the other classical subjects to be noted in glancing through the sixteenth-century section are portraits of Roman matrons, Hercules in various roles, Omphale, Pomona, Medusa, Venus and Adonis, and Horatius at the Bridge. An exquisitely engraved intaglio in pale gray chalcedony representing Pan and a Nymph in the style of Valerio Belli is also obviously indebted to the antique. Unhappily the character of this gem makes good photography impossible, so that we cannot illustrate it.

The sixteenth-century group in the Weil collection also includes two gems of an unusually individual character. The earlier of these, dating from about 1500, is a superbly cut intaglio (fig. 2), of jasper with reddish purple, gray, and yellow strata, representing the Adoration of the Shepherds. It is presumably North Italian, possibly Veronese, and in style is related to an intaglio in the Numismatic Collection in Munich which has been attributed to Niccolò Avanzi of Verona. Our intaglio has what appears to be a contemporary silver setting with a handle and was probably once used as a seal. The second, a rare large agate cameo (fig. 8) depicting a shepherdess asleep in a pastoral landscape, is in the highly personal style of Alessandro Masnago of Milan. Near at hand, also resting, are the flock and dog, and in the distance, through a clearing in the trees, rise the towers of a large city. Masnago's cameos are apt to be crowded with delicately wrought, nervous detail and frequently make a rather confused first impression. But their workmanship is quite on the side of tour de force, and it is easy to understand that that great collector of engraved gems, the Emperor Rudolf II, should have been Masnago's

ardent patron. As a result, the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna contains some sixteen splendid examples of his work. On the whole, however, cameos by Masnago are very rare, and as fine an example as that in the Weil collection is in these days difficult to come by.

From among the contemporary portraits of the sixteenth century two may be singled out for mention. A unique two-sided sardonyx cameo (fig. 3) with, on the front, jugate portraits of Charles V and Philip II, and on the reverse, the Empress Isabella, is the work of the celebrated Tuscan sculptor, Leone Leoni. In writing to Cardinal Granvella, Leoni speaks of this gem as “His Majesty’s cameo.” Granvella later wrote to the sculptor that the emperor greatly admired the stone and delighted in showing it on numerous occasions. Until it turned up in the Weil collection, this extraordinary cameo had been completely lost. The designs of both sides, however, were known from medals by the same artist. The second of the portrait cameos referred to (fig. 9) is of no interest historically, but it would be difficult to find a gem more completely expressive of the charm of its period. Against a background of translucent gray chalcedony is silhouetted in pure white the portrait bust of a young woman. On her head she wears a knotted turban from the back of which falls a scarf, its end being thrown across her chest. The modeling is a joy to behold, and one cannot help feeling that the greatest shortcoming of the later gem-engravers was a lack of the sense of poetry with which this irresistible little portrait is imbued.

Seventeenth-century cameos in general display considerably less finesse both in design and in craftsmanship than those of the sixteenth century. Whether craftsmanship degenerated at this time or whether gem-engraving merely reflected in miniature the coarseness characteristic of the arts in general is a question. Several of the most effective of the seventeenth-century group of cameos in the Weil collection are cut in

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FIG. 8. SLEEPING SHEPHERDESS BY ALESSANDRO MASNAGO. AGATE

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heliotrope. This stone was very popular at the time, especially for cameos representing Christ and the Virgin Mary. The collection contains two fine heads of Christ in heliotrope, one made very early in the century, the other (fig. 4) later, at a time when the baroque movement had reached its culmination.

In delicacy of workmanship cameos of the eighteenth century resemble more closely those of the period of the Renaissance. In fact, the eighteenth-century gems in the Weil collection include many examples of exquisite cutting and undeniable charm. Classical subjects continue to predominate, and several of the best of them are signed in Greek and are presumably the work of Giovanni Pichler, a well-known gem-engraver of Neapolitan birth. As the century advanced more of the gems were signed, and, as would be expected, these signatures increase their value. Among the signed eighteenth-century examples in the collection there are works by Johann Lorenz Natter, Nathaniel Marchant, and Christian Friedrich Hecker, all well-known gem-engravers of their day. A profile portrait of Pope Pius VI (fig. 5) by the last-named artist is especially fine. Hecker, a native of the Tirol, active in Rome after 1784, counted many famous people as his patrons.

From among the hundreds of gems of the nineteenth century which Mr. Weil owned, the Museum selected a choice group of more than fifty. Whatever their artistic status may be at the moment, there is every likelihood that the day is not far off when nineteenth-century gems will be adequately appreciated. The beauty of the materials employed is unsurpassed. Technically many of them are tours de force, but it must be admitted that in the gem-engraving of this period sensitivity of feeling was frequently sacrificed to exquisite finish. Two typical examples of the marvelous cutting of this period are illustrated. The earlier (fig. 6), made at the beginning of the century, has for its subject the Education of Bacchus, the composition probably being taken from the antique. The minute perfection of this beautiful cameo might well have given a gem-engraver of the sixteenth century every reason for satisfaction. It is signed in Greek N. AMASTIN and is presumably by Niccolò Amastini, who worked in Rome. Equally effective in a bold, handsome way is a black and white cameo (fig. 7) with a superbly cut head of Medusa. This fine gem belongs to the third quarter of the century and may very well be the work of L. Saulini, whose signature appears on several other black and white cameos in the collection, including those in an impressive parure of necklace, brooch, and tiara. Cameos at this time were used almost wholly for personal adornment, whereas in earlier times they were also used as decoration for sumptuous vessels and cabinets. Indeed the wardrobe of a lady two generations ago was not complete without its cameo jewelry.

Before bringing to an end his survey of the nineteenth-century part of the collection, the visitor should not fail to look at some of the extraordinary portrait cameos of this period. One of the most distinguished, a sensitive little portrait of Florence Nightingale by Saulini, is illustrated (fig. 10). Others represent Napoleon I, Alexander I, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Byron, Alexander Pope, Washington, Napoleon III, and the Prince Imperial. The fineness of their execution is pretty conclusive evidence that gem-engraving in the last century is not to be dismissed with a wave of the hand or the arching of an eyebrow. One cannot help wondering whether the art of cameo-cutting went out for all time with the nineteenth century or whether the caprice of fashion will at some future date bring about its revival.

Preston Remington.